



IN HIS SERVICE

JANUARY / 2006

A NEWSLETTER FROM MEHERABAD

In 1998 the Trust formulated a Development Plan, announced in the inaugural December 1998 issue of this newsletter, whose centerpiece was to be a new accommodation facility for pilgrims at Meherabad.

Eight years later, on 15th June 2006, the Meher

Pilgrim Retreat is scheduled to have its grand opening. Welcoming pilgrims from east and west and all over the world, the MPR, located on the Hill slightly more than half a kilometer to the west of the Samadhi, will provide rooms, food, and other amenities for 200 people. This capacity exceeds by almost four times that of the current Pilgrim Centre at Lower Meherabad, which has hosted pilgrims since 1980 and will now be put to other uses.

The total costs for the construction of the new building have run to about \$1,250,000. In the coming months further costs will attend the procurement of furniture, creation of facilities for the handicapped, building of a water catchment tank, purchasing of buses, and other finalizing steps. When complete, the Meher Pilgrim Retreat will join Hostels C and D and the Dharamshala in a constellation of accommodation facilities that will lodge pilgrims across a wider diameter and bring a broader tract and expanse of this sacred Meherabad property, hallowed by the footprints of the Ancient One, into active use.

MPR IN AN EXPANDED MEHERABAD. Located on the crown of the ridge extending and rising slightly to the west (the far side) of Meher Baba's Tomb-Shrine, the Meher Pilgrim Retreat has an orientation and setting quite distinct from that of the Pilgrim Centre that preceded it. The Pilgrim Centre nestles at the east foot of Meherbad Hill and is surrounded by a new growth of trees. Architecturally it turns inward, toward its garden courtyards and dining room. The MPR, by contrast, is a place of open skies and wide horizons. From the terrace on top of the women's dormitory, one can see for miles in every direction—on a clear day, all the way to Seclusion Hill at Meherazad twenty kilometers to the north. While the verandas and courtyards and dining areas provide many kinds of spaces, intimate as well as more public, in its broader design the building turns toward the Samadhi: its men's and women's quarters, each separately, are open square C's facing to the east. A view corridor runs through the middle of the Retreat, between men's and women's sides, in that direction—one of five such footpaths, like the spokes of a wheel, all of which, when completed, will lead to the Samadhi as the hub and center of Meherabad.

The inauguration of the MPR, and the stretching of the envelope to the west side of the estate, marks a new stage in the history and development of

Meher Pilgrim Retreat to Open in June 2006

Meherabad. Since the distances will be greater, roads and shuttle services will play a role, linking the various parts of Meherabad in a vital nexus. The Meher Pilgrim Retreat itself will serve as a place of food, lodging, and light conversation.

For darshan, pilgrims will walk, or take a shuttle bus, to the Samadhi. Strolling on down the Hill, they can visit Lower Meherabad with its historic sites—the Jhopdi where Baba began His Silence, the Table-Cabin where He wrote much of the Book. Talks, song sessions, and other programs will take place in Mandali Hall. Meanwhile, the theater in Outer Meherabad will feature programs several days a week—songs and music, dance, films, lectures, and every month or so, an original drama.

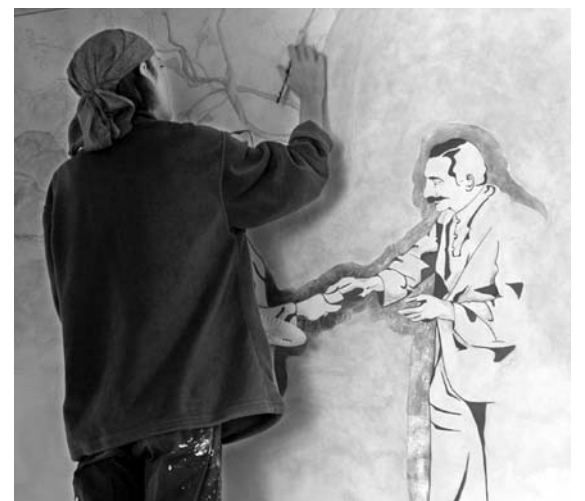
CURRENT PREPARATIONS. To make all this possible, the Trust staff and administration are scrambling to finalize their arrangements and preparations for what is sure to be a vast transformation in the daily life of Meherabad. From the standpoint of "hardware," most of the infrastructure—electrical connections, water supply, etc.—is ready or nearly so. Construction of a paved road linking the MPR with the Ahmednagar-Daund highway is in progress.

But the greater challenge at this stage is to put in place all the systems required for the management of a much larger operation and expanded work force. For room assignments and coordination with the registration office in Lower Meherabad, a new software program has been created and will be tested out in coming months. Longer hours and increased work load, particularly in the areas of pilgrim reception and housekeeping, will require new personnel and close coordination. Special care will have to be taken regarding security, especially in view of the banditry that has afflicted the areas around both Meherabad and Meherazad of late.

Amid all the changes, one important strand of continuity for pilgrims accustomed to the old Pilgrim Centre at Lower Meherabad will be the people. Overall, the staff—the volunteers as well as the Trust employees—will be more or less the same, with some additions. In pilgrim registration, reception, kitchen, laundry, house-keeping, and medical care, the faces will be mostly familiar. In human terms, essentially the same operation will continue but now in a new location.

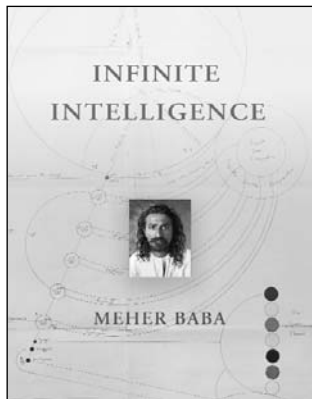
In coming years, as Baba has told us, Meherabad will become a place of pilgrimage for the masses of humanity. Slowly, a bit at a time, we can see a new Meherabad unfolding, like petals of a flower at the approach of dawn. While much of old Meherabad is passing in the way of all things, we trust that, when by His grace the New Humanity arrives here, they will find Him waiting for them with open arms.

Artists working on a sculpture and murals in the Meher Pilgrim Retreat



Photographs by Adair Adams

INFINITE INTELLIGENCE Released in November



Cover of *Infinite Intelligence*

In November of 2005 a major new book of Meher Baba's authorship, entitled *Infinite Intelligence*, was published by Sheriar Foundation in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina (USA). Running to 776 pages—which includes 450 pages of primary text as well as introductory and supplementary materials, photographs, and twenty-eight full color figures—the book is an extraordinary exposition on the divine Intelligence as the source and substance of all creation. Though the manuscript which is its source is unsigned and undated, clearly the material originated with Meher Baba, probably during the early Meherabad period of the mid-1920s.

The publication of the book culminates a seven-year project carried out under auspices of the Avatar Meher Baba Trust and, specifically, under the direction of its Chairman, Bhau Kalchuri. The original two-volume, 250-page manuscript, now housed in the Trust Archives, was found by Bal Natu in a Meherazad go-down shortly after Meher Baba dropped His body; the handwriting has not yet been identified, though certainly it is not Meher Baba's. Since the idiosyncratic style of the original would be impenetrable to most readers, the text had to be edited extensively; this editorial effort led to the creation of an apparatus of summaries and sidebars, explanatory materials, endnotes, appendixes, glossary, and other aids. Once the edited text had been prepared, the diagrams had to be redrawn and the book laid out. The design and proof-reading alone took almost eighteen months.

The book resulting from this vast effort is unusual and enigmatic in many ways; yet there can be little doubt that, as a gift to the human understanding from the Avatar of the age, it will enormously impact upon mankind in the centuries to come.

CONTENT. Of the books of Meher Baba's authorship published to date, *Infinite Intelligence* is most akin in its content to *God Speaks*. At the same time, it is clearly the expression of an earlier phase in the Avatic Advent. Certain key terms are used differently than in later writings. The word "subtle," for example, designates, in *Infinite Intelligence*, the first six planes, which *Discourses* and *God Speaks* divide between the subtle

and mental spheres. Meanwhile, *Infinite Intelligence* identifies what it calls the "fine" world, a term which refers to the state of latency and which disappeared from Baba's explanations after this early period.

A central theme of *Infinite Intelligence* is the dichotomy of "imagination" and "thinking," which are also called "creation" and "realization." Thinking is the consciousness of the Intelligence. Imagination is a point of nothingness within the ocean of that thinking. When thinking begins, Ishwar—Creator, Preserver, and Destroyer—projects this point of nothing into a seeming infinity, which this thinking progressively realizes through the series of evolution.

The book also provides extended treatments of the subject of sanskaras. The climactic chapter discusses in detail how sanskaras are eliminated, respectively, through karma, dnyan bhakti, and raj yogas. Towering over the spiritual landscape is the figure of the Sadguru, who plays a decisive role in the process of Self-realization. With Ishwar at His left hand and Parameshwar at His right, the Sadguru culminates and embodies within Himself all the stages and manifestations of the Infinite Intelligence.

MATTERS OF EDITORSHIP. *Infinite Intelligence* is a new kind of book, in that it presents material of Meher Baba's authorship in an edited form without that editing having been reviewed by Him. Other books of His too, such as *God Speaks* and *Discourses*, were edited as per Baba's directive. But in these cases Baba Himself reviewed the final text; and His having published these books under His name as author represents His seal, as it were, on the work done.

Infinite Intelligence contains much information that will be of interest to persons who would like to inquire more deeply into questions of editorship and the integrity of the Avatar's words. Further, the Trust is committed, now and into the future, to making available original documentary materials from its Archives Collection that will enable scholars and the general public to study these questions for themselves. Within the next twelve months, the Trust Archives plans to publish on the Trust web site a digital facsimile of the entire original "Intelligence Notebooks" manuscript. As the closest record of what Meher Baba himself actually composed, that manuscript will always remain the primary text and authority from which edited versions are derived and to which they ultimately refer.

Dadi Kerawala Returns to Baba



Dadi Kerawala

On 30th September Dadi Nasserwanji Kerawala, a life-long lover of Avatar Meher Baba and one of the trustees of the Avatar Meher Baba Trust, passed away in his family's residence in Pune.

Born seventy-eight years earlier on 24th August 1927, Dadi was a cousin of Eruch and grew up in a family that was devoted to Baba from his early childhood. He pursued a career in horticulture and later, with Baba's approval, got a Ph.D. in that field at Michigan State University in East Lansing.

Through the later 1950s and 60s, Dadi held the coveted post of horticulturalist at the experimental station in Ganeshkin Gardens in Pune. Through his influence, Baba was able to stay there with His mandali through several summer seasons.

At one juncture Dadi was much troubled by certain of his fellow workers, who were falsely accusing him of a certain vocational malfeasance. When Dadi related this to Baba, Baba told him, "Why worry? You haven't done anything wrong. From now on, I and you are on one side, and the state and local governments on the other. Let us see what happens." Thereafter, whenever the state government gave orders for Dadi's transfer, the central government cancelled these orders, and when the central government tried to dismiss him, the state government said it could find no replacement. In the end, Dadi kept this post for 13 years, far longer than anyone before him.

In the 1970s Dadi retired from government service and moved to Meherabad, where Padri put him in charge of agriculture and tree planting across the Meherabad estate. In 1975 Dadi became a trustee of the Avatar Meher Baba Trust and continued in this capacity until his death.

Following Baba's order, Dadi never married. His brother Sam and others in a large, extended clan are all close in Baba's fold.

From time to time over the years Baba would say, "Maro jiv Dadi par chhe," which means, "I love Dadi." To have lived his life first to last in Beloved Baba's intimate association, his has indeed been a blessed fate.

THE PILGRIM CALENDAR

YOUNG ADULTS SAHAVAS. From 27th June through 3rd July, some 75 young Baba lovers between the ages of nineteen and thirty gathered at Meherabad for the 5th annual Meherabad Young Adults Sahavas. This year's gathering had, as special guests, Jamie Newell, a singer and song-writer from America, who performed before the sahavasees and led a music workshop, and Meher Bala, who recounted her meetings with Baba as a young girl in Dehra Dun. As a "first" this year, the group paid a visit to Aurangabad and the Ellora Caves, celebrated for their magnificent temples and frequently visited by Baba at many times during His ministry.

SILENCE DAY. While around 1300 pilgrims reserved beds at Meherabad for the eightieth anniversary of *Maun Divas* ("Silence Day") on 10th July, torrential rainfall in Andhra earlier in the month produced numerous cancellations. The 1040 Indian pilgrims who finally made the trip had, as usual, to be

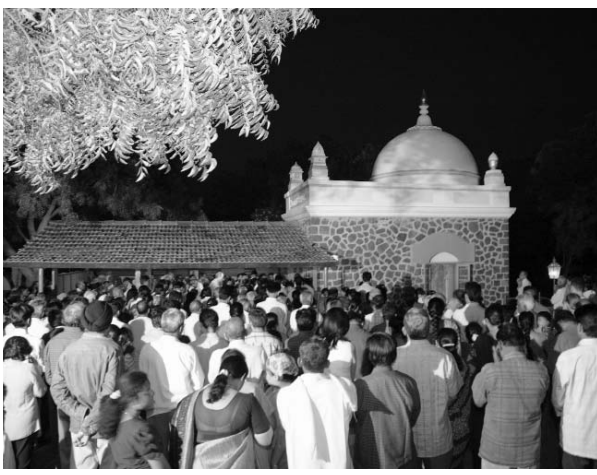
squeezed into the limited space in Hostels B, C, and D, as well as the Meher English School.

As always, the major Silence Day "program" was the program of keeping silence, as pilgrims queued up for darshan at the Samadhi; in Lower Meherabad the Jhopdi (where Baba actually inaugurated His Silence in 1925) was open for most of the day, and many took His darshan there as well. On 12th July 500 of the pilgrims still remaining traveled by bus and van to Meherazad, where they took darshan in Mandali Hall and Baba's room and greeted the women mandali on Mehera's porch. Back at Meherabad, the day's activities closed with Dhuni.

Along with the human visitors, unfortunately this Silence Day seems to have drawn to Meherabad an influx of "pilgrims" of a somewhat less welcome variety: swarms of flies! The Hindi word for this particular pest is *makkhi* while the word for "silence" is *mukka*, prompting some of our local wags to dub the

event the "All-India Mukkhy Mela at Meherabad."

NEW LIFE DAY. That momentous morning fifty-six years ago (on 16th October 1949) when Meher Baba with twenty companions set off from Meherabad to embark on the New Life was commemorated this year, as for the last several, by a *pad-yatra*, that is, a pilgrimage on foot. About seven hundred of Baba's lovers gathered in Meher Nazar (the Trust Office compound) at 8 a.m., enjoyed a sumptuous breakfast there, and set off. Fed and welcomed at various points along the road, shortly before noon the noisy procession arrived at Lower Meherabad, turned off the highway, and made its way up the hill for darshan. The *yatris* had walked to the accompaniment of drums with frequent stops for stick-dancing. Though it had rained the night before, the weather on New Life Day was overcast and cool, perfect for walking. The event concluded with a talk by Bhau under the Tin Shed on the Hill.



Commemorating the Great 1955 Sahavas



AFTER BRINGING THE NEW LIFE TO ITS CLOSE with Manonash (“annihilation of the mind”) in January 1952, Meher Baba embarked on a phase of mass darshans, traveling to Hamirpur district in Uttar Pradesh, coastal Andhra, and other parts of India and attracting crowds in the tens of thousands. In February 1954, Meher Baba for the first time in this advent publically declared Himself to be the Avatar of the age. Six months later this phase too came to an end with a final mass darshan in Wadia Park in Ahmednagar and the momentous message, “The Final Declaration,” delivered at Meherabad on 30th September.

In 1955 Meher Baba conducted another series of gatherings, but these were of a very different type. This time Baba did not want “darshan,” which in India is usually associated with such distancing formalities as garland offering and bowing down before the Master. Instead, He wanted “sahavas,” literally “staying with” or physical proximity, as a context for the intimacy of give and take between the Beloved and His lovers. As Adi K. Irani wrote in the printed letter sent out to the 800 men invited to the event, “the only possible relationship with Baba, for one and for all, is purely the relation of love.”

The great 1955 Sahavas was divided into four one-week sessions, from 3rd November through 3rd December. The first week was for speakers of Gujarati, the second, Telugu, the third, Hindi, and the fourth, Marathi. Don Stevens, one of the two westerners invited to the Sahavas, incorporated an account of the first week as the opening section of *Listen, Humanity*; further details appear in *Lord Meher*. Collectively the four weeks seem (in retrospect) like an oceanic moment of timelessness occurring in time, a concrete divine enactment and living out, for the sahavasees and for posterity, of the kind of relationship that Meher Baba wishes between His lovers and Himself.

THE 2005 COMMEMORATION. In honor of the fiftieth anniversary of this historic event, in 2005 the Trust organized a three-day commemorative gathering. Taking place under a pandal at the

amphitheater on Meherabad Hill just a few steps from the Samadhi and drawing more than a thousand pilgrims from various parts of India, the sahavas was, as many people noted, a kind of mini-Amartithi. In the general announcements sent out a few months earlier, all living attendees of the original Sahavas had been invited to speak; and about twenty did so. It was indeed moving to hear these men, most of them now in their seventies or eighties, telling these deeply personal stories of an event that had so transformed their lives. The recollections of Baba were so vivid that at times one felt one was participating in the original gathering. The commemoration opened and closed with talks by Bhau, who, of course, was among Baba’s resident mandali at the time.

The third day (Friday) had a slightly different focus. The original edition of *God Speaks* was published in the same month as the Sahavas—November 1955; so a morning and afternoon were given over to review of this, Baba’s great master work in the domain of metaphysics and cosmology. By an interesting coincidence, just as in the Sahavas Baba frequently alluded to *God Speaks*’ imminent release, this year’s commemoration occurred two weeks before the publication of *Infinite Intelligence*, a book more similar to *God Speaks* than anything else yet published.

The commemoration also included musical performances and, each night after arti, videos, which were projected on a large screen under the pandal just after nightfall.

As a special bonus treat, Saturday November 5th featured another special event, a two-hour dramatic performance by the Bombay group. For each of the last three years, that group has brought to Meherabad a new installment in a series of plays chronicling Baba’s life from His childhood through the 1940s. This year’s drama told the story of the New Life. The role of Baba was enacted charismatically in a performance that captured vividly many of His movements and gestures. And with this, an extraordinary four-day program concluded.



First Phase of Trust Development Coming to Fruition

When the Trust first formulated its Development Plan in 1998, the centerpiece of that effort was the Meher Pilgrim Retreat—the new pilgrim accommodation facility on Meherabad Hill. As the 15 June 2006 opening of the Retreat draws near, the Trust wishes to thank the worldwide community of Meher Baba's lovers whose steadfast love and support has made this possible. In the decades ahead, the Meher Pilgrim Retreat will doubtless serve many lovers of God in their pilgrimage to the Samadhi of the Ancient One.

Since 1998 donations to the Plan have totaled \$2,270,000. These contributions were the gifts of 968 lovers of Meher Baba. A number of groups facilitated in this process—notably the Avatar Meher Baba Center of Southern California; Avatar Meher Baba Foundation; Meherana; Meher Baba Center of the Twin Cities; Meher Baba House; Meher Baba Washington Gathering; Meher Fund; Meher Prasad; Sheriar Foundation; and in the UK, Meher Baba Association.

Your consistent giving has provided the foundation for the unfoldment of the Trust Development Plan. The list of major projects to date, some complete and some in progress, includes: the construction of facilities at the Pilgrim Education Site; expansion of the Meher Health Centre and Meher English School; construction of the Spiritualized Educational and Cultural Academy; archival development at Meherabad and Meherazad; development of the infrastructure and water supply; and, of course, the building and furnishing of the new Meher Pilgrim Retreat. All of these projects have been undertaken to implement Meher Baba's directives in the Trust Deed in the light of current needs and circumstances, as these are understood by the Chairman and Board of Trustees.

Much has been accomplished, and more needs to be done. Your continued gifts will help sustain the Trust in its on-going efforts. For those who have not availed themselves of the opportunity to contribute, here is how. In the UK, please send your tax-deductible contribution to Avatar Meher Baba Association c/o of Sue Chapman, 3 Whin Hill, Craster NE663TP, UK tel 01 665 57 69 57, e-mail suchapman@hotmail.com. In the United States, persons who wish to make tax-deductible contributions or wish to name the Trust as a beneficiary in their will, 401K, IRA, or insurance policy should contact Emory and Susan Ayers P.O. Box 398 Mystic, CT 06355 (tel. 860-535-0370, e-mail TrustPlan@ambppct.org); they will send you a list of eight Meher Baba tax-exempt organizations that have a grant in place to support the Trust Development Plan and other relevant information. Baba lovers from other parts of the world should send contributions directly to the AMBPPC Trust, Post Bag No. 31, King's Road, Ahmednagar 414 001, Maharashtra State, India. Further information can be found on the Trust's web site at www.ambppct.org.

Sacred Sites at Meherazad

Meherazad breathes the history of Meher Baba's life as the God-Man. The dust of every path bears the memory of His footprints; every place and object within Meherazad gates exudes the fragrance of His Work and Being. Taking a tour of Meherazad is stepping back in time to the scenes of some of the most major phases of His life activity.

The last issue of this newsletter described the Meherazad Master Plan and three of the most sacred sites within the Meherazad property—Seclusion Hill, Baba's House, and Mandali Hall. Here we turn to two more significant structures located on the men's side.

THE BLUE BUS. To the right of Mandali Hall, neatly tucked into the corner of the men's veranda just across the path that leads to the women's side, is a vehicle that played a key role in Baba's work over a ten-year period in the late 30s and 40s.

In 1938, Baba embarked on a series of journeys throughout India. Accompanying Him were many Eastern and Western women mandali. Driven by Elizabeth Patterson, Eruch, and occasionally Dr.

Donkin, the Blue Bus, originally built to seat 16 passengers, held as many as 24 women, plus children and pets during these odysseys that took them as far south as Sri Lanka, as far east as Calcutta, and as far northwest as Quetta on the untamed borders of what today is Afghanistan.

After the tours were completed, Baba decided to dispose of the bus so that He could use the proceeds for His work. A Baba-lover from Delhi, Keki Desai, won it in a raffle and immediately rededicated it to Baba, who commented, "It has come back." The engine, wheels and front end were removed and the body of the bus placed on empty oil barrels and fixed in mortar, brick, and lime. The seats too were also stripped away and a front door added.

Thus transformed into a small cabin, the Blue Bus served as the primary site of Baba's Great Seclusion in June–July 1949, just before the New Life. Today, it houses the surgical bed used by Baba in His room from the 26th of January 1969 until He dropped His physical form five days later. Meherazad pilgrims are free to go inside the Blue Bus whenever they wish.

MANONASH CABIN. Proceeding further up the

men's veranda, a few steps to the right you come to what many pilgrims know as Eruch's room. This structure, too, has a most remarkable history.

At the tail end of the New Life, Baba embarked on a phase called Manonash ("the annihilation of the mind"), which began in Hyderabad, continued on Tembi (Seclusion Hill), and was eventually completed in this cabin.

Earlier there had been two small cabins on Seclusion Hill, used by Baba in 1947. During His seclusion there Baba worked much of the time with Ali Shah, a fifth-plane mast from Ahmednagar. At the outset of the New Life the two cabins were left behind, like everything else; but when Baba arrived at Meherazad (traveling by foot) in December 1951, He reoccupied them.

A few days later, mid-way through His Manonash work, Baba had them dismantled by the mandali and carried piece by piece to the present location, where Padri reassembled this material into a single cabin. The interior was divided by a tarpaulin into two areas,

the west side for His work and the east side for rest. By Baba's orders, Eruch placed a straight-back chair facing two shelves on the western wall, and on the shelves he arranged five marble models representing the world's great religions.

Here Baba did His

Photograph by Phil Smith

seclusion work while Eruch kept watch outside.

One evening, Baba clapped for Eruch to enter the cabin. He told him to get a piece of paper and a pen and write, "All rites, rituals and ceremonies of all religions are hereby consumed in flame."

On 31st January 1951, as Eruch later recalled, "Baba told me to dig a pit behind the cabin, and He called all the mandali to come for a dhuni. He took the piece of paper from His pocket and made me read out His dictation. Then He tore the slip of paper into small bits and threw the paper into the dhuni fire."

The next day Baba stepped out of the Manonash Cabin, announcing that His work had been completed to His 100% satisfaction. As instructed by Baba, Eruch occupied the cabin as his bedroom, and he continued to reside there until he passed away in 2001.



WHAT IS THE AVATAR MEHER BABA TRUST?

CREATED IN 1959 under Meher Baba's direction and bearing His signature on its Deed, the Avatar Meher Baba Trust had at its founding two purposes: to provide means of subsistence to certain named disciples of Meher Baba's, and to fulfill certain charitable objects. Today, the first of these functions is discharged under "Avatar Meher Baba Trust, Firstly," and the second under "Avatar Meher Baba Perpetual Public Charitable Trust."

The Trust Deed calls for maintenance of Avatar Meher Baba's Tomb and the creation of pilgrim facilities; for educational, medical, veterinary, and other charitable services; for estate development and procurement of sources of water; for the promulgation of

Avatar Meher Baba's love-message through melas, lectures, publication, and the arts; and for spiritual training. The Trust's current Development Plan focuses on the creation of new facilities for pilgrim accommodation at Meherabad and other goals.

Inquiries and contributions can be sent to: The Chairman, Avatar Meher Baba Trust, King's Road, Post Bag 31, Ahmednagar 414 001, M.S., India. Subscriptions to this newsletter can be sent to that address or to: Avatar Meher Baba Foundation, P.O. Box 398, Mystic, CT 06355-0398, USA (tel. 860-535-0370, e-mail TrustPlan@ambppct.org). To subscribe to Tavern Talk (the Trust's electronic newsletter), send an e-mail to

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