



A NEWSLETTER FROM MEHERABAD

Highlights of the Pilgrim Season, So Far

OUR 2019–2020 PILGRIM SEASON opened in June with the usual excitement of welcoming visitors to come stay in Baba’s Home. From around India and the world, pilgrims came to stay in Meher Pilgrim Retreat, the Dharamshala, or Hostel D. We had a notable influx of pilgrims from China, many of them coming for the first time. In the first 5 months of the season, we had 82 pilgrims arrive from that country.

As usual, pilgrims came to bow down to Baba and attend arti at His Samadhi. Other activities include tours of Meherabad, Meher Nazar, and Meherazad; films and talks about Baba; concerts and exhibits. Three highlights of the season through October were Silence Day, the Young Adult Sahavas, and a play by the Bombay Centre (see articles, this page).

SILENCE DAY

The anniversary of the beginning of Baba’s Silence was commemorated at Meherabad July 9th–11th. Pilgrims attended from all over India and a variety of other countries to keep Silence with their Beloved for 24 hours on July 10th. Approximately 1,650 pilgrims

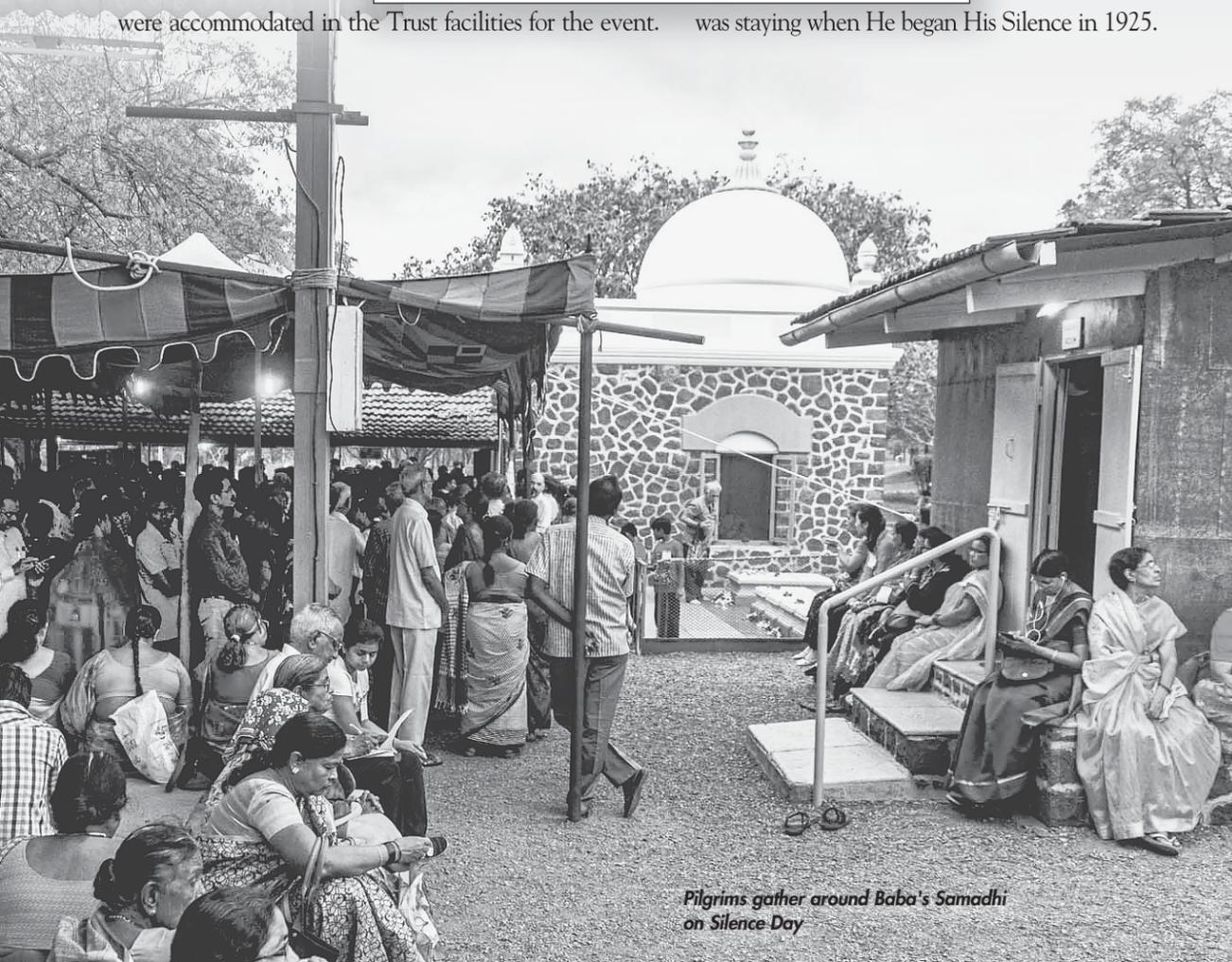
“You have had enough of words, I have had enough of words. It is not through words that I give what I have to give. In the silence of your perfect surrender, my love which is always silent can flow to you — to be yours always to keep and to share with those who seek Me.

“When the Word of my Love breaks out of its silence and speaks in your hearts, telling you who I really am, you will know that that is the Real Word you have been always longing to hear.”

MEHER BABA

Baba lovers gathered around Baba’s Samadhi from sunrise to sunset, taking darshan, offering fresh flower garlands, and sitting silently in the environs. Films of Baba were shown on the 10th, and a devotional concert was presented on the 11th. Pilgrims were able to visit Baba’s Jhopdi, where He

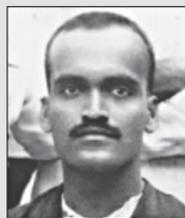
were accommodated in the Trust facilities for the event. was staying when He began His Silence in 1925.



Pilgrims gather around Baba’s Samadhi on Silence Day

THE BIG HEAD

The Avatar Meher Baba Bombay Centre delighted its Meherabad audience October 28th with a drama entitled “The Big Head— Life Story of Dr. Abdul Ghani with Avatar Meher Baba.” As they have done for many years, the Centre created and presented the play during the time of the



Dr. Abdul Ghani

Diwali holidays, a festive time in India when many people have time off from work and school. Lively and humorous, the play illustrated anecdotes from Dr. Ghani’s life with Baba. Held in the Music and Arts Centre (Theatre) at Meherabad, this year’s play was the beginning of a new drama series by the Bombay Centre: “Mandali of Avatar Meher Baba.”

YOUNG ADULT SAHAVAS

IN AUGUST THIS YEAR, the Trust hosted the 19th annual Meherabad Young Adult Sahavas Program, which had 160 participants from six countries—India, USA, China, Dubai, Singapore, and Malaysia, with the majority from India. The program opened with a warm welcome to all and orientation, the offering of a large flower garland to Baba at the Samadhi, and an evening dhuni program. The theme this year was “Inviting His Grace.” Throughout the week the sahavasees participated in a wide variety of activities focused on Baba. Discussion groups, service projects, arts and cultural workshops, and performances kept everyone busy and happy!

Participants also visited Meherazad, as well as had historical tours around Meherabad so they could learn the sacred significance of the places Baba graced with His presence. They walked up Meherazad’s Seclusion Hill, and visited the East Room on Meherabad Hill, Mandali Hall, and other sites. The Celebration Evening was given to dance, drama, and devotional singing presentations by the sahavasees, which they had prepared during the week’s workshops. Service projects included planting drought-hardy trees on a large tract of Trust property, mural painting in Baba’s seven colors on the walls of the railway underpass, trash cleaning, painting Gilori Shah’s tomb, and more.



Sahavasees performed songs they composed and learned in music workshops during Amazing Grace Celebration Night

PHOTO COURTESY OF PAUL LIBORIN

PHOTO COURTESY OF MBV'S MULTIMEDIA TEAM

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Dear Baba Family,

We are enthused to announce that our new solar electricity project on the Archives building, Manzil-e-Meher, is now operational. The solar power started flowing into the grid the last week of February 2019, and additional solar panels were installed in mid-October. The total cost of this project is about Rs.7,72,000. The project was overseen by an Australian Baba lover, Paul Morris. We are also thankful to others who donated some of the inverters used in the system. Next we plan to move

forward in installing a larger solar electricity system for the Meher Pilgrim Retreat.

Happily, we have had plentiful rains this monsoon season, nearly 30 inches (76 cm). The surrounds are still green even in November, and our groundwater levels have risen. Our new water storage reservoir has been filled to capacity, 30 million litres.

Our work on the Tower of Glory is in the finishing stages. At the time of writing, we are intending the inauguration of the tower to take place on 23 December 2019, the anniversary of Baba's own

dedication of the site in 1944. After many years of love-studded hard work, this project will fulfill Baba's wish and also serve to glorify Him. We look forward to sharing this event with our Baba family.



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF PAUL LIBORION

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

Want More Pictures?

We encourage our readers to subscribe to the Trust's electronic newsletter also. Called "Tavern Talk," it goes out via email and contains more frequent news of Meherabad/Meherazad, with lots more pictures! To subscribe, visit the AMBT website at avatarmeherbabatrust.org. Follow the menu items The Trust>Newsletter>Subscriptions and fill out your email details.

Or, go directly to the subscription page at <http://avatarmeherbabatrust.org/subscription.php>.

Master Planning Engagement

THE TRUST INITIATED a master planning effort four years ago in anticipation of the time when many more pilgrims will want to avail themselves of the opportunity for Baba's darshan at the Trust estate. This plan includes the development of Meherabad, Meherazad, and Meher Nazar up to the point when a million pilgrims come for darshan. This is in keeping with Baba's own statements about how widespread His name will have become as He manifests publicly.

To create the plan, a committee composed of trustees and senior residents gathered input from a wide range of Trust committees, and then formulated a plan that was approved in draft form by the trustees in 2018. This year a major effort has been conducted to include the Baba community throughout the world in reviewing the draft plan and providing feedback. By the end of December, sessions will have been held in twelve locations—six in the West and six in India. The size of these sessions has ranged from 30 to 300 participants at a time. In each session, the plan was presented, and then participants gathered in small groups to generate feedback, which was then shared with the entire meeting.

Participants have consistently expressed appreciation for the plan, as well as the opportunity to learn about these future plans and to provide feedback. The sessions have also produced numerous constructive suggestions, which the planning committee will consider when it reconvenes in 2020 to finalize the plan. Once the trustees adopt the final plan, the worldwide Baba family will be kept informed of the progress toward its fulfillment.

For those who were not able to participate in these meetings, a summary of the draft plan is available on the Trust website along with a form to provide feedback. All are encouraged to take advantage of this opportunity, which will remain available until 31 December 2019.

This master planning engagement effort is the first time the Trust has involved the worldwide Baba family so extensively in future planning. The goal of this engagement is to develop a sense of responsibility in all His lovers for the future of these sacred sites that Baba has made available to humanity in perpetuity.

Solar Electricity Arrives at Meherabad

Meher Baba graces Meherabad with over 300 clear, sunny days a year. He also graces Meherabad with volunteers with expertise in solar power. The result? Solar electrical power for Meherabad! We have already been using passive solar panels for heating water in the Meher Pilgrim Retreat since that building opened in 2006, but the generation of electricity is a new, much-anticipated venture for Meherabad.

A 9.3-kW system with 27 solar panels was installed on the Manzil-e-Meher Archives Building this year. The panels will generate enough power to provide for more than 100% of the building's needs.

The twenty seven 345-Watt panels with individual Enphase micro-inverters underneath will generate an estimated yearly total of 20,000 kWh (kilowatt hours). Nineteen panels were installed in February and an additional 8 were installed in mid-October.

This high-tech system has data collection, and early results have already seen up to 9 kWh exported

into the Meherabad network on one day. At the time of this data collection, cloudy conditions prevailed, but greater results are expected as the weather cools and the sky clears.

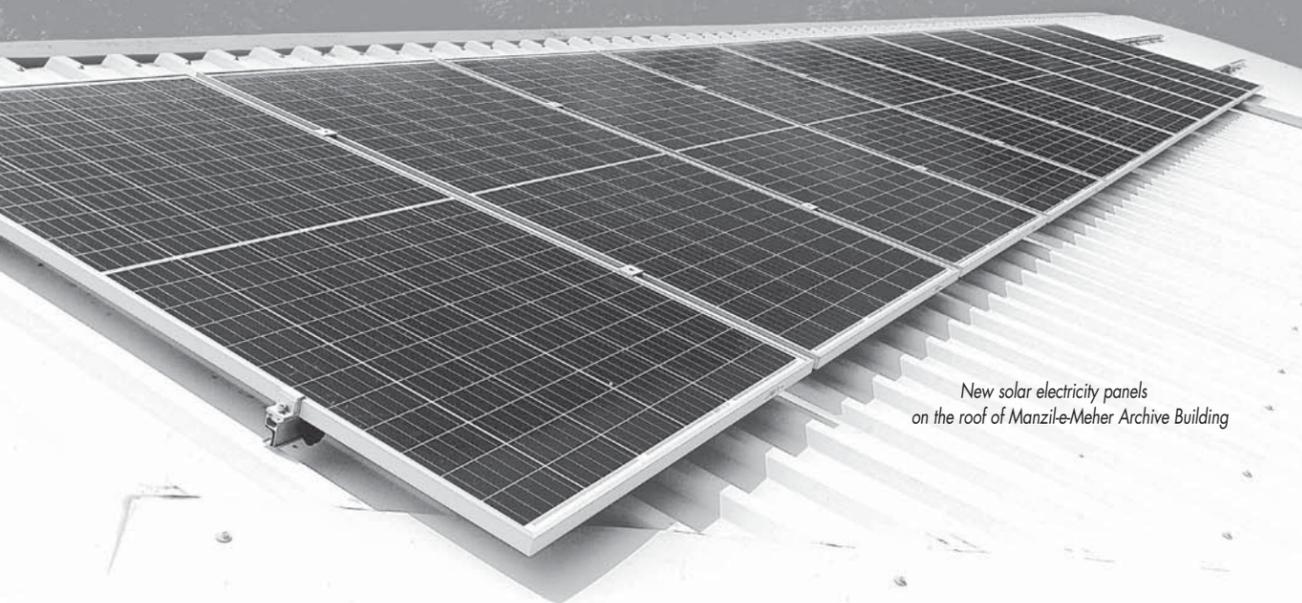
Expansion to the MPR

The Trust is currently working to install a 30-kW system on the men's side terrace at the MPR, which will hopefully produce electricity by mid-February 2020.

Data collection has indicated up to 400 units' consumption on busy days. Early estimates suggest we could halve the yearly expense the Trust incurs with the government electrical supply for the MPR as a result of the new solar system.

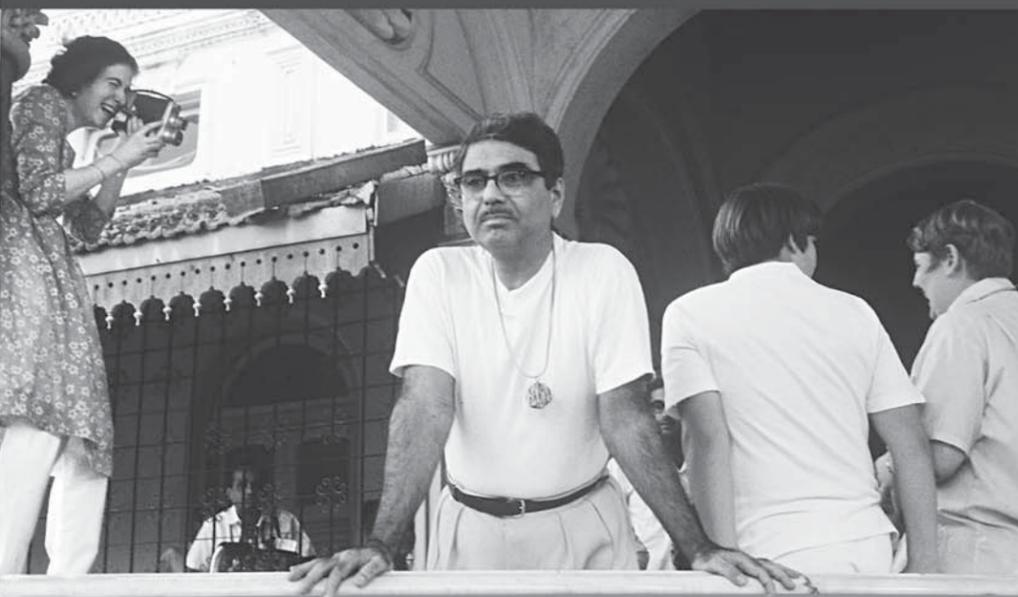
We propose to use approx. 90 Vikram or Waaree solar panels and Enphase IQ+ inverters for this project. If any Baba lovers have any connection with the manufacturers/suppliers of this equipment and can get the same at a discounted price, it will be most welcome.

PHOTO COURTESY OF JESSICA MEDNICK



New solar electricity panels on the roof of Manzil-e-Meher Archive Building

The Great Darshan 50-Year Anniversary



Mani and Eruch, 1969, Guruprasad

A commemoration of Baba's Great Darshan of 1969 was held at Meherabad in November this year. A woven mixture of song, dance, sharings by Darshan attendees, and films of Baba, the program was attended by about 600 Baba lovers from around the world. Presentations were held at the Amphitheatre on Meherabad Hill opposite Baba's Samadhi.

Avatar Meher Baba had invited His lovers from east and west to attend a large Darshan program, to be held from April to June 1969. Plans were underway during the latter weeks of 1968. But on 31 January 1969, Baba dropped His physical body, sending shockwaves around the world in the hearts of His lovers. The mandali soon realized that they had many signs from Baba that the darshan program was to go on and they let the Baba world know that the 1969 Darshan would be held, as planned by Baba.

In an account of Baba's last days, Francis Brabazon wrote on behalf of the resident mandali: "On 13th October 1968 Baba told us that He would give His darshan to all His lovers all over the world from 10th April to 10th June 1969. Considering His physical condition we were apprehensive of His body standing such a strain. But He said, 'It will be easy for me to give my lovers my darshan, so you are not to feel concerned about it. I will give darshan reclining and that will be no strain on my body. It will be different from all previous darshans and it will be the last in silence. Although I will be reclining I will be very strong. My physical condition now is because of my work, but by then my work will be complete and my exultation will be great.'"

Fifty years later, many who attended that wonderful "darshan of darshans" came from near and far to share their recollections of the experiences they had when they came to honor the God-Man's invitation. The wonder of the Master's darshan being given and received despite His physical absence was expressed beautifully by Francis Brabazon in addressing the group at the darshan.

"Who but the Beloved of Beloveds, could speak his Word silently in your hearts and make you come from across the world to take his darshan, to bow down to him in your hearts? Such a thing has never happened before. I have been at Mass-darshans where tens of thousands came and bowed down to his Man-form. But to come thousands of miles to bow down to him in one's own heart, that is of an entirely different order of devotion.

"Why has beloved Baba given you people this extraordinary privilege? Because he required a few to do what the many, what everyone, must eventually do: journey across the world of illusion to take darshan of him in their hearts. What a Beloved is our Beloved; what a mighty Beloved."

* 82 Family Letters by Mani Sheriar Irani, p. 345.

† 82 Family Letters, p. 356.



Group from the
50-Year Celebration

Upcoming Inauguration of the Tower of Glory

On 23 December 1944, Meher Baba held a dedication and foundation-laying ceremony at Meherabad for the future Memorial Tower, to be created to honor Baba's departed devotees. Baba chose the site of the memorial graves of His disciples Masaji and F.H. Dadachanji. He explained in His statement, which was read out, that these two disciples and the many others whose names would be inscribed on the tower were being honored as an inspiration for lovers of God in the future.

We reported in our last issue that the carving of the names on the memorial tower was nearly complete. Following the carving, the letters were all painted with a special stone colorant flown in by hazmat vault on a cargo plane. The colorant is a grey color, more similar to a stain than to paint. Other works in recent months were the completion of the 7 symbols representing the religions of the world, as well as Baba's "Mastery in Servitude" emblem, the placement of a slate apron around the base, and the raising of the two original grave markers of Chanji and Masaji. The markers were reassembled exactly in their original positions on top of the 2-foot-high plinth that now surrounds the tower.

All elements of this creation for Baba are now finally emerging as a completed whole. On 23rd December 2019, the inauguration of the Tower of Glory will be held on site, timed to coincide with the 75th anniversary of Baba's own dedication of the site in 1944.

**The Memorial Tower of my departed devotees,
which is being erected on this spot, will be
a reservoir of inspiration and power
for posterity.**

**A life of sacrifice based on love is never lost.
It is not only beautiful and fruitful in itself,
but also in the creative inspiration
which it leaves behind itself.**

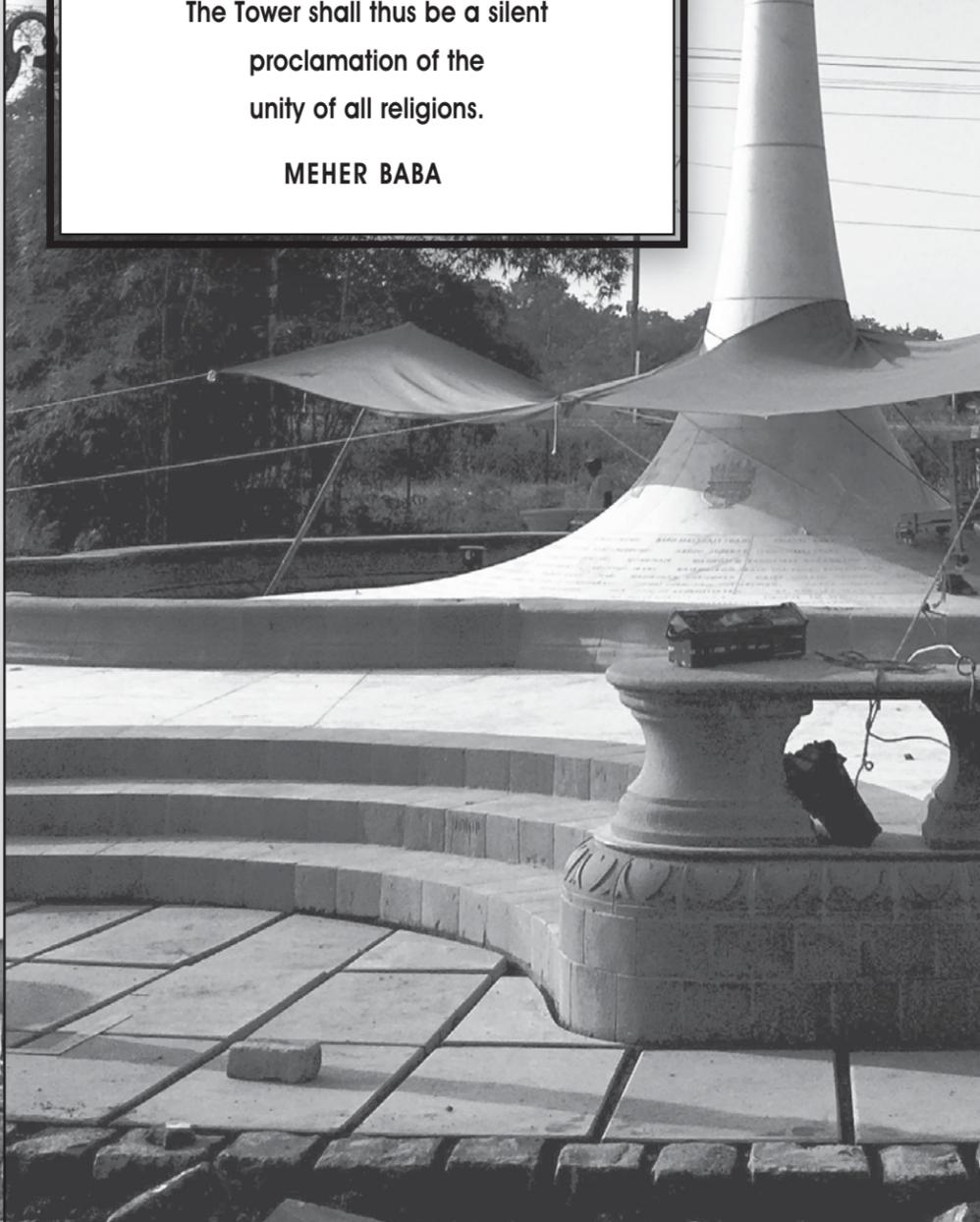
**This unity of all religions will be clearly empha-
sized by placing on the Tower the emblems of
all the important religions of the world.**

**The Tower shall thus be a silent
proclamation of the
unity of all religions.**

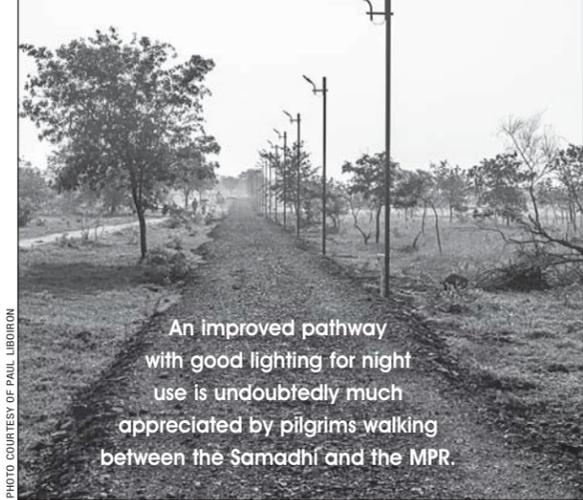
MEHER BABA

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF PAUL LIBRORION

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF TED JUSSON



Pathway to Samadhi



An improved pathway with good lighting for night use is undoubtedly much appreciated by pilgrims walking between the Samadhi and the MPR.

PHOTO COURTESY OF PAUL LIBORION

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 Meher Baba Association, c/o Sue Chapman, 2 Chapel Hill Row, Craster, Northumberland NE66 3TU, tel. 01 665 57 69 57, e-mail suchapman@hotmail.com.

In the USA, to make tax-deductible donations to support the Development Plan and/or Operating Expense grants being made to the Trust, please see the Trust's website (click on the "How to Help" button or search www.ambppct.org/fNat.php). The webpage lists the names and addresses of the U.S. Meher Baba tax-exempt organizations that make grants to the Trust and also provides information on making donations to the Trust by bequest or beneficiary designation.

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 Financial Report details information on Trust receipts and expenditures; it also provides a current and projected expenditures report for the Trust Development Plan. More information can be found in the Trust's website at www.avatarmeherbabatrust.org.

Water Reservoir

Thanks to plentiful rains and a long monsoon season this year, we were able to fill the "Shet Talav," the Trust's new water reservoir, to capacity. The tank is 60 metres deep and holds 30 million litres of water. To give you an idea of how much water that is, it is estimated that in an emergency, with no other water sources, and with water usage restrictions in place, the full reservoir could supply the water needs of Meherabad for two full years.

PHOTO COURTESY OF PAUL LIBORION



Baba's Dogs

In the Advent of Avatar Meher Baba, animals have been a constant. From the early days of life at Meherabad, through the Blue Bus tours and the New Life, from Satara to Dehra Dun to His final headquarters at Meherazad, Baba has always had pets. And in the starring roles were His pet dogs.

Perhaps the most famous of His dogs was Mastan, whose mother was a tibetan mastiff named Bhooty, whom Baba had acquired while on a mast trip in the northern regions of India near Bhutan. Meherazad resident Davana Brown shares with us the story of Baba's dogs Bhooty and Mastan, as told to her by Mehera and Eruch:

One day while Baba and the men were crossing a valley, they noticed a flock of sheep being shepherded by some big dogs wearing spiked collars. Baba commented that the dogs wore these collars because they were so brave that they would fight to the death to save their sheep from harm. As Baba and the men crossed the fields near the grazing sheep, a small puppy came running towards them. Bending down, Baba petted the animal and then continued on His journey, commenting again to the men how loyal and courageous were these dogs. Soon Baba and the men left the valley, climbing into the foothills of the mountains searching for a mast that they had heard lived there. As Baba and the men carefully traversed the steep and narrow trail up the mountainside, suddenly Baba clapped. "Listen, do you hear that whimpering? Eruch, go see what has happened."

Eruch discovered that the same little puppy Baba had petted earlier had followed them up the mountainside. The poor animal had slipped and was barely managing to hold onto an outcrop of rocks just below them with its tiny paws. Slowly, Eruch made his way down to the ledge and reached for the puppy, bringing it to safety. Then he carried it to Baba. "What a brave pup! Eruch, go back down to the valley and see if the farmer will part with it." And to make a long story short, the farmer agreed and the pup now travelled with the men all the way back to Meherazad. This pup grew into a strong and ferocious watchdog at Meherazad named Bhooty, and she became the mother of Baba's favorite dog, Mastan.



PHOTO COURTESY OF MEHER NAZAR PUBLICATIONS

Baba, Mehera and Mastan in Meherazad, 1967

The love between Mastan and Baba was so strong that after Baba passed away, Mastan could not bear to live. Shortly after Baba had passed away, Mehera saw Mastan go into the dining room where Baba used to sit for His lunchtime meal and feed Mastan choice bits of mutton from His plate. As Mehera related, "I saw Mastan slowly walk into the dining room and go over to Baba's chair. Very solemnly, he went around Baba's chair and circumambulated the dining room table. Then he walked out of the room into the passageway and lay down with a deep, deep sigh. It was as if he knew that he would

never see his beloved Baba again. The expression in his eyes and his whole demeanor spoke of his heart's grief."

Somehow Mastan still could not believe that Baba was gone and so again Mehera witnessed his almost human devotion to the God-Man. "[Mastan] did something he had never done before—[he] walked into Baba's room alone. . . Very slowly Mastan walked around Baba's bed, just as he had walked around the dining room table and Baba's chair."

It seemed with that final act of confirmation Mastan knew that Baba was no more and from that day he stopped eating. On 18th April, while Mehera and the mandali were in Guruprasad for the Great Darshan program, Baba's Mastan passed away.

Today, fifty years later, dogs continue to be a part of Meherazad life, not only as loving pets but also to act as guards over His home. Through the years, Meherazad residents have marveled at the unusual connections some of these animals have had with the Avatar and His mandali. With Meherazad's present trio of dogs aging, it was recently felt it was time to add some new blood to the crew. This April, two adorable puppies from the same litter, a labrador and mongrel mix, named Layla and Sachin, have joined the Meherazad household. The brother and sister have already endeared themselves to Meherazad residents as the newest pets, and they will also be trained to protect Baba's home, following in the footsteps of Bhooty and Mastan, and all those dogs fortunate to have



PHOTO COURTESY OF DAVANA BROWN

Pups Layla and Sachin receiving their training

come to live at the Avatar's home, Meherazad.

* *Baba Loved Us Too*, by Mehera J. Irani, p. 153.

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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