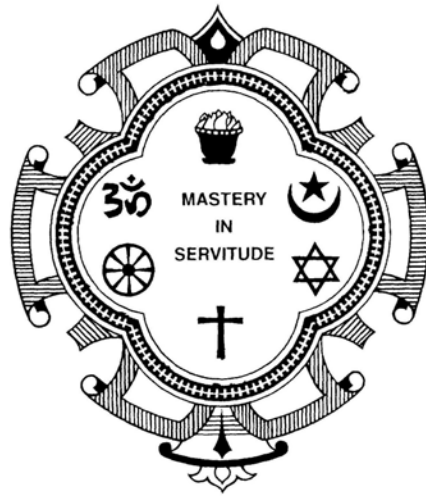


THE SPIRITUAL TRAINING PROGRAMME

**Avatar Meher Baba
Perpetual Public Charitable Trust**



Bhau Kalchuri

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Ahmednagar, 2005

Second Edition

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Meher Baba, 1954
At Khushru Quarters, Meher Nazar (Trust Office)

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SPIRITUAL TRAINING

The Trust's Spiritual Training Programme started in 1973 with the arrival of the first Spiritual Trainees. They, and the Spiritual Trainees who came during the next several decades, lived in close daily association with the Mandali. This association was the basis for the training of the first group of Spiritual Trainees. They lived at Meherabad (near the Samadhi), at Meherazad (the resident place of Beloved Baba) or the Trust Office at Ahmednagar (where the Trust is administered). By working alongside us, this first group of Spiritual Trainees came to know what ways would be pleasing to Beloved Baba. They would also hear stories from us about how we lived with Beloved Baba. But soon, the "shop" (as Baba called His own work) of the Mandali will be closed, and therefore, it is necessary that some guidelines for Spiritual Training be established to help you, the current Spiritual Trainees, and those of you who will come in the future.

Beloved Baba Himself created the Trust, and He specified that different objects under the Trust have to be fulfilled. Because they are His instructions, they are also His Wish. Who would want to fulfil His wishes other than those who love Him? The first group of Spiritual Trainees helped us with the development of the Trust. Naturally, this work will continue with you, the Spiritual Trainees of future generations. You will be the ones who want to lead a life solely dedicated to fulfilling Baba's wishes (as put down in the Trust Deed), and at the same time, seek your own personal relationship with the Beloved in your hearts.

What is Spiritual Training, and who can give Spiritual Training? Actually, Spiritual Training is a most personal matter. It is an intimate and sacred relationship between the Lover and the Beloved in your own heart. Only the Beloved can train or awaken anyone from within. No one else can. I know from experience that this training is not in words. But because Beloved Baba made Spiritual Training an object in His Trust Deed, it is the Trust's duty to establish some outer structure for Spiritual Training. This structure, a Spiritual Training Programme, would then allow dedicated souls to have the opportunity to come here and dedicate their lives to Him and fulfil His wishes as put down in the Trust Deed.

What is the Trust's Spiritual Training Programme? First, let me explain what spirituality is. Spirituality is not following a religious discipline through rituals. Spirituality is daring to efface your false self by gradually freeing yourself of its assertions. How does this happen? You cannot get rid of the false self simply by hearing lectures or by reading spiritual books. Only Perfect Masters or the Avatar can show how to efface the false self. Beloved Baba would always say that love for God, obedience to the orders of the Master and surrenderance to Him is the way to be free of the false self. But Baba lovers who have come to Ahmednagar since Beloved Baba passed away say to us, "But you had Baba with you, and we do not."

And they are right, of course, because He is no longer in physical form. But they have yet to understand that He is always with us internally. He can always be found in the heart that yearns for Him and listens to His silent prompting within. Even though we Mandali had Baba with us, and even though we had His direct instructions, still we had to learn how to listen in our own hearts to what He really wished in order to follow Him.

Therefore, whether living with Him physically or not, our heart's honest love for Him shows us the way to Him. When you go to Beloved Baba's Tomb, what do you do? Do you just bow down? What is the meaning of bowing down? Bowing down signifies keeping the head of your false self down by not listening to it but instead listening to the Beloved in your heart through your honest and willing acceptance of what He wishes you to do. As you make yourselves aware of His pleasure in your hearts (not only when you bow down at His Tomb, but also in your daily life), you will undergo real Spiritual Training, even though the Avatar is no longer in the body.

The voice of the heart will always lead you to love, sacrifice and self-effacement. It is very essential to follow these promptings in your heart without a second thought. It will make you free from the assertion of the false self. If you ask me how to listen to the prompting of the Beloved in your heart, I would say, "When you are honest in your heart to the Beloved, you will be able to follow His Wish. Your honesty to His love will guide you. The prompting of the heart is as simple as feeling a slight touch that directs you towards Him. But if your mind is the slightest bit distracted with what you think is right, then you will not feel anything except the weight of your own false self. If you are not honest to Him, the mind will make such noise all the time that the false self will assert itself over the poor real self. Your real self will remain as a silent witness, unable to prompt your heart with the Truth."

The voice of the mind is very different from the voice of the heart. At first, it may be difficult to distinguish between the two, because you are used to listening to the mind (which actually just creates noise). When you are at the mercy of the mind, you pay attention to its noise and get disturbed. You may think at the time that it is the voice of the heart you are listening

to. But this is not true. Once again, remember, the heart will always lead you to love, sacrifice and self-effacement. The mind only leads you to fulfil your desires.

The mind makes it difficult to understand that you have to go beyond right and wrong. Truth is neither right nor wrong; it is beyond both. What this means for your day-to-day life is that when you justify your actions, insisting upon being right, it is just another expression of the false self. Justification is the product of the intellect, and you have to try to go beyond the intellect by expressing love for God honestly and sincerely. Spiritual Training is not only listening to your heart, but also becoming aware of the activity of the mind and not being influenced by it. You should treat the activity of the mind like an unwanted guest.

On the spiritual path, there is no room for the real self and the false self to walk side by side because the path is so narrow that it can only accommodate the real self. You must make the false self follow the real self then you can walk on the spiritual path.

You must try to master your false self, enslaving it to serve God in everyone and everything. When you have this" attitude, your hard false self will first become soft, and then, slowly become dust. Becoming dust-like is not an overnight achievement. It requires years of honest effort and reliance upon God. You must let the circumstances of life hammer away at the hard false self to soften it and slowly become dust-like. It has been said by all the Masters since the beginning of time that you must become like dust under the Master's feet.

Although the false self will always try to lead you off the path, you must faithfully keep the false self from thwarting your efforts toward a life of "Mastery in Servitude". Living a life of selfless service under Mastery in Servitude is another

dimension to the Spiritual Training Programme. Selfless service is different from social service as done in the world. Although social service may bring good to the world, here, as you help fulfil the objects of the Trust Deed, the service you do in the midst of intense activity is to undo your false self, with no interest in name or fame.

Beloved Baba has given the words "Mastery in Servitude" as His motto over the door of His Tomb. Through this simple phrase (which can be your guiding light), He shows us the way to Him whether He is in the body or not. You can always refer your actions back to His words over His Tomb.

In the Trust Deed, which Beloved Baba Himself signed, there is the object of Spiritual Training. The Deed states, "Facilities for training Baba-lovers in living a life towards spiritual enlightenment according to instructions which the Settlor may give to the Trustees from time to time." After Beloved Baba passed away, we Mandali recorded the instructions of Beloved Baba (the Settlor) in 1974 through a Deed of Declaration. These instructions were made into 10 Objects. The first object directly states upon what Spiritual Training is to be based: "For training of persons according to the life, particularly what was called 'The New Life', lived by Avatar Meher Baba and His Companions exemplifying and practising at all times renunciation and detachment in the midst of the ordinary worldly activities, that is, *to be in the world and yet be not of it.*"

Therefore, it is the responsibility of the Board of Trustees to organise, administer and create facilities for Spiritual Training.

In considering what guidelines the Trust may establish to help Spiritual Trainees, Beloved Baba's own conditions,

which He laid down for His Companions in the Labour Phase of the New Life, are appropriate for you to help focus your minds and hearts on leading a life towards the Truth. But remember, these are only guidelines; they are not a replacement for the honest love that you must maintain in your life. However, as much as I would like to do so, that love cannot be explained. It is for each of you to love God and discover in your own heart what it means to follow the Truth. But if you remain dedicated to Meher Baba's Cause by fulfilling the objects of the Trust under Mastery in Servitude, if you live under the conditions of the Labour Phase of Meher Baba's New Life, if you listen to Beloved Baba's Wish for you in your own hearts, then you, as Spiritual Trainees, will be guided directly by the Eternal Beloved, Avatar Meher Baba.

Before I get to the particulars of the Trust's Spiritual Training Programme, I want to bring up some points which are very important for you, as Spiritual Trainees, to understand:

- **The Responsibility and Duty of The Beloved and The Lover;**
- **Divine Will and Divine Wish, and**
- **Rituals and Ceremonies.**

These topics always bring up many questions and having a proper understanding of them will help you in your Spiritual Training.

SOME BASIC SPIRITUAL QUESTIONS

RESPONSIBILITY AND DUTY OF THE BELOVED AND THE LOVER

When the first soul realised himself as God, He eternally became responsible for every soul in Creation to eventually become One with God. Since time began, He has enacted His duty by coming down on Earth in human form age after age to give every soul a spiritual push towards the Truth. He can never be free from His responsibility and His duty. He is called the Ancient One.

Every individual, when he takes birth, brings along with him his past *sanskaras* (impressions). The physical body is nothing but the mould of these past sanskaras. Through the course of reincarnation, the sanskaras go on changing, as does the face and body. Sanskaras are different for everyone. This can easily be understood by looking at the human face. Each face is different from every other face. And for each birth, one spends only the sanskaras from the past life. While spending these sanskaras, one collects new sanskaras, which are then spent in the next life.

Because they perpetuate the false self, as long as these sanskaras are in the mind, you remain bound. In a very real sense, they are a disease that needs to be treated. But each of us needs a different treatment for the same disease - the disease of the false self. The Avatar, knowing each person's impressions, treats each one according to those individual impressions. His treatment is to wipe out the impressions that obstruct the progress of consciousness towards God.

There are three types of impressions: natural, unnatural and non-natural. Natural impressions make your consciousness progress through evolution. They are created in response to God's Whim, which is in everyone, and help consciousness progress towards God through evolution. Unnatural impressions are those which are not in response to the Whim. They are a response from the mind and obstruct your consciousness from progressing towards God. Non-natural impressions only cause diseases through the environment. They are easily wiped out. But unnatural impressions are difficult to wipe out, because they are due to your actions. Ultimately, all sanskaras have to be wiped out in order for you to become consciously One with God.

When the Avatar comes down on earth, His Work for humanity is to eliminate impressions that obstruct humanity from following God. After He drops His body, the force of His work is felt for 400 to 500 years as people gradually turn towards God. Because the general population of the world comes to know about God, begins to believe in Him and follow Him, this period of time is called His Universal Manifestation. During this period, most of the unnatural impressions of humanity and the lower kingdoms are wiped out.

When the force of His Work is at its height, brotherhood can be most easily felt in the world. During this time, Illusion bows down to Him. But then, as His Manifestation wanes, the force of Illusion grows throughout the world, gradually raising its head. Selfishness, greed, anger, lust, jealousy and all other low desires increase once again, creating impressions that obstruct humanity from following God. Gradually, the world's condition becomes bad. It turns from bad to worse, and then from worse to worst. Except for a few of His true lovers, humanity remains in the grip of Illusion, forgetting God. At that point in time, God comes back again in the form of the Avatar (the Christ, the Prophet) with a different name and face to

perform His duty to Creation through His Universal Work, giving each and every soul a spiritual push towards God.

His duty toward humanity is once again to create awareness of God in peoples' hearts by minimising the impressions that obstruct consciousness from moving towards God. This awareness allows humanity to follow Him in a way particularly suited to them, by following His Wish. Although He is the same Ancient One, it is critical to follow the Wish of the present Avatar, because His Wish is based on helping humanity overcome its present set of obstructions against following God. When He begins His work, humanity is under the force of Maya, and so they cannot recognise Him. But when, because of His work, their impressions are minimised, they recognise Him, accept Him and follow Him by following His Wish. When the Avatar expresses His Wish, He also gives humanity the awareness of its importance in order to enable them to carry it out. After He drops His physical form, the Ancient One remains active in the form of the Holy Spirit. He continues to minimise obstructive impressions, so that humanity's consciousness may progress towards God. With every Advent, human consciousness is raised to a certain level. But at the end of the cycle of cycles, human consciousness is raised to an even greater extent, affecting all of mankind. We are at the end of the cycle of cycles, which is why Beloved Baba has said the world will come to Him.

Every person unknowingly has the responsibility to spend those impressions which they have brought with them into the present life. No one knows what those impressions are and how they should be spent. When you spend your sanskaras according to your own wishes and desires, you collect new sanskaras and remain bound. But if you spend sanskaras according to the Avatar's Wish, you follow God and do not collect new impressions. In fact, you lose some of the binding

impressions you had. Therefore everyone's real duty is to follow the Avatar's most recent Wish for humanity.

The Ancient One and humanity each have a responsibility and a duty. The responsibility of the Ancient One is to take care of each and every soul in Creation so that it eventually becomes One with God. His duty is to descend into human form. In general, He gives a spiritual push to each and every soul in Creation. In particular, He creates awareness of God in humanity by removing obstructions in consciousness, so that consciousness may proceed to the Truth.

As for the responsibility of humanity, each individual must spend the sanskaras (impressions) that they bring with them to their present life. The critical decision is how those impressions are to be spent. And that is where your duty lies - to spend them according to the Wish of the Avatar, the Messiah, the Messenger of God, the Christ, in order that your consciousness eventually becomes One with God, completing the Avatar's responsibility to the soul.

DIVINE WILL AND DIVINE WISH

Although everything happens according to the Divine Will, and as Baba explained, not even a leaf can move without it, the limited mind can neither know nor even understand how the Divine Will operates. It is beyond mankind's comprehension. The Avatar comes to give His Wish to humanity, so they can follow His Wish and come to closer to God.

Yet humanity, out of ignorance, often ignores His Wish, and in its attempts to comfort itself, misinterprets events, declaring that certain events or circumstances occur because of the Divine Will.

For a very simple example, someone steals something. The police catch the thief, and he is brought before a judge. The judge says to him, "Did you do this action?"

In reply, he says, "Everything happens according to Divine Will. Although I have done the act of stealing, God must have willed this act. Otherwise, how could I have done it?"

The judge replies, "Okay! You say your stealing has happened according to Divine Will. No doubt this must be so, because it happened. But I have to put you in jail because you have committed this crime. Since you're going to jail is also going to happen, that also is according to the Divine Will."

This simple example may seem laughable. But too often the mind makes similar justifications, in more complex situations in one's life, for the actions that we commit. We say God is doing "it", when it is we ourselves who, because of our own impressions, are doing the action.

To use another simplified example of how we sometimes think:

A Baba lover thinks that Baba is telling him what to do, and therefore, it is Baba's Will. He informs his friend, "Baba wants me to leave my wife, because only now have I have met the one woman in my life who is my true love."

The friend asks, "How can you say it is Baba's Will?"

He replies, "Since I am feeling this way, it must be Baba's Will. Because He said that nothing happens without it being His Will."

The friend says, "That may be. But do you think that your action would be pleasing to Baba? Do you think that it is His Wish that you leave your wife for another woman?"

At this, the first Baba lover says, "I only know what is in my heart. I must listen to my heart and be true to myself, which is what I think Baba would want us to do. So it must be Baba's Wish for me. And so I must leave my wife for my true love."

Such is the state of affairs when we do not listen to the Avatar's Wish but our own wish, and we justify our actions with our own philosophies of the Divine Wish and the Divine Will. We cannot understand how the Divine Will functions. It is beyond human understanding. But because of His compassion, we can follow the Divine Wish, which is the Avatar's message of love and truth for humanity. Although His Wish is fundamentally the same each and every time He comes ("Love God and love your fellow man"), there are also many aspects of His Wish which, in order to free people from specific obstructions, apply only to the predicament of humanity at that time.

That is why the words of truth that are in the Bible, the Koran and the Vedas are difficult to put into action today. They were meant for different time periods in humanity's history and suited to those specific situations and sanskaras. The words are correct, no doubt. They are words of Truth. But when we try to understand those words from our present circumstances and impressions, we end up interpreting those words according to our modern understanding. This results in misunderstanding, because our situation and impressions differ from those of humanity at that time.

Understanding the words of a previous Avatar is not easy. Only deep love can illuminate those words. But the general public does not have such love, and so they do not try to

understand the real meaning of those words of Truth. Because of this, gradually a priest class comes about and begins to tell people how to follow the words of Truth. But the priest class does not understand either and makes its own interpretations which eventually become rules for humanity to follow instead of following the Avatar's Wish. So the Wish the Avatar gave in a previous descent eventually is followed without understanding. Because of it, people follow the words mechanically and then ritual is born.

When the Avatar comes back, He wipes out obstructions in consciousness, so that humanity can follow God. For those whose hearts are truly sincere in following the Wish of a previous Advent, the words of Truth given at that time can be followed. However, Beloved Baba has told us that the easiest way to follow God is through the Wish of the most recent Avatar, because His message is the most closely suited to humanity's current situation and sanskaras.

As the Ancient One, He has to come down on earth in human form again and again, giving His Wish in a way that will help humanity at that time. Because its sanskaras keep changing, humanity's situation keeps changing throughout time. Therefore, whatever the Avatar's Wish is, and how He works to make humanity aware of it, depends upon sanskaras that humanity has collected since His previous descent. Whatever obstructions in consciousness to God humanity had at the time of Zoroaster, the same obstructions did not exist at the time of Ram. Whatever obstructions to God existed at the time of Ram, the same did not exist at the time of Krishna. Whatever obstructions to God were at the time of Krishna, the same did not exist at the time of Buddha. Whatever obstructions to God were at the time of Buddha, the same did not exist at the time of Jesus. And whatever obstructions to God were at the time of Jesus, the same did not exist at the time of Mohammed. And

whatever the obstructions to God were at the time of Mohammed, the same does not exist at the time of Meher Baba.

When the Ancient One came down in the form of Jesus, His work included using His power to attract and heal the masses. Baba stated that as Jesus, it was necessary for Him to do that at the time. He gave out part of His Wish as He sat with His disciples during the Last Supper. He asked them to eat bread and drink wine. But the bread He asked them to eat was likened to His body, and the wine He asked them to drink was likened to His blood. He knew His crucifixion was to come, and He asked His disciples to do this out of remembrance of Him. His utterance grew into one of the major ways Christians still remember Him. But His saying this is not for all time. It was His way to help His followers remember Him.

Another instance of His Wish is the Lord's Prayer, which He gave to help His followers and asked them to repeat. In referring to this prayer, Beloved Baba has said that no prayer even from Him lasts with its original potency. It is only for the time being. And this time, Baba has given several prayers. He specifically stated that His followers will be helped by repeating the Parvardigar prayer when He is not in the body. It will help maintain the link, He said.

When the Messenger of God, Mohammed came, His work included being involved in wars. As for His Wish, we turn to a few practical matters. He had said if you give a loan to anyone, don't charge interest. At that time, the situation was such that when anyone took out a loan, he would be charged so much interest, that he would never be able to repay the loan during his lifetime.

Now, the situation is quite different. There are banks, and if you take out a loan, there is a fixed rate of interest. And

when you deposit any amount in a bank, even if you don't want interest, the bank will automatically give it to you.

Another situation which is different from the present time is that Mohammed allowed men to have as many as four wives. At that time, not only was the number of women greater than men, but they also needed protection. Now the situation is changed. Family planning is necessary throughout the world, because the world has become overpopulated.

Meher Baba worked in Silence. But because mankind's intellect has developed, to satisfy it He gave out more words than in any previous Advent.

Because I was one of the Mandali, I could see how Baba would give out His Wish. Sometimes it was only for a particular person; other times it was only for His Mandali. Sometimes it was for ones who were close to Him, although they lived far away. At other times, He would give out His Wish to the general public.

Beloved Baba had said to the general public, "Remember Me." People may think, "How can simply remembering Meher Baba be spirituality? Shouldn't we observe austerities, penances, fasts, silence and repeat mantras? Isn't that spirituality?"

But in this age of action, where the mind is distracted by all the daily activities, He has made it very simple for humanity to follow Him through His remembrance. People do not know what help He gives them when they remember Him. For those who remember Him, He binds them to Him and gradually wipes out their impressions. Even though Baba would tell the general public to "Remember Me", you, as Spiritual Trainees, should never take too lightly His Wish of Remembering Him. Then in

a practical way you will make Him your constant companion in your thoughts, words and deeds.

A few years ago, I wrote a book entitled *Mastery in Servitude*. That book had three sections.

The first section had to do with organising the entire work force of the Trust, whether they are Trustees, Spiritual Trainees, paid staff, etc. under Beloved Baba's motto of Mastery in Servitude.

Another section of the book concerned "*Narayan Seva*" ("Service to God".) But in this case, the service is God Conscious (the Avatar) serving God Unconscious (His Creation). I explained what this means and gave episodes in Beloved Baba's physical life of how He performed Narayan Seva, which is really Mastery in Servitude. That book, along with this one on Spiritual Training, gives the Trust its foundation to fulfil its objects and manage its activities.

Also included in *Mastery in Servitude* was a section on the very important message of Beloved Baba's called "My Wish". The Trust's Mastery in Servitude programme is based firmly on Baba's Wish as He stated in this message. In this section of that book, I take each of the six points in Baba's Wish and portray their truth through five incidents that took place in Baba's time and one that took place in Mohammed's time. Baba gave this message in a special meeting of His lovers at Meherabad in 1958. Anyone, anywhere, who upholds His Wish as stated here, will surely come closer and closer to Him:

• • •
My Wish

Baba said: The lover has to keep the wish of the Beloved. My wish for My lovers is as follows:

1. Do not shirk your responsibilities.
2. Attend faithfully to your worldly duties, but keep always in the back of your mind that all this is Baba's.
3. When you feel happy, think: "Baba wants me to be happy." When you suffer, think: "Baba wants very me to suffer."
4. Be resigned to every situation and think honestly and sincerely: "Baba has placed me in this situation."
5. With the understanding that Baba is in everyone, try to help and serve others.
6. I say with My Divine Authority to each and all that whosoever takes My name at time of breathing his last comes to Me; so do not forget to remember Me in your last moments. Unless you start remembering Me from now on, it will be difficult to remember Me when your end approaches. You should start practising from now on. Even if you take My name only once every day, you will not forget to remember Me in your dying moments.

• • •

Upholding His Wish (as given by Beloved Baba here) is a good place to begin to follow God for most people. But you, as Spiritual Trainees, have come here to uphold more than what Baba states here. (This will be explained in later sections of this book.)

RITUALS AND CEREMONIES

Spiritual Trainees must truly understand one very, very important thing. When the Avatar comes back again to Earth in His next Advent, He will give His Wish according to humanity's situation at that time, not according to its situation in the 20th Century or for the several centuries that will follow it. When He comes in His next Advent, in one way or another, the Wish of His previous Advent as Meher Baba will have become misunderstood with the passing of time. Whether through rituals and ceremonies or by some other means, the beauty, love and power of His Wish in the advent of Meher Baba will be nearly lost to the general population. However, there are always those who love for the sake of love, like St. Francis, who lived 1200 years after Jesus, and whose love for Jesus,.Baba pointed out, pleased Him.

Rituals and ceremonies, created by humanity in order to try and remember the previous Advents, end up becoming obstructions on the road to the abode of God. They are like many thorns placed on the path of love that restrict spontaneity of action. Nobody wants to walk down such a thorny path. But pure love for God wipes out the restrictions and creates longing to become One with God. Actually, pure love for God is required, and nothing else.

Beloved Baba has said very emphatically that religion should be like a flowing river, carrying its followers to the Ocean (God). But when rituals and ceremonies are created and followed, they dry up the river so that the followers cannot flow to the Ocean (God). They remain stranded in the dry sand. He said that He would flood the river beds with His Love so that humanity will spontaneously flow towards the Ocean.

I will relate an incident that occurred during Baba's physical life that shows how He helped His Mandali put aside their continued interest in rituals for the love of God.

When He was at Manzil-e-Meem in Bombay, the first ashram, Beloved Baba allowed His disciples to follow their own religions. Muslims would go to the mosque, Hindus to temples, Iranis and Parsis to the *agyari* (fire temple), Christians to church, etc.

When Baba came to Meherabad and established His ashram there, His followers were still from different religions. But He would apparently take interest only in the rituals and ceremonies of the Hindus. When there was any festival, such as the birthday of Ram, Baba would encourage them. He would accept whatever they wanted to do and would show His pleasure. He would tell all the Mandali members, "Just see how Hindus work day and night and make all sorts of preparations to celebrate Ram's birthday! And because of their interest, I encourage them."

The Hindus would feel very, very happy. They would go to the extent that, as prescribed by Hindu religious rituals, they would bathe Baba as He sat outside on a wooden plank. Not only would the Hindu Mandali take part in this festival bath, but also thousands of people who had come for the celebration. With each one pouring a small pot of water on Baba's body, the bath would take hours. Throughout it, Baba would show His

joy! Afterwards, a big feast would be given to the thousands of people, and then singing would take place. The programme would go on continuously, day and night, with everyone keeping awake and Baba would praise the Hindus throughout.

Because Hindus have many festivals, this celebration did not happen only once a year. For each birthday festival - Ram, Krishna and other Masters, Baba would permit a celebration. His other followers - Parsis, Iranis, Muslims and Christians - felt annoyed by these celebrations. Neither would they work with the Hindus to organise the celebrations, nor would they keep awake. In fact, they would complain amongst themselves, "Baba is only for the Hindus. He is not for Muslims, Parsis, Iranis, Christians, etc."

On one occasion, the Hindus were working day and night preparing for the celebration of Krishna's birthday. The Parsis, Iranis, Muslims, Christians, etc., felt so bad, thinking that Baba only favoured Hindus that they held a nightlong meeting to discuss how their religious festivals should also be celebrated at Meherabad. During a sleepless night, they sat together and wrote down proposals that they wanted to submit to Baba. The next morning, Baba came and sat in the old Mandali Hall at Lower Meherabad (previously the military mess quarters during World War I). All Mandali members gathered around Him.

Baba asked one of the Muslims, "Did you sleep last night?"

"No, I could not sleep," he replied.

Baba said, "You did not sleep? Why? Were you helping the Hindus with their preparations?"

"No."

"Then why did you not sleep?" Baba asked.

He said, "We were holding a meeting."

"Meeting? What meeting?"

And the Muslim said, "You just favour the Hindus. All their celebrations are celebrated. What about *our* celebrations? We were preparing a proposal to submit to you for celebrating our festivals."

And Baba said, "Good that you opened My eyes today. I was thinking that these Hindus are interested only in the rituals and ceremonies of their religion, and that you are interested in God. But now I find that *you* are also interested in the rituals and ceremonies of your own religion. So, I will give you rituals and ceremonies. I wanted to give you God, but now I have come to know that you are also interested in the same thing as the Hindus. So all right, now you just celebrate your rituals and ceremonies!"

All of them cried out, "No, Baba, we don't want rituals and ceremonies! We want God!"

And Hindus also cried out, "Now, no more rituals and ceremonies. We also want God."

Then the celebrations of the remembrance of God through rituals and ceremonies stopped.

This incident in the Avatar's life shows how He patiently and lovingly brought home to His Mandali the critical point that what is important is love for God, not celebrations of God through rituals and ceremonies as advised by a priest class. People wrongly give importance to rituals and ceremonies

instead of giving importance to the expression of love that should be behind them. God does not require any ritual or ceremony. He requires pure love. Remember what Baba has told us, "God does not listen to the language of the tongue, which consists of mantras, tantras, japas. God does not listen to the language of the mind, which consists of meditation and concentration. God listens to the language of the heart, which is love."

Really speaking, the real depth of your love for the Beloved is always kept as a secret in your heart.

You, as Spiritual Trainees, must be very mindful that the only value any action has is the love behind it. Otherwise, the beauty of love will be lost, and your actions will be reduced to mere outward show in order to conform to the expectations of others.

An example of the difference between acting out of love and acting in order to conform to others is what easily might happen at Baba's Tomb.

Passers-by on the road, seeing people from different countries coming here, become interested in this place. They walk up the Hill out of curiosity. They watch as each person bows down to the Tomb; they hear the prayers being performed and arti being sung. So they think that by coming here, they also must bow down. That it is the traditional thing to do out of respect for this sacred place. So they also go to Baba's Samadhi, also stand in a queue and also bow down.

Now the behaviour of the passers-by and the pilgrims is just the same, but there is a great difference in their acts. Those who love Baba bow down because of love, and those spectators who see people bowing down, though they do likewise, bow down out of respect to tradition.

Remember well, that when something is done out of love, it cannot be a tradition; it cannot be a ritual. But when something is done because it is the traditional thing to do, it is a ritual. The truth is that each heart is its own witness as to whether it acts out of love or not.

Now in these next sections, I will give the particulars of the Trust's Spiritual Training Programme which, by fulfilling the objects in the Trust Deed, promote the expression of love of God through dedicated action.

THE SPIRITUAL TRAINING PROGRAMME

The truth is that we are One, but to experience the truth of this Oneness, the soul has to enter into the play of Manyness or Illusion. We all are playing a role in this great play of Beloved Baba's. This play, however, is not just a diversion. It makes each of you realise what you eternally are - One with God. In this play, Beloved Baba is the Director. Each of us has to follow His direction in order to play our role in a way that He can free us from our sanskaras and make us realise our eternal and infinite state of being.

In a theatrical play, actors and actresses play the role given to them by the Director. The Director then coaches them on how to play their parts. As the actors listen to the Director, he is able to help them perform to the best of their ability.

But, we as actors in this drama of Creation, often forget our Director and instead, what directs us is our impressions. They make us play our role in such a way that we collect new impressions, which make us bound to take birth once again to experience these new impressions. This way the drama of Creation goes on and on.

In the Bible and the Koran, there is no mention of reincarnation. And in fact, because the soul does not take birth and does not die, there is no such thing. If reincarnation exists, it is only in the dream of Illusion. The dream is false. And therefore reincarnation is also false, because it takes place in the dream.

The drama of Creation is one very long dream with innumerable small dreams in it. When any new dream begins, it is called birth, and when it ends it is called death. We do not realise this, because the dream has so much power over us, that we think it is real. But by following Beloved Baba's direction, the dream gradually has less and less power as His love enters our lives more and more. A short story illustrates the illusion of dreaming and the power it has over us.

One night a man goes to sleep. He dreams that he is a king, a very powerful king with a big kingdom. But he does not care for his subjects and enjoys his life to the fullest extent. He spends money on his own comfort, neglecting his people, who continue to suffer. Now, in this dream, he finds another king, who has a small kingdom. This king is very honest. He sees how the more powerful king does not care about his people's suffering. He wonders what he should do to help them and decides to write a letter to the powerful king, requesting him very politely to relieve the people's suffering. When the powerful king receives the letter and reads it, he becomes very upset. He writes to the less powerful king, warning him that if he dares write another letter with such advice, he will go to war and defeat him.

The less powerful king receives the letter. He thinks the only thing to do is to now make war against the more powerful king, even though he feels that it will be futile, because the other king has a big army. Then he decides to go to war

regardless, because even if he is killed, at least he fought for the people's good which is his duty. So he decides to wage war.

With full confidence he will defeat the less powerful king, the more powerful king appears with a large army. But the less powerful king is very determined to help the people. His army is very loyal to him and also very determined. As the battle goes on, the powerful king finds that he is losing. He sees the great determination this less powerful king and his army have. He feels that if he is caught, he will be killed. So he decides to flee from the battlefield by horse. He mounts his horse and rides away for a long time.

And then, the man, who was dreaming this dream of two kings, begins to wake up. As he does, he finds that he is still partially in the dream. He finds himself breathing very heavily, as if he is running away from something. Slowly, he sees that he is lying in his bed. Finally, he realises what he had experienced was just a dream. While he was dreaming, he thought everything he saw was true: the two kings and their kingdoms, their personalities that brought about the war. It all seemed so real to him then. But upon awakening, he finds that the battlefield, the two kings, everything, has all disappeared.

Our daily life is a dream, but we do not know that. It all seems so real. Our daily drama goes on because we are directed by our own sanskaras. But we cannot be free from their binding and awaken from the dream until we pay attention to the direction of the Real Director (God).

The Spiritual Training Programme, therefore, is established for you to train yourself to hear Beloved Baba's direction and put it into action. Under God's direction, you can become a real actor who tries to wake up from the drama of his impressions by longing to find Him, to follow Him, to experience Him, and to become One with Him.

Spiritual Training has an outer and inner side. The outer side is your labour of love in fulfilling the objects of the Trust Deed. The inner side is the love in your heart that inspires you to do so. When your actions are a reflection of the love in your heart, your Spiritual Training will proceed very smoothly.

Your lives as Spiritual Trainees are much like a performance. And as in any performance, your duty is to give your very best. Except here, the audience is also both of an outer and inner nature.

Outwardly, you help fulfil the objects of the Trust Deed by putting your hearts into the work with complete conviction that, by doing so, you are fulfilling the Wish of the Beloved. As you work lovingly, honestly and sincerely, acting out of a spirit of Oneness, the false self's impulses for name, fame, etc., is restrained, and you will be upholding the Real Self by being in harmony with others. Through the outer performance of your innermost intentions, your spiritual life will grow.

However, when you have not served the Beloved in a spirit of Oneness, your external performance will not be in harmony with others and can never please the Beloved, regardless of whether the outer work is done. When it comes to the feeling of harmony, the hearts of others cannot be cheated. Outer harmony is a reflection of the inner world where there is nothing but Oneness, and so the heart cannot be fooled. Therefore, in this case, the heart is the most difficult audience in the world to please, because it is an audience that will accept nothing short of the truth. Only when your heart bases your actions upon a spirit of Oneness, without having hidden motives, can genuine harmony be established.

The outer performance of your duty requires a Supervisor whose duty it is to see that the work allotted to you

is done. Those of you whose duty and responsibility it is to be a Supervisor, whether Trustee, Department Manager, Section Supervisor, etc., must remember that you are also Spiritual Trainees. Your role as a supervisor is an external one. Your concern is to explain how the work is to be accomplished and to be responsible for the work being done satisfactorily. Spiritual Trainees under your supervision will fail in their assignments from time to time and should be corrected to enable them to fulfil their assignments better in the future. But remember, you are not in a position to judge their love for the Beloved. That is most personal.

Because we are all One, no one is above or beneath any one, regardless of whether you are in a managerial position or not. But in order to experience this Oneness, everyone has to free themselves from the impressions of the false self. Regardless of the role in which you serve, as you perform your service, you learn inner spiritual freedom, which upholds the Real Self at the expense of the false self. So, even while performing your outward duties, you also perform this inner duty, which is another aspect to the inner side of Spiritual Training.

Although your outer performance is needed to complete the work at hand, the truth is that your outer performance is the medium for the expression of your love. Regardless of the results of your work, important as it may be, it is more important to remember that your love is the only indispensable link with the Beloved.

Therefore, the perfect audience to your real life, the inner life, is Beloved Baba. The movements of the heart towards the Beloved are the inner performance that is only for His pleasure. This inner performance is kept secret in your heart, even in the midst of intense Trust activity. But only through listening and following His inner direction can you

perform as He wishes you to perform. Each individual alone is responsible to the Beloved for their relationship. No one should forget this sacred responsibility - the intimacy of love between the lover and the Beloved. It is the reason that the whole world came into existence.

THE NEW LIFE

According to the Deed of Declaration, the Trust's Spiritual Training Programme is based particularly upon the time period of Beloved Baba's life called the New Life.

What is the New Life? When the search for God begins, we leave our old life behind and seek a new life. But to search for God is not an easy matter. Therefore, each time the Avatar comes, He reveals to searching humanity what it is seeking -The New Life. He determines how this New Life is to be lived according to the needs of mankind at that time. The New Life that He establishes each time is the easiest way to follow Him, live for Him and love Him.

Beloved Baba played perfectly the role of a Seeker of God by following the conditions of the New Life one hundred percent. During this phase of His life, He took His Companions through a brief training period in the spiritual activity of a Life of Begging, Langoti Life (that is, to put on a *langoti*, loincloth, and meditate), Gypsy Life and physical labour.

After this training phase, Baba made three plans for the Companions to choose how they would like to live the New Life with Him. However, He stated, "These three plans are based on the Labour Phase. The other three phases of Begging, Gypsy and Langoti Life will be personally carried out by Me alone or with the Companions staying with Me as New Life Companions. Therefore, the Companions, by accepting one of

these plans, (particularly Plan 1-A) will have been said to have gone through all the four phases of the New Life. As they will do the Labour Phase for Me, I will have been said to have gone through the Labour Phase also."

By emphasising the Labour Phase in the New Life, Meher Baba directs humanity how spiritual upliftment is to be attained in this age. In previous ages, the three phases of Begging, Gypsy and Langoti Life were suitable for spiritual search. But for the modern world, which is an active world, it is easier for the mind to focus on God through action that is dedicated to Him, rather than trying to focus the mind on Him by being physically inactive through meditation.

No longer is it necessary to withdraw from the world to find God. God can be found in your daily surroundings as long as your action is dedicated to Him, no matter what work you are doing or where you are doing it. Whether you are in a city or in a rural area, whether you are on a farm or in an office, whether you are a professional or a businessman, if your actions are dedicated to God, then you can live the New Life. When Beloved Baba sent His Companions to run the ghee business in Delhi, it showed that His physical presence is not required to live the New Life.

Although Beloved Baba showed physical renunciation by leaving Meherabad and Meherazad, ultimately His message to the world in this Advent is that you have to renounce your own false self in the course of your daily life. Therefore, the way to search for spiritual truth in this age has changed from outer renunciation to inner renunciation and from the inner activity of meditation to the outer activity of dedicated action.

In order to begin to live the New Life in this modern age, Beloved Baba created the Labour Phase of dedicated action to God, where you can follow Him in the midst of intense

activity. But in order to live for God, you must become His Servant.

The Labour Phase of Baba's New Life lasted until Baba asked those of the Companions, who were willing to obey Him one hundred percent willingly and cheerfully, to become His Servants.

Accompanied by His Servants, Baba's New Life culminated in His Manonash phase. Manonash means "annihilation of the mind". The search for God ends with the mind being utterly eradicated and the final remnants of the false self effaced. Before God is realised, the mind must be annihilated. Everyone eventually has to go through Manonash. Of course, Baba did not annihilate His mind. His mind is the Universal mind, which contains not only all individual minds but also the whole universe. What He must have done for His work is to take upon Himself the limited mind of a seeker of God who was ready for Manonash. And when Baba achieved Manonash as a Seeker of God, it was that person's limited mind which was annihilated. Beloved Baba always remains God, no matter what work He has to do to help humanity.

In order for humanity to live the New Life in this modern age, Beloved Baba and His Companions went through three distinct stages of the New Life. By doing so, He created a clear path of development for spiritual progress in this age. That path, which is the basis for the Trust's Spiritual Training Programme, is:

- 1) **Following** God through dedicated action of the labour phase;
- 2) **Living** for God by being His Servant, and
- 3) **Realising** God by **Dying** for Him through manonash.

You, as Spiritual Trainees, enter the first stage of living the New Life through the Labour Phase of dedicated action to God. Your life steadily becomes more and more dedicated to Him while serving under Mastery in Servitude. As you mature in your service to Him, your false self gradually becomes as dust beneath His feet. The Labour Phase is part of Beloved Baba's Wish for serious seekers of God in the modern world, because living a dedicated life leads you to become a Servant of God, where you live for Him alone. The Labour Phase ends when you no longer care for your own wishes but only follow the Wish of Beloved God.

When you live a life of one hundred percent cheerful obedience to His Wish, you enter the second stage of the New Life. You now are a Servant of God living for Him alone. In the state of being God's Servant under Mastery in Servitude, you no longer listen to the false self. The false self has become submissive to God's Wish, until ultimately, you become completely and fully submissive to His Wish.

At that ripe moment, the mind is ready for Manonash through the grace of the Avatar or Perfect Master. In this third and final stage of The New Life, you truly die for God. The mind is born once and dies once. And in this stage, the mind finally dies in order for the soul to realise its true being - One with infinite and eternal existence.

The first stage of entering the New Life through the Labour Phase is your own personal decision. But the second stage of becoming God's Servant comes about because your dedicated action has deepened your love for God to the point that you live for Him in a state of one hundred percent cheerful obedience to His Wish. If you become His Servant, He will be very pleased. And as His Servant, you have not the slightest concern with the third stage of the New Life, which is

Manonash. When Manonash occurs is left entirely to His pleasure.

Therefore, your goal as Spiritual Trainees is not the third stage of the New Life, but the second stage of becoming God's Servant and living for Him alone.

Because you will begin your Spiritual Training to live the New Life under the Labour Phase, it is meaningful to see what Baba dictated for His own Companions on how to live the New Life.

As I explained before, after the brief training period in the New Life, Baba made three plans for the Companions to choose how they would like to live the Labour Phase of the New Life with Him. Under the Collective Plan of 1-A and the Individual and Collective Plan of 1-B, Baba dictated ways that His Companions may work and live together.

As far as the Trust is concerned, Plans 1-A and 1-B are the most suitable for the Spiritual Training Programme. Plans 1-A and 1-B establish collective and individual life under the Labour Phase for the Trust. To work for any Trust project selflessly can be a collective or individual responsibility. These Plans also give some important guidelines on how the Trust may develop a Spiritual Training Programme appropriate for you as Spiritual Trainees to live and work together.

The points Baba dictated in Plans 1-A and 1-B, and which provide helpful guidelines for the Spiritual Training Programme, are as follows:

...

Extracts from New Life Plans 1-A and 1-B

1. In this collective plan, all of you must cooperate with each other, help each other, and adjust things suitably to the ability, capacity and tabiyat (health) of each of you - each of you doing his best to keep this plan going.
6. No Begging or Gypsy or Langoti life for you all in this Plan No. 1-A.
11. Everything to be managed by the companions, in any way they like, by committee, majority or appointing manager.
12. I will fix the conditions for you finally, and then leave it to you to carry them out or not.
13. I will trust you with the conditions, and whether you follow them or not is your responsibility, for which I will neither do insaf (justice) or blame or enquire. He who does not follow the conditions will not be in the New Life even though he stays with the companions.
14. In companions' spare time they may gather for light talks with me, or ask me to take part in any entertainment like music programme etc.
15. The companions will be free to live and work as they like within the limits of the fixed conditions, and can even stay on at the place

in my absence, as I am free to do as I like and go where I like for my three phases.

19. If a companion is found to be deliberately disobeying the conditions or deliberately not carrying out the duties entrusted to him or is found not to be fitting into the general management because of his temperament or obstinacy, he can be asked to leave the group-companionship by majority of votes.

...

All of these points have been taken into account and have been considered with regard to how the Trust will administer the Spiritual Training Programme. They will be discussed in a later section.

Along with the Plans that Baba dictated were the Fixed Conditions under Plans 1-A, 1-B and 1-C and Plan No. 2. Those Fixed Conditions are:

...

Fixed Conditions

- 1) First and foremost, you must take it as an absolute and unqualified certainty that you will not receive even the slightest spiritual or material benefit, or indeed any benefit whatsoever. On the contrary, you must be prepared for every kind of disappointment and adversity.
- 2) You should not expect that Baba will have His "*Nazar*" ("glance") on you or that He

will perform miracles or use His spiritual "key" to protect or save you from illness, danger, imprisonment, death, or difficulties and disasters of any kind.

- (3) You will not touch women except when necessary, mother, wife, sister, and daughter; or professionally when you are doing a doctor's profession.
- (4) You will not enter politics.
- (5) You will not express anger, by word or deed to anyone, whatever provocation, and you will not criticise anyone unfairly, either to his face or behind his back. Although you may at times feel anger in your mind, you must never express it in word or deed.
- (6) You will not tell lies under any circumstances.
- (7) Neither Baba nor you will accept homage from anyone nor will you deliberately create circumstances that might invite homage to Baba or to you. If however, without having invited it, homage is given to Baba or to you, it must be repaid action for action to the giver.
- (8) It must be clearly understood that although the conditions are absolutely binding on you all, Baba Himself is *not* bound by any order or condition, and is absolutely free for all time.

- (9) The one and only thing, however, in which Baba is *not* free, but deliberately binds Himself, is regarding the condition that you will not receive the slightest benefit of any kind whatsoever, and that you must be prepared for every kind of disappointment and adversity. It must, in addition, be absolutely clear that Baba will also never give any order that will absolve you of your individual responsibility before God for any consequences that may follow. You may take it as an absolute certainty that the responsibility before God for each and every consequence rests for all time wholly and solely with you and you alone, and that Baba will never give any order that will change or nullify this responsibility.
- (10) You will not commit any lustful action with anyone, male or female, young or old.

After dictating the Fixed Conditions for the New Life, Baba repeated, "It must be clearly understood that although every order listed here is absolutely binding on you, I am not only not bound by any order or condition, but I am also absolutely free for all time to give any order to you, and that such orders might change or even nullify any or all of these orders and conditions."

"The one and only thing, however, in which I am not only not free, but deliberately bind myself, is regarding the certainty to the effect that you must take it as an absolute certainty that you will not receive the slightest benefit of any kind whatsoever, and that you must be prepared for every kind of disappointment and adversity. This condition will stand for ill time, and will never be changed or nullified by me."

"It must, in addition, be absolutely clear that I will also never give any order that will absolve you of your individual responsibility before God for any consequence that may follow. Thus, you must take it as an absolute certainty that the responsibility before God for each and every consequence rests for all time wholly and solely with you and you alone - and that I will never give an order that will change or nullify this responsibility."

These conditions that Beloved Baba gave to His Companions during His New Life still can be applied to your New Life as Spiritual Trainees. Meher Baba's firm instructions can direct you. He dictated the 10 Fixed Conditions, emphasising Conditions No. 1 and No. 9. In order to acknowledge your seriousness in living the New Life, a list of the Fixed Conditions will be given to you to sign, indicating that you will uphold them. You will also make a written oath before God that you resolve to live The New Life. The written oath will be your personal expression of your own resolve.

Therefore, those of you who aspire to be Spiritual Trainees must consider these conditions and make a very serious self-appraisal of yourself, similar to what Baba asked His companions to do in following Him in the New Life. If you find that you can happily and wholeheartedly uphold these conditions, then you may request the Trust to accept you into the Spiritual Training Programme. Similar to Baba's New Life Companions, those who wish to live the New Life as Spiritual Trainees must obey the Fixed Conditions one hundred percent.

You, as Spiritual Trainees, have come here to rise above lustful actions, and you should take Fixed Condition No. 10 very seriously. If your weaknesses overwhelm you and you indulge in sexual activity, then you would not be living up to the conditions of the New Life. It is possible that you will be

asked to leave the Spiritual Training Programme. Yet, Baba always wanted things to be natural. And times also change. And therefore, even though Condition No. 3 states, "You will not touch women except when necessary, mother, wife, sister, and daughter; or professionally when you are doing a doctor's profession", as long as you embrace or touch anyone with a brotherly or sisterly feeling in your heart, you are upholding the conditions of the New Life. If the feeling is anything other than a brotherly or sisterly feeling, however, you should remember this Condition and not embrace or even touch the person in that circumstance.

At the Meeting in Mahabaleshwar on 16th October 1950, Baba ended the Labour Phase for His Companions and started the next phase with those Companions who were prepared to be His Servants. Also at that Meeting, Baba gave a very important statement regarding the New Life. Through this statement Beloved Baba tells posterity how to live for the Truth when the Avatar is not in physical form. It is the foundation upon which you, as a Spiritual Trainee, will live your New Life. This message will guide any genuine Spiritual Trainee now and hundreds of years from now.

...

New Life Message

This New Life is endless, and even after my physical death it will be kept alive by those, who live the life of complete renunciation of falsehood, lies, hatred, anger, greed, and lust; and who, to accomplish all this, do no lustful actions, do no harm to anyone, do no backbiting, do not seek material possessions or power, who accept no homage, neither covet honour nor shun disgrace, and fear no one and nothing; by those, who rely wholly and

solely on God, and who love God purely for the sake of loving, who believe in the lovers of God and in the reality of Manifestation, and yet do not expect any spiritual or material reward, who do not let go the hand of Truth, and who, without being upset by calamities bravely and whole-heartedly face all hardships with one hundred percent cheerfulness, and give no importance to caste, creed and religious ceremonies.

This New Life will live by itself eternally, even if there is no one to live it.

...

The goal of life cannot be achieved until the mind undergoes Manonash but Manonash cannot be achieved until each individual lives the New Life. Therefore the New Life is eternal!

During the 16th October 1950 Meeting in Mahabaleshwar, Baba also had read out a very succinct statement called "Baba's Sermon" in which He declared the established divine facts.

...

Baba's Sermon

Being just now in "Old Life" for these few hours, I will tell you what I feel to be the established Divine Facts:

Essentially, we are all One. The feeling of our being otherwise is due to ignorance. Soul desires consciousness to know itself, but its progress

towards this Goal which it cannot realise independently of creation, it must undergo the experience which it gathers as the individualised false self and which is all imagination. Thus it is faced at the outset with ignorance instead of Knowledge.

Dual forms and illusory creations are the outcome of ignorance: birth and death, happiness and misery, virtue and sin, good and bad - all are equally the manifestation of this same ignorance. You were never born and will never die; you never suffered and will never suffer; you ever were and ever will be, as separateness exists only in imagination.

Soul undergoes experiences through innumerable forms such as being king and beggar, rich and poor, tall and short, strong and weak, beautiful and ugly, of killing and being killed. All these experiences must transpire as long as the soul, though it is one in Reality and undivided, imagines separateness in itself. When soul is bereft of the impressions of these illusory experiences, it becomes naked, as in its origin, to become now fully conscious of its unity with the Over-soul which is One, Indivisible, Real, and Infinite.

• • •

The soul becomes free of the binding of impressions through various paths. And love is the most important of these paths leading to the realisation of God. Through this love, the soul becomes entirely absorbed in God, ultimately forgetting itself completely. It is then that, all of a sudden, Knowledge comes as swiftly as the lightning bolt which burns to ashes all that it falls upon.

This Knowledge uproots illusions, doubts and worries. Apparent sufferings are instantaneously replaced by everlasting peace and eternal Bliss, which is the Goal of all existence. The soul, now free from its illusions, realises the Original Unity of Being.

Let us not hope, because this Knowledge is beyond hoping and wanting. Let us not reason, because this Knowledge cannot be comprehended or thought of. Let us not doubt, because this Knowledge is the certainty of certainties. Let us not live the life of the senses, because the lusty, greedy, false and impure mind cannot reach this Knowledge. Let us love God as the Soul of our souls, and in the height of this Love lies this Knowledge.

The divinely Perfect Ones can bestow this Knowledge on anyone they like and whenever they like. May we all gain this Knowledge soon.

• • •

These two messages and the Fixed Conditions are the basis for Spiritual Training. The Fixed Conditions are the guidelines. The New Life Message describes the path. And Baba's Sermon explains the goal.

But putting Baba's words into action in order to live The New Life is the important thing. And this can only happen as you efface your false self.

EFFACEMENT OF THE FALSE SELF

Beloved Baba came to Meherabad in 1923. At that time it was not called Meherabad, it was called Arangaon, because that was the name of the nearby village. But in 1924 Baba gave Meherabad its name. Before He came, the area was used as a British military base during World War I (from 1914-1918). After the war, the land and the buildings were auctioned, and Adi K. Irani's father bought them.

After World War I, when Beloved Baba came to Meherabad, He also brought with Him an army. But His army fought the inner war. They were not attached to the world. They remained attached to God, engaged in fighting the war within themselves, to kill the real enemy, their own false selves. The army that fought during the external war needed armaments, but Beloved Baba's army needed only His love to fight and defeat their false selves. Those who loved Him and obeyed Him were real warriors.

There are different kinds of seekers of God in the world. Many want God, and at the same time, they also want the world. They try to follow God, but they have reservations and make compromises in their search. They are not wholehearted. There are also those who renounce the world externally and remain engaged in doing austerities and penance prescribed by certain religions, not for the sake of love of God alone, but to gain some power or for spiritual advancement.

But you, as Spiritual Trainees, should be serious seekers of God, renouncing your own false self and waging war against it. It is your duty as Spiritual Trainees to remain engaged in this inner war against the false self. It is a very difficult war! But Beloved Meher Baba is there to help you at every step. You should try to want God alone, being prepared to do everything

for Him. In this way you will become real warriors against the false self.

How can I describe the spiritual life in a way that will not be misunderstood? One thing is certain, that if you use your intellect, you will fail to even understand what the spiritual life is. The spiritual life is a life of forgetting your lower self. You become forgetful of your lower self, not through loss of memory, but through love of God. As you forget your lower self you lose name, fame, expectations, etc. And when the lower self is completely lost, you gain the Real Self, which is God.

I will tell four stories of my life with Baba and one story that Baba told us. In my telling these incidents, I want to give you a picture of what effacing the false self means, and how Baba effaced our false selves. Beloved Baba's physical presence is gone. But He is linked to each heart, and as the heart calls upon Him, He will continue to do His duty to each one of you, just as He did for the Mandali, by helping efface your false self.

Baba had met with an accident on 2nd December 1956. Pendu was also seriously injured at that time. His pelvis was fractured, and he was not able to walk. He also had severe pain. Pendu was sent to Meherabad to recover, and Vishnu, Dr. Donkin and Padri were sent to Meherabad to take care of Pendu.

Whenever Baba wanted a certain programme, Pendu would always be called upon to organise the programme. Baba wanted to have a Sahavas programme at Meherabad in February 1958. And therefore He called Pendu, Vishnu, Dr. Donkin and Padri to Meherabad. They came by car at 9:00 a.m.

Before their arrival, Baba came into Mandali Hall. He was in a very serious mood. Of the Mandali, only Eruch and I

were there. When we saw Him in such a serious mood, we just kept quiet. Pendu came to the door. He was fumbling with his crutches, and because of the steps, it was difficult for him to enter into the hall. We knew that he was in severe pain and needed help, but we did not dare go help him. We knew that Baba would not like it if we did so. Anyway, Pendu managed to come into Mandali Hall, followed by Vishnu, Dr. Donkin and Padri. Pendu was sitting on a chair, and the others sat on the floor.

Baba looked at Pendu and asked, "Did you sleep last night?"

Pendu started to cry, saying, "How could I sleep? I have severe pain. I can't bear it. I cannot sleep, and I cannot eat."

Baba said to him, "How selfish you are! You are suffering for yourself, and I am suffering for the whole universe! Can you imagine My suffering! You just think of yourself! You are most selfish! I cannot give this work to you! Get out!"

Pendu was crying. The whole atmosphere was very serious.

Again, Baba said, "Get out! I will not give this work to you. You are most selfish. You think of yourself! You don't think of Me! You are selfish. So get out!"

And Pendu had to leave. Dr. Donkin, Vishnu and Padri went along with him.

Besides Eruch and me, a Baba lover named Jimmy Mistry, from Bombay, was in Mandali Hall. He had come to Meherazad for the first time. He was quite new, and when he

saw Baba get so upset with Pendu, he felt scared to remain in Baba's presence.

After Pendu and the others had left, Baba said to Jimmy Mistry, "I have to become infinitely cruel in order to be infinitely compassionate."

Pendu was Baba's cousin, and he had been with Baba from his childhood. Was Baba really cruel to him? He is the most Compassionate One. He wished to draw Pendu's attention away from his pain and keep it on Baba. What a beautiful example this is. Baba showed us that no matter what we are going through, we should always think about the Beloved and not about ourselves. Baba has to do His duty toward those who have surrendered to Him. His duty is to efface the false self. In doing so, He has to be infinitely cruel. But He becomes Infinitely Kind when, after effacing the false self, He bestows Infinite Knowledge, Power and Bliss, giving the soul God Realisation. The process of effacing the false self is a very painful one. It may even seem cruel. But this cruelty is only apparent. This cruelty is for a real purpose, not to harm us, but really to free us - eternally.

(To let you know, Baba did end up giving Pendu the work of organizing the Sahavas. And as usual in spite of the pain, he did his very very best for Baba, and Baba was pleased with Him. Baba had given him this work from the early days and he carried out this duty most faithfully until the end of his life.)

After such incidents, we would not discuss the matter amongst ourselves. We did not complain nor blame anyone, no matter what situation we were put in, knowing fully well that it was Baba's doing. If someone did complain, the matter would be reported to Baba. If complaints were made and not reported, then He Himself would find out. He did not like such things.

And He did not like backbiting. Actually, when we sat together for lunch or dinner, we would have no time to discuss any situation. Each one of us had to hurriedly eat and get back to the duties that Beloved Baba had given us.

Now how to explain how the Mandali were with each other at times? It is hard to explain in a way that is understandable.

It is similar to the occasions when people who had traditional ideas of spirituality would come for Baba's darshan as He was playing cards with the Mandali. Baba knew they could not understand the notion of the Master being so familiar with His disciples that He would play cards with them. So Baba would go to such an extent to please these people, that before they came for His darshan, He would hide the cards underneath His cushion in order not to disturb their notions of spirituality. They had their traditional ideas, and He did not want to disturb them. But then, after they left, He brought the cards out. Again, we would enjoy His company in this way.

You could say that it was Baba's duty to efface our false self, and He would use any means that He could. We had surrendered to Him so that He could use us for His work and for His work on us. It is like a surgeon using his instruments to get rid of a disease. Sometimes Baba would arrange it in such a way that one Mandali member would be His medium or tool to efface another Mandali member. At that time, the first one would tease the other to any extent. It would appear to the one being teased that the other Mandali member was his enemy. Baba would make this happen between us in such a way that nobody would know Baba had created the incident. So, though we might appear as the worst of enemies, internally, we were the best of friends. Externally, we would be harsh but internally soft. We had no malice towards each other nor did we hold grudges.

For every one of the Mandali, there would be someone after him. Eruch would be after me, and Kaka would be after Aloba. The women Mandali that is, Mehera, Mani, Dr. Goher, Meheru, Naja and Rano, also had to go through such things. Once, during night watch, as I sat outside of Baba's room, Baba called the women Mandali. I heard Mehera and Mani arguing. In this case Mehera was the medium for Mani's effacement.

Everything depends upon the motive. If one of us said something to the other, it was to try to please Baba. Even if something was said against us, we would not feel bad about it nor incur any hatred toward the person who said it. This story takes place after Baba's second accident on 2nd December 1956. Baba started living nine months of the year at Meherazad and three months in Pune. Baba appointed Kaka Baria as the manager of Meherazad. From the New Life onwards, he would always stay there, even if Baba moved to other places.

There were four dogs at Meherazad: one belonging to Mehera, called Mastan, another belonging to Mani, called Peter, and two belonging to Kaka. Baba gave Aloba the duty of taking Mastan for a one-hour walk, Peter for an hour, and then Kaka's two dogs for another one-hour walk. This meant that Aloba had to walk the dogs for three hours in the morning and three hours in the afternoon. Kaka was in charge of seeing whether Aloba did his duty or not. After making the tea for the men Mandali, Aloba would take Mastan for a walk. Kaka would watch to see whether Aloba walked Mastan for the complete hour or not. Then Aloba would take Peter, and again Kaka would watch the time. Aloba was very particular in giving a full hour walk to Mastan and Peter.

But when he took Kaka's two dogs, he was not so careful. Kaka would watch the time, and if Aloba brought Kaka's dogs back after 50 minutes, Kaka would say, "You have walked the dogs for only 50 minutes. Walk the two dogs again and come back after half an hour."

So Kaka would penalise Aloba because he did not do his duty fully. Kaka was the manager. Even if Aloba walked the dogs for one minute less than the full hour, Kaka would send Aloba out again to walk the dogs for another half an hour. This went on for six months, and then Kaka's dogs were sent to Meherabad.

But poor Aloba still had to continue taking the other two dogs for a walk. He also had to make tea for the men Mandali in the morning and in the afternoon. Kaka would serve food only once a day. He would give less food to Aloba, which was not honest on his part, but Aloba did not say anything. He would keep quiet. After six months, Aloba felt fed up with his duty, but he did not say anything. Baba, of course, knew what he was feeling.

One day in Mandali Hall, the following took place.

Eruch was reading correspondence. Baba looked at Kaka and said, "Do you understand English? Aloba, teach Kaka English!"

Kaka had been to the West many times with Baba: America, France, England, Italy and Spain. He knew English better than Aloba. Aloba was very, very happy that the tables had been turned!

As soon as Baba left Mandali Hall, Aloba went to Kaka in his room and told him, "Keep ten exercise books and pen and pencil ready."

Kaka, knowing this was Baba's order, did not say anything. He kept everything ready. At lunchtime, Kaka realised his dishonesty in not serving Aloba sufficient portions of food and started to do so.

After lunch, the lessons began. Aloba wrote the alphabet in Kaka's exercise book and told Kaka, "Write ten times."

Kaka did not say anything but wrote the alphabet ten times. Aloba would walk in front of his room and see whether Kaka was writing or not. After writing the alphabet ten times, he would show the exercise book to Aloba. Aloba would say, "Your handwriting is not good! Write 50 times!"

Poor Kaka could not say a word because this was Baba's order. He would go on writing the alphabet. At this time, this was the only work Kaka had. But writing the alphabet 50 times became 100 times. This went on for six months. The entire time, Kaka did not say a word. While the lessons were going on, Kaka did not come to Mandali Hall, and Baba did not call him.

After six months, one day, all of a sudden, Baba asked, "Where is Kaka? I have not seen him for a long time."

"He is writing the alphabet and doing nothing else," Eruch replied. "He has no time even for lunch. He has no time for anything. He eats hurriedly and goes back to writing the alphabet: ABCD ..."

Baba laughed and called Kaka and Aloba.

They both came, and Baba told Aloba, "Stop teaching Kaka English from today onwards."

And He said to Kaka, "I am pleased with you. Now every day you come to Mandali Hall and sit here, because it is My order."

Look how both Aloba and Kaka obeyed Baba. Both were undergoing difficult situations. But neither said anything. They complained to no one. They put up with the difficulties quietly. They endured, and endurance is very necessary on the spiritual path. To do what you like has no meaning whatsoever. But to do what you don't like, and to quietly bear it, creates inner strength. That strength is used to defeat the false self. Both Aloba and Kaka were strong men and had strong characters. It would have been very easy for either of them to boldly express their false self in this situation. But they both knew that Baba wanted them to undergo this situation, and so they kept quiet, swallowing their difficulties because it pleased their Beloved.

Even though Beloved Baba is no longer in the body, such incidents will continue to happen in your lives as Spiritual Trainees. You should also not only try, but must learn to endure and bear these things, to develop the inner strength to defeat the false self. This is real obedience to Baba. As Beloved Baba has said in His Wish, "Be resigned to every situation and think honestly and sincerely: 'Baba has placed me in this situation'."

Now, because I have told this story, it does not mean that you always have to be quiet, either. Everything is according to the situation. In this case, it was Baba's Wish that Aloba and Kaka both endure the situations He put them in. And as you can see, Baba also ended both situations when the time was right.

In the next story, the opposite is required. It is a story of not keeping quiet, but learning to speak out. This story concerns me.

I was the most modest person of the Mandali, and Baba did not like my modesty. He wanted me to speak out, but I could not. It was very difficult for me. As I said before, Eruch would be the one to be after me. He was Baba's chosen medium for me. He would say anything, and I would keep quiet. I would not say anything back to him.

When I would go for night watch, Baba would say, "Eruch was teasing you. Why did you not reply to him?"

But I did not have the courage to do that. I would just keep quiet. Though Eruch's teasing would go to the extreme, I would not say anything.

Then Baba dropped His physical body, and Eruch continued his work, doing his duty. Still I would keep quiet. I would not say anything. I would be busy in my room writing books. Thinking that I was sleeping, Eruch would shout from the outside at me. Such incidents went on and on.

Then, in 1973, I was nominated as a Trustee. I would sit in my room, reading only law books. When any government official would come to Mani's office, I would bring a chair for that official. I would do the work of an office boy. But gradually, as I took up Trust work, the Trust depended upon me. Because I had a background in law, and none of the other Mandali did, I became very busy doing Trust work.

Anyway, the incident that I want to tell is that I was able to convince the government not to levy taxes against the Trust. Consequently, Mani and Rano had confidence in me.

The Government did not assess the Trust for the years 1970 to 1973, but when the Income Tax Office started doing assessments, they wanted to tax the Trust. In 1971, a law came into force that, if there were any surplus out of Trust donations,

Form No. 10 needed to be submitted along with the Income Tax Return. Before I became a Trustee, the Trustees did not know about this requirement. So when the assessment notice came, from the Government, I, as a new Trustee, and knowing this information, went to the Income Tax Office.

The Income Officer asked me, "There is a surplus, and you did not submit Form No. 10. So you cannot get exemption. You have to pay tax on Rs. 40,000."

I said to him, "Please wait. I want to see the Income Tax Commissioner in Pune. I will bring an order for the tax exemption."

He said, "Even the Board of Direct Taxes (in Delhi) cannot do this."

I said, "Please just wait. Give me time. Don't assess the Trust now."

I came back to the Trust office and started writing letters to the Income Tax Commissioner.

Eruch came to me and asked, "What happened?"

I replied, "The Income Tax Commissioner wants to levy a tax on Rs. 40,000 because Form No. 10 was not submitted. I have to go to Pune tomorrow early morning to see the Commissioner of Income Tax."

I was writing the application, and Eruch asked, "Did you explain it to him properly? Did you talk in Hindi or English?"

Hearing this, I felt irritated and said to him, loudly "Do you want me to write the application or not? Why are you disturbing me?"

Eruch was happy. He smiled. His duty was done. It was a great lesson to me. From that day, I no longer was a modest man. Baba wanted me to become a warrior, not to remain modest and keep everything inside. He knew that I had so much work to do for Him and for His Trust, and if I kept quiet, how could I work for Him and His Cause?

I saw the Commissioner of Income Tax in Pune the next day. Immediately, he gave the order that the Trust should remain tax-exempt. The work was done. As soon as I came back from Pune, I told Eruch, and he embraced me with all love. He was very, very happy because he knew that it was a difficult matter that even the best of lawyers could not handle successfully. But because Beloved Baba helped me, the Trust received the tax exemption.

But the most important thing I learnt was that Beloved Baba wanted me to get out of the habit of being modest. It was Eruch's duty to try to irritate me out of it. When I finally took off the cloak of modesty, he was happy, because his duty was over.

These few examples show how Beloved Baba helps efface the false self. The process of effacement will continue in your lives as Spiritual Trainees when you are willing to give your false self over to Beloved Baba so that He can free the Real Self. As the heart opens more and more to Beloved Baba's love, these stories will have greater and greater meaning. But if the intellect judges these stories based on its own standards, the real meaning will be lost. The effacement of the false self cannot be understood by the intellect. The intellect justifies itself in every moment and circumstance to maintain the false self. The process of self-effacement is not a rational process. It is not something that can be understood with the mind. In fact, it is an irrational process. Nothing on the spiritual path makes

any intellectual sense, and cannot, because Truth is beyond good and bad, right and wrong or sense and nonsense. If the mind is caught up in trying to make sense of things, then there can be no progress on the spiritual path. Although you might be here at the Trust Estate, you will just be leading a worldly life. The only thing to do is to renounce the unwanted activity of your mind. As you do your duties, let your love for Beloved Baba reveal to you that only His love has meaning and nothing else does.

Now I am going to tell you about an incident in my life with Beloved Baba that demonstrates what I said, that the Spiritual Life is not a rational life. These events might seem unjustifiable, but they did help efface the false self. You will see very easily what I mean from the following story.

In the year 1961, Baba asked me to write a book. I said to Him, "Where is the time for me to write a book, Baba? At night I am with You, during the daytime, again I am with You. I deal with correspondence, too. So tell me, when should I write?"

He said, "When we go to Pune in the summer, I will give you the time to write."

And I accepted this.

We went to Pune in March, and instead of 3:00 p.m., Baba told me to come to Him for watch at 4:00 p.m. Meherjee would keep watch for one hour.

On the first day, it took time for me to unpack and arrange everything on the table to write the book. To allow me quiet time to write, I was staying on the top floor of Guruprasad.

I unpacked everything in short order, and at 3:30 p.m., I went down and was waiting on the veranda to go for watch duty. Meherjee came out of Baba's room. He did not say anything to me and went to Eruch. I thought he must have brought some message from Baba for Eruch. After three minutes, Baba clapped, and Dr. Goher went running to His room.

Baba asked her, "Where is Bhau?"

Goher came running to me and said, "Baba is all alone, and you are sitting here?"

Immediately, I went to Baba, Who said, "Why did you not come?"

I said to Him, "Baba, You had asked me to come at 4:00 p.m., and therefore, I was waiting."

"Did Meherjee not tell you that I wanted you?" Baba said.

"He did not tell me. Otherwise, I would have come. I was just sitting outside, waiting for Your call."

Baba then asked me to call Meherjee, which I did, and he came. Baba asked him, "Did you not tell Bhau that I wanted him?"

Meherjee said, "I forgot, but he should have asked me."

Baba then said to me, "Why did you not ask Meherjee?"

Baba was upset, and He scolded me.

Now, if you listen to this story with your intellect, you will say that I was wrongly blamed. That it was Meherjee's fault and not mine. But whether you are right or wrong is not the important thing. What is important is that the false self has to be effaced. So remember this when you, as Spiritual Trainees, are blamed. Try not to react and allow your mind to become upset, but try to use the incident to efface your false self and be spiritually free. Being Spiritual Trainees means this: you are training yourself to spiritually free yourself from the false self.

But the story I was telling continues with another kind of lesson. From that day, I would not write anything. Every day at 3:00 p.m., I would sit there on the veranda waiting for Baba's call, and He would call me at any time. He did not ask about the writing of the book. Three months passed without me writing a single word.

Then, we came back to Meherazad. As usual, I would be sitting on the veranda outside Rano's room waiting for the call. Baba would call me at 5:00 p.m. I would sit idly on the veranda, and my mind would work. I had to attend to a lot of correspondence, and according to Baba's order, I was not able to write when I went for night watch.

Two more months passed by like this. One day, while Baba was retiring, He said to me, "Write a very urgent letter immediately."

And then He retired. According to His order I followed Him to His room to keep watch on the veranda. I could not write anything there.

While I was sitting, I was thinking, "What to do? He does not allow me to write on the veranda, and I am sitting here without being able to do the work He gave me. Even here, I

could have written the letter. Instead I am sitting, doing nothing."

Then at 5:00 p.m., Baba called me, and I went to Him. As soon as I did, He asked me, "Did you write that letter?"

I said to him, "No, Baba, I could not write it. Because as soon as You told me to write it, You retired. And according to Your order, I had to follow You. I was sitting there on Rano's veranda for two hours without work. Had You allowed me to bring paper and pen there, I could have written that letter."

Baba said to me, "You were only sitting there and doing nothing?"

I said, "Yes, absolutely nothing. I was just sitting there. Had You allowed me to bring paper and pen, I would have written something."

"You were just sitting there doing absolutely nothing?!" Baba repeated.

"Baba, I was just waiting for Your call and doing nothing."

"To wait for My call? Is that not work?" Baba said. "You tell Me that you were doing nothing? You don't understand the importance of waiting for My call. Just go to the Himalayas. To remember Me, people sleep on nails so that they may not fall asleep. Here, you are, on the veranda, sitting in a comfortable chair and waiting for My call. And you know that definitely I will call you after two hours. And still you complain! Only rare ones get such an opportunity like this to wait for My call. Know well, if you do any work continuously on your own, it has no importance. But if you do nothing but

wait for My call wholeheartedly, that is the most important work. Never complain. Just do what I want you to do."

So, my dear Spiritual Trainees, you have come here because He has brought you here. This is what He has done for you. Your remembrance of Him, the waiting in your hearts for His call, so that you may follow His Wish, is now what you must do for Him. There is nothing more important that you can do but wait for the Beloved. But waiting for Him in your heart goes on all the time, whether you are busy in your duties or not. You must always be in a state of waiting for Him. And surely He will call you. But to wait for His call, you must have sincere faith in Baba, and you must let it deepen more and more until it becomes unconditional. Faith is more than just intellectual belief. Faith is connected to the heart. And as your faith in Baba grows, your spiritual life will be alive with His love.

I will tell one story on faith that Baba told us.

It happened long ago. There were a husband and wife living in a village. At that time, the only way to travel anywhere was on foot. The wife's parents would come from time to time to see their daughter. But her husband did not take the wife to see them, although each time her parents came, they would invite the couple to visit.

One day, the wife told her husband that her parents had always invited them whenever they came to their village. So she and her husband should go at least once to her parents. This time the husband agreed and so they decided to leave early in the morning of the following day.

Her parents lived 20 miles away from their village, and in between, there was a forest. The husband and his wife thought that by evening they would have walked the 20 miles.

But what happened? When they reached the middle of the forest, clouds covered the sky. It became dark. Soon it started raining very heavily. Even though the wife had begged her husband so often to make the journey to visit her parents, she now told him that they should return. But the husband, knowing how much his wife had wanted to visit her parents, explained that they had already crossed half of the forest. There was no sense in returning, because the same distance would have to be travelled. But the wife was afraid and could not hear what her husband was saying. She grabbed him and told him that she only wanted to go back. The husband again tried to console her, but she would not listen.

Then the husband took a knife out of his own pocket and threatened to kill her. Upon seeing this, the wife only laughed. The husband told her how surprised he was to see that she could only laugh when he was about to kill her. And the wife said that she knew he loved her very much. How could he kill her? She was confident that he was just scaring her. She had full faith in him that he could not do such a thing.

The husband then told his wife, "I am threatening to kill you with this knife. But you are laughing, because you know that I love you and because you have faith in me, you know I will not kill you. So why not have the same faith in God? We are all His children, and He is our father. And because we are His children, He loves us. This rain is like this knife I am threatening you with. Although the rain seems threatening, it cannot kill you. So have faith in God and do not be scared."

And the wife felt comforted by his words. She calmed down and realised that they had already crossed half the forest. So why not continue on the rest of the journey?

Spiritual Trainees, now that you have decided to make the journey to the Truth, you must continue on this journey.

And when it starts raining in the dark forest, have unconditional faith that He is with you. Persevere, be brave, rely on Him, and you will definitely reach your goal.

ADMINISTRATION OF THE SPIRITUAL TRAINING PROGRAMME

Beloved Baba directed that the words "Mastery in Servitude" be inscribed above the door to His Tomb-Shrine. He wanted to let the world know how He lived His physical life and how mankind can follow Him by putting His motto into action. All Spiritual Trainees, whether you are the Chairman, Trustees, Department Managers or other Spiritual Trainees, should live such a life that it reflects Baba's motto of Mastery in Servitude. Everyone's first priority then is to go to the Office of Mastery in Servitude.

If everyone does not go to the chief office, how can the Trust run smoothly and properly? But where is that office? That office is the Tomb-Shrine of Beloved Avatar Meher Baba.

You should remember Beloved Baba's form itself is in the Tomb. And whether you feel anything or not, His form enshrined there is like the sun that touches everything. Going to His Tomb-Shrine will help disperse the cloud-cover of your impressions so that one day you can feel the rays of love from His Divine Sun in your heart. There is no rule or condition that you should go at a fixed time. You should go at a time that is suitable to you. But going regularly will help you. Do not doubt this.

In the New Life, the Companions were few in number, and we can expect as the decades and centuries roll by, that there will be hundreds and then thousands of Spiritual Trainees on the Trust Estate. Plans 1-A and 1-B of the New Life give us

guidelines as to how the Spiritual Training Programme can be managed. But those are general statements that show us ways that Beloved Baba approved of His Companions managing their lives.

The administration and its ways of managing things will create a pattern of life here, but the pattern of life which it creates should not be like a worldly institution. Therefore, in trying to establish any pattern of administration, careful consideration has to be given as to how it will affect relationships amongst all the Spiritual Trainees, whether you fulfil the role of Chairman, Trustee, Department Manager, Committee Member, Section Supervisor or other Spiritual Trainee.

Really speaking, the pattern of life which is worthwhile is a spontaneous one and comes from within. Spontaneity is not something that can be explained, but if you, as Spiritual Trainees, do your duty spontaneously, then a lively and loving atmosphere will be created. But if a disciplined pattern is created outwardly and enforced through coercion, then eventually duties become lifeless and boring, and the mind will rebel.

Although Spiritual Training is one of the objects of the Trust, it does not mean that a ritualistic spiritual order is to be created. The goal of Spiritual Training is to provide facilities for those Baba lovers who want to serve Meher Baba under Mastery in Servitude on the Trust Estate through the Labour Phase of the New Life, and by doing so with 100% cheerful obedience to Baba's Wish become His Servant.

There is no spiritual hierarchy here, either. Instead you may freely interact. Naturally, those of you who have been undergoing Spiritual Training for decades can be sought for your perspective, advice, consultation, guidance and

encouragement. The many years you have spent in His service required you to renounce the false self repeatedly. You do not have spiritual authority, but you do have the efforts of your own lives in trying to please Baba. These are worth sharing with Spiritual Trainees and other Baba lovers.

In the following paragraphs and sections, I will give some basic administrative procedures for the Trust. Some of these procedures do not apply for the present, because the Trust's administration is still very small. But as the administration grows, these procedures can be implemented whenever the Chairman and the Board of Trustees find it necessary. They are given here so that some guidelines are already prepared for administrative growth. If necessary, some of them can be modified by the Board of Trustees at the time of implementation. However, a few of them refer to what has been given in the Trust Deed and cannot be modified.

The Board of Trustees' major responsibility is to make policy for the Trust, and the Chairman's major responsibility is to execute that policy. Although the Chairman is responsible for the day-to-day functioning of the Trust according to the Trust Deed, he will report to the Board and remains answerable to it for how he upholds his responsibility. According to the Trust Deed, the Chairman can also arrange how the routine affairs on the Trust Estate are to be managed. This means, with the approval of the Board, the Chairman can appoint an Administrator to manage the routine affairs of the Trust Estate. Also, if the Chairman is too preoccupied with other Trust work, he can depute some of the responsibilities mentioned herein to other Trustees, Department Managers, etc.

For the sake of convenience, the Chairman is referred to throughout this book as "he" or "him". But the Chairman could also be a woman, and in fact, the second chairman of the Trust, Mani S. Irani, was Baba's sister.

Each object of the Trust and every major administrative activity will eventually have a Department. As these Departments grow, there will have to be many sections in each Department to see that the work is carried out. Each Department will have a Department Manager, along with a Managing Committee. Each section will also have its own Supervisor.

The Chairman, in his role as managing Trustee, chooses the various Department Managers. However the Chairman may also, under his discretion, change Department Managers if he feels it is in the best interest of the functioning of the Trust. The appointment of the Department Manager will be confirmed by the Board. The Department Manager may choose amongst those in his Department to be Committee Members. However, the Chairman will approve Committee membership, and the Board will confirm it. The Board will, in course of discussion create Departments and Committees, or, through the Chairman's recommendation to the Board, approve them.

After Spiritual Trainees have been here for five years, they may be appointed Section Supervisor by the Department Manager. The Department Manager can also select them to be part of the Managing Committee. The Board will also confirm these appointments. After Spiritual Trainees have been here for 20 years, they may become the Manager of the Department that they have been serving under. However, it is for the Board to make policies. It is not for the Department Manager to make policy, but to carry out policies made by the Board.

In previous Advents, the Avatar, the Christ, the Prophet never created a Trust for the benefit of His Lovers. But this age is a different age - an age of action. Through His work in the Labour Phase of the New Life, He has made it possible for mankind to follow Him in the midst of its activities. Moreover, through the Trust that the Avatar has created, He has made it

possible for His Lovers to be directly involved in activity that is focussed on fulfilling His Wishes as put down in the Trust Deed.

When Beloved Baba created the Trust Deed, He nominated Mandali members to be Trustees, although some of them, because they were with Him all the time, had no connection with worldly activity. But He nominated them in order to show the world, through their example, how to be in the world and yet be detached in the midst of doing one's duties in His Cause. In fact, out of ten Board Members, nine were Mandali. Although Beloved Baba may not have given specific instructions on how Spiritual Training is to be managed, He did give us Mandali two good examples and one good story of detachment, or "how to be in the world and yet not be of it".

The first example Beloved Baba gave us was that of a nanny, whose duty it is to take care of children who do not belong to her. She knows that even though the children do not belong to her, she takes care of them as if they were her own dear ones. Baba told us that, in the world, you should live like a nanny. That is, take care of everything according to your responsibility. But at the same time, you should not get attached to this responsibility. That, He said, was being in the world and yet not of it.

The other example Beloved Baba gave was that of a cashier at a bank.

One day, a man came into a bank and was watching the cashier. The cashier, very much absorbed in counting the money in order to keep proper accounts, did not notice the person watching him. After a while, the man left.

One evening, this man went to call on the cashier at home. Although the cashier did not know him, he let the man

inside and asked what he wanted. The man said, "You are very rich, and I need your kind help."

The cashier was surprised to hear that this man thought he was wealthy and said, "I am not wealthy. Whatever I get is by way of salary to support my wife and children."

And the man said to him, "But that day at the bank, I saw you were so absorbed in counting the money that you did not even notice me watching you. Now you tell me that you are not wealthy? You must be the owner of the bank. No one could be so absorbed in counting like that if the money were not their own."

At this, the cashier laughed, and he said, "Honestly, I tell you that the money you saw me count does not belong to me. It belongs to the bank. I only work there. My duty is to count the money properly and keep a proper account. When I am in the bank, I do this work with complete concentration. But when I come back home, I forget about the work, because I know that the money does not belong to me. I do the work in the bank according to the duty that is given to me. Then I am free of my duty when I leave at night."

Beloved Baba would want us to live in the world like the cashier of the bank, who counts money the whole day, keeping the account. But at the same time, he remains detached, knowing full well the money does not belong to him.

The third example Beloved Baba gave us in the following story.

There was a Perfect Master who had a few disciples who were living with him and followers who would visit him every week. When his followers came, they would garland him, bow down to him and give him some present. Then the Master

would deliver a short discourse, after which everyone would disperse.

One day, a rich man came. He observed this scene, and said to the Master, "Master, you are really very lucky. Without doing anything, you get everything! Your followers come. They garland you, bow down to you and give you different presents. You just give a short discourse. You do nothing, and you get everything. How fortunate you are!"

The Master said to him, "One day, you will come to know what I do."

The rich man said, "I know now! I don't have to wait to come to know. Just see, I work 14 hours a day and perspire all day long to earn money. And you, without doing anything, you earn!"

"One day, you will come to know," the Master repeated.

The rich man went on teasing the Master, but the Master kept quiet. Finally, the man left, still laughing at the Master.

One day, the rich man got a whim to go on an adventure that no one had gone on until then. This story takes place many centuries ago, when the only transport was camels, donkeys, horses, etc. So he thought, "No one has crossed the desert. If I cross it, I will become very popular! Since I am rich, I can afford it to make this adventure!"

He called his workers and said, "You all arrange one hundred camels. Load water and eatables on them. We have to cross the desert, so see that we have sufficient water and sufficient eatables."

So the workers got one hundred camels ready. The rich man got on his camel, and the procession of camels followed him. As he came near the desert, he could not bear the heat. But he was very determined to cross the desert, so he entered into it. The heat became unbearable, and he started pouring water continuously, all over his body! As the group went some distance into the desert, his workers thought, "This man is utilising so much water. What will happen to us when the water is exhausted? We will remain in the middle of the desert to die."

One worker said, "We should approach the owner, requesting him not to use so much water."

So the workers went to him, and they requested him to use less water, because there were so many people and the large desert had to be crossed. But he was a very proud man. He said angrily, "Why should *I* not use so much water? Does this water belong to *you*?"

And they said, "Sir, if you use so much water, then suppose the water is exhausted when we are in the middle of the desert. What will happen to us? We all will die, including you."

"If *you* die, what do *I* have to do with that?" the rich man said. "I am paying you. You must follow me, because I pay your salary!"

The workers said, "Sir, when the water is exhausted, we will not drink money. We will need water!"

He said, "You must obey my order! Don't say anything!"

"Then we must go back."

And the rich man said, "Then go back! What care do I have!?"

All the workers left him. Since he had one hundred camels loaded with water, he continued to pour water freely over himself. But when he was in the midst of the desert, the water was exhausted. He started dying of thirst. At that time, he prayed to God saying, "O God! I am dying! Please help me! Give me water!"

All of a sudden, a man appeared with water.

The rich man said to him, "My friend, I am dying of thirst. Please, give me a little water."

"Give you a little water?" the man said. "If you want water, I will charge you."

The rich man asked, "How much do you want?"

"I want whatever wealth you are carrying with you, and whatever wealth you have where you came from. I want your home, shops and fields. You have to give me everything you own."

"You want so much?" the rich man said.

"If you don't want to give it to me, then don't give. You will die. What do I care?"

And he started to walk away from the rich man. The rich man yelled, "PLEASE! Please help me! I will give you half of my property."

"I don't want half your property," said the man. "I want all of it. It is not going to do you any good if you die."

Because the rich man was dying of thirst, he had to accept the man's terms. So they turned around, and the man who miraculously appeared kept supplying water throughout the journey until they reached their destination. As soon as they reached it, the man said to the rich man, "Now give me everything!"

And the rich man had to keep his word, because the man with the water had saved his life. So the rich man gave everything he had to him. That man even said to the rich one, "You can no longer stay at your home because it is mine. Go away."

The rich man had to leave his home and his wealth. He was standing on the street, thinking "What should I do now?" Then he remembered the Master and thought, "I must go to that Master. He may give me shelter. No one will give me anything because now I am very poor. That Master looked very kind, so I must go to him."

The rich man then went to the Master, who looked at him and said, "Why do you appear so miserable? What is the matter?"

The rich man told the Master everything that happened to him while he was intending to cross the desert. The Master said, "So, for a little water you gave *all* your property, and *everything* to that man?"

The rich man said, "Master, this was his condition. Otherwise he would not have supplied water to me. I would have died. That's why I had to give him everything I owned."

"This shows that water is more valuable than your property."

The rich man said, "Yes, Master, what you say I accept."

The rich man saw the man who had taken everything coming towards them and said, "Master, this is the man who took away everything from me. But at least he saved my life."

The man came to the Master, who said, "Have you taken everything from this rich man?"

He said, "Yes, Master, I took everything. It was my condition. I supplied water because he accepted my condition. He wanted to live. He did not want to die. So I supplied him water and brought him back here. I am not at fault. I did what he wanted me to do, which was to save his life!"

The Master said to the rich man, "Do you remember when you were dying of thirst? What did you say?"

The rich man thought and then said, "Yes, Master, I said 'Oh God! Give me water, I am dying!'"

The Master asked him, "Do you know who heard your voice?"

The rich man looked at the Master and said, "I don't know, Master. But just after my prayer, this man appeared with water."

The Master said, "I heard your voice and sent this man immediately with water. The desert is thousands of miles from here, and I heard your voice. And you say that I don't do anything, that I take presents from people without doing anything?"

The rich man said, "Master, I am very sorry. Now I realise my mistake. Please give me shelter under you."

"I cannot give you shelter unless you obey me implicitly."

"Yes, Master, I am ready. I will obey whatever order you give."

The Master said, "Again, think this over and then tell me whether you will be able to obey me."

"Master, I give you my promise that I will obey you one hundred percent honestly and sincerely."

The Master said to him, "Now listen carefully. I sent this man to you to bring you water in order to save your life. You gave away your property to him in exchange for water."

The Master turned to the one who had saved the rich man and said, "I am your Master, and you obey me. I want you to give me all the property that this rich man gave you."

The man replied, "I give it happily to you, Master."

The Master then said to the rich man, "All your property belongs to me: your business, your home, everything belongs to me. Now I appoint you as a caretaker of my property and my business. Do it for me, and never think that it is your property. You are neither rich nor poor, you are a caretaker of this property, so do your duty. Take care of my business, take care of my property. Never think that it belongs to you. Work for me. Eat well and sleep well as the caretaker of my property."

And the rich man happily agreed to that, so he was allowed to live under the shelter of the Master.

What Beloved Baba wanted the Mandali to know was that we should live as caretakers, not be attached to the things around us or our duties, even when those duties are given to us by Him.

After He dropped His body, the Trust started to function, and we had to fulfil the important responsibility of Trusteeship that He gave us. After our deaths, the time for you, His lovers, to take charge of the Trust will come. But as you take charge, you who will serve on the Trust Estate must know that you should fulfil your responsibility like a caretaker under the Labour Phase as you try to become Baba's Servants.

One way to insure that you remain a caretaker is to remember that Beloved Baba is the doer. All those who serve on the Trust Estate as Spiritual Trainees (including those Baba lovers who live nearby and wish to serve His Cause) must remember that it is He WHO is doing everything. You should not think that you are the doer.

Beloved Avatar Meher Baba created the Trust for His lovers as a medium for them to remember Him. In this age of action, it is a very practical medium because through the Trust people get the opportunity to actively serve His Cause.

Anywhere in the world, His lovers can donate to His Trust to fulfil His wishes. When the Trustees receive donations, they should think, "This is the Beloved Who is making His lovers the medium to help the Trust." They should never think, "We are running the Trust."

Those of you in supervisory positions should think, "What a privilege the Beloved has given us to serve His lovers."

Those of you involved in helping to fulfil the various objects, such as the medical, education and pilgrim facilities, should think, "It is the Beloved Who is doing everything, and He is giving us the opportunity to serve Him in the patients, in the students, and in the pilgrims."

In fact, whatever role one is doing, you should have that understanding and feeling that, "It is the Beloved Who, through us, is doing this work to help Him, in the form of His lovers."

The Beloved Himself is very, very active, and since you want to follow Him, you should not forget this fact: It is He who works. You are only the media.

He is the only Doer, and if you serve on this basis, you will feel that the Beloved is always actively with you and His activeness will gradually make your false self inactive.

However, if you think that you are the doer, you will fail to follow the direction of the Beloved.

Your duty is to serve Him selflessly, willingly, honestly, sincerely, and with all love, being very careful not to allow your false self to assert itself by thinking that you are the doer. When you live for Him, there is no room for the false self to assert itself. Self-effacement will happen naturally.

SPIRITUAL TRAINEES AS TRUSTEES

Amongst the objects of the Trust Deed, Spiritual Training is the most important, because you, as Spiritual Trainees, will carry out all the other objects of the Trust. Therefore, it will be up to you to keep the atmosphere alive with Baba's love in all Trust activities.

For you who are on the Board of Trustees, you will have a great responsibility in how you fulfil the object of Spiritual Training. You will have to organise the outward structure of the Spiritual Training Programme so that it assists the Spiritual Trainees' expressions of love and service for Beloved Baba. But as you administer this object of the Trust, you must remember that the posts of Chairman and Trustee are administrative positions and do not indicate any level of spiritual authority. Whenever the Avatar comes on earth, He does not leave a seat for anyone to occupy. His seat is in every heart. And therefore, how can anyone occupy His seat? The Chairman of the Trust is only the person in charge of daily administrative matters and not a spiritual leader. No Trustee should think that he or she has any spiritual authority.

Though you as Board Members have no spiritual authority, it does not mean that you are not without experience in trying to live a life pleasing to Beloved Baba. You have decades of experience to share. But sharing your experience is not the same thing as imposing your experience upon others and expecting them to accept it.

As vacancies appear on the Board, I suggest that it is advisable to nominate Trustees from those Spiritual Trainees who have been serving on the Trust Estate for over 20 years. Not only is dedication required but also decades of daily experience of serving under Mastery in Servitude on the Trust Estate. A time period of at least 20 years will indicate those who have the ability and willingness to shoulder the responsibility of Trusteeship in a way that would be pleasing to Beloved Baba. Baba nominated those who were always with Him as His Mandali to be Trustees. Likewise, only those Baba lovers who become Spiritual Trainees and live on the Trust Estate, dedicating their lives to become Baba's Servants, can be considered for Trusteeship.

Trustees are chosen without regard to caste, cifeed, religion, sex, colour, nationality, etc. God is in everyone, and because all are here to serve Beloved Baba, these apparent distinctions must not be given any consideration.

If you are nominated and confirmed as a Trustee, you will still continue to be a Spiritual Trainee striving to become a Servant of God. As a Spiritual Trainee Trustee, you must continue to uphold the Fixed Conditions of the New Life. The only thing that has changed in your life is your outer responsibility, but your inner responsibility remains the same as before. Your concern being a Trustee is with the *outer* structure of the Trust Estate. But you have to continue to build the inner structure within yourself, striving to become God's Servant. When the inner structure is there, this will allow you, as a Trustee, to uphold and even promote a feeling of Oneness in the midst of your duties. If you do this, you will have fulfilled your duty to Beloved Baba's Wish under Mastery in Servitude.

Administering the Spiritual Training Programme will eventually require several Departments. I will suggest some of those Departments in the following sections. But as long as the administration is small, as is the case now and in the foreseeable future, many of these functions can be handled by the Chairman directly with the help of the concerned Trustees and Spiritual Trainees, and, when necessary, with final approval by the Board of Trustees.

SELECTION OF SPIRITUAL TRAINEES

The first group of Spiritual Trainees was drawn here by Beloved Baba. We did not do anything to promote their coming. But we realised our responsibility, and we helped them stay here. For the most part, they came here after having spent many

visits with us as pilgrims, sometimes helping us in various ways. We accepted them because we could feel how their hearts were drawn here, and how they wanted to be here more than anything else in their lives. We were happy about it.

I recognise the Spiritual Trainees who come in the future will face a different situation than what is here now, because we Mandali will not be here. At that time, the Trust will need some administrative guidelines to help with the selection of who will be permitted to enter the Spiritual Training Programme. As the Trust develops, many professional skills will be required. Selection of trainees should not be decided only on these qualifications, but whether the aspirant really wants, and is ready with all his or her heart, to try to become Baba's Servant by entering the Labour Phase of dedicated action to God on the Trust Estate.

There are, of course, many followers of Avatar Meher Baba, and they follow Him according to how He guides them. But as described in the Deed of Declaration of the Trust, this training is based on the New Life, lived by Avatar Meher Baba and His Companions, exemplifying and practising at all times renunciation and detachment in the midst of the ordinary worldly activities, that is, *to be in the world and yet be not of it*.

Therefore the Spiritual Training Programme is for those followers of Avatar Meher Baba who wish to live the New Life with the intent of effacing their false self under Mastery in Servitude by fulfilling the objects of the Trust Deed.

The Spiritual Trainees must be selected without regard to caste, creed, religion, sex, nationality, or colour, etc. Whenever distinctions arise, then spirituality is not present. The Spiritual Trainees may live at Meherabad, Meherazad or the Trust compound in Ahmednagar.

In most cases, the prospective aspirant to the Spiritual Training Programme, foreign or Indian, will have already served months in various capacities on the Trust Estate during previous visits as a long-term pilgrim. Therefore, accompanying his or her application should be a Sponsorship Letter from the Supervisor (or Supervisors, whether Trustee, Department Manager, immediate Supervisor, etc.) under whom the aspirant worked and who believe that the aspirant is ready to join the Spiritual Training Programme. Those who give Sponsorship Letters must take this responsibility very seriously. They have to make the first determination whether the aspirant is ready to live a life under Mastery in Servitude. Although the Sponsor (or Sponsors, who may be called Programme Sponsor(s)), might write this recommendation letter, this does not mean that the aspirant will be placed in that Sponsor's department if accepted into the Spiritual Training Programme. The final decision will be according to the discretion of the Chairman.

The applications of those who are interested in being Spiritual Trainees should continue to be forwarded to the Chairman until the Chairman decides to create a separate Department to manage this work. The aspirants will be given a copy of this booklet so they will know what is expected of them. They will also come to know that, if selected, they have to sign a letter of acceptance of the Fixed Conditions and also make a personal written oath before God of their resolve to live The New Life.

The Chairman will consult with various Department Managers and the Trainee's Programme Sponsor(s), taking into account the Trust's needs and the ability and interest of the Spiritual Trainee, to determine whether the aspirant is ready to join the Spiritual Training Programme and where to place him or her to begin service under Mastery in Servitude. He will also consult with the Department handling Staff Quarter

Accommodations to determine whether room is available. After the selection has been made and duties decided, the Chairman will inform the Board.

As the administrative duties of the Chairman grows, and he no longer can be directly involved in every stage of selecting Spiritual Trainees, I suggest that applications (along with the Sponsorship Letter) to join the Spiritual Training Programme be forwarded to a Department, which may be called the Spiritual Trainee Aspirant Department, because these Baba lovers "aspire" to join the Spiritual Training Programme. The Chairman can create this Department whenever necessary. Also long-term pilgrims who have an interest in serving on the Trust Estate during their pilgrimage may approach this Department and enquire where they can serve.

The Aspirant Department should base its selection of Spiritual Trainees on the guidelines stated above. All Trust Departments should keep the Aspirant Department informed, in writing, as to what their staffing needs are. Also, the Aspirant Department should have up-to-date information from what may be called the Household Department to see if and where accommodation is available.

Once the selection has been made, the Aspirant Department (based on information from the various Departments) will determine where the aspirants will begin their training. The Department should also consider not only the previous work experience, but also the life experience aspirants bring to their training.

After meeting with the concerned Departments, the Aspirant Department Manager, along with its Managing Committee, would meet with the Chairman to discuss and decide on the selection of the prospective aspirants and where they will begin their training. The Chairman will then report to

the Board on who has been selected as Spiritual Trainees and what their duties are.

In the future, many Baba lovers, after having served at various Baba Centres around India and the world for years, may finally want to join the Spiritual Training Programme. It is up to the discretion of the Chairman or the Aspirant Committee to decide whether they can join the Spiritual Training Programme directly, taking their previous service into account, or whether they should first gain some service experience on the Trust Estate as a long-term pilgrim before joining the Spiritual Training Programme. When an aspirant is selected as a Spiritual Trainee, the Aspirant Committee should consider their skills and experience, so that they can start their service in an appropriate department.

As part of the orientation process, the Spiritual Trainee's Department Manager (or Managers, if they are serving under more than one department) and Programme Sponsor (if different from the Manager) will help answer any questions the Spiritual Trainee may have in trying to live the life of a Spiritual Trainee.

The initial period of acceptance into the Programme is for five years. This is considered a preliminary acceptance. The Spiritual Trainees have expressed their *interest* in Spiritual Training, but they and the Trust have to see whether they are *inclined* in that direction.

Therefore, once every six months, the Department Manager and Programme Sponsor should send a written report to the Chairman on how the Spiritual Trainees are progressing in their Spiritual Training. Whenever the Chairman can no longer take care of this work directly, the Chairman can create a separate Personnel Department.

This Department may be called "The Spiritual Workers Department". Spiritual Trainees are serving on the Trust Estate under Mastery in Servitude. That is their duty. But they also have the responsibility to seek, uphold and encourage a feeling of Oneness in order to keep alive the spiritual atmosphere on the Trust Estate and within their hearts. Baba called those who did such work Spiritual Workers. Giving this department the name Spiritual Workers Department will help remind Spiritual Trainees that they are here not only to fulfil the objects of the Trust in a spirit of self-effacement for Him but also to seek, share and promote inner Oneness. And therefore the work they do is spiritual work and not just work.

When the Chairman creates the Spiritual Workers Department, Review Reports would be sent to it. The Aspirant Department is really a section of the Spiritual Workers Department.

If necessary, the Spiritual Trainee along with the Department Manager or Managers and Programme Sponsor can meet with the Chairman (or Manager of the Spiritual Workers Department) to discuss any matter that needs clarification. These six-month reviews will take place during the first five years of Spiritual Training.

What is the review based on? The review should be : based on whether Spiritual Trainees do their work satisfactorily or not. Whether the work given to them is suitable, or whether they should be transferred to another Department. Although no one can judge the heart's love for Beloved Baba, outer structure is the reflection of inner structure. So the review is based on both the head and the heart. That is, whether the work is done honestly, sincerely and lovingly (which is where the heart is active), and whether it is done properly (which is where the head [intellect] is active).

After the five-year time period, the Chairman will meet with the Department Manager under whom the Spiritual Trainee serves and the Programme Sponsor (if different) and the Manager of the Spiritual Workers Department (if functioning) to determine whether the Spiritual Trainee is definitely *inclined* in the direction of spirituality. If he or she is found to be so, and is willing to be a Spiritual Trainee, the preliminary acceptance of him or her into the Programme now becomes finalised. The Chairman will report this to the Board. Spiritual Training is not for any limited time; it is a lifelong commitment to effacing the false self. Those who are accepted into the Spiritual Training Programme wish to make that commitment, and therefore want to undergo Spiritual Training lifelong.

However, even after the Spiritual Trainee's preliminary acceptance has been finalised, reviews will continue, but made only annually by the Spiritual Trainee's immediate supervisor and Department Manager. After the Spiritual Trainee's preliminary training period is over, the Programme Sponsor has fulfilled their duty and responsibility and need not write further reviews. If the Spiritual Trainee is the Department Manager, then the review will be written by the Trustee in charge of that activity. If there is no such Trustee, then the Trustee(s) at the Spiritual Trainees' location should write the review. When necessary, the Chairman (or Manager of the Spiritual Workers Department) may call the Spiritual Trainee along with the appropriate Trustee or Department Manager(s) to discuss any matter that needs clarification.

As the governing body, the Chairman and the Trustees will have the duty and responsibility to review themselves, remembering that they, too, are Spiritual Trainees. All the Trustees should write their own review and send it to the Chairman for him to put it before the Board for its information. The Chairman also should write his own review and put it before the Board.

According to the availability of funds, the Board should provide more staff quarters, more staff kitchens and other facilities for Spiritual Trainees. When Beloved Baba's Manifestation takes place, more and more people will want the opportunity to join the Spiritual Training Programme. As the Trust is able to accommodate more Spiritual Trainees, the Board of Trustees should avoid hiring paid workers, and let His lovers serve Him as Spiritual Trainees on the Trust Estate.

ACTIVITIES OF THE SPIRITUAL TRAINEES

After a Spiritual Trainee has been selected, the Chairman along with concerned Trustees, Department Manager(s) and Sponsor(s) will decide in which activity or activities the Spiritual Trainee will begin their service. Afterwards, they will give further work assignments according to the ability and interest of the Spiritual Trainee. Spiritual Trainees can also serve in other capacities and be involved in other projects and activities as time goes by. The Chairman should be kept informed in writing when they become involved in these new activities. If Spiritual Trainees wish to be transferred to different duties, they should send their request letter to the Chairman.

However, in the future, when it is no longer possible for the Chairman to be directly involved in every step of this work, the Spiritual Workers Department will have this responsibility. This Department will assign Spiritual Trainees their duties. They will take into account the needs of the Trust and the abilities and interests of the Spiritual Trainees. All other Trust Departments must keep the Spiritual Workers Department informed as to their present and future staffing needs. This will permit the Department to make appropriate work placements.

Due to special circumstances, other Trust Departments can request the Spiritual Workers Department to transfer the required number of Spiritual Trainees to their department temporarily in order to complete urgent projects. The various departments can also make an application to the Spiritual Workers Department requesting specific Spiritual Trainees who have special skills needed to complete their projects.

Spiritual Trainees may make applications to the Spiritual Workers Department if they wish to be involved in Trust activities other than the ones in which they are currently involved. They can also make applications to this Department if they would like to do individual projects and are seeking the Trust's support and guidance.

Spiritual Trainees will work collectively and individually in their Departments according to how the work is assigned by the Spiritual Workers Department, as well as the Department Manager and Section Supervisor.

In every activity which you, as Spiritual Trainees, perform, you should think that you are serving the Beloved only. You should remember this with every action. When you work to please Him, all service is the same. So do not let your service be spoiled by trying to judge whether the work you do is high or low by worldly standards. Such thoughts show there is a lack of love in your service. It also shows that you feel that your pride is important to you. Your heart should remain the abode of the Beloved, not the abode of pride.

I remind you once again that when you serve the Beloved, it should be done in such a way that your inner feelings are reflected in your outer work. In order for this to happen, the heart must become the master and the mind must become the slave. The intellect is used to do the work, but the way in which it is done is where the heart steps in, and the

intellect must follow its wishes of love and service. Then the service will be pleasing to Him.

Although you will be assigned your work according to your abilities and interest, you should also be ready to do any work on the Trust Estate when called upon, especially during special programmes such as Amartithi or Silence Day. At other times, you can continue with your work under your usual Departments. But whatever work needs to be done on the Trust Estate should be done willingly by you when you are called upon. Suppose a sweeper's work, which includes cleaning the toilets, is given to some trainees during a special programme like Amartithi or Silence Day. You should not feel ashamed of doing such type of work. Those of you in managerial roles should also take part in such work at that time by supervising.

I will give an incident in my life with Beloved Baba, Who showed me how to play my role according to His orders.

On 29th and 30th September 1954, there was the meeting at Meherabad when Baba gave His Declaration. Beloved Baba had called the Westerners earlier, on 22nd September. They had to stay at Meher Retreat Building at Upper Meherabad. At that time, there were only a few buildings at Meherabad. At Lower Meherabad, there were only Mandali Hall and the Mess Quarters, where the Dharamshala is at present.

Indians were accommodated in tents at Lower Meherabad. At both Lower Meherabad and Upper Meherabad, provisional toilets and bathrooms were installed. The Westerners had to use these, as the building had no toilets or bathrooms. Each toilet had one potty. But the sweeper would come only once in the morning to clean the potties. So Beloved Baba appointed Dr. Donkin (who was an M.B.B.S. [Bachelor of

Medicine and Bachelor of Science] and F.R.C.S [Fellow of Royal College of Surgeons]) and me to clean the potties.

Now, this was the problem. If any Westerner saw us cleaning the potties, they would not have liked it. So, Dr. Donkin told me that we both should remain hidden nearby, as if we were on watch duty, and as soon as anyone leaves the toilet, we should immediately go and clean the potty. And this is what we did. We had a big pit, in which we would throw the waste (nightsoil), and then clean the potty. Nobody would see us doing this work; everyone would always find the potties very clean. We worked there from morning until late at night.

Then, in 1955, there was a Sahavas programme, and Beloved Baba appointed me as a supervisor over the workers. There were four language groups (Gujurati, Telegu, Hindi, Marathi), and each group would come for five days. Each week for four weeks, a different language group would come to Meherabad. Baba had given me the duty of supervising the workers to see that they cleaned the area and made the food and bath arrangements. I was continually engaged in this work.

As soon as one group would leave, each pandal would be cleaned. Beloved Baba had ordered that the Sahavasees should have beds, and when each group departed, bedsheets and pillow covers had to be washed and put back on the beds. This work would go on all night and all day. But after some hours, the workers would sleep. Because the next group was to arrive soon, I felt responsible for getting all the beds arranged properly, thinking this would please Baba. So I would end up doing the work myself. I would also sprinkle water in the pandal so that the dust would settle.

As I was taking a bucket of water into the pandal, Baba came and immediately called me. "What are you doing?" He asked me.

I said, "I am sprinkling the water in the pandal so that the dust will settle."

Baba asked, "What duty have I given to you?"

"Supervisor," I replied.

And Baba said, "Are you supervising, or are you doing the work yourself? Remember this, whatever duty I give you, you must do it. When I appointed you supervisor, you must supervise. Not do the work yourself."

Baba displayed His unhappiness toward me. He told me to be the supervisor, but I did otherwise. He had given me the duty of the sweeper in 1954, and I did that. Then in 1955, He gave me the duty of being the supervisor. I should have done that job, not the job of a sweeper. This was a good lesson for me. It is important to understand that whatever your duty is, it should be done one hundred percent in order to please Him.

Therefore, whatever work is assigned to you, you should do it and not become negligent towards that duty. Any work done with love for Beloved Baba becomes His work. When you work with that understanding, you will gradually find yourselves free from the worldly idea of high and low. And through this, you will gradually feel inner Oneness. Beloved Baba is in everything and everyone.

One early Mandali member was Ardeshir, from Iran. He was illiterate. But Ardeshir was made Director of Agriculture by Baba, who wanted a garden near His *jhopdi* (hut) at Lower Meherabad. The Mandali had to construct channels for the water. To make the channels, they had to bring stones by carrying them on their shoulders from a long distance away. Ardeshir was giving orders to qualified workers, and he would

correct them. Baba would watch whether the Director was directing the work and whether the workers would listen to the Director, even though they were more qualified than he was.

When Dr. Goher came to live with Baba, even though she was a qualified medical doctor, He gave her the duty of looking after chickens and ducks that Baba kept at Upper Meherabad. She willingly fed them, looked after their health and arranged their habitats.

Another early Mandali member was Arjun. He died in 1926. He was quite illiterate and only able to give his thumb impression for his signature. When the Hazrat Babajan School opened at Meherabad, Baba made him the Director of Education. All the qualified teachers were under his direction. Baba would express much love for him. Sometimes Baba would take His own food and put it in Arjun's plate as they ate. Everyone in the Mandali would be jealous, knowing that, although Arjun was illiterate, Baba made him Director of Education, and they had to work according to his direction. They felt they also had love for Baba, but Baba did not love them as He loved Arjun. Baba loved Arjun very much, because he was obedient to His wishes.

One day, in 1925, Baba went to inspect the school and found some mistake committed by Vishnu. Baba got very angry with him. After some time, Baba said to Vishnu, "Vishnu, I got angry. That isn't good. Take the stick in My hand and beat Me thrice on My hand." And Baba held out His hand.

But Vishnu could not hit Baba's hand because He was his Master. He felt it would be a great sin to strike his Master. He said to Baba, "You are my Master, and I am your disciple. If you ask me to do such things, I will not do it. I will run away."

Then Baba called Rustom, who was the Manager at

Meherabad, and asked him to do the same thing. But he could not do it, feeling the same way that Vishnu felt. He said to Baba, "If I am your disciple, then how can I do this? This is a sin. If you ask me to do it, I will jump in the well and die."

Arjun was then called. Baba gave him the order to beat Him on the hand three times. Without a second thought, Arjun obeyed His Master. Then Baba told the Mandali around him, "Do you know why I love Arjun so much? Because He pleases Me. Whatever I say, he does. You people, just think about your own orthodox ideas. Of course, it does not mean that you should beat Me. But when I say such an action is My order, you must do it. This is called obedience, and obedience always pleases the Beloved. There is no question of sin or virtue. It is the matter of pleasing Me."

These incidents are examples of what Beloved Baba wanted from those who loved Him. As I said before, although Baba is no longer physically present, if you, as Spiritual Trainees, fulfil your duties with Baba's motto of Mastery in Servitude firmly established in your hearts, you will certainly please Him.

As Spiritual Trainees, you will carry out two categories of activities of selfless service under "Mastery in Servitude". One category is those projects required for the general development and maintenance of the Trust Estate, which the Trust has as its general objects:

- **Medical** - hospitals, health centres, dispensaries, clinics, veterinary aid, etc.;
- **Educational** - colleges, high schools, Music and Arts Centre, Physical Education Centre, Libraries, Museums, etc., and
- **Pilgrim Accommodation** - Pilgrim Centres, Hostels, Dharamshalas during the year and

additional pilgrim accommodation during special programmes such as Amartithi and Silence Day.

To fulfil these main objects, maintenance and development of the Trust Estate's infrastructure is also required, such as: construction, water facilities, roads, electricity, afforestation, etc. Here too, it will be necessary to create Departments, and sections in those Departments, for all these various activities and functions that occur on the Trust Estate.

As the Trust Estate grows at Meherabad and Meherazad, Spiritual Trainees with all kinds of skills, interests and temperaments will be required to run what will become like a township. Therefore, no matter what skill or lack thereof, if the heart is willing to become His servant, genuine Spiritual Trainees can find a place to serve here under Mastery in Servitude.

The second category of activity is the list of ten objects under Spiritual Training in the Deed of Declaration. All of these objects will also require Departments and various sections and consequently all the necessary administrative and creative staff to complete these projects. The first object is Spiritual Training itself. The list of objects, items (ii) through (x), continues with the pursuit of various creative expressions of remembrance of Avatar Meher Baba upon which Spiritual Trainees can focus. To execute many of these items will require technical skill. As stated in the Trust Deed, the primary focus of activity is for the general development and maintenance of the Trust Estate. But as more funds become available in the decades and even centuries ahead, these objects can, and must be, carried out fully.

"(ii) For depicting and unfolding the life and words of Avatar Meher Baba through the establishment of museums, memorials, study-halls,

libraries, fairs or exhibitions or melas at such places as may be feasible from time to time, open to the public;"

I have already presented to the Board of Trustees the idea that the Trust should have an exhibition area of Avatar Meher Baba's life and works called "Meher Baba in Motion" at Meherabad. This will cover hundreds of acres and will have museums, exhibition halls, theatres, multimedia centres, outdoor performance areas, libraries and research buildings. For those visiting Meherabad something similar, but in a smaller way, can be created to show Beloved Baba's life specifically at Meherabad and give visitors the feeling of Baba's Home. These areas will help the general public learn more about Meher Baba.

The creation of such areas will require an enormous amount of funds, and we leave it to the followers of Avatar Meher Baba of future generations to fund it and future Boards to manage it. However, we have already started this work through the Archive, Museum and Research Building, which will be a major reference source for the creation of the exhibitions, etc. of Meher Baba's life and work.

"(iii) For assembling or producing and/or exhibiting films on the different aspects of the life and work of Avatar Meher Baba, such as His "New Life", the Poor Programmes, the Leper Programmes, Darshan to the masses and His other activities in the course of His mission of sowing the seeds of "Divine Love" and "awakening the whole of Humanity to the Divinity in each one of them" and the building of a foundation or nucleus of the New ! Era or the New Humanity which will live in peace and cordiality eliminating all selfishness, greed and discord of all forms and will realise the ONENESS

OF HUMANITY so that man's life may be devoted to the realisation of the Godhood within each one;"

Included in the plans for Meher Baba in Motion are workshops, so that exhibitions in Meher Baba in Motion can include films (or whatever media will be in use at the time) to depict Meher Baba's life and work.

"(iv) For the writing and production of "Plays" based on the messages, discourses, and sayings of Avatar Meher Baba for the benefit of the public;"

At present the Trust has a Music and Arts Centre, and in the near future, we plan to build a college. Plays are already performed at the Music and Arts Centre. When the college is built, its facilities may be used for the writing of the plays. Also, play productions will take place at the various facilities to be created at Meher Baba in Motion.

"(v) For encouraging music, songs, kirtans, quawwalis, bhajans (vocal and/or instrumental) disseminating the life and work and the messages and dissertations of Avatar Meher Baba for the benefit of the public;"

Eastern and Western music performances as well as dance programmes from around the world are already taking place at the Music and Arts Centre. When the college is built, musical theory and dance will be taught there. Also, music and dance performances will take place at the various facilities to be created at Meher Baba in Motion.

"(vi) For encouraging various Arts, paintings, sculptures, engravings, etchings, printings, posters, drawings, slides, depicting the various facets

of the life and work and dissertations of Avatar Meher Baba for the benefit of the public;"

When the college is built, it will have courses on these various arts.

Workshops will be constructed to facilitate these activities, and finished artistic works will be on display at Meher Baba in Motion.

"(vii) For the writing of books, tracts, booklets, journals, magazines, souvenirs, periodicals, and other publications or literature and the publication and distribution thereof amongst the public in several languages as may from time to time be feasible on the different aspects of the life, messages, sayings, expositions and discourses of Avatar Meher Baba;"

When the Trust can afford to undertake this work, it must be on a non-profit basis and done by competent Spiritual Trainees suited to such work.

"(viii) For encouraging talks, speeches, lectures, broadcasts, radio talks and television broadcasts amongst the public or sections thereof at such places and times and occasions in such languages as may be feasible spreading and disseminating for the benefit of the public the universal message and discourses of Avatar Meher Baba and His Mission and Avatarhood by those who lead a life of sacrifice, love and brotherhood, for the upliftment of Humanity as aforestated in all spheres of life."

Baba's message is to be spread and shared. But who is to spread and share the message? This object tells us "by those who lead a life of sacrifice, love and brotherhood" for God. All Spiritual Trainees will have joined the Spiritual Training Programme in order to lead such a life. But those amongst you who have the talent and interest may share your experience of trying to be Baba's Servant, as well as talk about Meher Baba's life and work. You should inform the Programme Department (which sees to programmes on the Trust Estate) of your interest and tell them what you would like to talk about.

You Speakers should remember that words are only words until you live them, and so you must be very careful to live His words that you are sharing with others. Otherwise, you will become hypocrites.

When you are speaking to the general public for the first time or to other Spiritual Trainees, the Programme Department will help you make your presentation of Baba's life and work fitting to the Avatar. The Programme Department will then arrange gatherings, either amongst the Trainees or the pilgrims. The Chairman or the Department Manager of the Programme Department will give final approval of the speakers' programmes.

As the object states, Baba's Message is to be spread to other locations and through all media. For this aspect of spreading Baba's life and message, another department should be created separate from the Programme Department. This department may be called the Communications Department, which will see to spreading His message of love and truth through spoken language on a national and international scale. Those of you who have this specific interest and talent, and most importantly, are leading a life of sacrifice, love and brotherhood for God, may be called upon by the Communications Department. Ordinarily, speakers will have

gained experience giving talks on the Trust Estate before going out to the general public at other locations or giving talks through the media.

You should know what Beloved Baba told us when He would send us out to give His message, "You should tell the audience that you are in ignorance, and you don't have knowledge of My true state. You are only speaking out what I have declared about My Self."

And also remember, Baba did not like propaganda. And He certainly does not need missionaries. Baba often told those who wished to spread His message of love and truth to do so but with the understanding that after the people heard His name, He would take over. It was for Him to see that His name moved from their ears to their hearts.

"(ix) For facilities of visits to places touched or visited by Avatar Meher Baba during His life time and during His Avataric Mission or Advent and to enable the study of and undertake research in the various aspects of His work at the respective places and to pay homage to the same and to the memorials, statues, symbols kept or preserved thereat or therein for the benefit of the public."

In this object, to enable the study and research of Baba's life and work, the Trust will arrange for those interested to go to the various places Baba visited. The Programme Department should undertake this responsibility to arrange such trips for Spiritual Trainees.

"(x) For the service to and for relief of the poor, indigent, illiterate, sick, the disabled, blind, giving of education, medical relief, relief of all kinds and help and succour, and amelioration in times of

distress, flood, famine, war, earthquake, fire or other calamity or havoc, scarcity of different kinds, to the afflicted, and the advancement of all objects of general public utility in a selfless and altruistic spirit and particularly to promote a sense of oneness of humanity in consonance with the example of Divine Limitless Compassion and Love of which Avatar Meher Baba was unquestionably acknowledged and recognised all the world over as the embodiment and personification."

This object gives the Trust scope to advance all matters concerning public welfare, to be of general help to mankind in times of distress and specifically to help the poor and needy. The Trust does this at present through donations.

This object also indicates how all the activities and all actions are to be carried out under Mastery in Servitude, that is, by promoting a sense of Oneness of humanity with Beloved Baba as our example. This is the most important thing.

MATERIAL NEEDS OF THE SPIRITUAL TRAINEES

How should you live as Spiritual Trainees? I look at how we Mandali lived very simple material lives with Baba. Although I suggest the same for Spiritual Trainees, I don't suggest it to the same degree that we lived. At Meherazad, Baba appointed Kaka to be the manager. He was very strict. He would supply us men with soap, razor blades, etc. He gave us very crude soap, called bar soap, for washing our clothes and for bathing. Sometimes he would give us razor blades that had already been used. Of course, he did this in order to please Baba, who was very exacting regarding how money was spent.

Everything has its right place and time, and for those of you who are starting on the spiritual path, our simplicity may

seem too difficult. So I am not suggesting that. What I am suggesting is for you to have only what is essential for your material welfare.

But I also want you to understand that a truly simple life does not just mean having simple clothes, simple accommodations and simple food. Although this may seem to the world like a simple life, it is only outer simplicity. It has no real meaning. A truly simple life is devoid of desires, temptations, expectations and all other wants. If you, as Spiritual Trainees, have all these desires and still put on simple clothes, eat simple food and live in a small, simple room that does not mean that you are living a simple life, and therefore automatically a spiritual life. Your life may give only the outward appearance of simplicity. In order to live the simplicity of a spiritual life, you have to continually free yourselves from desires and wants, and only then will you achieve the freedom of living a simple life.

It is the duty of the Board to care for the Spiritual Trainees. But in trying to administer this care, things should not become standardised or institutionalised. If that happens, the charm will be lost. The Trust will lovingly provide the essentials to Spiritual Trainees, who are Baba's dear lovers; so that they can focus on what is real. To help ensure that things are not looked upon in an institutionalised way, I am suggesting the creation of a Department whose responsibility it is to look after the essential material needs of the Spiritual Trainees. This , department is called the Household Department. In choosing the^ word "Household", I am trying to give the feeling that, no f matter how many Trainees there are in the future, everyone herei i is in the same household. Home means home. Those whose hearts are His are His home, and so they are precious to Him.

As funds become available, more staff quarters and more staff kitchens and dining halls should be built. Insofar as

possible, each Spiritual Trainee should be accommodated in his or her own room. If a married couple wants to undergo Spiritual Training, then two rooms should be provided with kitchen and bathroom. However, during Baba's time no married couple was allowed to live together at Upper or Lower Meherabad or at Meherazad. This should be continued but only for that original property held at Baba's time. If a married couple wants to have children, they should make their own independent living arrangement outside of the Trust Estate. But the opportunity should be provided to them to continue to render selfless service with love, honesty and sincerity, so that they may please Beloved Baba. Also, as funds permit, staff quarters should be separate for men, women and married couples.

However, until the time that the Trust is able to provide the material essentials for the Trainees, if required, the Trust may provide minimum facilities for those few Spiritual Trainees who cannot afford to spend for food and necessities. Such assistance will be given without regard to caste, creed, race, nationality, sex, religion, colour, etc.

When Beloved Baba was physically present, He would give whatever was necessary for the Mandali to live a very simple material life. I am suggesting that the Trust also help the Trainees live a simple material life by providing them with the basic material necessities. The Trust will give these material necessities, but will not give any pay, as Spiritual Trainees are doing honorary service without any expectations, material or spiritual. Therefore when funds are available, the Board of Trustees should provide food free of charge through staff kitchens to the Spiritual Trainees. As further funds are available, the Trust can provide simple clothing and purchase household necessities for them. A fixed stipend decided by the Board will be given to each Spiritual Trainee for clothing. And the Spiritual Trainee can get their household necessities like soap, toothpaste, bedsheets, shaving materials and feminine

hygiene products, towels, etc. from the Supplies Section of the Household Department.

In the choice of clothing and appearance, you as Spiritual Trainees should choose comfortable and simple clothing. You should look and remain natural while all the time the game of love is being played out in the depths of your heart. And so you should look no different than any other person of the world. You should not put on robes to look spiritual or grow your hair in the way of the sanyasin. You should not try to differentiate yourselves from others in order to receive homage. You can witness in the photos and films with Baba how the Mandali dressed. Sometimes we men would wear only pyjamas. But that was when we were alone with Baba. On public occasions, when Baba was giving darshan, we men dressed appropriately, wearing pants and shirts. On special occasions, the women would wear pretty saris.

In 1925, Beloved Baba's Mandali had a lively discussion on the topic of having some kind of separate identification. Baba enjoyed the discussion, and then He told them, "You don't need any identification that makes you separate from others. Outward change makes the false self strong, because you think that you are something better than others. You should change internally. So whatever clothes you ordinarily put on, put those on. Remain natural."

The Household Department will have the responsibility of managing material necessities for the Spiritual Trainees (staff quarter assignments, room furnishings, staff kitchens, dining halls, food preparation, and the purchase and distribution of household and personal items). Of course, with this much responsibility, the Household Department will require many section within it.

The Spiritual Trainees can receive free medical treatment from the medical doctors on the Trust Estate. But when funds are available, other free medical facilities should be provided to the Spiritual Trainees. This includes payment for medicines, treatment by doctors outside our Trust Estate for specialised cases or hospitalisation in an Indian hospital. If Spiritual Trainees become incapacitated because of physical or mental trouble and are unable to do any kind of service, yet still want to live on the Trust Estate, proper medical attention should be given to them, so they can remain on the Trust Estate. However, if they feel it is necessary to return home to restore their health, they may take a leave of absence.

In Beloved Baba's time, we had no such thing as vacations. We had surrendered our life to Him. So we were amazed to find that the first group of Spiritual Trainees needed time away from here for rest and recreation. As I said before, we Mandali recognised that those just beginning to live a spiritual life would find our way of life too difficult. So we allowed such liberties for purposes of rest and recreation. Therefore, you as Spiritual Trainees may continue to leave the Trust Estate for personal reasons, but only for a reasonably short period of time. It is a liberty of sorts that should be made use of carefully. While on leave, you should not indulge your weaknesses, but keep Baba's remembrance alive in the midst of these activities.

As with the first group of Spiritual Trainees, some of you may need to visit your families, or you may have parental duties at home. Or your parents may be ill, and you need to attend to them. Such family responsibilities may require a lengthy visit, and so a longer leave is permissible. But whether it is for a short time for rest or recreation, or a longer absence because of family duties, such expenses will have to be borne by you.

Spiritual Trainees should request the necessary leave time from the Chairman when the administration is small, then, as the growth in administration requires it, from their Department Manager, who will notify the Spiritual Workers Department.

In Baba's time, we Mandali cleaned our own rooms and washed our own clothes. It would be good for you to continue in these daily tasks. However as you age, when you are too old to do such work, the Household Department will make necessary arrangements for you. The Department will also make such arrangements if you have fallen sick for any length of time.

future, when funds become available, you should rely on what the Trust provides for a simple material life: room, clothes, food, personal and household supplies and medical care. Other incidental purchases will be left to you to purchase out of your own funds. But as much as possible, you should minimise these purchases in order for you to maintain a simple material life. You should carefully consider whatever additional expenditure you make as to whether it is really necessary and in keeping with the purposes of your training.

In fact, none of the Mandali had any money when we were with Baba. That was one of the first things we gave to Baba when we came to live with Him. The only ones who had any money were those whose duties, such as marketing, required it. But the person doing the marketing would always have to give an account to Baba. We could not buy anything or go out to a restaurant or go out for sightseeing. We were Baba's servants, ready to obey His instructions. Nothing was our own, because we had given ourselves to Him.

I will give one more example of our life with Baba, and this also involves how we looked upon the use of money that

Baba gave us for His work. As with every moment in our life with Him, this example is just another incident of effacement of the false self.

Baidul was the one who would be sent out to find masts. Of course, Baba would give him directions on where he should go to find them. Baba would ask Kaka, who was the manager of Meherazad, to give Baidul money for this work. When Baidul returned, Kaka would take the account of how Baidul spent the money. Baidul had to go to different places to find masts, sometimes into the interior of India. He would travel in such a way, that he could go anywhere. He would wear the same clothes throughout the journey, not taking any bedding, change of clothes, shaving kit or soap, etc. He would be gone for 15-20 days. When he came back, his beard would have grown; his clothes would be unwashed and filthy because he would sleep in them.

Once, Baidul was sent to the Punjab by Baba. He had to go to many interior places in that region. He would eat in a restaurant only once a day. Although he would take transportation to major cities, if he had to move about in the interior, he would walk long distances, not hiring any vehicle. So when he came back after the 15-20 days, he was very tired. His beard had grown; he was totally unwashed. When he came before Baba, Baba did not ask him about masts. Instead, He asked Baidul to submit the account of expenses to Kaka. Baidul was very particular and had written down whatever money he spent. He handed the account over to Kaka. And Kaka started examining the account.

After examining it, Kaka told Baba, "This man does not go out for your work, but he goes out to eat. He has spent a lot for food."

Baidul replied, "I ate only once a day. See how little I have spent for food."

Kaka said, "Baba, this man should not be sent out. He is not a fit person. He spends a lot of money and eats and enjoys himself."

Baidul said, "Baba, ask Kaka how much I have spent for food. In fact, if Kaka went out to do this work, he would have spent 20 times more than me."

"What are you saying?" Kaka said. "When I go out, I just go for work. I don't go for eating food."

And Kaka and Baidul started arguing. If Baidul kept quiet, Baba would incite him. If Kaka kept quiet, Baba would incite him to keep the fight going. Baba would create such situations amongst us Mandali in order to keep our minds free. During such times, He would make us say whatever was in our minds. Otherwise, what normally happens is that people hide their feelings, which ends up creating grudges. Because Baba incited the Mandali at certain times, everything would come out before Him. He would make us forget about it afterwards, so that we remained clean-hearted. One has to become internally naked and the Book of Sanskaras has to be torn out page by page.

After awhile, Baba said to both of them, "Stop it. Just embrace each other and forget about it."

And they embraced.

Then Baba said to Baidul, "Now go and shave and take a bath, eat well and sleep well. Tomorrow, tell me about the masts you contacted."

So those who were living with Baba not only did not keep money with them, but what money was given to them for His work was scrupulously accounted for.

Likewise, on the Trust Estate, all expenditures, official or personal should be handled with great care. All Spiritual Trainees should look upon this example as a guideline.

For those of you who will be involved in Trust work that requires you to travel to the Government Offices in Pune, Bombay, Delhi or elsewhere in India, your expenses will be borne by the Trust. However, you should be very mindful of your expenditures and minimise these also, as if you had to report to Baba after your journey.

From time to time, Baba would call us men Mandali and say to us, "Now we are facing '*kadki*' (no money). And therefore, how can you live with Me? If you can adjust, then stay here. Otherwise, go home. You may only get food once a day and a cup of tea. But if you don't like this, then you can go back to your homes." Not one of us went back.

After Baba would tell us this, He would call Adi privately and would instruct him to send different amounts - Rs. 5,000, Rs. 7,000, Rs. 10,000, etc. - to certain families in different places who loved Baba who desperately needed financial help. None of us men Mandali would even know that these large distributions of money had taken place. We would think that we had to be careful, and we should not spend any more money on food.

I say this also as an example and reminder that, as the Trust receives more donations, you should not expect lavish food, fine clothes and stylish living accommodations. You are living here as if you are living with Baba. The donations from Baba lovers around the world are for the fulfilment of Baba's

Wishes as stated in the Trust Deed. No doubt, your being here is in part fulfilment of that Wish, because you are here under the object of Spiritual Training. However, just as Baba used most of the money that came to Him from His lovers for His work and not for us, the same thing should apply to the Trust and the Spiritual Trainees. That is, most of the love donations that come to the Trust should be used in the fulfilment of the objects of the Trust Deed. Only what is necessary should be spent for the care of the Spiritual Trainees. You have the privilege of living on the Trust Estate in order to take care of it for Beloved Baba as He would want you to in the spirit of Mastery in Servitude, just as we would try to fulfil His orders as He would want us to.

LIVING TOGETHER

It is very important for you, as Spiritual Trainees, to understand that there is a world of difference between equality and Oneness. The world these days is very much caught up in the idea of equality, and it may seem like a very noble idea to live by. But if you try to uphold that ideal, thinking that it is in any way spiritual, then you will be moving towards what is unreal. The idea of equality is a false one. Remember Illusion, which is based on duality, expresses itself through diversity. How can you make things equal that are limited and therefore false? If you seek equality in your daily life, eventually your attempt will create jealousy and hatred, and in fact, you will find that you have created differences. On the other hand, if you seek inner Oneness, then you will want to love God more and more. Seeking inner Oneness will create sympathy and love in your daily life, wiping out those differences. Equality is unnatural, because it is based on what is external in Illusion. However inner Oneness is natural because it is a reflection of the spirit.

The following incident shows how Baba would adjust a situation to meet an individual's particular need, paying no attention to the idea of equality. Dr. Donkin was one of the Companions of the New Life. As one of the Companions, he had to go through all the phases of the New Life, including begging. During that period, India got its independence from England. When Donkin would go begging, people could not understand why this Englishman was doing so. They would think that there must be some trick behind it. Often, he would be abused when he went out to beg.

All the Companions slept out in the open under trees. Donkin would not be able to sleep because there would be plenty of mosquitoes. Observing this, Baba one day asked Vishnu to go to the market and buy a mosquito net. Before all the Companions, Baba gave that net to Donkin. And Baba said, "By giving Donkin this net, do you think that I favour him? He did not expect that he would get a mosquito net. Then why I am doing this? Because he is not used to sleeping out in the open, where there are so many mosquitoes. He spends sleepless nights, but he does not complain. Do not think, 'Why is Baba giving a net to him and not to me?' He is following the conditions of the New Life. He is just the same as you are, and he is proving that by his actions. But what is My duty? You can sleep without a net, and I see he spends sleepless nights but does not complain. Because he cannot sleep, I have to do something for him. That is why I am giving this mosquito net to him. It is left to him how he will use the mosquito net, because he does not have a bed or anything to fix it to. But if a mosquito net is given to you, you will think about wanting a bed. (Baba said this jokingly.) So know well, there is no favouritism. This is required for Donkin, because he is not used to this type of life."

So in this example you have an illustration of how Baba took care of one person's need, paying no attention to the idea

of equality. If you have a feeling of Oneness, you would be happy that something was done for him in the midst of leading such a life. You would not feel jealous. But if you feel that everything should be determined toward a standard of equality, you would think, "Why was he given a net. Why wasn't I given one?" Then the spirit is lost, and you are living a life of the mind, not a life of the heart.

As I said previously, because everyone has different impressions, everyone has a different face. You perform deeds according to your impressions. So also, does everyone do different deeds. As long as impressions exist, differences are bound to exist.

But love is such that it wipes out these differences, these impressions. The more that impressions are wiped out, the more the experience of inner Oneness will come. And as you love God, you will go on freeing yourself from sanskaras (impressions) that keep you bound to the world. Love for God makes you free from bindings, but seeking equality increases them.

As Spiritual Trainees, the aim of your life is to love God. Therefore, as you do your duties, your heart's attention must be towards the inner structure of the world. As you love God, inner Oneness is revealed. But you will only feel this Oneness in your heart when your life has become one-pointed toward Meher Baba. The goal of life is to become One with God, and so, one day, by Beloved Baba's grace, He will make you realise your eternal Oneness with everyone and everything.

As there is a world of difference between Oneness and equality, the same holds true for humility and modesty.

What generally happens at spiritual retreats, ashrams, etc. is that people, in their attempt to be spiritual, end up only

being modest. They think that by appearing nice and loving, they are spiritual. But they have not won the feeling of Oneness nor even the inner understanding that would truly make them loving. It is only an outward show. Sometimes their weaknesses overcome them, and they appear modest just so people will praise them. Beloved Baba did not want us to be modest. He wanted us to be humble and natural. When you act out of modesty, you show others how you want them to see you. When you act out of humility, your actions are based on what you honestly feel and are within yourself. That is, your external actions are an honest reflection of your inner being.

For an example of what I mean by the difference between modesty and humility, we can look at the cherry, the almond and the grape. The cherry is very soft outside, but there is a hard pit inside. The almond is very hard outside, but soft inside. And the grape is very soft, both outside and inside.

Someone with a cherry personality appears very soft outwardly, but inside they are very hard and bitter. No one knows this. Outside, they appear very hospitable, very friendly and very nice. But inside, they are not so. When, instead of being open and cleaning our hearts of bitterness, we hide our grudges, our personality becomes like the cherry. Baba did not like grudges. Modesty creates weakness and even leads to hypocrisy.

Now the almond personality is very hard outside, but soft inside. So those who are like the almond, although outside they appear very hard, inside do not have bad feelings for others. Inside they have love, but outside they appear as if they are very bitter. We act like this when we become too preoccupied with things and become harsh towards others, but don't really mean it inside. But still, this shows a lack of control over the false self and an inability to uphold the feeling of Oneness at the time.

Baba gave the following example: It is just like a boy who calls his mother, "my father's wife" instead of "Mummy", which would make her happy. Although it is true she is his father's wife, calling her such makes her unhappy. It is a very unloving thing to call your mother, "my father's wife". The next time when we become hard outside, we should remember to try to become soft, so it really reflects what we are within. By doing this, misunderstandings are not created.

And finally, the grape personality is soft both outwardly and inwardly. The heart's inner softness is reflected outwardly, and consequently your external actions are an honest reflection of your inner being. This is being truly humble. When the heart is reflected in your actions, you are listening to the Beloved, humbly obeying His promptings in your heart. Reflecting your heart in your actions makes you strong, because you actually express what you are. You rely on the truth, and you have nothing to hide. Modesty can never allow this, because in modesty, you will try to portray how you want to be. Sometimes we can be like the cherry, sometimes like the almond and sometimes like the grape. But we should try to become more and more like the grape in our actions.

I will tell one more story from our life with Baba on this subject of modesty.

We were in Satara in 1959, and at the time, two boys from Nepal were there. They had been with Baba in Dehra Dun. They did kitchen work and cooked food for the Mandali, and they asked Baba if they could stay with Him. Baba accepted their request, and they came with us from Dehra Dun to Mahabaleshwar and then to Satara. These boys continued to do the same work. Alopa was the kitchen manager in Satara. He would go to their room at 5:30 a.m., wake the boys up for them

to finish making the tea by 6:00 a.m., so we could be ready by 6:30 a.m., because then Baba would come to Mandali Hall.

One night, these boys went to the movies without telling anyone. The next morning, Aloba knocked on their door. The boys said they would get up and make the tea. But they went on sleeping. They did not get up, so the tea was not ready at 6:00 a.m. Aloba became so irritated that he went to their room and shouted and shouted at them through the door. At last, he kicked the door. The boys got up, but Aloba continued to shout at them. At 6:30 a.m. Baba came and asked us if we had had tea.

We told him that we did not, because the tea had not been ready.

At this, Baba called Aloba and asked why the tea wasn't ready. Aloba said, "Baba, these two boys are rascals. I woke them up at 5:30 a.m. They told me they were coming, but they did not."

Pendu then spoke up and said, "They did not come, but you behaved very badly."

"What did he do?" Baba asked.

"Not only was Aloba shouting at these boys," said Pendu, "but he was also kicking the door to their room."

Baba said to Aloba, "Why did you do this? They are just new boys. And why did they come here? Because they love Me. Never do such a thing."

Baba ended the matter with these words to Aloba and the topic changed.

Then Baba went to His bungalow. I went with Him along with Aloba. But as we walked to the bungalow, I continued thinking how Aloba had not behaved well with the boys. It was not proper.

Baba immediately asked me, "What are you thinking?"

I had to say that I was thinking about the episode in the morning, how Aloba had not behaved properly with the boys.

Baba immediately said, "Then go to Rishikesh. There are many ashrams there. Go to the Gandhi Ashram. There you will find modesty, and people will appreciate your modesty. But here, there is no modesty. Whatever you are, whatever Aloba is, it is open. He did not hide himself. Though his behaviour was not good, and I did not like it, at least he did not pretend to be other than what he is. But since you want modesty, go to those ashrams."

When I was in college, before I met Beloved Baba, I wanted to go to Rishikesh. I had been drawn towards spirituality, not knowing what spirituality was. I started observing long fasts, for twenty-one days, drinking only water and eating nothing. I went to Gandhi's ashram, and also to the ashram of Swami Ramakrishna Paramahansa in Nagpur. When I went to the tomb of Tajuddin Baba, I became even more restless. Then I wrote a letter to a Swami in Rishikesh, and he called me there. Unknown to me, behind the scenes, Baba was bringing about these changes in my life.

I did not go to Rishikesh, because in the meantime, Beloved Baba came to Nagpur where I lived. Before He came, I had never heard of Him. But when I met Him, I surrendered my life to Him. According to His orders, I joined Him in Mussoorie, in the Himalayas, three months after my final examination. Later, Baba took me from Dehra Dun to

Rishikesh, particularly to show me that place, so I would not think about it even in my dreams. When I went to Rishikesh with Baba, He pointed at it and taunted me by saying, "This is your Rishikesh." As I looked upon people in robes and long hair and all the dirtiness that surrounded them, I thought that it was good that I did not join an ashram there.

I came to understand later that those swamis and mahatmas do not know what real spiritual life is. They, and those in their ashrams, follow the ideal life, where you observe certain rules in order to fulfil your "idea" of spirituality. But this does not cause any real inner change. You are only following the mind. They do not know that real spiritual life is based upon the Master's orders. You fulfil them willingly, without thinking whether they are good or bad, because whatever He asks you to do is the proper treatment to get rid of the false self. There is no set pattern to the spiritual life.

As Spiritual Trainees, you should have a clear understanding that the ideal life covers the false self with the garb of modesty. And because modesty is maintained, the false self remains unchanged. In the spiritual life, the false self gradually disappears, because it is a life of effacement. With the ideal life you are unnatural, because your outer actions are not an honest reflection of your inner being. But in the spiritual life, you become more and more natural, because of the fact that your outer actions gradually reflect your inner being.

There is a story that illustrates the problems that modesty can cause.

In a village once lived a father and son. The son's mother died when she was delivering him, and the father brought the boy up. The father and son loved each other very much, and the son was so devoted to the father that he would not leave him, even for a minute. Now and again, the father

would consider how the son never left him for any change whatsoever, even for recreation or sightseeing. When the father would ask the son to go sightseeing, the son did not want to go. One day, the father thought of a plan to give some change in scenery to the son.

He said to him, "Your maternal uncle is about 50 miles from here, and I would like to see him. Will you come with me?"

The son said, "Of course, how can I leave you alone? I will go with you."

"We have only one donkey. How can we both go?"

"I am quite young, and I can walk the distance," the son said. "There is nothing difficult for me. I am strong."

The father was very happy, and he thought that in this way his son would get a change. So early in the morning of the following day, they started on their journey. After travelling awhile, they came upon a village. The villagers stared at the pair as they travelled down the street.

The people said, "Just see this man. He is riding the donkey, and he has no shame in seeing that young boy walk beside him."

When the father heard this, he felt ashamed that he was riding the donkey while his son was walking.

So the father said, "Son, now you ride the donkey. I will walk for some time."

Because the people were laughing at them, the son, feeling ashamed, also agreed. The son and father switched

places, and the son was riding the donkey. They went a further distance and came upon another village. There again, people started looking at them and speaking amongst themselves.

This time the villagers said, "What kind of young man is he that lets this older man walk while he rides the donkey like a prince? He has no shame."

When the son heard this, he felt very ashamed. So the father decided that both of them should ride the donkey. They went a further distance and came across another village.

There, too, people looked at them and said, "Just see their cruelty. Both of them ride the donkey, while the poor, dumb animal cannot say anything. How cruel they are!"

When the father and son heard this, they felt bad because they were being so cruel to the donkey. They decided then that both of them should walk and drag the donkey. Now the sun was near setting, and they came across another village. Once again, people looked at them and said, "What fools they are, that they are dragging a donkey while they themselves are walking. They are so ignorant that they don't even know that a donkey is meant for riding. They walk and drag the donkey."

Now the father and son felt really confused. They were feeling ashamed and cruel and foolish all at the same time. As they passed through that village, the father and the son decided to sit under a tree, feeling overwhelmed from everything that everyone had said to them. Wherever they went, they were found in the wrong by others. And they did not know how to proceed on their journey.

Just as they were thinking such thoughts, a saintly person came by and he said to them, "Why are you sitting here?"

They said, "We are thinking what to do."

And the father told the saintly person what had taken place on the first day of their journey. "If you have any remedy for this situation, please let us know. We will act accordingly."

The saintly person replied, "The reason that all this is happening is because you want to please the people of the world. But this is not possible because each person has their own ideas. Even though you did what they wanted, you are now confused and ashamed. They found you cruel and foolish. This is your weakness, because really you are neither. But if you continue to listen to the people as you travel from one village to the next, you will never be able to get to your destination. Then you really would be foolish. Do not listen anymore to their chatter, but listen to God within you. He will guide you properly.

The father and son had not listened to the voice inside themselves, and so they were at a loss as to what to do. All they could do was listen to everyone else. And that is why it is most important for you, as Spiritual Trainees, to listen to how Beloved Baba is prompting you. That is the voice you must follow, otherwise, you will not get to the destination. But to hear the voice in your heart, you have to be very honest with yourselves. Desires of every kind will always be in your mind, urging you to follow their lead. So you have to develop the discretion to distinguish between what is the voice of the heart and what is the noise of the mind and its innumerable desires. If you are not honest with yourselves, you will be led by false modesty, thinking that you are leading a spiritual life. But what you will be leading is only an ideal life, and no real inner change will take place.

Spiritual Trainees should also be aware of the difference between worldly friendship and true friendship. One thing that is very hard to accept for those beginning a spiritual life is the truth that friendship on the spiritual path is very different than what, in the world, is normally understood as friendship. I explained this earlier through some of the stories I shared in my life with Beloved Baba. Now I'll give one more incident I observed amongst Baba and the Mandali that directly concerns friendship.

Vishnu and Dr. Nilu were friends from the time they were in high school in Pune. Vishnu joined Baba after his high school education, and Nilu joined Baba after he finished his medical education. Both loved each other very much. They were fast friends.

But Baba did not like false friendship. He wanted true friendship. True friendship is such that one does not ignore truth for the sake of friendship. If anyone does so, he does injustice to his own honesty.

Dr. Nilu was fond of a special sweet produced from milk, called *basundi*. Milk is boiled and boiled until it becomes very thick, and *keshar* (saffron) is mixed into the milk. Beloved Baba permitted Nilu to have only 30 rupees worth of basundi every month while we were in Satara. Baba knew that after several months, His second accident would take place, and Dr. Nilu would die. So He permitted Nilu this treat which Nilu enjoyed so much.

Once, it so happened, that Nilu had exhausted the money before the month's end, and he wanted to eat some basundi very much.

Vishnu was doing the marketing, for which he had money. Nilu approached Vishnu and said, "Vishnu, bring

basundi for me today. I don't have money, but in three days, at the month's end, I will get 30 rupees. I will pay you back after that. But please bring me some basundi today."

Vishnu did bring it, but he felt very bad, that he had brought it without Baba's permission. It was not good. He should not have spent out of the money he had for marketing. And Nilu should not have spent more than 30 rupees during the month. So, Vishnu went to Baba and told him.

When Baba came to sit with the Mandali, Baba asked Nilu, "How much did you spend this month for your basundi?"

Nilu felt scared and answered, "Slightly more than usual."

Baba said, "Where did you get this money?"

"I asked Vishnu, and he gave it to me," said Nilu. "But I will return it."

"I had given you an order that you are to spend up to 30 rupees for basundi and not more. Why did you spend more?" Baba said, and then turned to Vishnu, "Why did you purchase basundi for him, because he is your friend? I don't like such false friendship. Be honest. Don't do such things. If you do it again, know well, you will have to take your bags and return to your homes. I don't like this type of dishonesty. If you do such a dishonest thing with Me, you are wasting your time here. It would be better that you both go home. Be honest; be truthful and sincere in following My instructions."

If anyone else had asked Vishnu to do this favour, he would not have done so without Baba's permission. But he did it for Nilu, because Nilu was his friend. But later he informed Baba that he had made this mistake. Baba always wanted true

friendship. He did not want us to seek each other's favour or to favour anyone. That is the weakness in worldly friendship. True friendship lasts, and false friendship spoils a person and permits their weaknesses to continue.

In the world, friends get personally involved with each other, favour and even lie for each other. Sometimes they commit very harmful acts in the name of friendship. But this is not true friendship. True friendship is based on helping each other towards the truth, just as Vishnu did for Nilu. In work situations on the Trust Estate, if worldly attitudes regarding friendship exist, it will spoil the work and the atmosphere. Favouring friends creates preferences where there should be none. As you can see, Beloved Baba did not want us to have such friendships. There is a world of difference between friendship as the world knows it and the feeling of Oneness. The feeling of Oneness is based on the Truth and is an expression of it.

But it is important to talk things over now and again with someone as friends do. We found that the first group of Spiritual Trainees came to us with their questions, and we did the best we could in helping them along the path towards Baba. But only He can really guide anyone. Even we who lived with Him could only offer care and suggestions. But the human need to talk things over will continue amongst the Spiritual Trainees after we are gone. I recognise that need, and so I am suggesting something be done to meet that need.

Although Spiritual Trainees can meet with their Department Manager(s) and their Programme Sponsors to discuss their work, it is also good to talk to someone outside of their work setting to get some sort of perspective. For that purpose, I am suggesting that new Trainees find on their own a "Personal Sponsor" amongst the Senior Spiritual Trainees (those who have been here for 20 years), with whom the new

Trainees can talk freely. If one is not available, then they should find some suitable Spiritual Trainee who has been here as close to 20 years as possible. Spiritual Trainees should inform the Chairman (or Spiritual Workers Department) who their Personal Sponsor is, so that the latter can also write the six-month review for the Chairman (or Spiritual Workers Department) and attend review meetings, if necessary, regarding the Spiritual Trainee's progress.

As the administration becomes larger in the future, in addition to the Personal Sponsor, I suggest one department be created to see to the relationships amongst the Spiritual Trainees. As Beloved Baba called those who accompanied Him in the New Life, His Companions, I suggest this Department be called "The Spiritual Trainee Companionship Department." This Department will address any personal needs of, and give any assistance necessary, to the Spiritual Trainee.

This Department can also see to such things as orientating new Spiritual Trainees as they enter the Spiritual Training Programme. The Department will help to see that new trainees have someone of their own age, but who has lived under Spiritual Training for a year or two, to help orientate them, as part of an orientation process. (The new Trainees will receive further guidance from their Programme Sponsor in helping them adjust, as well as the Department Manager under whom they work.) The Companionship Department can also be available to any Spiritual Trainee who just wants to come in and talk things over.

Originally Mani and I would make ourselves available to hear the grievances of Spiritual Trainees. This is an important responsibility of the Chairman. While administrative duties still permit, the Chairman can get directly involved in such matters. But as his duties grow, it will no longer be possible. Therefore, included amongst the responsibilities of the Companionship

Department is also to attend to the grievances of Spiritual Trainees that come up during work. The Department will help co-ordinate the efforts to address these grievances amongst the people concerned. The Chairman may create this Department anytime he feels it necessary.

In trying to uphold a feeling of Oneness, it is helpful to remember that Beloved Baba wanted us to forgive and forget. Beloved Baba did not like it if we had grudges amongst ourselves. So if there is any misunderstanding, it should be sorted out with love, so that everyone can remain clean-hearted. And therefore, this Department will have this very important and loving responsibility.

During the New Life, Beloved Baba played the role of a seeker of God. Throughout the New Life, whenever Beloved Baba would make mistakes, He would humble Himself.

Beloved Baba gave humanity an important example of what humility is. One night, near the end of the New Life, Beloved Baba was staying with His Companions at the Imampur Mosque near Meherazad. During the night, a bird was making noise inside the building. Baba asked Eruch to catch the bird and throw it out. Eruch read Baba's gestures by lighting matches. Just as Eruch was about to catch the bird in the darkness, Baba called him back. He told Eruch to leave the bird alone and that He Himself had committed a great mistake. To throw the bird out would have been cruel. The next day, Baba had Eruch tell the Mandali about the incident, that Baba had given a cruel order. As a remedy for this, Baba then instructed His Companions to slap His body with their sandals and then spit on Him. As a seeker of God, and not God Himself, Baba made that mistake in order to show mankind how to be humble and repent when you make a mistake.

On other occasions, after expressing anger, Beloved Baba would ask the Mandali to spit on Him. Again, He did this in order to show how important it was to overcome anger.

You, as Spiritual Trainees, are also Seekers of God. And Beloved Baba's examples of how to humble yourself after expressing weaknesses should be remembered. Of course, you should not go to the extent that Beloved Baba did for the sake of His work for humanity. But when you express anger, jealousy, greed, etc., you should become aware of it and then feel genuine repentance for those actions. After the repentance, you should remain alert so that such weaknesses are not put into action again.

Spiritual Training is an inner discipline which means that you discipline yourself, rather than being disciplined from outside yourself, the way a parent does a child. However, one outer discipline should be maintained and that is that everyone should be on Trust property by 10pm. This curfew can be extended when there are special programs like Silence Day, New Year's Day, Christmas Eve, etc.

One letter came to Baba, the writer wondering how Baba lovers should behave at a particular Baba Centre.

Baba asked me to reply, "However you behave before Me, behave like that, wherever you are. This is the only discipline I want from My lovers. Do not think that I am absent. I am present everywhere, and therefore, behave with that certainty. Never think that I am absent. I am always present. When you backbite, know well that I am present there. When you say something against someone because of jealousy, know well that I am present there. Whatever act you perform, know well that I am present there. So do not do anything without' thinking that I am present. Know well, that nothing remains hidden from Me. And therefore, always behave with each other

in a way which pleases Me. That is the best discipline for you to maintain."

As Spiritual Trainees, offering your life in the service of God implies that you are willing and able to discipline yourselves. However, now and again, you will make mistakes. At that time, those of you in managerial roles should explain to the other Spiritual Trainees very lovingly (and not harshly) how they may approach their duties in a more responsible and loving way. As Supervisors or Managers, you should do this only in order to help the other Spiritual Trainees in serving God. This is a very important responsibility for those of you in managerial roles. You should feel that your responsibility is to give those who are under your supervision direction in the outer work, and at the same time, show through your actions what the essentials of selfless service require. It is your duty as Supervisors or Managers to live such a life that other Trainees understand how Beloved Baba should be served.

Besides mistakes in carrying out one's daily duty, if any Spiritual Trainee personally misbehaves, he or she should be talked with very lovingly by those in managerial roles. The Supervisor or Manager should request the Trainee to uphold the inner discipline required. If necessary, the matter can be reported to the Companionship Department who can talk with the Spiritual Trainee. Those in this Department should carefully, properly, and lovingly settle the problem, basing their assistance on what Baba has said. This should all be done in a spirit of helping the Trainee.

If the problems are severe to begin with, and any one of the Trainees is found indulging in violence, stealing, sex or other undesirable acts, the matter should be reported to the Companionship Department. The Department will issue "Reminders of the Fixed Conditions" that Spiritual Trainees said they would uphold. If he or she does not mend his or her

behaviour after three Reminders, the matter should be brought to the Chairman's attention. And if the Chairman cannot help the Trainee to mend his or her ways, the Chairman can recommend to the Board that the Trainee be asked to leave the Trust Estate and return to his or her native place.

Spiritual Trainees who want to leave the Spiritual Training Programme at any time are free to go without any shame. Occasionally, even after many years of living with Him, some of Beloved Baba's close ones would ask to leave to return to live a life separately from Him. Also, if Spiritual Trainees wish to go back to help the Baba Centre in their home town, and that Centre is calling them to be of help, the Spiritual Trainee is free to leave the Programme without any shame.

Recreation is also a part of life. One department, the Programme Department, should be created to see to this aspect of the Spiritual Trainees' life. This Department will have the responsibility of seeing to the creation and availability of games, both indoor and outdoor, sports and exercise programmes. Beloved Baba was very fond of games such as cricket and cards. In the early days at Meherabad, Baba had the Mandali play various games and even gave prizes. However, whatever team sports and games Spiritual Trainees participate in, they should only play in competitions organised for them by the Trust. They should not lose sight of why they are here and get involved in outside competitions.

The Programme Department can also arrange events which include music, plays, singing, talks on spiritual matters, the viewing of Baba films and Mandali videos, etc.

The Programme Department can also plan excursions for the Spiritual Trainees to visit places where Beloved Baba did His work, places such as Hyderabad where He did His Manonash work and Belgaon, Benares (Varanasi),

Mahabaleshwar, and Meher Mafi where He spent time in the New Life. It will be necessary to create many sections in the Programme Department.

Because there is a free mixing of the sexes on the Trust Estate, there is the potential of two Spiritual Trainees becoming so attracted to each other that they want to be married. This happened on a few occasions amongst the first group of Spiritual Trainees. We Mandali asked them to go back to their homes to be married. Some returned to continue their Spiritual Training, but most stayed at their native place to live their married life there. Spiritual Trainees make an oath before God to strive to live the New Life, and they also sign the Fixed Conditions. These acts on their part are done with full understanding of what is required to be a Spiritual Trainee. Amongst the conditions is striving to rise above the force of lust and maintain a brotherly and sisterly feeling for all.

However, if the force of attraction rises to the extent that Trainees feel that they must be married, that is their personal choice. They then should inform the Chairman (or the Spiritual Workers Department). They will be asked to return to their native places to be married. As long as they live on the Trust Estate, they are expected to uphold Fixed Condition No. 10 up until the time they are married.

Spiritual Trainees should not take it for granted that they will be allowed to continue to live on the Trust Estate under Spiritual Training if they are married. They will have to make an application to the Chairman (or Spiritual Workers Department). The Chairman will discuss the matter with that Department (if functioning) or the Department Managers under whom the Spiritual Trainees work. The Chairman will then present the application to the Board. Only those applications of Spiritual Trainees who have been serving the Beloved's Cause for many years genuinely, sincerely, honestly and lovingly will

be considered. If the Board has the confidence that they will remain so until the end, then they will be permitted to continue with their Spiritual Training.

If a Spiritual Trainee wishes to marry someone who is not a Trainee, and they both wish to live a dedicated life undergoing Spiritual Training, the same procedure is to be followed. If the Board finds that both are sincerely dedicated, the Board would also approve of the Spiritual Trainee's partner undergoing Spiritual Training.

Even after marriage, although Fixed Condition No. 10 does not directly apply to such Spiritual Trainees, they should remember this condition and try to uphold it as far as possible.

FINAL REMINDERS AND A FEW WARNINGS

Finally, once again, I want to remind Spiritual Trainees that the purpose of your Spiritual Training is to efface your false self in order to realise your real self. The purpose of Spiritual Training is to make your false self less, not more. Therefore, you should be careful that, as you become involved in the activities of the Trust, you do not look upon them as ways to fulfil your own personal ambitions and gain respect from others. The objects of the Trust are Beloved Baba's, not yours. The Trust is His gift to you, giving you the opportunity to serve Him.

A good example of how to serve is shown in the following incident. I became Trustee a few years after Baba passed away and because of my studies I was in charge of finance. Padri was one of the oldest mandali, being with Baba from the beginning. Padri was the manager at Meherabad and also Baba appointed him as a Trustee. Once when I went to Meherabad as winter was about to start, the grass in front of

Mandali Hall at Meherabad needed cutting. To get the grass cut would cost about Rs.20/- to Rs.25/-. Padri asked me, "Should I get this grass cut?" And I said to him, "Why not? We must keep this compound clean. Padri Kaka (Kaka means uncle and the word is also used as a term of respect) is there any need for you to ask me?" And he replied, "You are in charge of finance. It is my duty to ask your permission, because I will need money to do this work." I replied, "Is my permission required for work that costs only Rs.25." And Padri said, "Even if the work costs one rupee, I must get permission." Then he turned to the workers and said joyfully, "Just see, I got permission to do the work." And I was wonderstruck at his attitude. I felt touched at his humility, witnessing how he felt duty bound to follow official Trust procedures even though he was in charge of Meherabad and a Trustee himself. I never forgot his attitude. All of Baba's mandali behaved likewise while doing Baba's work even after He passed away. As Spiritual Trainees, you should also try to become as humble as Padri was, and it will be a great thing if you do because the Beloved will definitely be pleased with you.

A few of you will become Trustees, Department Managers, Section Supervisors, etc. Managerial roles are necessary in order for the Trust to run smoothly. But remember, these roles are not internally important. You have to fulfil these roles because of your sanskaras. If you fulfil the role in a way that is pleasing to Baba, then you will be free from those impressions. Sometimes, a thought can enter the minds of those in managerial positions, that they are different or special from others. Beware of such thoughts. The only thing that makes any one special is that they have been given the opportunity to serve Him. Remember Beloved Baba's own motto of Mastery in Servitude, and that will help guide you in using your position properly in helping other Spiritual Trainees love Him and serve Him more. Whether a Spiritual Trainee has an official managerial position or not does not alter the fact that everyone

has to go through lessons regarding power and position. They will come up in their own way in your life. But remember, you are really Infinite Power. Do not be enticed into trying to achieve some role of external importance. This will hold you back from your real purpose. Let your impressions work themselves out in a natural way.

Much of the service required for the fulfilment of the objects will be office work or grounds keeping. This may be called unskilled work in the world. But when it is done for the Beloved under Mastery in Servitude, it becomes a labour of love which touches His heart.

Some of you will have professional skills that will be put into action in fields such as medicine, education, law, engineering, architecture, the arts, computers, administration, finance, etc. As the Trust grows, the Trust will need such knowledge in order to fulfil its objects properly. Beloved Baba has brought you here to serve under Mastery in Servitude. He has given you an opportunity to use your professional abilities in His Cause so that you may efface your false self. But be careful; do not give yourself a false sense of importance because you have professional abilities. Baba has told us so many times, that He needs no one to do His work.

Remember this! So remain humble no matter how your expertise is used to serve Him and His Cause.

Spiritual Trainees will do so many different kinds of external work, whether skilled or unskilled, in trying to fulfil all the objects of the Trust. But all Spiritual Trainees do the same work internally. All Spiritual Trainees work in the same inner field, trying to rid themselves of the weeds that rise into their actions and choke the flowers of love.

I will briefly add here one last incident in my life with Baba that showed me that the sublime thing about Beloved Baba's words is putting them into action. It was during the time when Baba was dictating *God Speaks*. Eruch and I were the only members of the Mandali that would take any interest in what Baba was dictating. Baidul and Pendu and the others would not care at all. The dictation went on for two or three months. During that time I would think to myself, "Only Eruch and I can understand this sublime thing which Baba is giving; the others cannot understand it. They do not even care about it."

I thought people such as Baidul, Kaka and the others were not meant for such sublime things, that all they could do was take care of those dirty masts. Then, once while we were in Satara, after night watch, when I went to lie down to get some rest, all of a sudden I saw Baba before my eyes. He said to me, "Can you do what Baidul does? Can you do what Kaka does?"

For many nights this would go on. I knew it would be very difficult for me to do the work Baba gave them. Then I realised that what the important thing is and what is really sublime, is not the words themselves in *God Speaks*, but that we put into action whatever Baba asks us to do. In order to hear God speaking in the heart, we must put His orders into action. This was a great lesson for me.

Now I pass this lesson on to you in this way, that as Spiritual Trainees remember that the important thing is to put His message of love into action. Therefore, again I want to repeat Baba's New Life message to emphasise this to you.

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New Life Statement

This New Life is endless, and even after my physical death it will be kept alive by those, who live the life of complete renunciation of falsehood, lies, hatred, anger, greed, and lust; and who, to accomplish all this, do no lustful actions, do no harm to anyone, do no backbiting, do not seek material possessions or power, who accept no homage, neither covet honour nor shun disgrace, and fear no one and nothing; by those, who rely wholly and solely on God, and who love God purely for the sake of loving, who believe in the lovers of God and in the reality of Manifestation, and yet do not expect any spiritual or material reward, who do not let go the hand of Truth, and who, without being upset by calamities bravely and wholeheartedly face all hardships with one hundred percent cheerfulness, and give no importance to caste, creed and religious ceremonies.

This New Life will live by itself eternally, even if there is no one to live it.

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After Beloved Baba passed away, and the Trust first started functioning, Mani, Eruch, and Rano would come from Meherabad to the Trust Office and do routine office work. They continued doing such work for decades, until the end of their lives. Before the first Pilgrim Centre was built, we had a few rooms at Lower Meherabad where twelve pilgrims could stay at Meherabad for four days. Otherwise, pilgrims had to stay in town. Besides correspondence, Mani's work included deciding which pilgrims would stay at Meherabad. So she was the first

person to book pilgrims into pilgrim accommodations. Eruch would do a lot of clerical work. He would meticulously keep the Trust records, files and all letters (whether official Trust correspondence or pilgrim correspondence) perfectly organised. Rano was an artist, and she continued drawing portraits of Baba after He passed away. But at the office, she would help Mani and type letters for her.

Adi already lived at the Trust Office. It was his home, and he donated it to the Trust before he died. Amongst the work he did in his last years was to register pilgrims when they arrived in Ahmednagar and notify the police of their arrival. After Baba passed away, Padri would do all kinds of menial work at Meherabad. He did such things because they were necessary for the welfare there, and he knew that what he was doing was for his Master, Avatar Meher Baba. Pendu continued to see to the Programmes as he did in Baba's time, so he was in charge of the Amartithi management.

At first, I would do almost the work of an office boy at the Trust Office, bringing chairs for officials when they came, etc. Even though I had professional skills, I did menial work. A few years later, I started doing all kinds of Trust work. As I single-handedly did official Trust work, I would think, "In the future, so many Departments will have to be created to carry out each and every aspect of this work, which is now just starting."

After Baba passed away, Dr. Goher would run her little free clinic out of a very small room at Meherazad. She had the simplest equipment and no modern facilities. Yet people from the surrounding villages would come to get her treatment. They could feel her love.

This is what some of Baba's Mandali would do. We were not involved in great projects and great work. We all did what came to us to do for Baba. And we all did it in unity. We

all worked as a team, His team. Because I was involved in Trust work of all sorts, I would have to write official letters to all the various government departments. Mani, who was the Chairman, was not familiar with such matters. So I would draft the letter, and then she, Eruch and Rano would go through it. Then the letter would be typed, and she would sign it as Chairman. We would all discuss Trust matters. Some times, although I had certain worldly knowledge, because Mani, Eruch and Rano felt differently, I would accept their suggestions. Sometimes, they would accept my suggestions. We worked as a team, which, as I say, Baba made us into.

So you Spiritual Trainees must look at this example and also work and serve as a team. This will happen naturally as you efface your false self.

There will come a time when the Trust will continually receive an enormous amount of donations from people all over the world. They will donate to the Trust as an act of love for Beloved Baba. At that time, the Trust will be able to fulfil many objects, especially some of the ones that require the technical skill to be used in Meher Baba in Motion. Do not get overpowered by the financial resources and worldly fame that will eventually come to the Trust. As you fulfil the objects of the Trust, you must preserve your objective - which is effacement of the false self. You, as Spiritual Trainees, must remember that no matter what kind of work you do, no matter if you work in a very modern building or not, no matter if you have all the materials available or lack them, if you do your wholehearted best for Him, then, regardless of the results, everything will have been done as it should be.

I have lovingly given my warning, and now I am going to give the message that Beloved Baba gave as He was approaching America by ship in 1932. (Of course it would be a good thing for Spiritual Trainees to read Baba's books,

messages, and discourses. But they should be read in order to be put into action, which is the most important thing.)

This message is an appropriate message to place here, because the first several paragraphs can also be looked upon as a reminder and a warning to Spiritual Trainees. In the last half of the message, Baba explains His work and states Who He is.

Baba's 1932 Message

I have not come to establish any cult, society or organisation, nor even to establish a new religion. The religion I will give teaches the knowledge of the One behind the many;

The book which I shall make people read is the book of the heart, which holds the key to the mystery of life. As for ritual, I shall teach humanity to discriminate, express and live it rather than utter it. I shall bring about a happy blending of the head and heart.

Societies and organisations have never succeeded in bringing Truth nearer. Realisation of the Truth is solely the concern of the individual.

Every being is a point from which a start could be made toward the Limitless Ocean of love, bliss, knowledge and goodness already within him. No spiritual Master brings religion to the world in the form it eventually assumes. His very presence is a blessing and radiates spirituality. He imparts it to others by personal contact. The so-called religions are an effort to commemorate that association with a

great spiritual Master, and to preserve his atmosphere and influence. It is like an archaeological department trying to preserve things which only resuscitate the past. The living spirit being absent, religions or organisations gradually lose their glamour. The result is a mental revolt against the established order. Something more substantial and practical is required which expresses the life of the spirit.

There exists at the moment a universal dissatisfaction and an inde-scribable longing for something that will end the chaos and misery that is holding the world in its grip. I will satisfy this craving and lead the world to real happiness and peace by making people look more deeply into things than heretofore.

As a rule, Masters help individually according to temperament and fitness of the aspirant, but this being an Avataric period, which means the end of the previous cycle and the beginning of a new one, my spiritual help to humanity will be both individual and collective.

The period of junction of the old and new cycle usually connotes the advent of a Master who rejuvenates religious thought, infusing new life and meaning into the old order of things. Besides imparting the highest state of spirituality to a select few, he gives a general push to the whole world.

A higher state of understanding is permanent illumination, through which the illumined one experiences and sees all things as they are. In this state, one feels in harmony with everyone and

everything, and realises the divinity in every phase of life, and is able to impart happiness to others. Once this state is attained, one attends to all duties and material affairs, and yet feels mentally detached from the world. This is true renunciation.

The last and highest state of understanding is the merging of the soul into the Limitless Ocean of infinite bliss, knowledge and power. The Perfect One who has himself attained this freedom can make thousands perfect like himself. I intend bringing about a great spiritual revival in the near future, utilising the tremendous amount of energy possessed by America for the purpose. Such a spiritual outpouring as I visualise usually takes place at the beginning or end of a cycle and only a Perfect One, who has reached the *Christ* state of consciousness, can make such a universal appeal.

My work will embrace everything - it will permeate every phase of life. Perfection would fall far short of the ideal if it were to accept one thing and eschew another. The general spiritual push that I shall give to the whole world will automatically adjust problems such as politics, economics and sex, though these are not directly connected with the original theme. New values and significance will be attached to things which appear to baffle solution at the moment.

The benefits that shall accrue to different nations and countries when I bring about the spiritual upheaval will be largely determined by the amount of energy each one possesses. The greater the energy - however misapplied or misdirected - the greater the response.

The Master merely diverts the current into the right channel. It will be one of my greatest miracles to bring together and blend the realistic West with the idealistic East; and the West at the zenith of its material and intellectual attainment and the East at the height of its spiritual manifestation in the shape of the *Avatar* will meet without shaming or looking down upon each other.

I have become one with the infinite Source of everything. This is the state of *Christ Consciousness*. If people call me the Messiah, Saviour, Redeemer, it does not affect me. Terms and names do not matter. What really matters is the state of Christ Consciousness that I eternally enjoy and towards which I shall lead all who come to me. When I speak, my original message will be delivered to the world and it will have to be accepted.

CLOSING REMARKS

Now it is up to you and your love for Beloved Baba. The Trust is there to help you by providing facilities for Spiritual Training according to Baba's wishes. Don't ever think that you are serving an organisation. You are serving Baba. There is no organisation outside of yourself, because you are the organisation, an organisation of people on the Trust Estate who wish to serve their Beloved. Perhaps one of you in the centuries to come may love and serve Meher Baba as St. Francis loved and served Jesus. How pleased our Beloved would be.

Although these guidelines for a Spiritual Training Programme have been written for Beloved Baba's Trust, any

group or organisation who wishes to undertake a similar programme may do so. Also, Beloved Baba has made it very clear that any individual who wishes to live the New Life, living under its Labour Phase of dedicated action to God in the midst of worldly duties, is free to do so. Beloved Baba is already in your hearts waiting for you to surrender to Him and to His Wish.

SUPPLEMENT

After the Spiritual Training Programme Book was distributed amongst the Spiritual Trainees, a meeting was held and several residents spoke out their concerns to me. I later asked that they put their questions in writing. Afterwards I received a letter signed by Trustee FJ. Mistry and long time residents Ms. Heather Nadel, Ms. Janet Judson and Ms. Meredith Klein. The questions they sent to me are really good and I feel their questions are the main questions that the Spiritual Trainees expressed at the Meeting. Therefore, I want to clarify the points they bring to my attention. Because the questions are helpful in understanding the Spiritual Training Programme, I have decided to make their questions and my answers to these eight questions the supplement to the Spiritual Training Programme Book when the second edition of the Book is reprinted.

Now if other questions come up it is time that you ask Beloved Baba and He will guide you. You can ask Him anything but He is the one who does not reply in words but He will reply to you by awakening you.

I. Written Agreement with the Spiritual Trainee: In the Meeting you held of the residents at the Trust Office, you clarified that a written oath or the signing of the Fixed Conditions of the New Life is not required or necessary for anyone joining the Spiritual Training Programme . Yet for the Trust to establish the candidature and acceptance of a Spiritual Trainee, some documentation would then become necessary. The spiritual aspirant needs to make a commitment and show good faith in an Agreement to undergo training, and it is necessary for the Trust to maintain a record, in writing of this commitment made by the trainee.

QUESTION:

Should not the Trust have the Spiritual Trainee sign an Agreement to:

- (a) read the Spiritual Training Programme Book*
- (b) undergo training, as stipulated in the clause of the Trust Deed, in living "...the life, particularly what was called 'The New Life', lived by AVATAR MEHER BABA and His Companions exemplifying and practicing at all times renunciation, and detachment in the midst of the ordinary worldly activities, that is, 'To be in the world and yet be not of it.'?"*

When there was a Meeting with the Spiritual Trainees they asked me whether a written oath and the signing of the Fixed Conditions that Baba gave during the New Life is required for any one to join the Spiritual Training Programme. At that time I said it is up to each one because it is a matter of the heart. Only the heart can sign such an Agreement and then the Conditions can be followed. Therefore I can not say anything about whether anyone "should" sign or not sign the Fixed Conditions, otherwise afterwards it will become a rule and people will do it mechanically. This New Life is not for that.

People get attracted to Baba's New Life Message and they say what a "beautiful message the Beloved has given." But do they understand that in order for this "beautiful" message to be lived one has to abide by the Fixed Conditions that Baba gave in the New Life. The intellect asks why? It is because they are the conditions to an inner life. They have nothing to do with the outer life. Therefore if anyone wants to live the New Life, naturally they will have to follow the Fixed Conditions. And Spiritual Training as put down in the Trust Deed is based on trying to live the New Life.

I repeat Baba's New Life Message:

New Life Message

"This New Life is endless, and even after my physical death it will be kept alive by those, who live the life of complete renunciation of falsehood, lies, hatred, anger, greed, and lust; and who, to accomplish all this, do no lustful actions, do no harm to anyone, do no backbiting, do not seek material possessions or power, who accept no homage, neither covet honour nor shun disgrace, and fear no one and nothing; by those, who rely wholly and solely on God, and who love God purely for the sake of loving, who believe in the lovers of God and in the reality of Manifestation, and yet do not expect any spiritual or material reward, who do not let go the hand of Truth, and who, without being upset by calamities bravely and whole-heartedly face all hardships with one hundred percent cheerfulness, and give no importance to caste, creed and religious ceremonies.

This New Life will live by itself eternally, even if there is no one to live it."

Of course Spiritual Trainees do not live under the same circumstances that the Companions did when they lived with Baba on the New Life. They do not have the same degree of material, mental, emotional and spiritual hardships that the Companions had as they do not obey Baba's direct orders. Spiritual Trainees live on the Trust Estate at Meherabad, Meherazad and Meher Nazar and their basic material necessities are met. But it is for Spiritual Trainees to live the "spirit" of the New Life as Baba states in the above message through its Labor Phase. In fact any Baba-Centre, or any other trust or any other institution that is dedicated to Beloved Baba can introduce this Programme if they so wish. There is no restriction. The New Life is for the whole universe.

Meher Baba was called "Agreementwalla Baba" because throughout the years, He would make the Mandali sign so many agreements. Sometimes He would have the Mandali sign what He had dictated and sometimes He would have the Mandali write what we would feel.

We were in Satara and He asked me to write a letter to Him as an Agreement. And I wrote it and read it out to Him. Ramjoo Abdullah one of the old time Mandali was there, and he appreciated that letter very much. Other Mandali liked it too, but Ramjoo Abdullah was a very critical person and when he liked it I was extremely happy. What I wrote I took the words from my heart. That Agreement letter was kept with Pendu as were all the letters from the Mandali. I don't know where Pendu kept this letter, but Baba had asked him to keep it as a treasure. I don't remember what I wrote. But, I will give the summary of it:

I did not know about you and still I don't know who You are. I did not know about spiritual life. But, when I saw You, I just felt that I must be with You. I was in the university as a student, and I was very much interested in my studies. I did not know how it happened that I came to see You when you came to Nagpur. Now, I feel that You are for me, to guide me and I am for You, to obey whatever You ask me to do. I am not interested in achieving anything. My achievement is that You have allowed me to be with You. I feel that whatever You ask me to do, that is the only thing I must do. And if there is any interest in my life, it is to please You. I will live with no stone unturned in order to please You. I have no other aspiration. I have come to You to belong to you and, therefore, there should be nothing left which makes me not to belong to You.

Please, allow me to please You, so I may not fail in doing so. I know that I have many shortcomings but you are my strength. Even when I came to know You, I did not know what

obedience is. But I know now that obedience is that which pleases You. I cannot say that I am pleasing You all the time. I fail many times, but I am under the weight of Your compassion that Your forgiveness gives me strength and I become strong. Oh, Beloved, whatever I may be, I belong to You, and You belong to me. But, please see that I may not be able to forget You in any circumstances. This is my humble request to You. And I bow down at Your feet so that this head may not lift up any time.

Your humble servant

Now, I tell you all dear ones the truth: I came to Him definitely not to take anything from Him. Just to love Him and please Him and obey His orders. I never expected anything from Him. And that same attitude has stayed with me throughout my life.

Whatever I had given to Beloved Baba in writing about obedience was not only in writing but it was from my heart. And from that time when anything would happen I would remember those words and correct myself. Baba would place me in difficult situations in my life with Him but since those words came from my heart I could not go against His wish. I don't say that I would not get thoughts. I would. But through my words Baba Himself would remind me and still He reminds me to follow His wish.

And so just as we Mandali signed so many Agreements with Baba during our life with Him, I am suggesting that the Spiritual Trainees continue with that and sign their Agreement with Baba also. But as I say it has to be done from the heart and that is why I said it is up to each one.

Perhaps there should be two Agreements. I suggest in the Spiritual Training Programme Book that there should be a preparation period of five years under Spiritual Training before one becomes permanent. So perhaps there can be an initial Agreement with the words from the Trust Deed that state that the person is undergoing training "according to the life, particularly what was called The New Life', lived by Avatar Meher Baba and His Companions, exemplifying and practicing at all times renunciation, and detachment in the midst of the ordinary worldly activities, that is, To be in the world and yet be not of it." And also the Agreement can state that each Spiritual Trainee will read the Spiritual Training Programme Book.

So the Spiritual trainee begins their training "to be in the world, but not of it." But this is really very, very difficult, in fact rather impossible unless one remains dedicated and one's focus is always on the Beloved. Thoughts may come, desires may come, but they should not be but into action.

Then when the person, that is the Spiritual Trainee, feels inwardly prepared (whatever the time period) and is ready and decides on his or her own wholeheartedly to join the New Life he or she can sign another Agreement that is more specific giving Baba's New Life Message along with the Fixed Conditions as given by Baba in the Labor Phase of the New Life. And also at-that time on his/her own the Spiritual Trainee makes a personal written oath to God that he/she resolves to live the New Life.

All of this seems very practical to me. The only fear I have is that it may become mechanical. And that is why I say that unless all of this is followed by the heart, it is not Spiritual Training. It should be wholeheartedly and lovingly performed in order to please the Beloved. Those who are really inclined towards Spiritual Training and will want to live the New Life

Message, they themselves will invite the Fixed Conditions and they will lovingly sign and take the oath before God. It all must be spontaneous. The signing of the New Life Agreement should not be made into a show. It is a matter of inner honesty. It is between each one and Baba. But also there should be no distinction between the Spiritual Trainees as to who has signed and who has not. And in fact it is a personal matter.

Most of the present day Spiritual Trainees have already signed a Declaration of Intent and made a written oath before God of why they are here which was submitted to the Indian Government long ago in order for them to receive long term extendable visas. At that time we used the phrases "meditation in action" and "inner discipline" to describe Spiritual Training. But what is "meditation in action" other than the Labor Phase of the New Life and what is "inner discipline" other than following the Fixed Conditions? Now it is for them to decide whether they want to continue their Spiritual Training by signing the New Life Agreement, follow the Fixed Conditions and make their loving oath before Beloved God. Any Spiritual Trainees who have come recently and new ones that join the Programme should sign the first Agreement.

When Spiritual Trainees on their own sign the New Life Agreement, the Beloved will be pleased with them because their resolve has been to serve the Master according to His Wish. They should always remember that in order to please the Beloved more and more they should think about their false selves less and less. As they commit mistakes, they should not justify them. There is no justification in the dictionary of spirituality. They should correct themselves. We have been with the Beloved and I tell you that the mind is not crushed immediately. It takes a long time, but when one relies on Him, He gradually makes the heart stronger and stronger and the mind weaker and weaker.

If Spiritual Trainees who have been here for decades and have been determined throughout this time to dedicate their lives here in His service where is the question of asking me whether they should sign the Fixed Conditions and make a written oath to live the New Life? When the intellect is used for such things, what reply can I give? And therefore on the day of the meeting, I said, "It is up to each one, how they take it."

But I ask what is wrong in making an Agreement as Baba would have the Mandali do? Why use the intellect this way when one has been dedicated to His Cause? The intellect goes on creating different interpretations and by doing so it creates obstacles where there should be none. One should have the feeling to "just do it!" But at the same time it should not be done coercively. Everyone should know that they are following the Wish of the Beloved and not any person's wish. And according to His wish He gave the Fixed Conditions and the oath in order for His Companions to lead the Labor Phase of the New Life.

There were four phases of the New Life: Begging, Langoti life (put on a loin cloth and meditate), gypsy life, and physical labor. Baba gave His assurance to His Companions that He will lead the first three phases for them and the Labor Phase should be lived by His Companions. In the Labor Phase, He created three plans. This is briefly explained in the Spiritual Training Programme Book and I give full details about the New Life in a Book I have written called "Meher Baba's New Life" which will be published in the future. Those who accompanied Baba were in Plan 3. But later He also abolished this third plan in order to put before the world that His physical presence is not necessary to live the New Life.

This Labor Phase of the New Life is so important for this modern age of action. Through Baba's work in the New Life, He made renunciation internal and not external. This is

most important. It is through the Labor Phase that one can come closer to Him when one honestly dedicates their work to God. But the New Life is important not only for this age but for always as Baba stated in His New Life message. To join the New Life is the beginning of the end of the false life. To follow the Conditions will lead the Spiritual Trainee to being prepared for the goal of all life which is to annihilate the mind and achieve oneness with God. And so what He has given in this Labor Phase of the New Life should be accepted with all love without any compromise from the intellect.

Every one should know that Beloved Baba is actively present all the time. When I say Beloved Baba is very active, more active than what He was during physical life time, these are not just false words. I feel that. I feel that and at the same time, when I see the new faces coming to Him, every now and then, I just feel that what He is doing for them. They do not know that the Beloved has already taken their burden at the time of His last seclusion. And what was that burden? It was the burden of unnatural impressions which everyone had collected. This burden does not allow consciousness to progress further to God. So now He is actively lessening the burden in each one and since that process has begun, people are coming to Him. This Awakening will differ from person to person but it will give everyone the opportunity to follow Him. But in order to follow Him one should remain honest with Him by using the heart. If one tries to follow Him using the mind, one can not really follow Him because all the mind does is interpret things according to one's impressions.

When Beloved Baba was physically present, He gave treatment (that is His orders) to different persons according to their different diseases (that is their sanskaras). He would see that they followed His orders 100%. For Baba lovers around the world He gave an important message called His Wish in 1958 which gives general directions on how to keep Baba's

remembrance alive while they lived in the world and did their worldly duties. And for those of us who lived with the Master, we had to dance to His tune, and He would go on changing His tune every moment. It was not an easy thing.

The time has gone for receiving His orders. But for those who want to dedicate their life to the Beloved the Spiritual Training is Programme is there for them. They can live the New Life by wholeheartedly following the Conditions thinking that it is His order. The New Life Agreement with its Fixed Conditions and oath are not from the Board of Trustees. They are Baba's words. Spiritual Trainees sign the New Life Agreement before the Beloved as the Companions did and not before the Trustees. However, those who are responsible (Board of Trustees) should be given signed copies of the Agreement as records. As for the Oath, the Spiritual Trainees after writing such an oath should keep it with them as a treasure from their heart, to help remind them and inspire them to overcome the obstacles that will come in their way as they try to love and serve Baba through a life of Spiritual Training. And for those who are not under Spiritual Training, they should follow His Wish in such a way that they take it to be His order and His help will be there.

But it is very, very important for the Spiritual Trainees to know what responsibility they have taken upon themselves and it is their duty to fulfill that responsibility. This duty is for all time and it has to be done willingly. And therefore after one signs the New Life Agreement with its Fixed Conditions and takes the oath and deliberately does not follow it, without trying to correct oneself, this is hypocritical.

For those Spiritual Trainees who do not sign, it is left to them. There should be no compulsion. They should be given time and when they willingly come forward to sign, they should be given this opportunity. Those in charge must not let Spiritual

Training change into a mechanical life. But, one thing is definite: one who wants to lead the life for the Beloved will sign and take the oath without any question. And those who do not want to sign have not yet decided wholeheartedly to try to live for the Beloved.

These are my suggestions. I can not say about the future. Future Board of Trustees may decide that after a preparation period Spiritual Trainees may either have to be prepared to sign the New Life Agreement or return to their native places. It is left to them. But for now and for this present group of Spiritual Trainees I do not suggest that. Many of them have come here under unusual circumstances, and I do not wish to disturb them. They have their connections with Baba and His Mandali. But in the future for other Spiritual Trainees it may be a different thing.

But I want to say something more about the Fixed Conditions that seem to make some Spiritual Trainees uncertain about maintaining them:

About Fixed Condition No. 2 - Here Baba says not to expect His Nazar. A Baba lover may pray, "Baba, please have Your nazar on me." In the New Life Baba gave this Condition of not expecting His Nazar to fall on His Companions. But during the New Life Baba became an ordinary seeker. Therefore, what expectation can you have from an ordinary seeker?" However now because He has dropped his physical body, He is more than just ordinary seeker. Beloved Baba led the life of seeker so that people from any place in the world can follow the New Life. But not only did He play the role of a seeker, He also played the role of annihilating the mind. That was the end of the New Life. He did not annihilate His mind because He had the Universal Mind. But He was playing the role for humanity. Therefore anyone can ask for His help but one still should not have expectations.

About Condition No. 3 about not touching women etc. -I have already said in the Spiritual Training Programme Book on page 37-38 that to embrace others in a brotherly or sisterly way is understandable but if it goes beyond that in any way then the Spiritual Trainee is breaking Condition No. 10 where one should not commit any lustful act with anyone.

About Condition No. 5 about expressing anger - It is natural to feel anger, since we are not stones. But, if we cannot control the expression of anger then we can say the repentance prayer, not mechanically, but wholeheartedly. Weaknesses are there in everyone, but if we pay attention towards the Beloved and follow His Wish, we will become strong internally. It is not that we should appear good before others and have false modesty. We should develop equanimity and have that poise of mind. That is the spiritual training - to become pure. But when Spiritual Trainees sign the Fixed Conditions in order to want to lead the New Life this does not mean that they have overcome anger. It takes a long time to do so but by keeping the Beloved in their heart, they will defeat anger.

About Condition No. 10 about not committing any lustful action - In the Spiritual Training Programme Book on page 123-124, I recognized that occasionally two Spiritual Trainees may be so attracted to each that they will want to be married. And I said that if that happens, they may do so. And if they want to continue with their Spiritual Training, then they would have to submit an application to the Board for its consideration. Also I stated in the Book that even after marriage Spiritual Trainees should try to uphold Condition No. 10 as far as possible so they can eventually rise above lust.

Some of the Mandali were married. But no one has any idea how we were living with Baba. Gradually not only would the desires be wiped out, but also the thoughts. There became no question of action. I was married when I joined Baba. Sheila

was born before I came to Baba and Rama was already pregnant with Mehernath when I joined Baba. Since joining Baba permanently, I have not touched her.

After four years of being with Him, Baba asked my wife and two children to live in the staff quarters at Arangaon. I said to Him, "Baba, why have You called them here?" And Baba said, "Who are you to ask Me what I am doing? You have no authority to ask Me." And He did call them.

Once Baba sent me there for one night and the next day when I came back to Baba, before all the Mandali Baba asked me, "Did you commit any lustful action?" And I said, "No," because I had not committed a lustful action.

Then, afterwards, when Baba left, Vishnu came to me and he said, "You did not do it?" And I said to him, "I would get thoughts and desires. I am not free from that, but I know to put Baba always before anything else so I did not do anything." This would inspire Vishnu. He would always be interested to know whenever Baba sent me to see Rama. But because I did not do anything, there was nothing to tell him. Actually, I never wanted to get married. But it happened, and it shows that it was Baba's Wish.

I can say that when Baba dropped His body He gave me the gift of not having any desires and thoughts in this way. Because I don't get any desire how can anything be put into action.

Actually there is no place for free will in spirituality. Everything happens according to Divine Will. But it is difficult to understand the Divine Will. People do good and that is His Will. People do bad and that is also His Will. But because we can not understand Divine Will, people justify themselves in their actions saying that God has done it. But this is not the

Truth. No doubt everything happens according to Divine Will but because we can not understand the Divine Will, the Avatar comes age after age bringing His Divine Wish for humanity to follow.

I will give one story about the Divine Will and Divine Wish:

At the time of Prophet Mohammed, people were very illiterate and if someone in the village knew how to sign his name he would be considered to be very learned and the whole village would follow him. He would be the head of the village.

Prophet Mohammed would tell the people that everything happens according to the Divine Will. So one day one person from the village went to see Prophet Mohammed and he saw some people sitting near him and the Prophet was telling people that everything happens according to the Divine Will. When the villager returned to his village he told the Village Headman, "Sir, today I had gone to see Prophet Mohammed and he was telling the people that everything happens according to Divine Will. Is this a fact?"

And the Village Headman said, "No, it is not a fact. When I feel hungry, I eat. Nobody can stop me and if I don't want to eat, I won't. It is my will, my free will. Whatever Prophet Mohammed is telling is wrong."

So the villager told the Village Headman, "Why don't you go and tell Prophet Mohammed? Everyone listens to him without raising an objection. You are clever and when you ask such questions Prophet Mohammed will stop repeating such things."

So the Village Headman said, "I will go see Prophet Mohammed."

Prophet Mohammed was sitting with the people, and the Village Headman goes to him and said, "May I ask one question?"

And Prophet Mohammed very lovingly said, "Yes, yes, ask. What do you want?"

The Village Headman said, "I have heard that you are saying that everything happens according to Divine Will, is this a fact?"

And Prophet Mohammed said, "Yes, it is a fact. Everything happens according to the Divine Will."

And the Village Headman said, "I am not going to accept this. I am very learned. Do not think that I am illiterate like other people. Whatever I want to do, I do. Whatever I don't want to do I don't do. When I want to eat I eat. And when I don't want to eat, I don't. This is my free will. Where is your Divine Will?"

And Prophet Mohammed said, "Yes whatever you say the Divine Will is also there."

And the Village Headman said, "Prophet Mohammed you have not been telling the truth. You are making the people timid. I can do anything according to my free will. I am brave. And whatever I say is also correct. Whatever happens for me it is according to my free will and not according to the Divine Will."

And Prophet Mohammed said, "Everything happens according to Divine Will and whatever you are saying is also according to Divine Will."

Then the Village Headman said to Prophet Mohammed, "You have to prove it."

And Prophet Mohammed said, "I will prove it. All right stand up." And the Village Headman stood up. Prophet Mohammed was looking from side to side, ignoring the Village Headman until he got angry and said to Prophet Mohammed, "Why don't you reply. Why do you ignore me? All you are doing is looking around. This means that you don't know and therefore accept what I say."

And Prophet Mohammed said, "You are very, very impatient. I am replying to your question and it appears you are in haste. All right, lift one of your legs." And the Village Headman lifted one leg. And again Prophet Mohammed continued to look from side to side completely ignoring him.

This time the Village Headman could not bear it and he said, "I know Prophet Mohammed you can not reply to my question. You just ignore me. Just accept that whatever one does is according to one's own free will."

And Prophet Mohammed smiled and said, "Young man you are really very impatient. All right lift your second leg."

And the Village Headman said, "Lift the other leg, what do you want to say. If I lift the other leg I will fall down."

And Prophet Mohammed said, "You wanted an explanation about free will and I have given it to you. You think yourself as very learned but you did not understand."

And the Village Headman said, "You can deceive others but you can not deceive me. You made me exercise and you say that you explained free will to me."

And Prophet Mohammed smiled and said, "Young man, I have explained it all to you very clearly and you could not understand. All right, I will explain it again to you. When I asked you to stand up, you were able to stand up. I say to you that both of your legs are under Divine Will. But you do not believe me. When I asked you to lift one of your legs, you did so thinking that you were able to because of your free will. But now look at your free will you could not move. Even if you tried how much could you move? This shows the extent of what you think your free will is. But when I asked you to lift the other leg you could not do so at all. And you became useless. So you see your own free will of lifting your leg made you useless. Really speaking if there is free will it is only the product of the intellect. Now I will tell you how not to become useless. Follow the Divine Wish. It is impossible to follow the Divine Will. Divine Wish tells you what to do and what not to do. And if you follow the Divine Wish, one day you will know the Divine Will. Actually everything happens according to Divine Will. And if you think free will is there, it makes you useless."

Beloved Avatar Meher Baba has said that the Divine Wish changes age after age when the Prophet, the Avatar comes down on earth. He gives a fresh wish according to the situation of humanity. And because He gives the Awakening the Divine Wish is followed for 300 to 400 years. Then again the priest class takes a hold of it, converts it into rituals, ceremonies and traditions and again the situation of humanity changes. God is forgotten, priest class remains alive and people follow mechanically the rituals, ceremonies and traditions. And then the Ancient One has to come again with another fresh Divine Wish according to the changed situation of humanity.

I will tell two stories of two followers of Beloved Baba. They both concern the Divine Wish and the New Life. One follower could not follow the Divine Wish and live the New

Life as Baba had wanted him to and the second follower could follow the Divine Wish and live the New Life and therefore he pleased The Beloved.

There was one follower of Beloved Baba named Manek Mehta from Bombay. He came to Baba and he promised Baba that he would follow Him. He said to Baba, "Baba, I love you. And I want to serve your Cause. I want to bring many people to You so they can know You and love You. I think I must start a bhajan group in Bombay. What rule should I form for this?"

And Baba said to him, "There is no need of any rules. One who loves needs no rules. And in order to bring others under my fold only love is required. But you may form a bhajan group to sing songs about Me and about God and about the lovers of God."

And Manek said, "I am very happy Baba to hear this, but I want some guidance from you from time to time."

Baba said, "You are always welcome. It is my duty to create love and your duty to remain open to receive that love. And to receive that love one should be open-hearted. That is, one should remain free of desires, attachments, temptations, wants, and all types of desires, good or bad. One has to become naked of all these enemies which keep one separated from God."

And then, Manek said, "I will follow this 100% but when you go on tour I will be happy if you take me with you."

And Baba said, "Very good, I am very happy."

So Baba went to Navsari and He allowed Manek to come with Him. The Western group was also there. Then Baba sent a message to C.D. Deshmukh to arrange a lecture at

Nagpur University and ordered Norina to go to Nagpur and give a talk on Baba there in the university. He also asked Manek to accompany them to Nagpur. And they left for Nagpur. It was a very good programme in Nagpur. Norina gave a very inspiring talk and the students liked it very much. A Marathi version of Baba's message was read out also. But Manek expressed his wish to read out Baba's message in Hindi. But he did not know Hindi well. He only knew Gujarati. He got up and started talking in Hindi. And the students could not follow it at all and they started laughing. Then Manek said to the students, "shanti, shanti (peace, peace)." This made the students laugh more and they started shouting at him, "Sit down auntie, sit down auntie!"

Baba said to him after this, "Don't worry, you will become a very good speaker. Now go to Bombay and do what ever I want you to do."

So Manek went to Bombay and he collected a bhajan group. He would also give talks in Gujarati. He had given instructions to his group that no one should go to Meher Baba directly. When he would take the group to Baba he would stand near Baba, introducing each one saying, "He is a very good lover Baba. He never fails to come when I hold the meeting. He loves You very much." Baba would say to the Mandali and other lovers that were there, "What work Manek is doing in Bombay! He is collecting the people and they love Me. Manek, I am very happy with you. You are fortunate that I have given this duty to you." And Manek would feel very happy and his group would pay more respect towards him. It would go on and on like this.

Once Manek came from Bombay to Meherabad along with the group and he said to Baba, "Now the group is expanding and we need a big place for the Centre so people may be easily accommodated."

And Baba said, "Go ahead. Why did you not tell me this before? I will finance it." Manek was very happy. Manek Mehta became a big guru. When people would come to him, they would garland him, bow down to him and they would sit before him with all respect. But one time, one of Manek's group had come for Baba's darshan separately from Manek. It was Nariman Dadachanji. And he was thinking, "Whether Baba knows what Manek does in Bombay? He asks everyone to bow down to him and garland him! But Baba continues to appreciate him."

In 1949 after Baba came from Mt. Abu where He was in seclusion, He came to Meherazad and remained in seclusion for forty days. He sat in the Blue Bus for thirty-one days and went to Poona for nine days to contact masts. It was a very serious period. At the beginning, no one was allowed to see Baba, even the Mandali. Only Kaka Baria was permitted to enter the seclusion compound surrounding the Blue Bus. Jal Kerawala kept a diary and conveyed instructions to the Mandali.

Afterwards Baba started going to Meherabad. And Baba started talking about the New Life and the instructions He was going to give. He told all the Mandali there if they join New Life they should think that they are dead to the world and alive only to obey His instructions. They will have no connection with the world. The whole atmosphere was very tense. Baba had made it very clear that if they want to join Him during the New Life they will have to take an oath before God and obey His instructions 100%. Where He would go and what He would do was not fixed.

At that time Baba called Manek Mehta from Bombay. And He said to him, "Manek, this is a very important phase of My life and I am leaving Meherazad and Meherabad. I will have no connection with Meherabad and Meherazad. Nothing will remain in My name. I have asked Pendu to sell all the

lands, farming implements, even utensils for drinking water and cooking food. Nothing should remain here. I have also told the Mandali that it is their decision to come with Me or not. But if they decide to come, then of course they have to take an oath before God that they will have no connection with the world. They will be dead to the world and alive to obey my day-to-day instructions. I will not be responsible for anything. Whether you get sick or suffer for anything, I will not be responsible. And I have given full freedom to the Mandali members to choose this New Life and come with me or go away. But I love you and you are the only one whom I am asking not to miss this New Life. You must join the New Life. Others, of course, I have left it to them to decide for themselves. But because of your love for Me and My love for you, I want you to join the New Life and be with Me."

And Manek Mehta said, "Baba I am very anxious to join this New Life and make You pleased, but what about the group?"

And Baba said, "That is not your responsibility; that is My responsibility. And though I will not be here, I will take care of everyone. Don't think that the group will be left out. My care will be there. I will take the responsibility."

And Manek Mehta said, "Baba I must make some arrangement for the group, I must not leave the group as such and so I need some time."

And Baba said to him, "No need for this. But because you insist tell me how much time do you need to make some arrangement for the group?"

And Manek Mehta said, "Six months."

And Baba counted six months. And He said, "I will let you know just a week before from wherever I am and give you the address and you must join me there." And Manek Mehta agreed.

Baba went on the New Life and after six months Baba informed Manek Mehta by telegraph to join Him. But Manek did not give any response. He continued with his own activities. People would continue to come to him, bow down to him and garland him. And he would give discourses but He would give Baba's discourses in such a way as if the words were his own.

When Baba went to Manjri Mafi, He sent him another telegraph to come and join him there. Manek did not give any response. He was very happy because he was considered to be a guru. And Manek never joined Baba during the New Life.

When Baba completed the New Life He returned to Meherazad. One of the followers of Manek Mehta came to Ahmednagar and he came to know that Baba came back from New Life. Although Manek Mehta told his group that no one should go direct to Baba, this man thought that as he had come to Ahmednagar he would see Baba and so he went to Meherazad. Baba embraced him very lovingly and he observed the atmosphere was loving and free. It was not like the atmosphere around Manek Mehta, sitting rigidly in discipline, not to move, not to do this, not to do that. He thought, "What Manek Mehta tells us about the atmosphere around Baba is not true. What a loving atmosphere is around Him."

He went back to Bombay and he told one after another in the group about the loving atmosphere at Meherazad when he saw Baba. And one after another of the group came to see Baba and they all gradually left Manek Mehta. So Manek Mehta ended up with only an empty hall without souls.

Then one day Beloved Baba went to Bombay and there was a darshan programme. Many people came for darshan. And one after another they embraced Baba. And after embracing each one Baba would ask them how their health was or caress them.

Manek also came with one garland in his hand. When he approached Baba he garlanded Him and in His ear he said, "Baba, please forgive me."

And the Compassionate One said, "Forgiven! Don't worry."

God does not forgive hypocrisy but it shows that the Avatar does. How compassionate the Beloved is. Even though the lover disregarded Him, still He does not disregard the lover and in fact forgives him. Even though the Lord Himself wanted Manek Mehta to join the New Life, he was unable to.

Now I will tell the story of a person who was really genuine and that was Dr. Daulat Singh. He had a family and was a medical practitioner. He was also given the chance to join the New Life and he accepted happily.

Baba held a meeting at Meherabad about the New Life. Baba said to everyone, "In this New Life you have to follow My instructions whether good or bad. You cannot say 'no' to anything. It is not your choice, it is My Wish." Dr. Daulat Singh agreed and others also agreed. Dr. Daulat Singh was a Sikh and according to his religion he never smoked. At this meeting Baba took the cigarette out of Dr. Ghani's mouth and told Dr. Daulat Singh to smoke. Without any hesitation he put the cigarette in his mouth but before he could smoke Baba took the cigarette out of his mouth. Baba expressed His pleasure with Dr. Daulat Singh and allowed him to join the New Life.

Then when the New Life began Baba went walking from here to Belgaum in order to train the companions how to lead the New Life from His example.

In Belgaum one of Dr. Daulat Singh's duties was to clean the vessels. He had never done it in his life. He did not know how to sit on the ground or the Indian way of cleaning utensils which is that one has to sit on the ground and clean with ash and mud.

Eruch was keeping night watch. Baba told Eruch to see what the Mandali were doing. So he walked around the camp site. And he found Dr. Daulat Singh awake, cleaning the utensils. Poor Daulat Singh had one leg spread out and he would very slowly clean the utensils. He told Baba that all the Mandali members were sleeping except Daulat Singh who was trying to clean the utensils. Baba then told Eruch to ask Daulat Singh what he was thinking. Eruch went again to Daulat Singh and asked him and he said, "Thoughts came to me about how my daughter is thinking what kind of father she has that is not attending her wedding." Eruch reported this to Baba. And Baba told Eruch to tell him that the next day He would decide about this matter. When he heard this message Daulat Singh thought Baba would send him back and so he started to weep. Eruch went back and told Baba. Again Baba sent Eruch with another message to Daulat Singh that he should sleep and not worry and the next day He will decide what is to be done.

So the next day Baba called the Doctor and reminded him of the previous night. And Baba told him that what he was thinking of was against the spirit of the New Life and therefore he had to go back. Again the Doctor started weeping telling Baba that he was happy to be with Baba but his mind was troubling him. It was just a thought he had. And Baba said to him, "Listen to me carefully, you will still be in the New Life, provided you follow what I say. Attend your daughter's

marriage and then live with the family but one thing you must do for Me don't eat in the house. Beg for food. And he accepted this condition and went back home.

So, Dr. Daulat Singh had to leave. But then what happened? When he went home the daughter who was to get married was in the hospital with a serious illness, and his family members had tried to contact Baba. They had sent 2 or 3 telegrams to Baba, but the office was closed. But the All-knowing knew what was happening and that's why Baba sent him back. After a few days, she was all right, but Dr. Daulat Singh continued to beg for food. The family members could not tolerate this. They said, "What is the need for you to beg? The food is there in the house. You must eat in the house. What will people think?" But he did not care. He continued begging. Then the family members harassed him so much that he had to leave his home. He would go from place to place and beg for food. He did this for a long time.

The phase for begging stopped when Beloved Baba started the Labor Phase for the Companions. But Dr. Daulat Singh who was away from Baba did not know that of course and he continued to beg for his food. When Baba came down to Satara in order to go to Mahabaleshwar for the meeting, Baba happened to spot someone on the roadside far away and He asked Eruch to find out who it was. Eruch could not believe that it was Daulat Singh in the same New Life dress with a begging bowl looking quite old. Daulat Singh went to the house where Baba was staying and he begged food from Baba. Baba gave him food and embraced him. And then Baba asked him to tell Him everything that had happened to him since he left Baba's company. Baba felt very, very happy in hearing how Dr. Daulat Singh obeyed Him. And Baba said to him, "You are still begging?" And he said, "Yes, it is your order." And Baba said, "But my Mandali have stopped begging and you are still begging. You are really in the New Life because whatever order

I gave you, you are obeying it." Baba then told him to go back to his home, continue being a medical practitioner, that he was free from the New Life, that he should remain happy and one day Baba will visit him. (Baba also called Daulat Singh during the New Life in different places that Baba went to.)

After the New Life and Baba's accident in America in 1952 Baba started His mass darshan Programmes. After these Programmes His mast work again started and He went to Hyderabad. I accompanied Baba. Daulat Singh was living near Hyderabad in a place called Nizamabad. Baba asked Eruch, "Do you know where Daulat Singh is?" And Eruch said, "He is in Nizamabad, but I don't know where he lives in Nizamabad." So Baba said, "Let us go to Nizamabad." And we went there. And Eruch began asking people about where Daulat Singh lived. He was a medical practitioner so people knew him. They showed us the way. Dr. Daulat Singh was coming out of his house to go to his dispensary when he saw Baba and he became mad, continuously shouting "Avatar Meher Baba Ki Jai! Avatar Meher Baba Ki Jai! Avatar Meher Baba Ki Jai! Continuously he would shout that and not say a word to Baba. When his wife heard this she came out and she invited Baba to come inside the house. Dr. Daulat Singh kept shouting "Avatar Meher Baba Ki Jai." He did not stop.

After some time Baba said that He had remembered His promise to visit him. Baba told him to continue with his practice and to come whenever He called him, and that Baba was very very pleased with his love. His wife served tea and some breakfast to Baba and the Mandali and then Baba gave them all an embrace and Baba came back to Satara. After some years Dr. Daulat Singh expired in Baba's service telling people about Baba.

Now, just see: one side is Manek Mehta and the other side is Dr. Daulat Singh. If one does not want to lead the New

Life, no matter if the Lord Himself invites you, you still will not be able to do it. And if one wants to lead the New Life, one leads it regardless of anything that happens, even if the Lord orders you to leave His company. If Manek Mehta signed the Fixed Conditions what good would it have been? And although Baba sent him away for breaking His orders, Dr. Daulat Singh continued to live the New Live to such an extent that he was still begging long after the companions had stopped begging. And he pleased Baba very, very much.

Although I joined Baba after the New Life, I want to tell this story. Because again it shows His compassion when one surrenders to Him regardless of one's weaknesses.

Beloved Baba had given me night watch and at the same time I had to do correspondence and He also asked me to write books. In 1963 He asked me to translate "Wayfarers" into Hindi and also write 3 to 4 ghazals every day besides night watch. At this time He kept me aloof from correspondence so in this way the load was less. But to write 3 to 4 ghazals every day and to translate the "Wayfarers" every day was not an easy thing. When I would go for night watch in the evening at 6pm, the first thing I had to do was read out the ghazals that I had written that day. And then He would ask me how many pages of "Wayfarers" had I translated into Hindi? At that time, Baba asked me to keep night watch for 10 hours, not 12 hours a day as I previously did. But still it was difficult for me to write ghazals and to translate "Wayfarers" during this time.

One day I could hardly write two ghazals. And when I read out these two ghazals, He said to me, "You have written only 2, why not 4 ghazals?" And I said to Him, "Baba I have the lines You have given me, but I did not find time to compose four ghazals. It is very difficult. It requires the mood and when I am in the mood I can write." Baba got very upset and He said to me, "I don't want to see your face. You don't make me pleased.

And you don't try to please me. I am very upset. Just go and sit there."

I of course sat on the chair. There was the order that I should not make any movement, any sound and I should not sleep. I was thinking: "What Baba asked me to do was not possible for me. I can not please Him and He feels annoyed with me. It is my mistake no doubt that I can not please Him though I have joined Him in order to please Him and to do whatever He asks me to do. But it seems that I will never be able to please Him because the more I try to please Him the more and more He creates difficulties for me. So there is only one thing that I should do and that is to die. But how should I die? This also is not in my hands."

Then a thought came in my mind that I must commit suicide. And another thought came that Baba tells us again and again that suicide is a very bad thing. One who commits suicide does not get a body for a very long time. He remains a ghost and he has to spend each impression through different mediums that means other people's bodies. And the doors of Heaven or Hell for the suicidal soul remain closed until the past life impressions are spent through different mediums. So it takes a very, very long time for him to go even to Hell or Heaven, and then get a new physical body."

So such thoughts were coming to me at that time and the mind continued to tell me, "Who knows what happens or does not happen? I must commit suicide." But then, the heart would say, "Baba accepted me and whatever He does, He does for my good. And I should not commit suicide." Then, again other thoughts would come: "I must write down why I am committing suicide. I must make it very clear that it is not because of Baba that I am doing this. He has been treating me very lovingly and kindly, so He should not be blamed for this. And no action should be taken against Him by the police, because whatever He

was doing was for my own good. It is because of my weakness that I could not relish His kind and merciful acts. So I must commit suicide." So before leaving Baba's room, I thought that I must write this.

But Baba's orders were not to move, not to make noise and not to sleep and I thought that in order to put the paper on the table, I have to break His orders. Again I thought, "No it is alright. I am doing this in order to save Baba from the action of the police. I must do it."

So as I tried to get up, Baba took a turn in such a way that I had to sit down. And again, I waited until I thought He was sleeping to try to get up. As I tried to get up again, immediately Baba took another turn showing me that He knew what I was doing. I waited, trying to get up five or six times. But I never could.

My night watch ended at 4am. I decided to go to the railway station which was close to Guruprasad bungalow and sleep on the rail and the train would come and I would be finished. So at 4am, when it was my time to leave, I stood up and prayed to Baba, "Please Baba, forgive me. Tomorrow You will not see my face. But I cannot help it. I cannot please You. I could not do whatever You wanted me to do and still, You are kind to me. But today I feel so fed up that I have to commit suicide. It is not possible for me to live without You. So, please, I pray to You to forgive me."

And very slowly without making any noise, I crossed the doorstep, and Baba did not take any turn or move. But what happened? As soon as I crossed over the doorstep of His room, I totally forgot that I had to go to the railway station. I went to my bed and I slept.

When I got up, I thought "How did I go to sleep? I wanted to go to railway station and commit suicide." Then I realized that nothing is in our power. Once you surrender to Him, He takes all care. And whatever He does, He does for ^ good of all. He Himself suffers. No one has any idea how suffers for everyone and particularly for those who are very close to Him.

This is what I want to tell you dear ones that He is really the Compassionate Father for each one. And therefore, I request all the Spiritual Trainees that they should always remember that the Beloved will never, never leave them. And that is why I say that in spite of one's weaknesses, one should try to live the New Life. One should rely on Him and at the same time try to rise above one's weaknesses. That will please Him.

But I also again remind each one that they should not use the intellect and feel justified when weaknesses are put into action. Thoughts come to everyone, many different thoughts, but they should not be put into action. One should be alert. We should recognize that it is the product of the mind. There is no room for justification and reason when one is dedicating one's life to the Truth. Truth is Truth and reason and justification have no place in the Truth. As my own story shows it is the relationship between the Beloved and the lover. And Beloved Baba is there to help if we are surrendered to Him.

2. Guiding Principles of Spiritual Training Programme are constant and unchanging, but the Structure and Administration of the Spiritual Training Programme evolves and changes with time: Age after age, God descends on earth giving the same message of Love and Truth. Never Changing and Ever the Same. Since the guiding principles of the Spiritual

Training Programme are about this Love and Truth therefore they too remain changeless.

However, the Structure and the Administration in the Spiritual Training Programme are outlines given as your suggestions. In the Book, you convey the sense that in implementing the Spiritual Training Programme, the Structure and the Administration will have to necessarily change and evolve with time, while the underlying principles never change.

QUESTION:

So is it accurate to say that the guiding principles of Spiritual Training Programme are unalterable but its Administration and Structure set as guidelines by you will evolve and change with each future generation as determined by the then Board of Trustees?

Of course the guiding principles of the Spiritual Training Programme which are based on Beloved Baba's work and words must remain the same. And as the focus of Spiritual Training is on living the New Life, it is eternal but it takes place in the midst of illusion. It is not a question of the administration evolving. But the administration and its structure will change according to the situation, especially as Baba's Manifestation takes place. There will then be an increase in the number of Baba Lovers who will want to join the Spiritual Training Programme and there will also be an increase in the amount of funds that the Trust will have in order to provide facilities for the Trainees according to what I have suggested in the Spiritual Training Book.

I have already explained in the Spiritual Training Booklet that those matters that concern administration are my suggestions. But some matters which concern the Trust Deed can not be changed. This is what I said in the Booklet. It is on page 62:

"In the following paragraphs and sections, I will give some basic administrative procedures for the Trust. Some of these procedures do not apply for the present, because the Trust's administration is still very small. But as the administration grows, these procedures can be implemented whenever the Chairman and the Board of Trustees find it necessary. They are given here so that some guidelines are already prepared for administrative growth. If necessary, some of them can be modified by the Board of Trustees at the time of implementation. However, a few of them refer to what has been given in the Trust Deed and cannot be modified."

The guiding factor should also be that the structure is a means to serve Him. It is not that we are serving anyone. Otherwise it becomes social service. People do social service for the sake of name and fame and even make sacrifices but it is for name and fame. Such persons may appear modest and polite and very caring but their false self becomes stronger and stronger because people appreciate them. But that way they have lost nothing. On the contrary, they take on the burden of the sanskaras of those they served. But spiritual service is a losing game. One loses the false self. That is the real game and one can only play that game according to the way that Baba has given. And this age is such that one cannot adopt any other way to lead a spiritual life except through the Labor Phase.

Baba gave both a collective plan and an individual plan. Serving Beloved Baba through the Labor Phase of the New Life is not only the question of Avatar Meher Baba P. P. C. Trust. Any organization dedicated to Baba, any trust, centre, etc. can serve Him through the Labor Phase. And therefore in the collective plan the structure and administration will differ according to the organization.

And individually, if anyone has any job, and he does that job for The Beloved, he is in the Labor Phase of the New

Life. If any one has any profession and if he does that profession for Him, he will be in the Labor Phase of the New Life. And the same thing is there if anyone does fanning or business, and if he does that work for the Beloved, he is in the labor phase of the New Life.

But one important thing is that each one's life must be based upon Baba's New Life Message and that message can not be lived unless one maintains the Fixed Conditions.

It is better not to think too much about the administration or structure, just think about Him and living the New Life. Structure and administration should not become obstructions. I can say that the administration and the structure is the outer thing. They are the external. And to live the New Life Message by following the conditions of the Labor Phase is internal.

Whatever work Spiritual Trainees do, they should uphold the New Life Message which will efface their false selves and please the Beloved. Go on doing this and one day, it will become very natural to feel close to Him. While living on the Trust Estate and doing one's duty and having no attachment with the results one becomes attached with the Beloved.

That is the New Life Baba has given to the world, which leads everyone to becoming dust under His feet. That means to kill the false self and achieve the ultimate goal of life. This is the important thing. This is the only thing. The decisions of how to administrate and how to create a structure are only secondary. And as I said before they can create obstacles and one can easily lose one's focus on these outer things. The administration and its structure are only the medium. They are like a channel that lets the water flow. The channel has no importance whatsoever if it is dry. The channel only becomes important when the water flows. If the focus is on the channel only, the

water will dry up. This happens eventually, and that is why He is The Ancient One. He has to come again and again to let the water of life that is love, flow through humanity.

3. *Who comes under the Spiritual Training Programme?*

Besides short-term pilgrims, there are currently four main categories of people both from India and abroad serving on the Trust Estate or connected with the Trust:

- (1) full time residents who reside and serve on Trust Estate*
- (2) part-time residents who reside and serve on Trust Estate*
- (3) some who serve on the Trust Estate but reside nearby*
- (4) paid employees working on the Trust Estate*

QUESTION:

May individuals from all of these four categories listed above apply for the Spiritual Training Programme?

Because this Trust is established by Baba Himself, placing His Tomb-Shrine under its care, the Trust must become an example for other organizations, trusts, and centres dedicated to Beloved Baba of how the Labor Phase of the New Life is put into action. It is really a great responsibility.

Beloved Baba began the New Life in 1949. He became a Seeker of God, making the New Life the path for the spiritual seeker to follow. And therefore the New Life is for the seekers of God who want nothing but God. And for those in the world Baba has given the message called "His Wish." They should follow His Wish wholeheartedly until they have the longing to become seekers of God.

And therefore, it depends upon the inclination of each person, whether they are capable or not to live the New Life.

But, once the New Life is taken up, one should be determined to live His New Life Message by fulfilling the conditions. Although weaknesses are the obstructions, the Seeker has to face the obstructions and lovingly get through his shortcomings and gain inner strength. Therefore, one should always seek the pleasure of the Beloved through everything one does.

Number 1: full-time residents who reside and serve on the Trust estate:-

This Programme was originally for those who wanted to be here full time and dedicate their lives to Beloved Baba in His Service. But now many other categories are coming up and so already the administration is changing. And it is a good thing.

For those who live here full time, they are living here trying to live the New Life with no other thought in their mind. The Beloved has given them this opportunity. They do not have to focus on all the worldly distractions that others have. They live to awaken to Baba's love. And it is for them when they are ready to sign the New Life Agreement and join His New Life by inwardly living His New Life message and following the Fixed Conditions through their own personal oath. Then they are internally bound to the Beloved. They should not think that they are free. But they are bound in order to become free eternally provided they do everything according to the conditions that Beloved Baba has given in the Labor Phase of the New Life and remain honest towards the oath.

Whether they are from India or they are from abroad, the Spiritual Training Programme is without any distinction of caste, religion, creed, nationality, or sex. And it is very important for those who are connected with Beloved Avatar Meher Baba that they should not make any distinction between caste, religion, creed, nationality, or sex.

Number 2: part-time residents who reside and serve on Trust Estate:-

Now part time residents, why are they here? Are they here to do some service for Baba? Are they here to serve the Trust? They have been welcome and they have been a help to His Cause. But really speaking they should be here also for Spiritual Training. The Trust has accepted them to live on the Trust Estate and therefore they have a responsibility just like those who live here full time.

And therefore when they first come here they should sign the first Agreement that states that they are here to undergo Spiritual Training to live the New Life. And they can also be given the opportunity when they are prepared to do so to sign the New Life Agreement and join the New Life and follow the Fixed Conditions and write a personal oath.

Number 3: some who serve on the Trust Estate but reside nearby:-

Again I say here as I said at the Meeting with the Spiritual Trainees, "it all depends how you take" and "it is up to each one". And as I also said earlier Baba has made the New Life collective and individual. And so if any individual wants to try to live the New Life he or she is free to do so. And also if that individual wants to join the Spiritual Training Programme they are also free to do so. They can sign the initial Agreement and when they feel prepared they can sign the New Life Agreement and write their oath.

Number 4: paid employees working on the Trust Estate:-

Any Sevak or Sevika who wishes to join the Spiritual Training Programme may also do like those who serve but live nearby the Trust Estate. They can sign the First Agreement to

try to live the New Life and when they are prepared they sign the New Life Agreement and write their oath.

4. Trust Scope in regard to the Spiritual Training Programme - Administrative or Spiritual?: *In the Trust Deed there is no spiritual authority conferred or spiritual hierarchy established by Beloved Baba. The Trust is an administrative body, with an administrative structure or hierarchy. The Spiritual Training Programme is in fulfillment of one of the objects of the Trust Deed. In writing the Spiritual Training Programme you have devoted a large section of the Book to the structure and administrative aspects of the Spiritual Training Programme.*

QUESTION:

Is the Trust's scope in regard to the Spiritual Training Programme purely administrative in nature without any spiritual authority?

Authority means knowledge and not just any knowledge but the knowledge of the Truth. So there is no question of anyone asserting they have spiritual authority. Only the God Realized can assert the Truth.

Now, the question then is whether the activities of the daily administration of the Trust can be separated from spiritual life. Everyone is here because of Baba. And so everyone is here dedicating their life to His Cause. And that is why all the activities of the Trust are dedicated to Him. All activity must be turned towards spirituality, and the false self should be crushed at every step. Therefore how can the administration be separated from the spiritual? It is not possible. And it should not be. The Trust is not managed like an ordinary worldly administrative pattern. What is the point then? Baba's message is to be lived.

Beloved Baba had given some of the Mandali members the duty of being a Trustee of the Trust. But what did they know about administration? They had to learn. But, in order to set an example of how to continue to carry on the Labor Phase of the New Life, Baba did this. When we call it Baba's Trust should not the administrative structure follow the Labor Phase of the New Life? Otherwise how would the Trust serve His Cause? But even the Mandali had no spiritual authority. They were just His servants, but those servants were following their duty by pleasing the Beloved.

Therefore those who are responsible for the administration of the Trust are also responsible for paying attention towards the spiritual aspect. They cannot be separated. It is the bounden duty of the Trustees of the Trust to accept the spiritual aspect because that is the basis for the whole set-up of the Trust.

I have made it very clear in the Spiritual Training Programme Book on page 61 that there is no spiritual hierarchy. But I have also made it clear how one's experience of leading a dedicated life can be shared in the midst of the day's service:

"There is no spiritual hierarchy here, either. Instead you may freely interact. Naturally, those of you who have been undergoing Spiritual Training for decades can be sought for your perspective, advice, consultation, guidance and encouragement. The many years you have spent in His service required you to renounce the false self repeatedly. You do not have spiritual authority, but you do have the efforts of your own lives in trying to please Baba. These are worth sharing with Spiritual Trainees and other Baba lovers."

Also as one needs explanations of how to lead a dedicated life, there are many stories about how the mandali

lived with Baba. These stories will definitely help anyone if they want to know how to follow the Truth.

There are many ashrams everywhere and particularly in India. And people think that they become very spiritual there. They get up early in the morning, take bath, do meditation, and different spiritual exercises. They try to be modest and people think that they are very advanced. That is not spiritual training. Spiritual Training is to clean ourselves from the dirt of falsehood. And what is that dirt, unnatural impressions which we go on collecting and which stop our progress of consciousness towards God. We remain where we are in the ditch of illusion. Therefore Spiritual Training is to clean ourselves from these unnatural impressions which our low desires create like selfishness, jealousy, lust, anger, greed and hypocrisy. And love for God is the only thing which can purify us.

The Trust created by Baba Himself is the first organization to put into action a Spiritual Training Programme. Although it is one of the objects of the Trust Deed, it was not implemented when the Trust started functioning after Baba dropped His body. But see how Beloved Baba works! Baba lovers from abroad started coming, and a few of them wanted to stay and be of service to Baba's Cause. Because there was a visa restriction it was impossible to get a resident visa for foreigners from the Government. But Beloved Baba prompted us to recognize that on the basis of Spiritual Training, the government could sanction resident visas. We did not think at that time that Beloved Baba was creating this situation but He was. And since then Spiritual Training has come into the lime light. Now, as He has given the understanding about the importance of Spiritual Training, it will gradually spread all over the world for those who are Seekers of Truth just as Beloved Baba played the role of a Seeker of Truth during the New Life.

At present the Sevaks and Sevikas of the Trust, that is the paid workers do not have the understanding about following the Beloved. But, it is definite that after Beloved Baba's Universal Manifestation the workers too will follow the Labor Phase of the New Life. It will take some time, but it is going to happen because this is the age where serving God through dedicated action is important. A big change will take place because Beloved Baba has said that this time His Universal Manifestation will be the greatest and the whole world will recognize Him.

But discipline will need to continue in order for the work to go on whether it is under Avatar Meher Baba Avatar Meher Baba P. P. C. Trust or any other Baba group or organization. Discipline is also necessary for the collective plan of the New Life. On page 33 of the Spiritual Training Programme Book I shared the important parts of the collective plan in the New Life that are still applicable. Baba told them that in this plan, they must all cooperate together, that there would be a managing body, they were free to work and live the way they liked within the limits of the Fixed Conditions, and that they were free to get together for talks and entertainment. Such an atmosphere creates oneness so that the feeling of love for God is present. That is most important.

And therefore service should be out of love for Him. Otherwise, what is the point of being here? The Spiritual Trainee could earn in the world, but what will they achieve? They will achieve nothing, and not anything from The Everything. The real achievement comes only through His love. So they should work, work and work through the Labor Phase, and try to make their false self dust under His feet.

But the feeling of oneness is not the same thing as trying to enforce equality. In fact the idea of equality creates the differences and then hatred, jealousy and other things come up

causing disorder. People force equality on each other. But that is an outward thing and there can never be equality.

Mind divides and heart brings the feeling of oneness. Mind is the enemy of everyone, and we have to therefore, annihilate the mind, in order to realize the One who always exists. No one exists besides Him and whatever appears as existing, only exists in non-existence.

One should say to the mind, "please, keep quiet, let me follow my heart." The feeling of oneness comes through love for God. That love is the only medium which makes us realize who we really are. Where there is love then of course, there is no trouble from the mind which sees distinctions. The heart does not pay attention to distinctions.

Therefore whether one is a Trustee, head of a department, worker or sevak and sevika, whatever one has to do, it should be done for the One within everyone. While doing any service, whether it is administrative work or it is manual work, the spirit of love is just the same. Although the duty differs, the spirit of love does not differ. The spirit is internal. And when the spirit is expressed it balances the mind and heart. And gradually the time comes when the heart becomes stronger and stronger and mind becomes weaker and weaker, which is the motive of Spiritual Training.

Now, regarding the Trust administration, there are many roles to be played. Some are Trustees, some are department heads, some have supervisory work and some have special work according to some degree and some are workers. When it comes to being Spiritual Trainees all are under Spiritual Training. But when it comes to the administrative set-up, there is a difference.

But the supervisors who give orders have no spiritual authority. They are also servants of God. And those who work

under the supervisor are also as a servant of the servant that is a servant of God who is serving another servant of God by doing His duty. Duty comes when one does their service for Him, and He will be pleased if one follows the instructions of the supervisors who are also His servants. This is the most subtle point. And one should serve other servants of God because the motive should be to become the dust under His feet and ready for Manonash.

Therefore one has to work under whatever set-up those who are servants in the administration arrange. One should not avoid it. Spiritual Trainees should very honestly and sincerely do their duty, fulfilling their responsibility to The Beloved. When the work is done through the heart, only then can one become the servant of God serving other servants of God.

I give one example out of the New Life how one should take administrative responsibility. Every phase of the New Life was important. One phase took place in the New Life in May 1950 when He brought before the men companions two methods of carrying out the Labor Phase. This phase lasted until the October 1950 Mahabaleshwar Meeting when again Baba entered another phase of the New Life.

The choice Baba gave the men companions was:

Method 1 - To render lifelong service to Baba through the four women (Mehera, Mani, Meheru and Goher) and to obey Baba as a servant obeys his master or employer. And by serving the four women, Baba will arrange to feed them by using the funds which were at the disposal of these four women. Baba told them that He would give them all kinds of orders and they may have to do farm work, take up any job even be coolies, that is do any work. The servant-companions should expect nothing in return from Baba; there would be no reward or hope of one. And

whatever happens each companion is responsible for their decision. In short the continuation of the Fixed Conditions.

Method 2 - Carrying out the Labor Phase by being individually independent and abiding under Fixed Conditions under Plan No. I-B. and Baba would give them funds to start so each could work out his independent labor phase in the best way possible.

Naturally, the men unanimously accepted Method 1.

This phase is important for Spiritual Trainees and the Trust because it shows how one may serve Baba under those who have the responsibility to supervise.

In order to be with Baba the men companions chose to serve the women Mandali under Baba's orders. And one could say that the men companions were the servants of the servants (women Mandali) of Baba. But, they were working directly for Beloved Baba because as far as the orders were concerned, they were following the orders of Baba, So too should all the Spiritual Trainees not feel anything when they have to be under the supervision of some one else. Everyone is a servant and everyone also becomes the servant some one else in the administrative set-up. But really everyone is only serving Baba.

Really speaking those who are in the administrative setup are more responsible than others who work under different department heads. If a Trustee does not do his duty properly and does not live the New Life Message, how can he expect others under him to do so? And those who have been given supervisory duties do not do their work under the New Life Message how can they expect those in their departments to do so. They all should feel this great responsibility not only in doing the actual work but in molding their life according to the

New Life Message. Those who have administrative roles should feel that responsibility towards the Spiritual Trainees.

I will give an example of responsibility to Baba and the supervisory duty that He entrusted to one of His Mandali.

In 1954 when Baba made His second visit to Andhra, He made it very, very clear in Rajahmundry that He needs no one to do His work. He alone does His work. No one can do His work. When He gives the opportunity to His lovers to work in order to spread His message of love and truth, it is external work. He said, "When I form a committee just to translate an English circular into Telegu and distribute it to my lovers and also print other Books which are in English into Telegu, it is only external work. But now I see that the committee members have pride thinking that they are spiritually advance souls. I am most unsatisfied. And I am dissolving this committee. When I return, I will be in seclusion. Nobody should write to Me and nobody should come to see Me. I will do my work which no one can do. When I provide this opportunity for you to serve in helping Me with this external work, you must work as a servant with no expectation from Me. But, I see that instead of loving Me you all have pride. I am most dissatisfied."

This meeting went on from 9p.m. to 2:30a.m. I was there and Eruch was interpreting Baba's alphabet board. When Baba said this everyone got a shock. It was not a physical shock, but it was spiritual shock. That means the committee members felt great pain to hear this and the others who complained against them also felt pain because they were the ones who complained against the committee members and because of that Baba made this decision. They thought, "Now what will happen? We will not get any circulars. We will not get any Books in Telegu." Everyone was affected by Baba's decision. It was like a spiritual earthquake. Very lovingly they requested Baba to permit some communications with Him.

Baba said, "No one can have any contact with Me. I will be in strict seclusion. If you want to, you may write to Adi K. Irani and Adi, without informing Me, can write to you."

Adi was one of Baba's Mandali. And He lived in order to please Baba. What a responsibility Baba gave Adi. How much He trusted Adi because he did everything according to Baba's instructions. And therefore Adi was Baba's servant. Now Baba was making others to consult with Adi and Adi was to respond. Really speaking, Adi became their supervisor, and they had to listen to him because of Baba's orders. And thus they became the servants of the servant. What a difficult duty Beloved Baba gave to Adi.

The duty of those who consulted Adi was not as difficult as Adi's. And it is similar with those who serve at the Trust. That is, those who serve under the various supervisors, their duty is not as difficult as the supervisor, whether that supervisor is a trustee or head of a department, or anyone in the administrative staff. They should know their responsibility before the Beloved just as Adi did. And that is why Baba gave him that responsibility because Baba could trust him with it. Adi was bound so much in that responsibility towards Baba and towards His lovers. And ultimately Adi died in Andhra.

To determine to live the New Life Message and follow the conditions and write an oath is not for show. It is to be lived. Then, there is the sweetness and purity of serving Him honestly, sincerely, lovingly. There should be only one thing in everyone's heart that they are serving the Beloved and pleasing Him. Otherwise, undergoing Spiritual Training has no meaning.

5. The word "Spiritual" or its connotation is misleading when used as a prefix or affix for a title or department: When Trainees, Departments and Department Managers are given titles with spiritual prefixes, like Spiritual Trainees, Spiritual Workers Department and Spiritual Department Manager, the pitfalls of authority and misinterpretation of their roles and functions are potentially greater.

QUESTION:

Since the Spiritual Training Programme neither recognizes nor confers spiritual authority to people or departments why call them other than by their specific role or function and create possibility of misuse and misinterpretation? Can they instead be called, preferably, only by their function i.e. "Trainee", "Workers Department". "Workers Department Manager etc. ?

I have already explained that there is a difference between authority and responsibility. No one can claim spiritual authority but everyone who undergoes Spiritual Training should feel that responsibility in his heart and should do their duty in order to please Him.

In the Trust deed itself it says, "Facilities for training Baba-lovers in living a life towards spiritual enlightenment..." And so this training is Spiritual Training. So we can not avoid this word. This is a most important word and everyone must know that spirituality is beyond intellectual understanding. In religion, there are always rituals, ceremonies and traditions. Spirituality is different. Spirituality cannot come under the boundary of religion. Spirituality is beyond understanding. Spirituality is connected with the heart. It is not connected with the intellect or mind, and the language of the heart is silent. Beloved Baba is the only authority and He has included the object of Spiritual Training in the Trust Deed. Therefore we

must have full conviction that when we fulfill that object, His pleasure is there.

Therefore why does this question of the use of names such as "Spiritual Trainee" come up or to name a department with that name? Whenever there is any kind of training the departments are called as such. So we must accept "Spiritual Training", and that word should not be avoided because it is the kind of training that Baba stated in the Deed. I don't think that this word is used anywhere. So it should be accepted very willingly and happily, and not only accepted, but one should not think anything about it, because one's purpose in being here is to efface the false self and the workings of the false mind.

If a department has the word "spiritual", does that give spiritual authority to the department manager or the workers in the department? How can that be? Again authority comes from having Real Knowledge. But if someone is appointed to be the manager then they have to fulfill their duties to that department as set by the Board. Whether one serves in the medical department or the educational department or pilgrim facilities department, archiving department, or the spiritual workers department all are the same because all are serving Him. And Spiritual Trainees serve in each department according to their qualifications. But the best qualification is that one should work for Him with one's heart without any reasoning or using the intellect.

Baba has said that God does not listen to the language of the tongue. God does not listen to the language of the mind. What He does listen to is the language of the heart, which is the silent language of God. Therefore, whatever one does, one should do for the Beloved from one's heart. When one eats, eat for Him. When one works, work for Him. He should be the center of every action, every thought, and every word. We

should have that silent longing in our hearts so that God can hear us.

I will tell a story of how I used my intellect and made interpretations of Baba's orders.

In 1954, when Beloved Baba was to enter into seclusion, His Hamirpur lovers thought that they did not have a chance to write a letter to Baba or to go and see Him. So they thought what should they do? They thought that they should start the repetition of God's name continuously without a break. So, they formed prayer groups. Each group had to repeat God's name for two hours continuously and this chain was formed for four and one half months.

Before Baba entered into seclusion, they sent a letter to Him telling Him about this. When the letter was read out to Him, Baba said, "Just see what My lovers are doing. You (Mandali) must also do it."

Baba then distributed the hours to each one of the Mandali. One hour to Eruch, one hour to Pendu, one hour to Vishnu, one hour to Dr. Nilu, one hour to Gustadji, one hour to Aloba, one hour to Dr. Donkin, one hour to me, and six hours to Baidul, etc. Kaikobad was repeating God's name one hundred thousands times every day. But, my hour was at lunch time. Others had different hours. When He gave the order I did not think that it was a bad time at that time.

Every day, Aloba and I would go to Baba's bungalow to bring Him to the men Mandali's bungalow. Then, exactly at 10:30 we would take Him back to His bungalow and my time for the repetition of God's name would begin. Everyone was repeating God's name according to their religion. Pendu, Gustaji and Baidul would repeat "Yezdan," Eruch would repeat "Ahurmazda," Aloba would repeat "Allah-Hu-Akbar," Dr.

Donkin would repeat "God Almighty" and Vishnu, Dr. Nilu and myself would repeat "Om Parabrahm Paramatma."

Now, the first day of repetition of God's name started. I returned after I took Baba to His bungalow. I sat on the bed, closed my eyes, and started: "Om Parabrahm Paramatma." After hardly half a minute of doing it, my mind started thinking about lunch. I was thinking, "Everyone must be eating now." Then, I would say "Om Parabrahm Paramatma" again and another thought came, "Will there be any food remaining for me?" Then, "Om Parabrahm Paramatma" and a third thought would come, "I have to write this letter, that letter, do this, do that." So, the whole hour I would be thinking of different things and also repeating "Om Parabrahm Paramatma." I would feel very much disappointed and I was thinking that the others must be doing very well and I am a very bad man. I am a sinner, and that's why I cannot repeat God's name.

The second day also the same thing happened. I would get different thoughts particularly at the time when I was repeating God's name and more and more thoughts would come. The fourth day, when I was doing the repetition of God's name so many thoughts came that I thought "I must tell Baba, that He should exempt me from this .meditation." Apparently, if anyone would have seen me at that time, they would have thought that I was doing my meditation wholeheartedly without making any noise. But my meditation was not connected with the heart. It was connected with the mind. Mind had the upper hand. When I became determined to request Baba to exempt me nui₄. ^ meditation someone knocked on my head. I opened my eyes, and Baba was standing there. I got up from the bed, and I said, "Baba please forgive me, I cannot do it. I get many thoughts at this time, when I am repeating God's name."

And I said, "You asked me to repeat God's name."

And Baba said, "You are repeating God's name. That is the order."

And I said, "I get many thoughts particularly at that time."

And Baba said, "I had asked you to repeat God's name. And you are doing so. So, why do you worry?" And Baba gave this example: "When there are mosquitoes, what do you do? You have the mosquito net around your bed and you sleep inside the mosquito net. Still, you hear the buzzing sound of the mosquitoes outside, but they don't come and bite you in the same way. When I have asked you to repeat God's name and you do so, the thoughts and desires that come are like mosquitoes. But when you follow My order and repeat God's name, the mosquito net of My love is already fixed around your heart. So those thoughts and desires cannot harm you, because you are following My orders. Let the thoughts and desires come. Don't put them into action. Continue with the repetition of God's name, but always remember: any order I give, you must obey the order wholeheartedly, Just follow my order, and don't put those thoughts and desires into action, and you will be free. My duty is to wipe out the thoughts and desires when they come. Your duty is to follow my orders."

And therefore that is why I say try not to go on using the mind in such a way that interprets Baba's words. But use the heart so it can feel Him in the heart so you will know how to truly follow Him and please Him.

6. Reports, reviews, evaluations, guidance, questions, letters, etc. by the Spiritual Training Programme administrative hierarchy - limited to work performance & behavior:

Answering questions, writing sponsorship letters, reports & reviews, giving guidance to trainees, etc. are a part of administrative procedures. You state that the basis of any decision for report, review, assessment, sponsorship letter, evaluation and guidance given by the administrative hierarchy in the Spiritual Training Programme can only be made in relation to work performance, attitude or behaviour of a trainee.

QUESTION:

Is it true that the Administrative hierarchy of the Spiritual Training Programme would have no authority to base any decision on anything other than the "outward" performance or behavior of a spiritual trainee?

On page 26 of the Spiritual Training Programme Booklet I spoke of the outer and inner performance of the Spiritual Trainee. It is important to recognize that the way the Spiritual Trainee does his work can also indicate the inner:

"Outwardly, you help fulfil the objects of the Trust Deed by putting your hearts into the work with complete conviction that, by doing so, you are fulfilling the Wish of the Beloved. As you work lovingly, honestly and sincerely, acting out of a spirit of Oneness, the false self's impulses for name, fame, etc., is restrained, and you will be upholding the Real Self by being in harmony with others. Through the outer performance of your innermost intentions, your spiritual life will grow. However, when you have not served the Beloved in a spirit of Oneness, your external performance will not be in harmony with others and can never please the Beloved, regardless of whether the outer work is done."

But I also go on to say how the Supervisor should view the outer performance of the Spiritual Trainee:

"The outer performance of your duty requires a Supervisor whose duty it is to see that the work allotted to you is done. Those of you whose duty and responsibility it is to be a Supervisor, whether Trustee, Department Manager, Section Supervisor, etc., must remember that you are also Spiritual Trainees. Your role as a supervisor is an external one. Your concern is to explain how the work is to be accomplished and to be responsible for the work being done satisfactorily. Spiritual Trainees under your supervision will fail in their assignments from time to time and should be corrected to enable them to fulfil their assignments better in the future. But remember, you are not in a position to judge their love for the Beloved. That is most personal."

So clearly no one is in a position to judge one's love for Baba. That is not possible. But that does not mean that those who are have the responsibility to write the review can not look at "how" the Spiritual Trainee does their work. In the Spiritual Training Programme Booklet on page 80 I have spoken of what the review is to be based on. I said there:

"What is the review based on? The review should be based on whether Spiritual Trainees do their work satisfactorily or not. Whether the work given to them is suitable, or whether they should be transferred to another Department. Although no one can judge the heart's love for Beloved Baba, outer structure is the reflection of inner structure. So the review is based on both the head and the heart. That is, whether the work is done honestly, sincerely and lovingly (which is where the heart is active), and whether it is done properly (which is where the head [intellect] is active)."

However, the Reviewer is doubly responsible: being responsible both to the Beloved and to those who work under Him. The Reviewer must take into account his attitude towards the Trainee when observing the outer work. He must be honest and truthful. This is a good test for the Reviewer. He should neither be prejudiced one way or the other. He should not favour the Spiritual Trainee nor should he allow his own weaknesses of jealousy and hatred etc. to harm the Trainee. This would displease Baba.

In Spiritual Training one must learn how to balance the mind and the heart. That is most important. That can only happen when the heart leads the way, when the ego-mind begins to be crushed by the heart that longs to love and serve and please Him. So both the mind and the heart of the Spiritual Trainee can be looked at in this very limited way. But still one can not judge their love for Baba. One can not say this person does not love Baba. And at the same time when one is serving it is difficult for one to judge if the Spiritual Trainee is doing the service with all love for the Beloved or is doing it out of pride. That is why if the Spiritual Trainees are sincere in their training and relying on Baba, He will guide them to crush their pride in order to feel His love.

Now, in our Trust, we find the Board of Trustees, and every one of the Trustees has certain responsibilities. There are also department heads. Now, what is their duty? They are supervising the workers in their departments, and it is their duty to see that the workers should work honestly, sincerely and lovingly. That is their duty and they must do it. But the workers should not think that since the Trustees and Department Heads are in the Labor Phase and we are also in Labor phase, that we are equal. There has to be structure and work has to be done accordingly. Everyone has different outward responsibilities but inwardly everyone has the same responsibility towards the Beloved.

Those who serve as Trustees or heads of the departments are also Spiritual Trainees. But they do not have any spiritual authority. And when they are Trainees, what training should they have? To follow the New Life Message and uphold its conditions 100% according to Baba's Wish. It is not easy, because it is the question of how one lives one's life. And at the same time, they have to look after the work under them and for that they have to engage the Spiritual Trainees as the different workers in the departments and see that the work not only is done but also how it is done so Baba's atmosphere prevails. And if the supervisor finds that the Trainee is not working properly, the supervisor can say, "You are not doing your duty; you are not putting your heart into it." The Trainee should not say, "Who are you to say this to me?" The Supervisor should do his duty, workers should do their duty, and the administrator should do his duty by administering the Trust.

Now what if the supervisors are not behaving well? What if the supervisor lets his pride get in the way and starts to think that because he has been given this post that, "I am something"? Does that mean it gives a Spiritual Trainee in his department the right not to be bound to follow their Agreements? Of course not! He has signed the Agreement for the Beloved and not for anyone else. The Spiritual Trainees are responsible to Him. The supervisors who are also Spiritual Trainees are also responsible to Him. And it is the duty of everyone to try to correct oneself. Spiritual Trainees should not play mental exercise with Baba's words. They should exercise the heart instead. The mind should follow the heart. Mental exercise should be avoided. Because the mind itself is false, Mind creates different things. What can one expect from the mind? One should depend upon the heart and should not pay attention towards the mind. But as I told you before it takes time. The Beloved is there to help.

There is no question of hierarchy; it is a question of the duty. In the spiritual world there is a hierarchy with a fixed number of those in the first plane, second plane, third plane, fourth plane, fifth plane, sixth plane. In all there are 7001 and there are also five Perfect Masters. Out of 56 God Realized souls, there are the five Perfect Masters as well as Jivan Muktas and Paramhansas. Under Spiritual Training, there is no hierarchy at all because everyone is bound to Beloved Baba through their Agreements to live the New Life. Whether they are workers, department managers, or Trustees everyone is responsible to Baba. When we have come to Meher Baba to love Him and to serve Him, we must try. Everyone has got weaknesses, and so many weaknesses, and Spiritual Training through the Trust is the medium which Beloved Baba has given us to get rid of our weaknesses gradually.

Now I will give an example of love that Beloved Baba gave us. There was a mother and a small child and there was poison in a glass of water which is on the table. Now the child goes and takes the glass in his hand and the mother says, "Don't drink it! It is poison!" The child does not know what poison is and he wants to drink it. Then the mother goes and tries to take the glass from his hand, but the child does not want to give it to her. So what does the mother do? The mother gives one slap to the child and takes away the glass. Now, whether this is love or cruelty? It is love. She wants to protect the child. So always we should remember that Love protects. Love does not harm anyone. In order to have love, we must be free of desires. If one has jealousy or if one slanders and backbites or if one hates anyone or if one has pride that one is better than others that is not love.

Therefore, it is the duty of the administrator, head of any department or Trustee to see that whatever work is allotted that the Spiritual Trainee is doing it properly with all love. If he or

she is not doing it properly, it is their duty to bring to the Spiritual Trainee's notice that the work should be done honestly, lovingly and sincerely by living Baba's New Life Message and following the conditions. But the supervisor, administrator, department head or trustee can only say this when he himself is living the New Life Message and following the conditions.

7. Conflict of interest when Report and Reviews compromise confidence: *The idea of the Companionship Department and the understanding of the value of friendship in supporting new Spiritual Trainees, are necessary. But Personal Sponsors who are duty bound to write reviews or reports on the Spiritual Trainee would face a conflict of interest. The trust essential to friendship is compromised by the writing of a report or review of information exchanged in confidence by the Spiritual Trainee with the Personal Sponsor. This discourages the trainee from sharing confidence, and potentially undermines the basis of friendship among companions.*

QUESTION:

Can the Companionship Department be considered in the same line as the Household Department - providing for an important need of the trainees but not be part of the report/review process ?

I suggested that someone from the Companionship Department write a review only because sometimes a single review from the Spiritual Trainee's supervisor may not be sufficient to give the total picture. It does happen where the person does not get along with the supervisor. And if the review is based on just that report it may not be good. That is why I suggested another review by the person that the Spiritual Trainee is talking to on a personal level. Perhaps the review that the Companionship Department writes should not be

confidential and he shows the Spiritual Trainee what he writes. There should be that free flow between them then there is no conflict. It is an honest exchange. But just one person's review is not a good idea. And, as Baba had used the name "companions" for those who accompanied Him in the New Life we should not change the name of that department, and so we should keep it as such.

In the Spiritual Training Programme Book on page 115 I bring to the attention of the Spiritual Trainees the important difference between worldly friendship and true friendship and I illustrated the point with stories from our lives with Baba. This must be understood by the Trainees:

"But Baba did not like false friendship. He wanted true friendship. True friendship is such that one does not ignore truth for the sake of friendship. If anyone does so, he does injustice to his own honesty....In the world, friends get personally involved with each other, favour and even lie for each other. Sometimes they commit very harmful acts in the name of friendship. But this is not true friendship. True friendship is based on helping each other towards the truth, just as Vishnu did for Nilu. In work situations on the Trust Estate, if worldly attitudes regarding friendship exist, it will spoil the work and the atmosphere. Favouring friends creates preferences where there should be none. As you can see, Beloved Baba did not want us to have such friendships. There is a world of difference between friendship as the world knows it and the feeling of Oneness. The feeling of Oneness is based on the Truth and is an expression of it."

8. Selection of Trustees - 20 years residency?: *In the Trust Deed the clause for selection of future Trustees has no limitation of time and place. You suggest in the Spiritual Training Programme that a residency of 20 years of service on the Trust Estate would be a requisite.*

QUESTION:

Do you think that selection of a Trustee should not have a time or place limitation, keeping to the spirit of the clause in the Trust Deed for selection of a Trustee: "Such Trustee shall be selected without any distinction of caste, creed, race, religion, sex or nationality."?

In the Spiritual Training Programme Booklet on page 74, I suggested that a Trustee who has been serving on the Trust Estate for over 20 years should be selected as Trustee and I explain why that is necessary:

"As vacancies appear on the Board, I suggest that it is advisable to nominate Trustees from those Spiritual Trainees who have been serving on the Trust Estate for over 20 years. Not only is dedication required but also decades of daily experience of serving under Mastery in Servitude on the Trust Estate. A time period of at least 20 years will indicate those who have the ability and willingness to shoulder the responsibility of Trusteeship in a way that would be pleasing to Beloved Baba. Baba nominated those who were always with Him as His Mandali to be Trustees. Likewise, only those Baba lovers who become Spiritual Trainees and live on the Trust Estate, dedicating their lives to become Baba's Servants, can be considered for Trusteeship. Trustees are chosen without regard to caste, creed, religion, sex, colour, nationality, etc. God is in everyone, and because all are here to serve Beloved Baba, these apparent distinctions must not be given any consideration."

However, after I wrote this, the question came up about those that may be quite capable and have lived a life that would be pleasing to Beloved Baba by remaining pure, dedicated, sacrificing, and living only for God, and living such a life by either serving at another Baba centre for many years or living independently. And therefore I say that if such a person's name is brought before the Board for consideration as a Trustee, he or she may be considered. But such persons should also have no selfish motive and they should not expect to be chosen as a Trustee.

Still, some years serving on the Trust Estate under Spiritual Training is most necessary and generally it is better to nominate persons who have been serving on the Trust Estate for many years, because they will know the administrative set-up and they will be familiar with the place and the people. Also they will have withstood the many tests that Baba gives in living the collective plan of the New Life. Serving here for many years will show if one's weakness is the pitfall of pride and then it is useless to be in such a position. The candidate for Trusteeship must be inclined to express the feeling of oneness because they should feel the situation of everyone and that is important.

It has been also suggested to me that in order to have proper administration we should nominate as Trustees even if they are not Baba Lovers retired collectors, retired engineers, retired doctors, etc. This is not a good thing at all. Then there will be no difference between the atmosphere on the Trust Estate and elsewhere in the world. How can a person who is not dedicated to serving Beloved Baba understand how to be an administrator here? This is not a worldly organization. One must be solely dedicated to Avatar Meher Baba. Everyone should note it carefully that at Baba's Trust or Baba's Centres or in Baba's institutions only those persons should be selected who have love for Him and who want to serve Him lovingly.
Service

to Him is based on dedication and not money. There should be sacrifice. Here under the Trust service is for the Beloved without any expectation or any selfish motive. Service is done out of pure love to please the Beloved.

In fact anyone who is chosen to be a Trustee should have the thirst of becoming dust under the feet of the Beloved. Otherwise what is the use of this position of responsibility? A Trustee should be careful of hypocrisy. The responsibility of a Trustee is to try to please Him in every act they perform.

I cannot say that I have replied to the questions perfectly well. No one can do it, because when intellect comes into play, intellect always wants to have the upper hand. I can only say that if one follows the New Life Message and its conditions lovingly and lives up to one's oath, then, of course, these questions do not arise.

Everyone should try to find out their own weaknesses and not be concerned about the weaknesses of others. When love is there then no one laughs at anyone when they commit any mistakes. Lovingly, they can be corrected. The worldly pollution of selfishness, greed, jealousy, anger, hatred, backbiting, lust, etc should not be brought into the spiritual atmosphere of love, obedience and honesty. We must develop love for God and when we develop love for God, we should also love others for the same God is within them. Really speaking by living up to the Fixed Conditions these weaknesses will disappear, because we are also living a life of obedience to Baba. And when one gives their oath, it will help them stay true to Baba and the New Life.

Dear ones, it is most important to remember that the false self should be kept away from whatever work one does. Although the false self comes very often, if we are alert to it then of course we follow His wish. It is not possible to think about God and think about the world. Two swords cannot be put in one sheath. We should not keep Him absent from the heart. Outwardly one should remain dedicated in one's service to the Beloved. And if thoughts come, don't worry, let them come and let them go. When questions come in the mind, let them come and let them go. There is a long struggle between thoughts and action. But we must put into action only those thoughts which are useful to serve Him. We should always be careful about this. Just continue to be dedicated to Him, put the heart into living the New Life and eventually one will feel Him in the heart. But it requires a long time to feel Him in the heart.

I should say we are all fortunate that we are getting the opportunity to serve the Beloved wholeheartedly and honestly. What an opportunity the Beloved has given. Our renunciation of the world should be internal, not external. If anyone goes to the forest and meditates there, he will only continue to think of the world, though he is in the forest. Real renunciation is to live in the world, but remain detached. What is this world: Nothing but a big zero. And therefore what can we get out of this zero, nothing but zero.

My dear brothers and sisters, I just request you, in my humble way to remain attached to the Beloved and not to remain attached to the world, which is nothing but a zero. There is no one equal to the Beloved. He is the same Beloved One, who comes age after age. He is the Unchanging One in the changing world. And therefore it is necessary that we should pay attention to the Unchanging One and not to what is changing. Love for God cannot be changed. It is just the same from beginning to end but people express it in different ways. But when they forget the spirit, it becomes mechanical.

Beloved Baba has said that this New Life is eternal, and if there is no one to live it, He alone will live it. The spirit of this New Life will always exist. The situation will change after this age, but the New Life will live on in Him. So therefore, why not go toward the One who is everywhere and in everyone. And in this age to follow the One, we have to lead the Labor Phase of the New Life.

I feel this is enough. Words are words unless they are put into action. Let the Spiritual Trainees' action speak those words of the New Life Message and they will find how the Beloved is bringing them closer and closer to Him. May Beloved Avatar Meher Baba bless all Spiritual Trainees to live the New Life Message and uphold its conditions through wholeheartedly following their personal oath to their Beloved. May they be strong not to make any compromise and that way they will please Him.

Avatar Meher Baba Ki Jai!

April 2005

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