



IN HIS SERVICE

NOVEMBER / 1999

A NEWSLETTER FROM MEHERABAD



PHOTO BY NEAL PRESSLEY

Meherazad Gates

Meherazad Property Merges into Trust Estate

On March 15th of this year, the private trust that has served as caretaker of Meherazad for almost two decades dissolved itself, and Meherazad Property became part of the estate of the Avatar Meher Baba P.P.C. Trust. Meherazad, which literally means "Meher Free," served as the residence of Avatar Meher Baba during much of the second half of His Advent. The "hominess" and simplicity of its buildings and beauty and serenity of its gardens and walkways are greatly beloved of Baba's lovers, who find this sacred place to be charged with the perfume and memory of His personal presence.

The history of Meher Baba's connection with Meherazad - a name that Baba gave - dates back to the early 1940s, when His primary ashram was at Meherabad. At this time, since Baba had been expressing the wish for a new residence at a place that had more water, a few acres of property near the Pimpalgaon reservoir were purchased for Baba by Sarosh at auction.

In 1944, Baba and a few of the men and women mandali moved into Meherazad and continued to live there for short periods over the next five years.

Just before setting out on the New Life on 16th October, 1949, Meher Baba gave Meherazad to Nariman Dadachanji, an intimate disciple, who continued to hold it in his name until his death three decades later. From the end of the New Life in 1952 until Baba dropped His physical form in 1969, Meherazad more than any other place was His residence.

Over the last thirty years, Meherazad has continued to serve as the

home of many of Meher Baba's intimate disciples and as a haven where Baba lovers from throughout the world can visit and breathe the atmosphere of His personal intimacy. After Nariman's passing in 1974, his estate was inherited by his wife, Arnavaz Dadachanji, another of Baba's close mandali. In 1981, she became settlor for the Meherazad Trust for Avatar Meher Baba and transferred to this newly created trust title to the Meherazad property.

During the last year, Arnavaz decided that the time had come for Meherazad to become part of the Trust Estate. Accordingly, in its last

meeting early this year, the Board of the Meherazad Trust voted for its own dissolution, and Meherazad's 12.5 acres came into the possession of the Avatar Meher Baba P.P.C. Trust.

As Brindaban and Mathura are to the bhaktas of Lord Krishna, or as Medina and Mecca to Muslims, so, in the centuries ahead, will Meherazad and Meherabad become to the lovers of Avatar Meher Baba. As Eruch recently observed, Meherabad is the place of pilgrimage whereas Meherazad is the "sacred site" where He is at home; or as Bhau has said, Meherabad is the place of Baba's activity

while Meherazad is the abode of silence. Thus in future years Meherabad will host the burgeoning of art and culture, education, medical services, and above all, the masses of pilgrims seeking darshan at His Samadhi. Meherazad will remain a garden fragrant with His presence, where visitors can taste and savor the wine of His divine humanity.



Seclusion Hill, Meherazad.

PHOTO BY DEBORAH SMITH

Letter from the Chairman

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

A year has passed since the inauguration of the Trust's Five-Year Development Plan, and during that time Meherazad, Beloved Avatar Meher Baba's residence for much of the period between the 1940s and 1969, has become incorporated into the Trust estate. Now that for the first time Meherazad, Meherabad, and Meher Nazar - three major historic sites in the story of His Advent - are all under the Trust's care, the scope of planning must be broadened to ensure that pilgrims in future years are enabled to savor the unique atmosphere of each place.

While the Trust is currently developing in various directions, as indicated in the varied objects Beloved Baba set forth in the Trust Deed, the most important thrust at the present time lies in the creation of new pilgrim facilities. Over the last two or three years the overcrowding of current pilgrim facilities has become increasingly evident; and new accommodations need now to be provided if the new waves of Baba's lovers are to continue to enjoy the opportunity to visit and stay at Meherabad as His lovers have done in the past.

In this connection I am reminded of an episode relating to the November sahasas of 1955, when, over four successive weeks, four different communities of Baba lovers within India were invited to Meherabad to enjoy Beloved Baba's companionship. Since the last week of sahasas coincided with government holidays, as the date of sahasas approached a far greater number wrote for reservations than could be accommodated.

Increasingly distraught, Pendu, the mandali member responsible for the feeding and lodging of the sahasasees, brought the problem to Baba's attention. "Let them all come," Baba said. "But where will they stay? And what will they eat?" asked Pendu. "If they are my true lovers," Baba replied, "they will be happy to sleep under trees; and I will give them such interesting discourses that they will forget about food."

But as the days passed, Baba began to ask, "What if it rains? They will catch cold. And if they are hungry, how will they be able to keep their attention focused on Me? Shelter should be arranged, and some simple food provided." In the end, Baba Himself had arrangements made for the procurement of 100 beds from Poona and cooks from Ahmednagar; all guests were provided for, and the sahasas was an unforgettable occasion for those fortunate enough to take part in it.

This episode represents, I feel, an indication from Beloved Baba that the Trust should do all that it can to accommodate the growing number of pilgrims who want to visit His Samadhi and stay at Meherabad. What will happen when the world at large awakens to the reality of His Manifestation and the number of visitors swells to tens of thousand and even millions? That we must leave in His hands. But our current development plan is based on the decision that, for as long as possible, the Trust must go on making simple accommodations of food and shelter available to His lovers when they come to His Home.

On behalf of the Avatar Meher Baba Trust, I want to convey appreciation to those who have contributed to this effort. It does not ultimately matter whether the gift is large or small, for in reality, all is His already. It is He who gives and He who receives. It is He who crosses the world of illusion to bow down at His own threshold; and it is He who welcomes Himself into the Ocean of His own divine embrace.

V.S. Kalchuri (Bhau), Chairman
AVATAR MEHER BABA TRUST

Manuscripts from 1920s being prepared for Publication



The cover of "Tiffin Talks."

A group of manuscripts dating from the 1920s have recently come to light and are currently being edited for publication. Some of this material has been published before, but most of it is new.

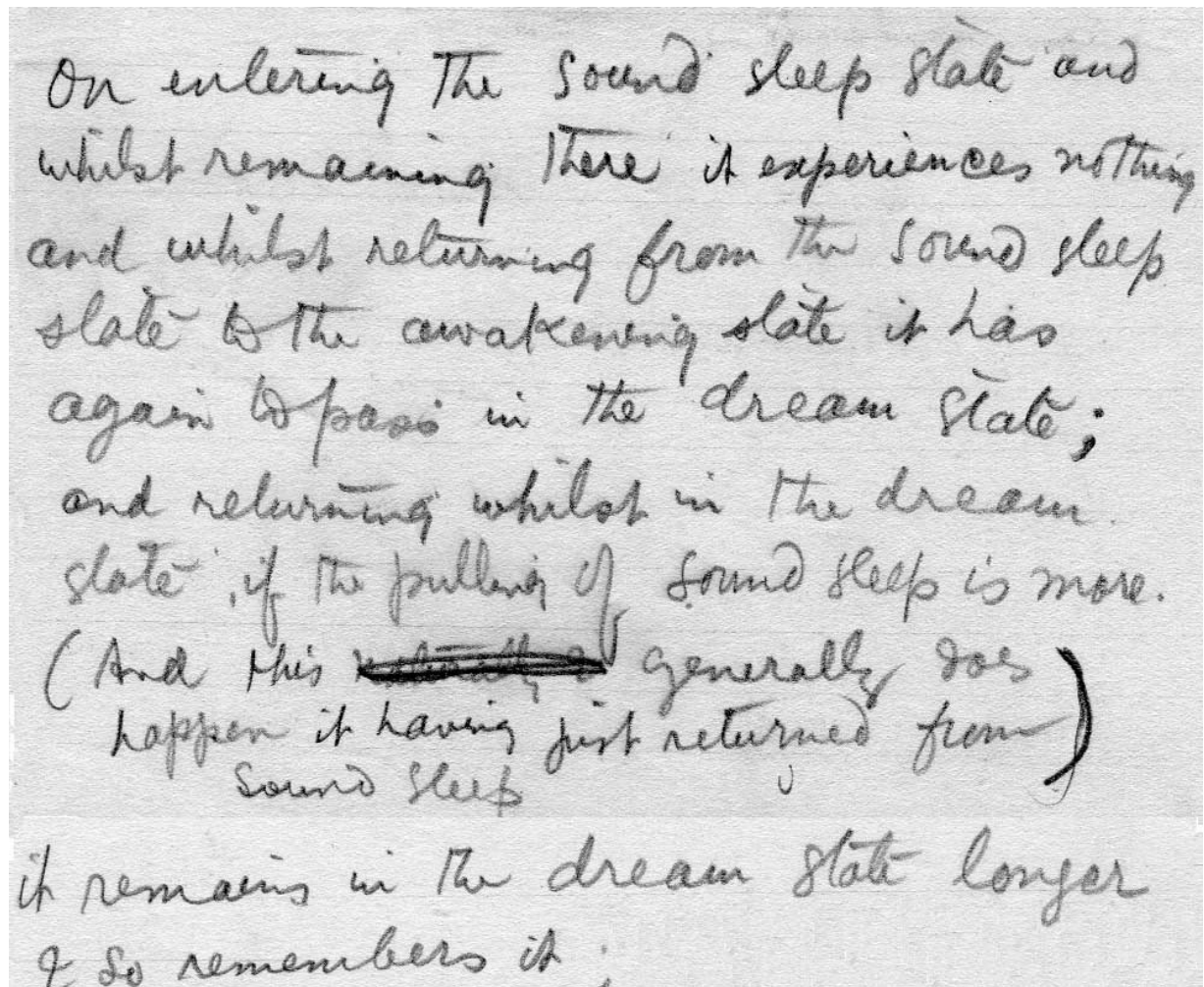
While many questions regarding transcription and transmission are still being researched, there can be little doubt that the ultimate source of the substance within the manuscripts is Meher Baba Himself.

Editorial research over the last year has divided this manuscript material into four categories, on the basis of content. The first comprises what are being called the "Tiffin Talks," a bound volume of typed sheets which record discourses that Baba gave between April 1926 and August 1927. The fifty-odd talks average about three to four pages each, though some are twice that length, while others are shorter; date and place is indicated for each lecture. The word "tiffin," which appears in the embossed title on the volume's front cover, means "lunch." Presumably, then, these talks were given by Baba to the mandali after they had finished their midday meal.

The second cluster of material is comprised of notes taken by Ramju Abdulla, one of Baba's intimate mandali. Many of these unbound typed sheets contain the record of lectures, much like the Tiffin Talks, given by Baba between 2nd December 1927 and 14th January 1928. While in some cases Baba may have been discoursing to the mandali, in other cases He was clearly "speaking" (through the alphabet board) to the boys of the Prem Ashram. This body of material also contains an extensive treatise in Ramju's handwriting which records (as Ramju himself writes) explanations "conveyed by Shree Baba."

Most difficult and most interesting, however, is an extended (and undated) treatise in a handwriting not yet identified (though we know it is not Baba's) on the subject of Infinite Intelligence. This treatise runs in 211 continuous handwritten and numbered foolscap pages that fill one notebook

and spill over into a second. Then, after a gap of about 60 blank and unnumbered pages, writing in the same hand and same blue ink resumes, though there is no direct continuity in subject matter; moreover, the pagination in this final "chunk" starts over, beginning with page 1 and continuing through page 44. The bottom of p. 44 is marked with a bracket that



Meher Baba's handwriting from a manuscript dating from the 1920s

seems to signify the conclusion of (at least) this segment of the text.

All of these manuscripts were found by Eruch in an old leather briefcase in the course of his looking through old files and records in the first year or two after Baba dropped His body in 1969. Though Eruch showed this material to his brother Meherwan and had copies typed in the late 1970s, the pressure of work did not allow him fully to turn his mind to it. Finally, in 1998, he gave Meherwan the go-ahead to begin editing with a view to an eventual publication.

But when this work had begun, one of the Meherazad preservation specialists drew Meherwan's

attention to an original 39-page document in Meher Baba's own handwriting that had been in Mani's collection. On examination, this 39-page manuscript exhibited a close relationship to the 44-page chunk described above; indeed, certain portions of the 44-page chunk follow portions of the 39-page manuscript word for word, while in other places it follows

in paraphrase. The 39-page manuscript descends to us with cover pages on front and back.

Because of their great beauty and inherent interest, during the next year the 39 pages in Baba's hand will be published (in concurrent Western and Indian editions) as an "art book" in which the texture of the paper and quality of Baba's penciled handwriting will be reproduced as closely as possible. Meanwhile, the editing of the essay on "Infinite Intelligence" continues under the direction of Bhau and Meherwan; it is hoped that this work will be ready for publication within two years.



IN BRIEF FROM MEHERABAD

FOR THE SILENCE DAY programme at Meherabad on July 10th, approximately 1000 pilgrims took darshan in silence at Avatar Meher Baba's Samadhi on Meherabad Hill. On July 11th these visitors took their darshan at Beloved Baba's chair in Mandali Hall at Meherazad.

ON 16TH OCTOBER 1999 - the fiftieth anniversary of the inauguration of Meher Baba's New Life - Baba lovers from many parts of India gathered in Pune and set out on a *padyatra* - pil-

grimage on foot - to Baba's Samadhi. Four days and 75 miles later, 214 footsore but exuberant pilgrims arrived at Meherabad in time for evening arti. Recent years have witnessed a growing



New Life pilgrims arriving at Meherabad.

trend among many Baba lovers to honour New Life Day through yatras of one type or another. Perhaps this is a sign of the awakening of the spirit of the New Life among His humanity.

COMPLETED IN 1992, over the past two years the Music and Arts Centre (Hostel A) in Outer Meherabad has truly come to life as an on-going focal centre for creative expression. Particularly popular have been Sunday afternoon programmes where audi-

ences enjoy tasty sweets along with their tea, followed by 60- to 90-minute performances of song, instrumental music, dance, or drama. During this pilgrim season these programmes have occurred approximately every other week.

A TOUCHING EPISODE took place at a recent eye camp at Meherabad, which the Trust's medical staff now conducts on a bi-monthly basis. An old woman from an outlying village had been denied cataract surgery by the doctor

Khorshed Irani, 1910-1999

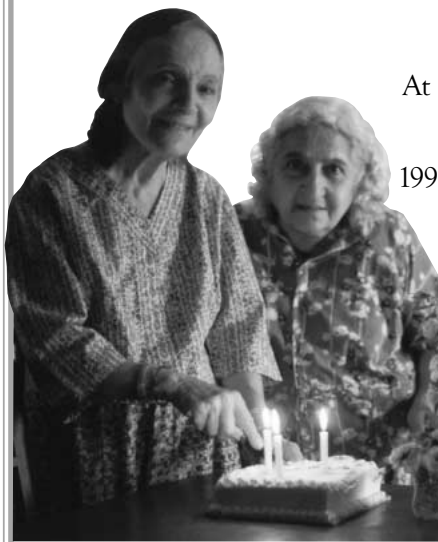


PHOTO BY RAEILIA LYN

Mehera with Khorshed, Meherazad, late 80s

At 7:10 a.m. on August 4th, 1999, Khorshed Kaikhushru Irani, one of Avatar Meher Baba's close women mandali, shed the physical

form that she had carried since 2nd May, 1910 and returned to her Lord and Beloved.

Though only the eyes of the heart could have seen it, in truth, hers was one of the great lives of our time. Born to parents who were themselves great lovers of God, she came into Baba's fold when she was not yet even a teenager. She was present on that occasion in Sakori when Upasni Maharaj told the close ones assembled there that Meher Baba is the Avatar of the Age. With Mehera, she shared a room at Khushru Quarters in 1923 and was among the original group of four women who lived in the post office at Meherabad in the next year. She stayed with Baba in His various ashrams for most of the period until the New Life. Since her mother Soonamasi was growing old, after the New Life, Khorshed lived with her in the family apartment in Bombay that Baba resided in during the 1920s.

In 1981 Khorshed left Mumbai and settled into a small room in the Trust Compound, which had been the family quarters of Adi K. Irani, Baba's secretary and Khorshed's cousin on her mother's side. To some who came to know her then, she may have seemed like no more than a simple, old Zoroastrian lady whose interests centered on ordinary household matters such as food or the comings and goings of those around her. But in truth, this was a queen among women, and the reason that household affairs so absorbed her was that she had spent much of her life participating in the affairs of the household of the Lord of Creation Himself.

Though Khorshed lived long, always it was to

the earliest phase of her life with Baba, when He was still speaking and when only a few knew of Him, that her heart most belonged; and the magnetism of that magical time drew her irresistibly whenever she began to reminisce. In the Sakori and Meherabad post office days, she had been Mehera's best friend; and her stories of herself and Mehera and Baba bring vividly to mind the impression of two innocent young girls into whose lives a very living Miracle had come walking. But this was no ordinary teenage infatuation: this was the awakening of divine love - that love for which creation itself was brought into existence.

Khorshed would sometimes recall the first time she saw Baba, when she and her mother were joining Baba's party in a train bogey en route to Upasni Maharaj's birthday celebration in Sakori in 1922. Rushing into the train compartment ahead of the others, Khorshed saw Him, seated a short distance away. "And really He was very beautiful," she would say. "He was young, like my father had told me, and He had a scarf wrapped around His head. He looked very active, and His eyes were moving about all the time, and He seemed to see everything. For me, it was love at first sight. I thought, 'O, how beautiful He is! Why did I waste all these years without knowing Him?' And I felt that I had found something that I had been missing inside of me for a long, long time."

Khorshed used to love to tell other stories filled with a similar spirit of sweetness and innocence. During Baba's birthday darshan programme in Meherabad in 1925, for example, she and Mehera suddenly realized that they had prepared no birthday present for Baba and had no money with which to buy one. But each had a ring - Khorshed's with an emerald and Mehera's with a ruby. Emboldening themselves, they approached Baba amid the crowd, and each girl put her ring on one of His fingers. "And we were both very happy, because we had done something for His birthday," Khorshed would conclude in her usual quaint style. A simple story - and yet, one suspects, an account filled with a deeper significance.



Khorshed

PHOTO BY WIN COATES

On 9th November 1999, the ashes of Khorshed and Mansari, another of Baba's close women disciples who died on 12th January 1997, were interred in the graves prepared for them on the north side of Baba's Samadhi on Meherabad Hill, in accordance with Baba's directions in the Trust Deed. The grave of Soonamasi, Khorshed's mother, lies on the south side, fourth to the left as one faces the door of Baba's Tomb.

And so another of His stars has left this earth plane to take its place in His firmament. Farewell, Khorshed! May the light of your love for Him help guide all of us on our many individual journeys to His feet.



Khorshed and Naja in Meherazad, 1970s

PHOTO BY WIN COATES

IN BRIEF ♦ ♦ ♦ CONTINUED

she had previously visited, since she suffered from severe tremors that would make this operation hazardous. In a dream at night, Meher Baba appeared to her and assured her that her operation would nevertheless be carried out. A few days later, some Arangaon villagers visiting her village for an engagement ceremony advised her to see the eye doctor at the "Meher Baba Dispensary." Though he knew nothing of her dream, and despite the challenge created by her trembling, this doctor agreed to operate. The surgery went well - as one would

expect - since it seems to have been prescribed by the Master Doctor Himself!

THE 1999 MONSOON started with a rush in late May and early June, lapsed into a long lull, and concluded with a splash in exceptional late-September and early-October downpours. Through the end of October, the ten-month Meherabad total of 28 inches exceeded the annual average by a wide margin. Ample water supply for pilgrim and estate needs is now confidently anticipated for at least the next year.



Beautifully designed historical markers such as shown here now document key sites such as Meherabad.



PHOTOS BY NEAL PRESSLEY

Contributions to the Five-Year Plan

The Trust is happy to report that to date Meher Baba's lovers have contributed \$450,000 to be used for the Five Year Development Plan. By the spring of 2000 it is estimated that \$326,000 will have been spent on construction. Some of these projects were described in the last issue of *In His Service*, including the Meher English School, Meher Health Centre Annex, and the Spiritual Academy Meeting Hall. At the end of its fiscal year in March, the Trust will be sharing a full report on the construction progress, including the financial picture.

Major work projected for 2000 includes: the laying of the foundation and plinth for the new Pilgrim Centre and construction of ancillary new Pilgrim Site facilities; continuation of the new Amartithi accommodations; the further creation of Pilgrim Site infrastructure, particularly new roads and electrical wiring, and the first phase of the furnishing of the Archives, Museum, and Research Building. New donations in 2000 necessary to keep the work on schedule are estimated to be \$400,000.

U.S. residents can make tax-deductible donations for the Five-Year Plan to the following organizations, all of which have grant programmes with the Trust: Avatar Meher Baba Center of Southern California, Attn: Kanji Miyao, Treasurer, 1214 S. Van Ness Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90019-3520 (tel. 213-731-3737); Meher Baba House, Attn: Keith Sheridan, 236 West 27th Street, New York, NY 10001 (tel. 212-645-6400); The Meher Baba Washington Gathering, Attn: Pam Butler-Stone, 11227 Dewey Court, Kensington, MD 20895 (tel. 301-946-0236); Meher Prasad Inc., Attn: Steve Edelman, 4364 Glengary Drive, Atlanta, GA 30342 (tel. 404-261-3563); Meherana, Attn: Christine Pearson, 5311 Italian Creek Road, Mariposa, CA 95338 (tel. 209-966-5078); Meher Baba Center of the Twin Cities, Inc. Attn: Patrick Cook, 4724 Zenith Avenue South, Minneapolis, MN 55410 (Tel 612-920-2056); and Sheriar Foundation, Attn: Andy Lesnik, P.O.Box 1612, North Myrtle Beach, SC 29598 (tel. 843-272-7282, email: trust@sheriarcfoundation.org).

Meher Baba's lovers in the UK can send their tax-deductible donations for the Five Year Development Plan to: Trustwalla, The Meher Baba Association, 228 Hammersmith Grove, London, W6 7HG, England. For information in the UK, please contact Sue Biddu, Flat 2, 202 Falcon House, Old Brompton Road, London SW5 0BU, England (171-370-0909).

Laws vary from one country to the next. Baba lovers from other countries should send their donations to the Trust directly.

Questions can be addressed to Sheriar Foundation, Attn: Andy Lesnik (*as above*) or to Avatar Meher Baba Foundation, Attn: Emory and Susan Ayers, P.O. Box 398, Mystic, CT 06355-0398 (tel. 860-536-0303, fax 860-536-2318,

Meherabad Memories

Over the last two decades, overnight pilgrims who come to Meherabad to offer themselves to Avatar Meher Baba at His Samadhi have been accommodated at the Pilgrim Centre and Hostel D. Many visitors may not realize, however, that this practice of hosting pilgrims originated in the very early days of Meherabad. It was in 1924 that Meher Baba settled into Meherabad on a "permanent" basis. By the end of the next year Meherabad had become a bustling colony with a school, hospital, hall for the mandali, rest house for visitors - and even a Taj Mahal and Raj Mahal Hotel!

When you set out from the Pilgrim Centre today for a walk up Meherabad Hill, passing Gilori Shah's tomb on your right, you come to a neem tree along the Ahmednagar-Daund highway. This is the same neem tree that Baba rested under when He first came to Meherabad with a few of His men mandali on 4th May 1923; and the well next to it is the very well from which Baba first drank water

on that hot summer morning. A few yards further to the south is the site of the original dharamshala, called the "Upasni Serai," which Baba had built as a resting house for visitors in 1925.

Crossing the highway, you come to a field of congress grass and wild flowers, now populated with neem, acacia, and ailanthus trees. Though all the old buildings were torn down more than half a century ago, this vacant space was once a teeming centre of Meherabad where every day crowds would flock for Meher Baba's darshan. Over the past year historic markers have been erected to indicate the old sites: the "path" that Baba used to climb Meherabad Hill; the Hazrat Babajan School, opened in March of 1925; the Sai Darbar, which served as a hall for darshan, discourses, and performances; the Makan-e-Khas ("House of the Chosen Ones") where the men mandali stayed; the old Post Office, which housed Mehera and several other women mandali and whose stones were later used for the construction of Baba's

Tomb on the Hill.

It was in this same vicinity that, following Baba's hint, two Arangaon villagers opened tea stalls to provide some simple refreshment to the growing stream of darshanites. The structures were primitive, made of gunny sacks on bamboo poles; and the tea cups were chipped and tarnished. Nonetheless, when Baba with His mandali paid His inaugural visit in December of 1925, He humorously named them the "Taj Mahal" and "Raj Mahal Hotels."

The Taj Mahal Hotel in Bombay, of course, was at the time and remains today a luxurious, world-class establishment catering to the wealthy. Taj means "crown" and raj means "king" or "kingdom." Apart from the chipped cups and gunny sacks, the Meherabad Taj Mahal and Raj Mahal Hotels were so tiny that Baba and His mandali had to break into two parties in order for each to squeeze into its own tea-stall. Nonetheless, after enjoying their hospitality, Baba told His hosts, "If you continue to do this work lovingly and honestly, then you

will get the raj ('secret') of life and will receive the taj ('crown') of kings."

During this same period, Baba used to give help to the poorest among the villagers in the form of weekly packets of grain, soap, and other necessities. Indigent farmers would approach Baba, who would write "chits" (or notes); these would be sent to Gustadji in the storeroom, who would proceed to fill the order.

Now it happened that one of the so-called "indigent" was actually a middle-class business man. When this was pointed out to Baba, He said, "He approached me as a poor man, and as such I am ministering to his needs." Soon after this, the man suffered sudden business reverses and lost everything. Before long, it was indeed as one among the destitute that this man was coming to Meherabad to receive his weekly sustenance from Baba's own hands. Later, this man recovered his former prosperity and he served Baba faithfully and honestly for the rest of his life.

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. Its first purpose was the provision of means of support to certain named disciples of Avatar Meher Baba who had dedicated their lives to Him and become His dependents in the material sense. Its second, long-term objective was to maintain and develop Avatar Meher Baba's Tomb and associated properties, which would one day become the centre of world pilgrimage, and to serve a range of charitable objects.

In 1975 these two functions were divided: "Avatar Meher Baba Trust Firstly," a temporary trust, took charge of the support of the "beneficiaries," and the "Avatar Meher Baba Perpetual Public Charitable Trust," registered under the Bombay Public Trusts Act 1950, assumed responsibility for pilgrimage facilities and charitable works. Over the past three decades it is the Avatar Meher Baba P.P.C. Trust that has become the primary site and focus of activities at Meherabad and other parts of the Trust Estate.

The Trust Deed calls for mainte-

nance 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 propagation of Avatar Meher Baba's message of love and truth through melas, lectures, publication, and the arts; and for spiritual training. The Avatar Meher Baba Trust is dedicated to the cause of Avatar Meher Baba in all its aspects and to that awakening of His love that will be the transformation of the heart and the dawning of a New Humanity.

Donations and inquiries should be sent to: The Avatar Meher Baba Trust, Post Bag No. 31, King's Road, Ahmednagar 414 001, Maharashtra State, India