



# IN HIS SERVICE

JULY / 2003

A NEWSLETTER FROM MEHERABAD

## Trust Website Launching this Fall

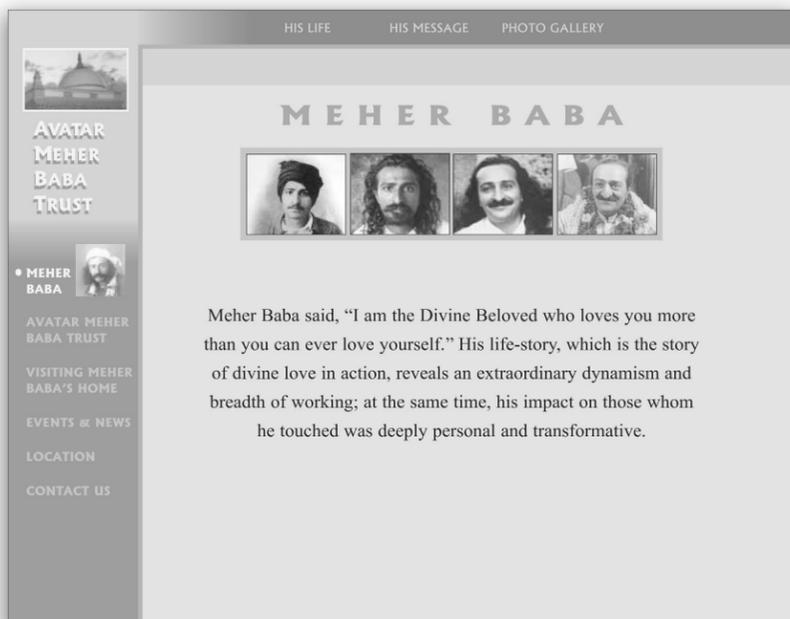
THE AVATAR MEHER BABA TRUST plans to launch its website on the internet this fall. Intended both for the general public and the worldwide community of Meher Baba's followers, the Trust website provides extensive information about Avatar Meher Baba Himself, as well as about the Trust and its activities. The site is a large one, with more than 100 web pages, several hundred photographs, and many presentations on various subjects.

It can be accessed through [avatarmeherbaba.com](http://avatarmeherbaba.com) or [avatarmeherbabatrust.org](http://avatarmeherbabatrust.org).

The original stimulus for creating a Trust website

God-Man's light and truth to a humanity that is starved for it.

The Trust expects that its website will continue to mature and evolve into a rich resource available to Baba lovers and the general public 24 hours a day anywhere in the world. In the near future the Trust hopes to make available selected materials from its archives. Those who would like to keep in touch with current events in the life of the Trust can do so through news stories, photos and, as technical capabilities allow, audio-visual clips from recent programmes and talks at Meherabad and Meherazad.



came four years ago from Baba lovers from abroad, and ever since that time, the site's development has been an international collaborative effort, drawing on the talents, technical skills, and enthusiasm of Baba lovers from all around the globe. The site was designed by Sheila Krynski in close communication with the workers from the Trust and programmed by Christina Arasmo. It is being hosted by Divinenet Inc., courtesy of Joe Stewart.

Since at the time that the Trust Deed was written the internet had not yet come into existence, obviously no allusions to websites appear in its text. Yet the Deed is emphatic in charging the Trust with the task of disseminating the Avatar's message to the world through all available media. At present there are several dozen websites dedicated to Meher Baba, some sponsored by major Baba centres and organizations around the world, others by individuals. While no doubt the greater internet today is inhabited by many influences, spiritual as well as mayavic, it promises to provide an important channel for the outflow of the

organized by decade, from the 1920s through the 1960s.

Elsewhere in the website visitors can learn about the Avatar Meher Baba Trust and the legacy that it caretakes at Meherabad and Meherazad. A virtual tour provides historical information and photographs relating to some of the major sites – such as the Samadhi, or the Dhuni, or the Old Dharamshala. Practical information relating to travel, accommodation, and pilgrim life will be of help particularly to newcomers. The website also introduces major Trust activities – the seasonal calendar of major events and celebrations, programmes in the Music and Arts Centre and elsewhere, the on-going archival effort, the medical and educational services, and the Development Plan. Some of the sub-sections contain a wealth of information for those who would like to dig deeply; a brief history of the creation of the Trust, for example, contains a link where one can read the entire Trust Deed.

A section on "Events and News" will be of particular interest to those who would like to keep current

### Letter from the Chairman

My dear ones of the Beloved,

In this modern age, Beloved Baba has provided the modern facilities that have been created by science. Often these facilities are misused, since in this age man is in the grip of the twisted and perverse intellect. But these same facilities can be put to their proper use in His cause. Modern technology – in the form of cars, airplanes, and so forth – served Baba's own purposes when He was in human form. And the further advancing technologies of the present time can serve His cause today.

Soon after the release of this newsletter, the Trust will be opening its own website on the internet. The spider of the mind spins its web, and in that web it catches many flies. The Divine Beloved too has a web, and what He catches in that web are the hearts of humanity. Caught in the web, one is transformed in His love, and in this way one becomes His lover. Eventually, when one is altogether consumed in His love, the lover becomes one with the Beloved forever.

In past advents, even though the Avatar spoke freely, still, the records of His words that descend from those advents are fairly limited. But in this advent, though Baba was silent, He gave out many words – more than He did in the past.

Now on the web one can learn about Him, read His messages, look at His photographs. One does not even have to leave one's home. Sitting in your living room or bedroom or office, a treasure of Baba material is available to you. This is what technology has made possible! Now Baba's words and Baba's image can travel farther more freely and more quickly than ever before.

Know well, when this happens, that there is something behind it. Baba is doing His own work, which is the work of awakening. His work is to establish Himself in every heart, so that each heart will turn to Him, and see Him, and in the end become one with Him. At present, even though Baba is so freely and easily available, the people of the world pay no attention. The forces of Maya are opposing Him, and He has allowed the might and the power of manyness to seem to prevail for the present. But because He is always working, at the time of His Manifestation, the grip of delusion will be broken and humanity will turn its eyes from the dream to the Reality.

May Beloved Baba draw us all closer to Him in the net of His love, and may the strands of His web bind us to Him in our thoughts and remembrance and obedience, until every moment of our life is lived in accordance with His wish and will.

V.S. Kalchuri (Bhau), Chairman  
Avatar Meher Baba Trust

*"Be true to the trust that I have reposed in you."*

AVATAR MEHER BABA

with what's happening at Meherabad and Meherazad. Various notices and news stories will appear here. In this section too one can access the archives of this newsletter (*In His Service*) and *Tavern Talk*.

# Health News

FROM THE EARLY YEARS of the Meherabad ashram in the 1920s, service in the medical sphere was an activity that figured prominently into the life around Meher Baba. The ranks of His close disciples and devotees included a surprising number of doctors; and during many periods His ashrams incorporated medical dispensaries. Moreover, Baba Himself was afflicted by various medical problems, particularly after the end of the New Life, and He became the recipient of much medical care. By thus playing the role of Patient, one presumes that Baba was giving His Avataric push to the world of medicine.

Since the Avatar Meher Baba Trust opened its doors and began to function in 1969, the scope of its medical service has gradually been expanding. Much of the work that goes on today is fairly un spectacular and might escape the notice of short-term pilgrims and visitors. Yet while it might be hard to make a news story about an eyesight restored or a chronic illness relieved, such events make all the difference in the world to the people who experience them.

What Baba's worldwide lovers will be most likely to have heard about is "health news" concerning some of His intimate mandali, as has been reported in the Trust's electronic newsletter "Tavern Talk." Over the past year a number of Baba's disciples have undergone major surgery. On 3rd August 2002 Aloba passed away in the operating theater in the course of surgery for a fractured hip. At the same time Bhau, returning from America, passed through a severe episode of sciatica and had to stay on his back through much of the autumn, undergoing sophisticated

procedures to relieve the pain. In December Meheru underwent a successful open heart mitral valve replacement and bypass surgery. A few weeks later Bal Natu was successfully operated on for an intestinal obstruction; and in March Manu Jessawala was successfully operated on for a fractured hip. In these cases as in so many others, the Trust's medical team has given unstinting heart-felt care to Baba's mandali, remembering the love and service that these "fortunate slaves" have offered to their Lord over so many years.

Another important focus is medical service for Baba's pilgrims at Meherabad and the residents who work there, at Meherazad, and at Meher Nazar. The task that the medical team faces is made particularly tricky by the fact that, as a centre of world pilgrimage, Meherabad stands at the confluence of diverse human streams where foreigners especially are liable to encounter diseases they have no immunity to. This presents the medical staff and other Trust workers with many challenges. On the one hand (for example), drinking water and eating utensils have to be made free from contamination by intestinal parasites; on the other hand, due precautions need to be taken against epidemics such as SARS spreading internationally through the air travel corridors. Though the village of Arangaon (where Meherabad is located) may seem to be a cultural backwater, it is surprising what medical expertise and resources Baba has made available to His lovers there to deal with these problems!

A major Trust medical facility is the Meher Hospital in Outer Meherabad. Its clinic, open every

day, gives free medical care to pilgrims, residents, and Trust workers and their families. Another dispensary is the Meher Health Centre, situated on the site of what used to be the "Family Quarters" on the edge of Arangaon. Open every day for four hours, the Meher Health Centre provides free outpatient medical care to about 110 patients daily. Most of the clientele, of course, hails from Arangaon and other nearby villages, where basic care is the most important medical need. When their case requires it, patients are referred to local hospitals in Ahmednagar.

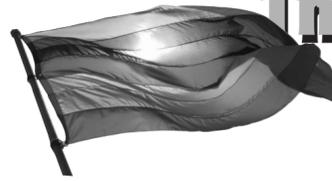
The Meher Hospital also arranges for what are known in India as medical "camps." For a number of years the Trust has been providing free cataract surgery approximately every two months to a total of about 100 patients annually. Since much of the local population consists of farmers who work long hours in the bright tropical sunlight, cataracts have long been a common affliction which results, if untreated, in blindness. In fact, Baba Himself set the precedent, providing free cataract surgery at Meherabad in 1925! The Meher Hospital also operates a dental clinic, which serves 20-25 patients a day twice a week. On 21st November a special dental camp gave free dental examinations to 881 school children from the Arangaon Marathi-medium schools. Six weeks later examinations were given to 416 patients from the Trust's own Meher English School.

While the Trust medical programme continues to acquire new equipment and facilities, far and away the most important resource are its people. What matters most in the end is not the alleviation of transient external conditions but the exchange of love, as Baba the merciful Doctor serves Himself as the Sufferer. For those who wish to serve in this sphere, the Trust continues to provide opportunities, now, and into the future.



LEFT: Dental examination of a willing pupil from the Meher English School.

# The 2003 Amartithi & Birthday Celebrations



THE FACT THAT THE AVATAR of this age dropped His physical form three and a half weeks before the date of His birth, and that He was born just before the onset of India's summer season, has permanently determined the shape of the Meherabad and Meherazad pilgrim calendar. Each pilgrim season comes to a climax in its last two months, with the Amartithi and Birthday celebrations; and after that the crowds disperse for three sweltering months of baked earth under a tropical sun.

Amartithi remains, as it has always been, the primary event of the year. Its central focus is the Samadhi, where for 48 hours, day and night continuously, His lovers wait their turn to bow before the place where His human form was laid to rest. The queue-and-token system, first put in place five years ago, is working well, and now pilgrims need to spend only a short time actually standing in line. Under the large pandal that runs from the Samadhi down to the amphitheater, vast improvements in the sound system over the last three years have made it possible to hear the programme clearly from anywhere on the top of the Hill. This year the programme was



further enhanced by a new video projector and high-quality screen, which made it possible, in the popular film showings just after nightfall, to display new digitally-created movies that were put together specially for the occasion. Meanwhile, along the east and north rims of the Hill and at other places on the estate, stalls sold Baba books, photos, and other paraphernalia, or provided inexpensive food. Indeed, over Amartithi week, stalls and pandals bloom like brightly-colored mushrooms, and Meherabad becomes like a small city.

The numbers have held fairly constant over the last three years. In 2003 the number of registered attendees was 10,240, which represents a small increase on the last two years (10,091 in 2001, and 10,148 in 2002). This figure does not include the sizable legions of people who come for the day; of course, and at noon on the 31st, the full assemblage gathers at the top of the Hill for a talk by Bhau, the singing of "Meher Dhun" and "Begin the Beguine," and then the fifteen minutes of silence. That silence, commemorating the final minutes in the physical lifetime of the Avatar, is certainly the high point in the Amartithi celebration. It is broken by "Avatar Meher Baba ki Jai" shouted seven times, the prayers in a number of languages, and arti.

While Amartithi is an event for the thousands, Baba's Birthday on February 25th is celebrated on more intimate scale. Well before five

in the morning - the hour of Baba's birth in 1894 - pilgrims had gathered on the Hill in the dark pre-dawn chill, and for the next three hours, as lovers took their turn in darshan, the occasion was celebrated with singing. The featured entertainment later in the day was the Birthday drama, this year entitled, "Everything You Always Wanted to Know about the Ten States of God but Were Afraid to Ask." The basis for the play, of course, was the chapter "The Ten States of God" in *God Speaks*. But though the source text is serious and metaphysical, the play itself was comic. Indeed, it added up to a comic extravaganza, with spectacle, music, and, as a new feature, computer graphics projected on a screen in the background. God Beyond Beyond - that is, State I - slept the play out in a bed dangling from the catwalks above the stage. God Beyond A, B and C (the three aspects of State II) quipped and bantered from their seats in large rings suspended fifteen feet above the ground in positions visually corresponding to what one sees in the "Ten States of God" diagram on p. 158 of the book. In fact, the entire visual frame of the play was modeled after the chart - which during the play was being assembled, a state at a time, in images projected onto the screen behind the characters, mirroring the action of the play.

The entire play ran to about an hour and provided a delightful close to the day's festivities.

ABOVE: Baba's Flag hoisted on Meherabad Hill during Amartithi. LEFT: Over 10,000 overnight visitors attended the 2003 Amartithi celebration. BELOW: Scene from Baba's Birthday Play, "Everything You Always Wanted to Know about the Ten States of God but Were Afraid to Ask".



# Pipeline Completed in the Nick of Time

READERS OF THE PREVIOUS two issues of this newsletter will no doubt be aware of the acute water shortage afflicting the Ahmednagar district owing to the recent poor monsoons. In March 2002 the Meherabad wells began to run dry, and it became apparent that the Trust had a crisis on its hands. Drastic water conservation went into effect, and water tankers were hired to meet immediate needs. Meanwhile, emergency plans were drafted for the laying of a new pipeline connecting the Meherabad sump with the Ahmednagar municipal supply, and the Trust staff went into overdrive.

This year-long effort came to fulfillment in dramatic fashion in January, in the very nick of time. At the end of January, of course, the Trust hosts the Amartithi gathering. Over this three-day event many thousands of pilgrims come to Meherabad and bring with them their water needs - for drinking, bathing, food preparation, and so forth. Had the pipeline not been completed, the provision of adequate water supply for the occasion would have been almost impossible.

The crucial stretch of pipeline runs 2.2 kilometers, from the Ahmednagar municipal supply outlet on Station Road (where the road forks not far from the bus station) to the Trust's sump at Panjarapol Dairy, 5 kilometers north of Meherabad. The 500 mm pipeline is of a high quality durable grade, made of cast iron with rubber gasket joints. Currently the Trust is drawing about 200,000 liters of water daily through the new connection. Tests have confirmed that the water is uncontaminated.

The pipeline project has not been completed, however. At present water is being conveyed from the Trust's Panjarapol sump to the storage tank behind Hostel D in Outer Meherabad five kilometers away through a twenty-year-old pipeline that constantly needs repair. As soon as funds are available and the water crisis eases sufficiently to permit the work, the Trust will replace this old line with a permanent one made of cast iron. Also, since the existing 100,000-liter sump at Panjarapol is not big enough to cover in the case of prolonged power failures and other emergencies, the Trust may install a second sump with 200,000-liter capacity.

## A Race with the Clock

In fact, the completion of the 2.2 kilometer pipeline in time for the Amartithi deadline made for an exciting drama - or perhaps one should say, a

harrowing ordeal - for all those concerned. Though the Trust had decided to construct the pipeline in April 2002, the necessary permissions and sanctions had not been secured until November. At this juncture the project became a race with the clock, with the prospect of tens of thousands of thirsty Amartithi pilgrims looming on the horizon line.

Every kind of obstacle arose - in the form of intricate municipal regulations, changing mandates and compliance standards, encroachment on the part of small businesses on the roadside, and so forth. The pipeline had to cross under a river, and for this purpose it needed to be encased in a special, waterproof concrete to protect against contamination. Another major problem was the crossing of a busy chowk (or intersection), which, owing to constant heavy traffic, could be done only within a restrictive time frame. The contractor and his crew worked overtime, staying up until 3 a.m. on two nights. Indeed, the contractor's wife pitched in, cooking dal and rice for the exhausted laborers.

In the end these efforts bore fruit. The pipeline was completed, flushed out with clean water, and ready for use - just a week before Amartithi began!

## New Water Prospects

The Meherabad pipeline project, even when it is completed, will still leave the Trust dependent on Ahmednagar municipal supply, at a time when local resources are being heavily strained. Yet a new opportunity has arisen which, the Chairman hopes, will solve the Trust's water crisis for many years and even decades.

The Maharashtra State government is now implementing what is called the Ghospuri water scheme which will provide water from Maharashtra state sources to eighteen villages. The Trust has just arranged to get its own independent connection for Meherabad that will provide 500,000 liters a day. By coincidence, another state government water scheme - the Mula Dam scheme - has come to fruition, and the Trust has arranged for a connection for Meherazad from the nearby village of Adhavwati. This water source should provide Meherazad with 200,000 liters a day.

To avail itself of these opportunities, the Trust will have to construct its own pipeline connections and water tanks. The programmes require that this work be completed right away. Costs will be expensed in this financial year (2003-04) and the next. Because these developments are so recent, they have not been incorporated into the 2003 Financial Report.

## Work on the Meher Pilgrim Retreat Continues

SINCE THE TRUST EMBARKED upon its development plan four years ago, the support of Meher Baba's worldwide family has made possible enormous progress in many areas. The centrepiece of all this work was and remains the Meher Pilgrim Retreat, a new facility capable of accommodating 200 pilgrims. Situated on Meherabad Hill a kilometer to the west of the Samadhi, the Retreat now stands at its full height and is clearly visible along the horizon as one approaches Meherabad on the highway from Ahmednagar. The structure itself should be completed within two years, and the electrification and furnishing of the building will take another year after that. If all goes well, the Retreat will open for pilgrims for the 2006-07 season. Many contingencies, however, could delay that opening date.

As is explained in the 2003 Financial Report, the Chairman and Board have reordered priorities for the near future. In view of the instability of world economic conditions, and also in view of the immediate need to respond to the current critical water shortage in Maharashtra, the Chairman has felt it best to reschedule some of the less urgent projects so as to place less burden on Baba's lovers.

The top priority remains the completion of the Meher Pilgrim Retreat and necessary related vital infrastructure. The construction of the new Pilgrim Registration Centre and new Staff Quarters at Meherabad, as well as the completion of the Pilgrim Education Site for Amartithi, will be delayed until the 2006-07 season. Immediate work, however, will have to be undertaken in response to the new opportunity provided by the government water schemes (as described elsewhere in this issue) that promise to supply both Meherabad and Meherazad with all the water it needs for many years. This latest water development is so recent that it could not be incorporated into the current Financial Report.

As a perpetual public charitable trust under Indian law, the Trust remains wholly dependent on the voluntary contributions of Baba's lovers. If Baba wishes this work to continue, He will continue to provide through your hands. Gifts great and small are all from Him and will serve His work through the Trust.

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, email [suchapman@hotmail.com](mailto: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 860-536-0303, email [EAYers88@aol.com](mailto:EAYers88@aol.com); 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.



Mani S. Irani

ONCE WHEN ERUCH was in a playful mood, he shared a remarkable recollection. Baba had once revealed to the mandali, Eruch said, that everything that happened at Meherazad and Meherabad had worldwide repercussions. "Meherazad is a microcosm of the world," Eruch observed. "Everything starts here."

Today, as technology continues to rise to greater heights, it has become possible, through such new mediums as listservs and websites domiciled in cyberspace, for Baba's lovers round the globe to communicate with each other almost instantaneously. In view of Baba's remark, one wonders whether the seeds for this were not sown by Baba Himself and the efforts that He Himself made, through the mediums of telegrams and circulars and family letters, to maintain links with His worldwide family.

Particularly instrumental in helping give shape to the greater Baba community in the years immediately after Baba had publicly declared His Avatarhood were the "Family Letters" of the 1950s and 1960s. Baba's sister Mani wrote them at Baba's explicit directive, and He took an ongoing and detailed interest in them. These letters were, indeed, an extraordinarily vivid and personal expression of the life around Meher Baba, at Satara and Meherazad and Guruprasad, during the last fifteen years of

# World-Wide Communications & the "Family Letters"

His physical lifetime.

Before the "Family Letters" had been inaugurated as such, Mani had been maintaining a correspondence with certain close Baba lovers in the East and West. But after His second car accident at Satara in 1956, Baba insisted she write a "family letter" to His lovers worldwide to give them news of His condition. This one labor of love led to many more, 82 in all, beginning on 5th December 1956 and running through 26th August 1969.

As Mani laughingly used to recollect, Baba would not let her forget about the "Family Letters", even when she wanted to. "Isn't it time for another 'Family Letter'?" He would ask. "Have you started yet?" In fact, the letters were often a headache for her, since she had to write them on top of everything else that she was already doing. Writing, of course, requires concentration; but no sooner would she get started than the flow of her thoughts would be interrupted by a call from Baba - setting her about some other chore or errand. Or asking her, "Is the letter done yet?"

Mani would start by collecting all the information for each letter (often from Eruch) and on this basis hammering out a rough draft on the typewriter. Then she would cut out paragraphs from her typed sheets, move them around until she liked how the letter read, and paste togeth-

er the improved version. Eruch would read through the draft and check the information. At this stage Mani would read it out to Baba for His approval, comments, corrections, and additions. Once the process was complete, Baba would look radiant. "This is the best one yet!" He would say.

But since He would praise every letter this way, Mani knew He meant to encourage her to go on writing them.

Finished letters would be sent out to Elizabeth Patterson in Myrtle Beach. They would be typed up in final form, mimeographed, and sent out to a mailing list of group heads. For almost fifteen years, these letters provided the primary outward channel of communication between Baba and His lovers.

And even today, the window that they open on life around Baba, at a time when seclusion had made Him largely inaccessible to the world, is wonderfully human.

Mani's letters were truly masterpieces - arising out of the humble and homespun conditions that Baba's close ones had almost always to function in. One day, perhaps technology will allow His words and images to flood human imagination, and the "family" that will receive His "letters" through these varied new means and media will be all mankind.



The collection of Family Letters in one volume.

## 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, PO Box 398, Mystic, CT 06355-0398, USA (tel. 860-536-0303, e-mail: [EAYers88@aol.com](mailto:EAYers88@aol.com)). To subscribe to Tavern Talk (the Trust's electronic newsletter), send an e-mail to [Listserv@ambppct.org](mailto:Listserv@ambppct.org) and include in the text of your message the words: "subscribe tavern-talk."

*"In His Service" is the newsletter of the Avatar Meher Baba Trust; all articles and other material are compiled under the direction of the Chairman. Issued biannually, it is designed and published by Sheriar Press, Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, USA.*

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