



# IN HIS SERVICE

FEBRUARY / 2010

A NEWSLETTER FROM MEHERABAD

## The Memorial Tower at Meherabad

THE LAST FIVE MONTHS OF 1944 saw the passing away of two of Meher Baba's closest disciples. On 25th August Chanji, Baba's longtime secretary, died in Kashmir. On 19th December Baba's maternal uncle Masaji passed away at Meherabad at the age of 77.

Four days after Masaji's death Baba assembled at Meherabad a group of His resident mandali, lovers from the city, and guests who had traveled to Ahmednagar to attend the wedding of Nariman and Arnavaz Dadachanji on the 21st. The occasion was a foundation-laying ceremony for the memorial tower that Baba wished to be constructed in honor of His "departed devotees" who had sacrificed their all for Him.

As *Let's Go to Meherabad* relates the event: "Baba looked lovely, with a sweet smile playing on His lips, making the occasion absolutely joyous. He asked the mandali to dig a pit in the ground beside Masaji's grave and bury Chanji's bedding roll, symbolizing his body, there. Baba then scattered flowers on the bedding, and as it was being covered over He too threw in some earth and then sprinkled some rose petals on top of the grave. . . . The names of all His departed lovers were read out, and for each one of them Baba laid a flower on the grave." Adi Sr. then read out a message from Baba, selections of which are reproduced on p 3.

Though no tower was built at the time, over the following two decades Baba kept the project in mind and occasionally dictated new names to be added to the list. On 21st November 1967, as Eruch recalled later, Baba "had me read the list of names, and He gave the following message: 'I invoke God's blessing on My lovers who will have dropped their bodies by the time I drop Mine that they have their places near Me according to their faith, love, and service. And I invoke God's blessings on My lovers who will still be in their bodies when I have dropped Mine according to their faith, love and service. And I invoke God's Grace on the few I have in mind to realize Me as I am.'

"On 24th June 1968 in Guruprasad," Eruch continued, "Baba had me read the list of names out twice, and then afterwards gave this message: 'God has blessed

them according to their sacrifice for Baba. Amen.'"

**THE MODEL.** Since the Avatar Meher Baba Trust became active after 1969, Baba's mandali used to discuss this project from time to time. Eruch, Mani, Rano, and others shared ideas with Ted Judson, the resident architect who came to live at Meherabad in 1976.

Two years ago Ted submitted a design for the tower, which the board approved. In recent months masons have begun carving the foundation stones at the site that Baba selected, in the strip of land between the railway tracks and the Ahmednagar highway, directly across the road from the old Dharamshala and Mandali Hall.

Ted describes the building thus:

"The shape of the Tower is formed by rotating an hyperbola about its vertical axis. An hyperbola is the graph of one of the simplest equations,  $XY = 1$ . Mathematically, the resulting shape begins at a point infinitely high, descends almost vertically, and gradually approaches, but never quite reaches, the horizontal axis. In three dimensions, it is shaped like a horn that drops from an infinitely tiny point and grows in an ever-increasing circle to become infinitely large.

"The Memorial Tower is a tangible representation of the Creation coming into being—like the symbol of Gabriel's horn, the trumpet described in the Koran, emanating from what we could call the Om Point. Tracing the movement in reverse (from the bottom upward), it represents the separate drop souls returning to the Real Unity of God.

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## Crime at Meherabad Shakes Baba World

On 26th August Meher Baba's worldwide family was rocked by news of a crime the like of which Meherabad has never seen before.

For several years Eric and Heather Nadel, two of the original Western residents who moved to Meherabad full time in 1976, had lived in a home on Trust property, on the lane that runs along the south foot of Meherabad Hill. In the early morning hours that Wednesday intruders broke into the house, attacked them in their sleep, looted whatever valuables they could find, and made off into the darkness.

A trusted employee who sleeps on the property awoke to the noise, found the couple unconscious in their beds, and called for help. Doctors, trustees, security personnel, and friends from the resident community rushed to the scene, and the Nadels were carried by Trust ambulance to Noble Hospital in Ahmednagar by about 5:30 a.m.

Both Eric and Heather sustained fractures to their skulls during the attack, but Eric's injuries were much more serious. By a stroke of good luck a neurosurgeon from Pune who comes to Nagar every Tuesday to see patients at Noble hospital had not yet departed that Wednesday morning, so he was present to receive both Heather and Eric when they arrived. After assessing their conditions, the surgeon determined that Heather required immediate surgery to relieve the increasing pressure on her brain, thereby saving her life, and although more seriously injured, that Eric was stable enough to be transported to Pune where he could be admitted to a special neurological hospital.

Tragically, Eric succumbed to his injuries and passed away on 6th September without ever regaining consciousness. Heather, who had been transferred to the same hospital as Eric the day following the attack, was able, after she regained consciousness, to visit him in ICU twice before his death. Although full recovery may take up to a year or longer, Heather continues to improve at a rapid pace. She is often seen out and about at Upper and Lower Meherabad.

**WORLD-WIDE RESPONSE.** Mainstays in the life of Meherabad for more than three decades, Eric and Heather are widely felt to be exquisite gems of Baba's, deeply loved by many throughout the world. The dreadful news shocked His global family and precipitated a tidal wave response. In many places Baba's lovers met in prayer and loving remembrance, and emails and letters expressing love and support flooded the caregivers and family. Locally the Meherabad community gathered in

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# Tragic Attack at Meherabad

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the garden outside the Nadels' house Saturday evening after the attack, sharing their love for Eric and Heather and assuaging their own feelings through prayer and song.

Eric's body was carried back to Meherabad, placed before Baba's feet at His Samadhi, and cremated at the Meherabad cremation ground on 7th September. A huge crowd assembled there, consisting not only of Meherabad pilgrims and residents but much of the population of the village of Arangaon, who had known the Nadels for thirty years.

**POLICE INVESTIGATION.** The Ahmednagar police arrived at the scene at Meherabad on the morning soon after the incident, and found there the cupboards in the Nadels' bedroom broken into and ransacked. In fact, three days after the attack a local farmer came across discarded effects in a field not far from the Meher Pilgrim Retreat. Evidently the burglars made off with whatever valuables they were able to find, leaving behind empty wallets and documents like passports and residence papers.

But in the meantime, investigators had found an important clue. One of the culprits seems to have lost a chappal (sandal) while fleeing the compound. Having sent out a general alert, at about mid-morning on the day of the attack authorities apprehended two young men buying a pair of chappals of the

same size in the village of Supa some twenty kilometers to the south on the Ahmednagar-Pune road. One of them had in his possession an ordinary Baba button (not a medallion coin, as has sometimes been reported).

Though their fingerprints did not match those found in the house, in December test results confirmed that specks of blood on their clothing contained Eric's DNA. The two men have been charged with murder.

Though some have been puzzled by the appalling violence of the bandits and the level of risk they incurred that seemed disproportionate to their prospects of gain, such, unfortunately, is the usual modus operandi of the gangs of dacoits who operate in this area. They typically attack by night, beat their victims about the head, and plunder

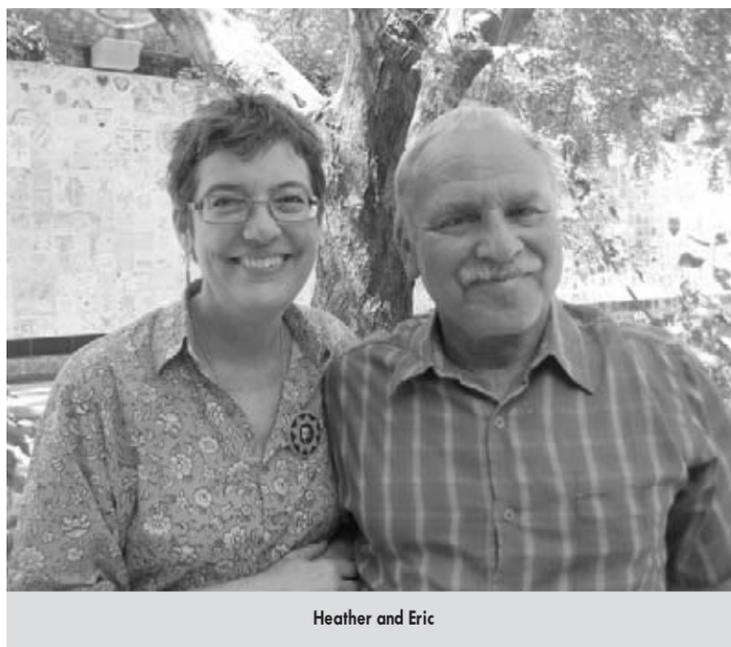
whatever they can find. What happened at Meherabad this August was not unique; other such acts of violence have afflicted the vicinity of Ahmednagar during the last few years, even since the attack this past August.

Galvanized by this terrible turn of events, the Trust has been implementing an extensive new program of security measures, as is described elsewhere in this newsletter.

**AN EXTRAORDINARY PERSONALITY.** In the meantime, the Meherabad-Meherazad community is coping with the unexpected loss of one of its dearest longtime members.

As those who knew him can attest, Eric was truly an extraordinary personality, altogether original in his manner and outlook, unique in his interests and enthusiasms and in the imaginative fashion that he pursued them, devoid of personal ambition and seemingly without need for recognition, empathetic, deeply generous of heart, and in a way that is hard to describe, free. There is no one else like him, and he is deeply missed.

During his early years at Meherabad Eric kept regular night watch duty at the Samadhi; and he served as one the primary attendants of Mohammed the Mast until his death in 2003. Heather has served the Trust in many capacities, enjoyed close association with Mehera, and was one of Mani's confidants. She is currently one of the Avatar Meher Baba Trust's ten trustees.



Heather and Eric

## Early Messages to the West Released in December

Edited under the auspices of the Avatar Meher Baba Trust, a new collection of Meher Baba's words and messages, entitled *Early Messages to the West: The 1932-1935 Western Tours*, was released by Sheriar Foundation this past December.

During the early- to mid-1930s Meher Baba paid ten visits to the Western world, a tally that included two trips around the globe. Much of Baba's focus was devoted to the various media of communication. In 1932 He delivered six major messages before audiences and press corps representatives in London, New York, and Los Angeles. In 1933 He formed the Circle Editorial Committee, which published two booklets before the end of the year. And in 1934-35 Baba devoted His main energies toward a film project, *How it All Happened*, which would depict the theme of creation, evolution, reincarnation, involution, and God-realization in a major Hollywood feature film presentation.

All of this material has been collected and published in *Early Messages to the West*, along with a wide assortment of supplementary information that helps to put the primary texts in context. One of the appendixes reproduces thirty pages of newspaper and magazine coverage in facsimile.

Of particular interest is the assemblage of materials relating to *How It All Happened*, much of which

## New Security Arrangements at Meherabad

In the aftermath of the recent crime at Meherabad, the Trust has developed a new program to provide greater security for pilgrims and residents on the Trust estate. After several months of development, the system went fully into effect this past December 2.

Hiring professional personnel and services from an Ahmednagar firm specializing in this line of work, the Trust now has two teams on continual patrol every night, one in Lower Meherabad and one in Upper Meherabad. Each team has a supervisor stationed at a central office, a gunman, seven or eight guards, and a number of vehicles, including two jeeps. All night the security forces patrol the estate, some by jeep or motorcycle and some on foot, by routes that are constantly changing. Land lines to the security offices (one in the Meher Pilgrim Retreat and one in Dadi Kerawalla's old room in Lower Meherabad), together with cell phones, provide channels of communication and contact points for anyone on the estate who finds cause for alarm.

The Trust has put in place new floodlights and sirens at a number of the buildings and facilities. Lights along the path between the MPR and the Samadhi and in other places are now kept lit all night, and guards on the MPR rooftop terraces maintain a vigilant watch from a vantage point that allows them to survey a wide tract of local terrain.

Pilgrims have been instructed not to move about alone outside the pilgrim compounds after nightfall, and all are asked to bolt their doors. Many of the residents have installed an iron bar that makes their doors more resistant to attack from outside.

Unfortunately none of these measures provides an absolute guarantee of safety. Yet Baba has given a clear warning sign, and from now on the Trust, all its personnel, and pilgrims will have to keep up their guard.

Hopefully as the neighborhoods of Meherabad and Meherazad become more settled and populated, roving bands of dacoits will be driven away, and the neighborhood will become safe again.

derives from original documents made available from the Avatar Meher Baba Trust Archives for the first time. An insert inside the book's back cover reproduces in facsimile a chart of major significance that Baba had His mandali at Meherabad draft in May of 1934 in preparation for His upcoming tours later

that year. An early exposition of what Meher Baba later called the Divine Theme, the original master chart, five feet wide and seven-and-a-half feet tall, was intended for Baba's use in presentations before business executives and creative talents in the Hollywood film industry.

# Message by Shri Meher Baba

## On the occasion of the Foundation Ceremony of the Memorial Tower at Meherabad, 23rd December 1944

You are today witnessing a solemn occasion of supreme importance. While the world is feverishly occupied with the vanishing things of the moment, there always are those, who gain true perspective of life, through the grace of the Master: and these lucky few are ever willing to make their whole life an ever renewed and ceaseless dedication to the universal and ageless truth of the imperishable and undivided Life Divine. The spiritual grandeur of those who set aside all thoughts of the self and make their life an offering to the divine and

### The Memorial Tower

*Continued from page 1*

“As per Beloved Baba’s instructions, the foundation will be built over Masaji’s and Chanji’s graves. It is shaped like the Mastery in Servitude symbol and points toward the Samadhi. The original tiles and marble nameplates of the existing grave markers will be reassembled above the exact same place. The existing tree will remain so that the area around the graves may retain some of the same atmosphere that existed when the momentous original ceremony of 1944 took place. Baba’s Message will be inscribed on a marble plaque behind it.

“The Tower will be surrounded by a flowerbed as a reminder of the flowers Baba placed in the pit while His lovers’ names were read out. The names themselves will be carved in concentric circles on the base. That list will include the phrase ‘All My Future Lovers to Come,’ words which Baba Himself said as He dropped the last of the flowers into the grave. The emblems of the important religions of the world will be placed above the names.

“The Tower will rise to a height of fifty-six feet and end with a glass prism designed to refract the sun’s rays into the colors of Baba’s flag. It will be clad in white marble to express purity. The plinth will be built of dressed local stone.”

imperative cause of the Master, is in itself ineffable: but while it surpasseth all description, it is something much more than an ornament of crowning glory for those souls themselves. A visible memorial like a tower, which symbolises their life of unflinching loyalty and love can itself become a medium for inspiring the generations to come.

The memorial tower of My departed devotees which is being erected on this spot will be a reservoir of inspiration and power for posterity. Their memory is not being perpetuated for their sake: they had no desire for fame or name, but their memory is being perpetuated because it will be an example for those who are living as well as for those who are to come. 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.

The foundation of this tower is being laid on the tomb of My beloved Masaji with the bedding of one of My loved disciples—F. H. Dadachanji, whose selfless service to My cause was whole-hearted in its devotion and signal in its attainments. There are also others like Buasaheb, Munshisab, Sampath Aiyangar, etc., who served My cause with unimpeachable integrity of character before dropping their physical body. 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.

The symbolic representation of these departed souls through flowers dispenses with the separate burial or cremation ceremonies, which are prevalent in different societies: and the putting of all these flowers in the same foundation is intended to emphasize the truth that though the bodies of these devotees were different, they were all parts of one eternal and indivisible Soul. The memorial tower has completely dispensed

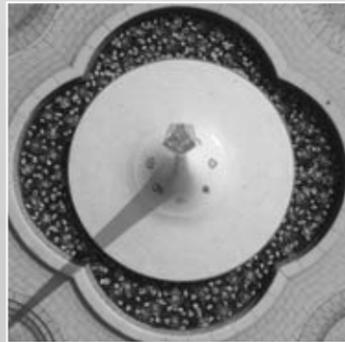
with the physical bodies of departed souls: for the physical body is only the illusory shadow of the soul. Those devotees whose names are likely to be inscribed on this tower, will have free choice in respect to the disposal of their bodies after their demise. Their bodies

may be buried or cremated or disposed of on the tower of silence according to any desire expressed by them during their lifetime: and they shall be represented on this memorial tower only by their names.

The tower will be in memory of men belonging to different religions and will in fact represent the fundamental unity of all the great world religions. All the great world religions have in their own way revealed the same one truth, which I bring anew: and this unity of all religions will be clearly emphasized 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. The unshakable peace of the life in eternity and the unfading glory of conscious divinity shall crown the souls, which are represented by this memorial tower.

They are all eternally Mine: I bless them all.

— Avatar Meher Baba



Names inscribed on the base of the Tower, viewed from above

Model of the Memorial Tower



# Katie Rustom Irani

27th February 1920 – 29th May 2009

In June 1923, when Katie was only three, Meher Baba traveled to Quetta and stayed with her parents, Rusi and Khorshed Irani. One day Baba asked Katie's mother how many children she had. "Why Baba, I have seven."

"No," came Baba's prompt reply, "You have five. Two of your children are mine."

## 2009 Silence Day Gathering

In continuation of the trend of recent years, the 2009 commemoration of Meher Baba's silence-taking on 10th July drew many pilgrims to Meherabad from throughout India. 1,160 men and women were accommodated at Hostels C and D, sleeping Amartithi-style on mattresses spread on the floor. Food arrangements over the five-day period from the 8th through the 13th were provided by several Baba lovers from Andhra Pradesh.

As usual, the main activities on Silence Day were pilgrim darshan at Baba's Samadhi on the Hill and at the Jhopdi at Lower Meherabad, where Baba's silence was actually inaugurated in 1925. The evening of the 9th featured a program of songs in Telugu in the theater, and the film created for the commemoration last year, "Meher Baba's Universal Message," was screened on the 11th. Dhuni on the 12th marked the conclusion of the event.

## 2009 Young Adults' Sahavas

Between 29th June and 4th July, a hundred young persons between the ages of nineteen and thirty-five participated in the ninth Young Adult Sahavas, hosted at Hostel C at Meherabad. Eighty-nine of the participants hailed from India and eleven from abroad.

## How to Contribute

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

For those who have not taken the opportunity to contribute, here is how. In the UK, please send your tax-deductible contribution to Avatar Meher Baba Association c/o Sue Chapman, 3 Whin Hill, Craster NE663TP, UK tel 01 665 57 69 57, e-mail suchapman@hotmail.com. In the United States, persons who wish to make tax-deductible contributions or wish to name the Trust as a beneficiary in their will, 401K, IRA, or insurance policy should contact Emory and Susan Ayers, P.O. Box 398 Mystic CT 06355 (tel. 860-535-0370, e-mail TrustPlan@ambppct.org); they will send you a list of eight Meher Baba tax-exempt organizations that have a grant in place to support the Trust Development Plan, and other relevant information. Baba lovers from other parts of the world should send contributions directly to the AMBPPC Trust, Post Bag No. 31, King's Road, Ahmednagar 414001, Maharashtra State, India. Further information can be found in the Trust's web site at [www.ambppct.org](http://www.ambppct.org).

At the time no one could understand Baba's cryptic remark, but years later, when the sisters Goher and Katie joined Baba's ashram—much to their mother's consternation—the meaning became clear.

Katie was shy as a girl, but when Baba visited Quetta in 1931, He began drawing her to Him. "Who is this little flower sitting in my room?" He asked her mother when He first saw her again.

At the same time, Baba began impressing upon her the importance of obedience, though she was still only eleven. An early lesson came about when one day her mother asked her to bring a basket of fruit to Him in His room.

Baba picked out the biggest and juiciest plum and stretched out His hand toward Katie, offering it to her. "No thank you, Baba," Katie replied, shaking her head. "This fruit is not for me; my mother sent it for especially for You."

Baba seemed displeased. Turning to Chanji, He gestured, "Doesn't she know that when I give something, you don't say no?"

Katie began crying, and Baba told her, "Never refuse anything I give you. You must never say no, even if you don't like it." Then He held out His arms and embraced her. "Now will you remember to accept whatever I give you?"

"Yes, Baba."

And the momentum of that first "Yes, Baba!" carried Katie Irani through to the very end of her life with the God-Man almost eighty years later.

Soon after His visit to her family home in 1931, when Baba was preparing for His first trip to the West, He sent the message to Quetta asking Katie to join Him; but her mother refused. Katie's opportunity finally arrived seven years later, shortly after Baba had set out on the Blue Bus tours in 1938. At His instructions she took the train to Hyderabad and joined the life of the ashram there. She remained with Him for eleven years.

Among the many stories from that period, one stands out. Baba had assigned her duties in the kitchen, where one day an argument erupted among the women. Afterwards, Katie remained alone in the kitchen, weeping. What was the sense in continuing to live with Baba when she never seemed able to please Him? Tears were rolling down her face and dropping

into the pot of dal that she was stirring on the stove.

Just at that moment Baba appeared at the door. "Why are you crying?"

"Baba, I don't want to stay here any longer," she blurted out.

"Are you crazy?" Baba pointed out the window to the distant mountains. At the time they were staying in the north of India, and the weather was icy. The outline of the Himalayas could be seen on the far horizon.

"There are people on those mountain peaks pining for Me, longing for just a glimpse. Their hair has become long and matted, and their eyelashes iced from the severe cold, but undaunted they continue their austerities and their search. Yet it is not in their destiny to have even a glimpse of Me. You live with Me and serve Me. How fortunate you are! What I am giving you is the real thing. Now forget about everything except being with Me."

When Baba embarked on the New Life in

1949, He ordered Katie to move to Bombay, reside with Arnavaz and Nariman Dadachanji, and find a job. "I remember saying to myself, 'Oh my God, the worst place I could ever be!' Can you imagine what it was like? Here I had just spent eleven years with Baba in His constant companionship, and then He tells me, 'Don't think you will ever see Me again!' But I had to say, 'Yes, Baba.' Finished!"

After Baba returned from the New Life in 1952, Katie continued with her job at the Japanese consulate in Bombay. A young man fell in love with her and asked her to marry him. Since, for Katie, Baba was the center of her existence, she asked Him what she should do.

Baba looked directly into Katie's eyes and said to her, "When you have found the King, why run after a beggar?"

Katie indeed had found the King, and that was all she needed to hear. Her heart belonged to Baba alone.

Katie died at Meherabad at 4:10 am on 29th May 2009, just before dawn. Though her death certificate may have stated that the cause of death was heart failure, in the truest sense her heart never failed but remained bold and steadfast until the end.

Katie won her race into the arms of her Eternal Beloved.



## 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, publications, 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. 860-535-0370, email EAYers88@comcast.net).

To subscribe to Tavern Talk (the Trust's

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