



DECEMBER / 2015

A NEWSLETTER FROM MEHERABAD

Young Adult Sahavas Celebrates 15 Years

Meherabad Young Adult Sahavas celebrated fifteen glorious years (2001–2015) this season, with an overwhelming response from young adults. Almost 150 participants from across India, as well as two members from China and one from the U.S., gathered together at Meherabad in early September to dive deep in His Ocean of Love through the “Sahavas” experience of intimacy with Beloved Meher Baba. Rakhi Sharma, organizer and participant of many years, shares with us an account of the week-long Sahavas.

This year’s sahavas theme was Divine Humour. Sahavasees were in awe of Beloved Baba’s words:

Long, long ago I lost myself and became God, but I thank God I didn’t lose my sense of humour.

Beginning with the hoisting of Baba’s seven-colored flag, the program continued the first night with the lighting of His Dhuni. The Dhuni was lit by new sahavasees and the Dhuni poem was recited by Alan. All the sahavasees circled around the sacred fire and sang “Satchitanand Paramanand Meher Baba Vigyanand!!”

Activities

Our Meherabad Family hosted a beautiful day filled with Beloved Baba’s home darshan, bhajans in Mandali Hall, and a special remembrance of our very dear Eruch Jessawala on his 14th anniversary (31.08.2001) of union with Beloved Baba. After lunch, sahavasees had fun-filled games (Treasure Hunt in God’s Abode) and a visit to Seclusion Hill.

Special Upper & Lower Meherabad Tours were organized, for walking the divine path where

the God-Man left His touch in every dust particle. Sahavasees toured Baba’s historical buildings and sites and heard stories of Beloved Baba’s stay here and His work on this sacred ground.

Meher Baba’s motto “Mastery in Servitude” was honored through various service projects to which the sahavasees applied their positive energies.



Group discussion with Dr. Gokaran.



Cleaning of the Flour Mill.

Through tree planting, cleaning and whitewashing of historical buildings, and cleaning of the Museum and the women mandali shrines, these fortunate souls found opportunities to serve the God-Man.

Food for Thought

Group discussions have become an integral part of this Sahavas. Sahavasees were divided into groups to

engage in meaningful discussions, guided by invited facilitators. Topics under discussion included Meher Baba’s Silence, Surrender, Attitude of a Pilgrim in Meherabad, Spreading Baba’s Words, Future of Meherabad, God’s Divine Humour, Meher Baba’s Descent on Earth & Its Purpose, and Spiritual Training at Meherabad.

The next day the sahavasees prepared group presentations on these subjects, sharing highlights of their key learnings and reflecting their understanding in creative ways (skits, songs, handmade/power point presentations). This also served as a wonderful forum for young adults to learn, absorb, and speak about Beloved Baba’s literature, messages, and stories, and to prepare for spreading Baba’s words in the world.

This year we had the privilege to host Mr. Rustom Falahati and Mr. Cyrus Khambata as Guest Speakers. They both selected and spoke on very relevant subjects – “Managing Relationships Meher Baba’s Way” and “What is Baba’s Work & How to Go About It,” respectively. The talks were quite engaging and aroused a lot of questions from the participants, which were meticulously answered by our speakers.

Culture and Entertainment

Afternoons were filled with Cultural Workshops. A great medium of meditation in the form of music, dance, skits, and art and craft, the workshops are when sahavasees prepare for the grand finale—celebration night. Meher Spectrum (celebration night) is a very special cultural program, which has stage performances by sahavasees (dance, songs, qawwalis, plays in different languages) to express their love and gratitude to Beloved Baba and to AMB Trust and Meherabad residents for giving them this wonderful opportunity—to Stay In

The Company of God.

In remembrance of Beloved Baba’s love for cricket, the Meher Prem League cricket match was organized between Young Adult Sahavasees and AMB Trust workers and MPR Kitchen Staff. A special team of commentators made the atmosphere quite sporty and

humorous for spectators. The winning team was awarded Gold and Silver medals from AMB Trustees followed by an ice-cream treat for everybody.

The closing program of our Sahavas unfolded with sahavasees sharing their soulful experience with each other during these seven days. Every heart was singing “Dhanyawad Meher” with tears of joy and separation glowing in their eyes like pearls in His Ocean of Love. Preparing to move back into the world, they invited

Beloved Baba to join them and to live eternally in their hearts.

Hoisting the flag and the Sahavas begins!



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Jai Baba Dear Family,

Our concerns about drought and water supply in recent years beset us again well into this monsoon season as rains failed to measure up to expectations during June, July, and August. Often we get the late season monsoon rains in September and this year we were blessed by Baba's grace with good showers in the second week of September. Again in November unseasonal rain was most welcome, bringing the season's precipitation to twenty-two inches, above the average for our area. Now we thank Baba that the water crisis has eased and we will have enough supply to last till next monsoon.

Showers of Baba's Love and Presence were also most welcome these past months as we enjoyed many interesting gatherings and programs at Meherabad. Silence Day was our largest yet, as 1,600 Baba lovers gathered together at Meherabad to share His Silence. The 15th Young Adult Sahavas was also its largest, with nearly 150 participants. In November, over the Divali holiday period, Meherabad hosted

two dramas on Baba's life brought to us by the Bombay Centre and a two-day program to commemorate the 50th anniversary of Baba's 1965 Darshan in Guruprasad. Our newsletter will give you some of the flavor of these events.

We look forward now to the annual Educational Gathering, Baba's Amartithi, marking the day He left our midst to live eternally in the hearts of all. Thousands will travel from near and far to meet together in the atmosphere of His presence felt so deeply at Meherabad.

In Baba's Love, and with my deepest heart-felt salutations to Him in all of you,

Shridhar Kelkar, Chairman
Avatar Meher Baba Trust
Avatar Meher Baba ki Jai!



PHOTO COURTESY OF PAUL LIBORON

90th Silence Anniversary

"When I break my Silence, the impact of my Love will be universal and all life in creation will know, feel and receive of it."

Approximately 1,600 Baba pilgrims were accommodated at Meherabad this year for Silence Day, the highest number ever for the occasion. The great majority (over 1,300) were accommodated in Hostels C and D, where beds are removed in order to fit everyone in, and floor space is provided for the devotees to put down their bedding rolls. In the MPR, extra beds were added to accommodate a total of 254 pilgrims.

The highlight of the Silence Day program is individual darshan at the Samadhi. Baba's Jhopdi at lower Meherabad, where He began His Silence in 1925, is also open for darshan on this day. From the 9th to the 12th July, a number of activities were scheduled, including several Baba films, a music program, visits to Meherabad, and the Dhuni on the 12th.

Errata: In our last issue we published a picture on page one of the East Room under restoration. The picture was taken while the room was still being worked on, and the correct caption should have been: "The East Room in the process of being set up for visitors."

PART FIVE | HISTORY OF THE AVATAR MEHER BABA TRUST

MEHER BABA'S DIRECTIVES TO THE TRUST, AS RECORDED BY BAL NATU, CONTINUED

On five occasions between 1963 and 1967 Bal Natu recorded instructions that Meher Baba gave for the future conduct of the Avatar Meher Baba Trust, created by Him on 6th April 1959 yet still dormant throughout most of the decade that followed. Bal's previous entry, dated 26th May 1965, was published in the June issue of this newsletter. We resume here with Bal's next entry (and the second to last), which followed the preceding entry by about two years.

April 28, 1967,
Guru-Prasad, Poona,

Baba arrived in mandali's room after finishing the "work" in His room. Some of the Trustees of A.M.B.T., the mandali residing at Guru-Prasad and a few close Baba-lovers were present. Baba took His seat and He gestured all to be seated. I don't remember how a talk about the affairs to be conducted by the Trust cropped up. This time Baba did not brush aside this subject, as He did sometimes in the past. But He seemed pleased to convey the following:

Baba stated, "Yes, I have to give you some more directions about the object and the clause (Avatar Meher Baba Trust Deed Object (b)(F) (vii)) that you happen to bring often to my notice. Last night, I had a thought about the places I visited and specially stayed for some periods—days, weeks, months or years, for my work. So the Trustees should afford facilities in future to those who wish to study or want to know more about these respective places and desire to conduct research in connection with the various activities and aspects of my work done over there. They should also

provide facilities to those who visit these places, to pay homage and also at such places where you have memorials, statues or symbols, kept or preserved there-at or there-in.

"You are familiar with the methods as to how I have been helping the poor, the sick, the disabled, the blind, the indigent, the illiterate and the down-trodden (depressed classes). You very well know, how I have been helping the flood and famine stricken people and how I have provided the essential things by way of offering relief measures, whenever there was an earthquake or some other calamity, e.g., havoc caused by excessive rains or drought etc., etc. So the Trustees should arrange to render

service to the poor, the indigent, blind and the disabled through measures of all kinds, including medical aid. They can help the illiterate and also those who have just lower (primary) education by affording means and facilities for further education.

"In short, they should arrange service for the advancement of objects of general public utility. To serve the people and your fellowman is to serve me because I am in everyone. But remember, this should be done in a selfless and altruistic spirit and particularly to promote a sense of Oneness of Humanity that will inculcate the spirit of tolerance and the feeling of good will in humanity, in consonance with the example of the divine, limitless compassion and love; and I am the embodiment or personification of Love."

Baba's words of authority that flowed in a most natural way made all feel that the room was filled to its height with Beloved Baba's presence, radiating His Love and Compassion.

At this point someone happened to say a few sentences in praise of Baba's presence and it was a good excuse for Baba to discontinue giving further instructions on the subject in question. And it was one of Baba's habits or ways, to deal with a certain subject, not at one stretch; but to explain it in parts and with short or long intervals in between.

In keeping with Baba's instructions to provide facilities at places where He had stayed, the Trust maintains the Guruprasad Memorial in Pune.



PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF TED JOHNSON

Memorial Tower Marble Column Pieces Installed

In previous issues of “In His Service” (Feb. 2010, Jan. 2012, July 2014), we have presented the story of the inauguration—in spirit—of the Memorial Tower at Meherabad by Meher Baba in 1944, and we’ve described the design and construction plan for the tower. We have also updated you with a few of the construction stages, which began in 2009.

In November, progress on the Memorial Tower took a giant step forward with the erection of the thirteen marble column pieces. These cylindrical pieces are of graduated diameters, hollow in the center, and slide into place around the steel structural column, which is painted white because the marble is slightly translucent. The marble column pieces were fabricated in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, of statuary grade, the highest quality marble, which has the fewest defects and the purest white color and which takes a high polish. The lowest, and largest, piece weighs over two tons.

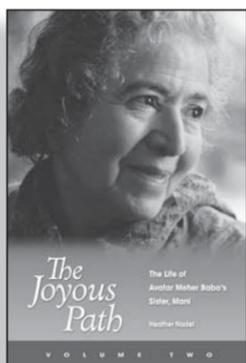
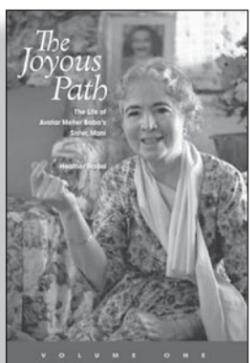
A special installation crew was sent to Meherabad by the Trivedi Stone and Marbles Corporation, which had fabricated the column pieces. Joined by our own architects, contractors, supervisors, and laborers, the team took five days to complete the installation. Visiting architect Ty Provosty suggested “topping out” the structure, a symbolic act traditionally done with a tree or plant cutting. What was at hand at Meherabad were fresh flowers (see photo inset).

The placement of flowers at the top seemed to echo the very foundation of the Memorial Tower project by Meher Baba Himself. At the foundation ceremony in December 1944, Baba scattered flowers and rose petals into the earth, symbolizing the individual devotees who had loved and served Him. In His message read out at the time, Baba said, “For each one of them a separate flower is placed in the foundation of the tower; and the names of all of them will be inscribed on the tower of glory, which will be erected on this foundation.”



PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF TY PROVOSTY

Mani’s Life Story Published



A new book recently released under the AMBPPCT copyright is *The Joyous Path, The Life of Avatar Meher Baba’s Sister, Mani*, by Heather Nadel. The book was a labor of love over sixteen years in the making, using Mani’s own diaries and notebooks, as well as transcripts of her many talks, as source materials. It is alive with Mani’s stories of Baba, both profound and uplifting. Published in two hardcover volumes by Sheriar Foundation.

Pilgrim Activities at Meherabad

During most pilgrim seasons, November marks the start of a busier time, which continues of course right into our busiest time, Amartithi, and on to the end of season in March. This year India’s holiday Divali, the Festival of Lights, was in mid-November, and many pilgrims had time free to travel to Meherabad. We enjoyed a variety of programs and activities during the period.

NOVEMBER 11th the Avatar Meher Baba Bombay Centre presented Part 5 in an annual series of plays the Centre has been performing on *The Avatarhood of*

Meher Baba. This series is always enjoyed and appreciated for the quality of the performance and dedication of the players. This year’s installment was entitled “Role of Night Watch in Baba’s Universal Work.”

NOVEMBER 12th the lighting of the Dhuni as instructed by Baba.

NOVEMBER 13th and 14th the 50th Anniversary Commemoration Programme of the 1965 Guruprasad Darshan. Many Baba lovers who had attended this darshan held by Baba in Poona gathered in several sessions on stage to share memories of the darshan. In addition, there were skits, music, and dance performances; bhajans and qawwali songs; and a film of the 1965 Darshan.

A drama about Meher Baba’s work with Mahatma Gandhi

was performed in our Theatre as the last portion of the Darshan Commemoration Programme on November 14th. *Ek Gumshuda Ki Talash (The Search of a Seeker)* was also presented by the AMB Bombay Centre.

ONGOING PILGRIM ACTIVITIES in recent months include a sharing and discussion meeting every Thursday evening on two of Meher Baba’s books, *God Speaks* and the *Discourses*; tours of lower and upper Meherabad; an “Awakening to the Life Within” sharing group based on Baba’s messages and discourses; weekly group sing-along under the tin shed on the Hill; film showings in the Media Centre and theatre; and talks by Baba lovers who met Baba.



Some of the speakers at the Anniversary Programme who attended the darshan in 1965.



Gandhi and Baba portrayed in the AMB Bombay Centre play.



Under the great pandal commemorating Baba’s 1965 Darshan in Poona, crowds of devotees faced the Samadhi during evening arti.

PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF PAUL LIBERON

Meher's Paradise Garden

A new tree plantation has been established on 40 acres of Trust property far to the west of Beloved Meher Baba's Samadhi, near the bypass road. Trust workers and volunteers were joined by 300 school children from Meher English School and Arangaon School in this service project. Named "Meher's Paradise Garden," the area was sown with donated seed of the Paradise Tree (*simarouba glauca*), known in India as Lakshmi Taru. Native to Central America and Florida, the Paradise Tree was introduced to India in the 1960s. It is known as an important medicinal tree, effective in treating over 35 diseases, as well as producing an oil-rich seed. As the trees mature over the coming years, they will also provide much needed natural shade to the area while improving the soil's water profile. Immediately after the seeds were planted, good rains fell on the area in what had been an otherwise very dry period. It seems the project received a special blessing from Beloved Baba!



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF ANVAYAS MULTI MEDIA TEAM

How to Contribute

The Avatar Meher Baba Trust is supported entirely by love-gifts from Meher Baba's lovers around the world. In truth, it is Baba Himself who gives through your hands, and it is Baba Himself who brings the objects to completion which He Himself laid down in the Trust Deed, when it pleases Him to do so.

Contributions can be made directly to the Trust at: AMBPPC Trust, Post Bag No. 31, King's Road, Ahmednagar 414001, MS, India. Donations may be sent by personal check or demand draft payable to Avatar Meher Baba PPC Trust and may be in any currency. In addition, a few Baba organizations in the USA and UK have established legal means to accept tax-deductible donations and transfer them to the Trust.

In the UK: Please send tax-deductible contributions to The Meher Baba Association, 228 Hammersmith Grove, London, W6 7HG, tel: 44 (0) 208 743 4408 e-mail centre@meherababa.co.uk.

In the USA, to make tax-deductible contributions or to name the Trust as a beneficiary in your will, 401K, IRA, or insurance policy, please contact Susan Ayers at Avatar Meher Baba Foundation, e-mail TrustPlan@ambppct.org. AMB Foundation will send you relevant information along with a list of eight Meher Baba tax-exempt organizations that have grants in place to support the Trust. These include a Trust Development Plan grant, an Operating Expense grant, and a grant for the construction of the Memorial Tower.

Trust financial information is provided annually in the Trust Financial Report, sent out with the June/July issue of this newsletter and posted on the Trust website. The report provides information on the Trust's financial position at the end of each financial year and its receipts and expenditures for that year. More information can be found on the Trust's website at www.avatarmeherbabatrust.org.

FROM MEHERAZAD . . .

Two Stories of Dr. Donkin

THE STORY OF HOW DR. DONKIN, one of Meher Baba's close mandali, came to write *The Wayfarers* is rarely recounted. Recently in Mandali Hall, Meherwan Jessawala shared details of the making of this amazing book about Baba's work with the God-intoxicated *masts*. Meherwan then shared an amusing story of life amongst the mandali, featuring Donkin and others.

When Baba would return from a *mast* tour, He often had Eruch relate to the mandali who had remained behind interesting stories and incidents that had occurred on the tour. Dr. Donkin would listen intently to these stories of Baba's *mast* trips, enthralled with all that Baba and the mandali with Him would go through to contact these God-intoxicated souls.

One day Donkin said to Baba, "These are such precious stories, Baba, they need to be recorded before they are lost to posterity." Baba nodded His head, and then gestured, "Why don't you write it. Listen to the stories and write them down."

As Meherwan commented while recounting the story in Mandali Hall, "Once Baba said that, Donkin had no choice but to do it. And being a doctor, Donkin was extremely meticulous, so he would pester the mandali with question after question about the tours. At first they would answer, but there would be no end to the questions, as each answer would lead Donkin to ask another question. Even if the mandali tried to put him off, Donkin persisted because now Baba had told him to write the stories down.

"For Dr. Donkin, just collecting the stories from the mandali who accompanied Baba on these *mast* hunts was not enough; he now embarked on going to the places where Baba had been, photographing the areas and the *masts* that Baba had contacted in these various localities. He also created maps showing where Baba had travelled. After all this was done, Donkin edited and proofread the manuscript and then personally read each of the accounts out to Baba.

"The next step," according to Meherwan, "was for Donkin to go to Bombay and contact the leading British Publisher at that time, Caxton Press, and get them to take on the project of publishing *The Wayfarers*. For over a year, he toiled, traveling back and forth to Bombay to make sure that the printing of the book was just right. He did not want a comma to be out of place. It was Baba who gave Donkin the title of the book, *The Wayfarers*, and also wrote Part One of the Foreword.

"But this great effort had taken a toll upon the mind of Dr. Donkin. He himself became more and more *mast*-like, and the other mandali found it increasingly difficult to live with his idiosyncrasies."

IN 1956, BABA SHIFTED, with just a few of the mandali, from Satara to Meherazad for a period of time, leaving Pendu in charge as the manager of the Satara ashram. It so happened that during this period, Meherwan was called to be with Baba at Meherazad for the first time, for a stay of one month.



(left to right) Meherwan Jessawala, Dr. Ghani, Kaka Baria, Donkin, Eruch, Sarosh, Ali Shah (the mast), and Baba.

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF AVATAR MEHER BABA TRUST ARCHIVES

One day while Meherwan was with Baba at Meherazad, a letter from Pendu arrived describing what had happened recently in Satara. Dr. Donkin had developed the habit of catching hold of Pendu and talking nonstop to him, which Pendu found difficult to endure. On this occasion, Donkin had again captured Pendu's attention and would not let him go, talking and talking with no end in sight. Just as Pendu was wondering how he could escape from Donkin, he happened to notice Aloba walking across the compound nearby. Aloba, hearing them talking about the Shah of Iran, immediately came over. This was a topic that Aloba had strong views about and he began expressing them. As soon as Pendu realized this was his chance to escape, he ran for it, leaving Aloba and Donkin in deep conversation.

Eventually, Donkin got tired of hearing Aloba's tirade and he used the excuse of having to go to the loo to get away from him. He ran to the toilet and locked himself inside. But even this did not stop Aloba, who continued to talk to Donkin from outside the door. Aloba, in his excitement, even started banging on the door of the loo, asking Donkin, "Are you listening to what I am telling you?"

Finally, Donkin rushed out of the toilet and ran to his room. But Aloba, in hot pursuit, ran after him calling, "Listen to this, I have more to tell you. . . ." Donkin was at the end of his tolerance so he slammed the door shut and propped his mattress against the door—in an attempt to shut out the sound of Aloba's voice.

Baba had a real laugh hearing Pendu's account of life in Satara. "But," Meherwan chuckled, "such were the idiosyncrasies of the mandali. They had come not to live with each other, but to serve the God-Man."

WHAT IS THE AVATAR MEHER BABA TRUST?

Created in 1959 under Meher Baba's direction, the Avatar Meher Baba Trust has the purpose of fulfilling the objectives in the Trust Deed set out by Baba and the Trustees He appointed. The Trust Deed calls for the maintenance of Avatar Meher Baba's Tomb; for the creation of pilgrim facilities; for educational, medical, and other charitable services; for estate development and procurement of sources of water; for the advancement of Avatar Meher Baba's love-message through melas, museums, lectures, publications, and the arts; and for spiritual training.

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<http://mymeherbaba.com/mailman/listinfo/tavern-talk>.

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For Reservations to Stay at Meherabad:

For Meher Pilgrim Retreat: pimco@ambppct.org.
For Hostel D/Dharamshala: jaibaba@ambppct.org.

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