

B 4 Baba

**B 4 Baba : Pilgrimage tales
(Brindaban, Byramangala, Books & Bow)**

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Introduction

“Mind is like a barking dog, give it a few words to eat and keep quiet” - Meher Baba

If I am allowed to interpret the above in my own way then my arguments are: -

- That since human beings are said to be ‘mental-beings’, therefore, a man, specially an intellectual one, can be called a ‘Dog-Man’.
- Thus, an attempt to understand a God-Man, the Avatar, the Dog-man must quit barking.
- As such, the words become an essential commodity to feed, in order to keep the barking dog quiet and the other faculties of human consciousness may be put in use.
- Considering the dog, being very loyal to his master and very useful for the whole household, well fed mind may be useful and it can be tamed to cooperate in bringing desired harmony of the intellect and emotions, reason and imagination, understanding and realization (harmony of Mind and Heart)

The above arguments are to justify the feeding part of the ‘Barking Dog.’ In the process of feeding the mind and trying to grasp the esoteric meaning of the doings, sayings and commandments of the God-Man, Meher Baba, when my attempts proved futile the Grace has always helped me in bringing home. The stories of these failures are dear to me because they are embedded with the element of His Grace. Although Meher Baba has warned us by saying, “Do not try to understand me you will miserably fail, just love me”, yet I am happy to share the moments, incidents of my miserable failures during His pilgrimage tours because they have invariably proved Baba and His omniscience, compassion and love on the top even to unworthy infant like me.

Born and brought up in unorthodox but spiritual background yet prior to 1996, I had not heard the name, Meher Baba. Thus till this date I don’t claim to be a Baba-Lover. Nevertheless, long years of academic and professional activities that provided me opportunity to travel, and to assess the situations and objects for their rational pertinence and values in the context of non-animal human instincts and behaviors termed spirituality. Occasionally I have contemplated the hairline difference between the traits of so called civilization

The object of presenting these excerpts from my tour diary is neither to convince anyone about the divinity or Avatarhood of Meher Baba, nor to preach, but to share my experiences, which as said above are so dear to me. By doing so some incidents and my analytical comments thereon may not fall into the category of spirituality at all. They are included simply to maintain the continuity and to keep up with the context thus making the reading more enjoyable and impersonal.

Most of the narrations are edited to suit a single relevant topic. A single journey has been broken into two. In this attempt the essay ‘Meher Brindaban’ has been narrated not as a journey but an essay.

All this exercise is for keeping my ‘Barking Dog’ quiet. To readers they are just chitchat about the Ancient One. I salute Him in you and offer my poor effort to you, the readers.

Safarchand
Lucknow, The 25th February ‘2005

Amartithi Pilgrimage: Baba, Books & Bow

Meherabad, Ahmadnagar (Maharashtra) is supreme pilgrimage spot connected with the Avatar of the Age, Meher Baba¹. From Lucknow (UP), the journey was long, expectations high, but going to tomb of an Avatar a – God- Man, silently stirred our inner self like a school child going to his home with his annual exam’s report card in which he had a poor grade. We were proud of our fortunes on one hand and feeling ashamed of our worthiness on the other.

Our getting up very early in the morning of 29th January‘2002, boarding on the train at 6.30A.M, cheerful exchange of greetings and finding ourselves as a Crowd of total 35 persons ensued some enthusiasm in us. Shall we not call it the emancipation of “mass-consciousness”? Some sociologists and psychologists might term it as “mob-mentality”, but vibration of thoughts directed towards a common Master, His constant remembrance, common purpose and goal certainly created a peculiar resonance. The train pushed off leaving the echoes of our hailing “Avatar Meher Baba Ki Jai”.

Unconsciously we became selfish in finding coach and berth to suit our fancy. All of us were having reservations and no one was without a pre-allotted berth but our humane folly eluded us to take more comfortable berth than a mere comfortable one. Being given the option to choose, we tried to apply it in the most fancied way. Mr. X at berth number 7 was fond of Mr. Z whose berth was number, say 34; and berth number 8 was allotted to Mr. Y. So, Mr. X requested to Mr. Y to take number 34 and leave 8 for Mr. Z. I was fanaticizing as to what geographical area and clan I would opt if God would provide a similar option to be born on earth.

The morning of 30th January found us still in the train hunting for tea etc. at Bhusawal. The train was scheduled to reach Ahmadnagar around 12.30 P.M. The stoppage there was of only two minuets. Our complete conscious being was now concentrated on boarding off the train safely without leaving any one and anything. And so, it came true. We dismounted from our coaches and watched with dismay the train still at rest. For the first time I reflected upon my foolishness to make haste. I was burdened with two heavy packages of books. They were, as I found later, not only physical loads, but also subtle loads on my ego.

Repeating His name in reverence, we hired a tempo and reached our cherished spot, Meherabad. Within 15 minuets, our leader brought our boarding-cum-lodging-cum-Darshan badges. Ladies and gents were housed separately. We had prior knowledge about this arrangement and made up the baggage likewise. Yet, the gender segregation was a bit inconvenient to the persons like my wife and me who habitually were adapted for the “division of duties” between us. I am responsible for all the expenses while she is always in-charge for deciding, “what to wear, eat and buy”. I resolved to take bath and change. And so was everyone. The streams of people were pouring in and everyone wanted to take a bow- down at Samadhi (Tomb) as if to put his or her signature of presence/arrival. I too along with one of my co-traveler set out for Darshan.

The boarding place (at lower Meherabad) was about a kilometer from the. Near the Samadhi (Upper Meherabad) variety programs were being continuously performed on a wonderfully made stage with all modern stage arrangements.

I had number 7 as my “Darshan” token. As soon as I reached upper Meherabad to take a bow as my signature of arrival before the date 31st commenced, I heard the announcement saying that currently “Darshan” queue was not token wise and at 11.50 P.M. the tomb shall be closed for “Darshan”, restarting token wise Amartithi “Darshan” after midnight. The queue was in zigzag manner; long temporary lanes made of tied logs and ropes volunteers standing all over to check trespassing or any mischief whatsoever and to give drinking water, to take care of ill persons, children, old and crippled.

I calculated that if I join the queue now (at 2P.M.), it should take at least 2 hours to reach the tomb. It seemed wise to join the queue now so that arrival bow may finish before nightfall and I may be able to enjoy the enchanting stage programs whole night after amply feeding myself and relaxing a little. My team leader during handing over our tokens had congratulated us to get token number 7, as this is the magic number known to be Divine. As I pen these lines, I reflect what the Divinity had for me in its magical store. It is better to leave this story of lucky number 7 because I am sure that the reader shall find it anyway. So, I thought myself clever and joined the queue. Another tale is also hidden in this description; and that is about the “load of my ego”. As already mentioned that I had carried two bulky packets of books. My wife was publisher, myself a translator (in Hindi, originally written by renowned Dr. GSN Moorthy in English). I had my ego inflated to pride over the thought that I brought readable material for Hindi readers. The author had sent me a message that I should get the book inaugurated by the chairperson of the trust, Mr. Bhau Kalchuri, and start the sale.

I was in the queue for about one hour and suddenly Mrs. Nandini Mathur, my sister, told me that Mr. Bhau Kalchuri² was presently on the stage and she had talked to him and the book was to be inaugurated immediately. Now this was a test for me. I was in the queue to bow down at Lord’s Samadhi and nothing should have distracted me in leaving the queue. My clever mind invented a manner to kill two birds from a single stone. I asked one of my colleagues to bring the pre-prepared packet for inauguration; requested Nandini, who was wearing a volunteer badge, to reserve my position in queue and arrange so that after the inauguration I may re-join the same position. She did arrange for this. Not only this, she placed the packet over the Samadhi, a ritual I had longed for, then escorted me to the stage, in ceremonial inauguration and finally back to my place in the queue.

Whole drama took just 20 minutes or so. I was happy and thought the episode as Divine Will. I, in my folly, could not decipher that my contentment was more because the book was inaugurated than to reach back in the queue. I now reflect that a quiz was posed before me; I had to opt for - **Baba or Book!** I, however, had opted the book.

Anyway, a loving father does not fail to point out the mistakes and provides tools to correct them. Here, I was at the council of the great Awakener of our times. How could He ignore the sleeping ignorance within us? He says, “When the real light comes, the darkness which you think is light, disappears; for seekers of Truth I am the Sun giving them light and love.” How could I evade His light? It is bound to illuminate our inner darkness unflinching. So, I took the first bow at 4.30P.M. And I was delighted.

Now I was free to move along and enjoy the stage programs. But this enjoyment proved a mirage. My book was on sale and I had to run around to ensure the arrangements. My colleagues contacted every bookstall, and other stalls. No one was ready to keep my books for sale. Only one person, who was stallholder and close friend of the author, agreed to keep a few copies. The book was on sale at his stall only.

I remained swinging between “Book & Baba”. Undoubtedly on the pretext of visiting “Baba”, I had been nursing the longing for utilizing the opportunity to show off my translation skill. The result was before me. Astonishingly even at that moment I was unaware of all these details, which I am writing now. Thus, instead of enjoying the stage program that was spiritually brimming, highly charged with subtle love, I was marketing His Silence (I had translated the book, ‘The Wonders Of Silence’ in ‘Hindi, as Mown Ke Ashcharya’).

From the time the book was inaugurated and I performed the ritual bow (4.30PM.), till 10.30 P.M., I don’t remember having been able to sit quietly. By that time, my wife and other co-fellows had brought necessary warm sheets and some eatables too and they had occupied a place near the stage for all night stage show enjoyment. When, at 10.30 P.M., I approached this spot a few youngsters requested me to stay there so that they too may go for dinner and do some

errands. In other words, I was asked to keep a watch over the belongings granting them the freedom. I consented to their request and sat there making myself comfortable. Since I landed Meherabad this, I think, was my single good juncture at ease. I wish to discredit myself even for the first bow I made to Him. I now remember His words, “Real happiness lies in making others happy”. I recollected all His sayings about helplessness. I was searching for my worth until now. I found it. To work as a security guard for the belongings, was my only worth here. The moment this feeling poured in me, I felt complete calmness within me, as if the thought itself descended in me as His Grace. A strange inner Silence overpowered me and now all my senses were focused on to the stage performances. I got myself deeply immersed into His all-pervading blissful presence.

At midnight of 31st January/ 1st February‘2002, announcement was made that all holding token number one to join the queue for “Darshan”. Now Amartithi had begun. The stage program too warmed up with devotion. I effortlessly was composed. Everything except Baba was present for me in all His glory, beauty, and bliss. As the time passed on and token number 3 holders were announced to join the queue, I calculated, that one batch was taking approximately 70 minutes. In this speed, the turn of our number 7 token would come at about 5A.M. When token number 3 was current, some of my colleagues reached me. One Mr. D. who was of my age group and we had befriended each other, told that now he too is in a mood to witness stage shows. Music, dance, drama, and nearly all aesthetics are more enjoyable if you have some one on your side to share the emotions.

I felt myself doubly fortunate. I was relieved from security guard duty and was free to sit in the auditorium with a like-minded friend. We settled ourselves at the front seats and our emotions sublimated with the blissful aura of the Ancient One.

At 3.30 A.M. the ladies comfortably settled near our belongings, sent me message conveying that they are going to wash and bathe so that they may join batch number 7 in time and I was asked to keep an eye over the luggage. This time I was happy to do this duty. At 4 A.M. we ought to have left the seats to join the queue. At that time, number 5 was queued up. But since the women had not returned as yet, I was to be a security guard for the luggage. This I took for granted. Women members had not yet returned. Moreover, even if they do return they all were having token number 7 and someone had to be there on guard duty. Well, why not me? And it came true. Number 7 was announced and I could not join it. Here it may be noted that on the previous occasion, when I left the queue for the inauguration of the book Mr. D. was just by my side. I had left the queue then joined again and took our first bow together. But this time number 7 was lucky only for him, not for me. I kept musing as to why? I bade farewell to arms (arguments) and was at ease to place all the musing to His Marzi (Will). Thus, the lucky number 7 was indeed lucky for all. For those who took bow at the prime time (Brahmvela) of Amartithi, and for me too to whom the power of Divine Will was very vividly demonstrated. The greatness and beauty of whole episode was that even for a moment I did not have any guilt consciousness, yet my fault was made crystal clear to me. I silently took a mental note that the key word was not repentance but the repetition. I may not repent for my fault but I must not repeat it.

Token number seven holders were enjoying the blessed “Darshan” queue except for myself. A feeling of utter helplessness became acute and upon being intensified by emotional music and lyrics of the stage, it flowed out as soothing tears.

Through the haze of watery eyes, I kept staring His photograph on the background of the stage and His smile seemed to gesture His Marzi (Will). To sum-up, as a holder of Token number seven I was bestowed not merely a bow to His tomb but the massage of the Will Divine.

When token number 9 was queued, my wife came and explained that they were quiet late in bath etc. hence, came hurriedly and joined number 7. She and other members too were feeling sorry for me, but I assured and reassured them all that even being able to breathe near His abode

is sufficient for me. I must confess that secretly I was nursing a hope that all day up to midnight of 31st was Amartithi, and I might get a chance or a fluke of chance to take a bow sometime during that period.

Now the dawn had tinted the eastern sky purple, and again I was eagerly expecting to meet - not Baba, but Dr. Moorty. He had conveyed me his arrival at Meherabad on 31st. Dr. Moorty is one of the fortunate few favorites of the Avatar in His lifetime. Now, of course, I was keen to meet him, but this time not for the books, just for an embrace. He asked me about the progress of sale of the books. I reported him. After knowing that I could not keep, the books save at one stall, and only a few (about 45) copies could be sold, he seemed concerned. I knew he was only concerned because of my money being blocked. It is, therefore, I assured him that I didn't had slightest worry about unsold copies. I dared not to tell him about Divine Will because I was confident that he knew it more than myself. It was one of the most memorable times, which I was fortunate to spend with him. I sat by his side at the plinth of Baba's seclusion room facing wide-open windows of Avatar's Samadhi in complete silence.

Many persons, usually officials of countywide Avatar Meher Baba Centers, kept flowing in to embrace him and pay regards. He used to meet them all calling their name lovingly, asked about the welfare of their siblings, and occasionally introduce me to them as Hindi translator of his book. I knew that he was doing this only to kindly project my identity thereby boosting the sale of books. I had nothing to say or ask. I was just immersed in the whole scenario of the Samadhi, Baba's room and nearness of a veteran Baba Lover. Occasionally he would ask me to call this or that person in sight, and I complied his commands. The whole affair lasted for about two hours. Then being called upon for lunch, he departed, informing me that he would come again at about 5P.M. I too searched for my colleagues and soon got busy in meditating upon books.

What a wonderful and lovely Avatar is Meher Baba! Although I had enlightened experience about "Baba v/s Books", yet I did not had any guilt feeling. The only difference between pre and post experience was that, this time I was consciously meditating upon books but with a great degree of detachment. Most wonderful aspect was that I was able to do it effortlessly and happily, more happily that on 30th and more efficiently too. I consoled the boys and girls who were campaigning the sale and asked them not to worry at all. If all the books are not sold out, we shall carry them back to Lucknow and they shall be sold in due course.

If I don't mention the main proceedings of Amartithi, my whole narration would be worthless. Main proceedings started at 11 A.M. and the chairperson, Mr. Bhau Kalchuri, delivers a short welcome speech informing the importance of this date, and a few reflections of his association with Baba.

His speech is beyond description not for it's content, but for its affect. His words are not to be understood, but to be realized. First he said, quoting Baba, that all material world including the form and attributes are the product of a big but real Zero. Since 1 succeeds zero and 9 precedes it, both of them (1 and 9) cant be opposites of zero. Opposite of a Zero had to be a nonzero, i.e. Absolute. Thus the phenomenon of death, which inhales the material body, a form, is merely returning into nonzero entity. Thus, an Avatar's nonzero state must be nothing but immortality. Hence, this day, when Baba dropped His material body is called The Day Of Immortality that is 'Amartithi.'

Bhau's words to this affect are the words of a realized soul. Since realization is more important than understanding, therefore trying to understand this may be futile. Although the process of understanding is a mental activity and all the actions including mental ones must be regarded as the product of the same Divine Principle, yet it (the mental activity) must be armed with imagination too. Reason can answer every question, but imagination shall have to ask for it. Mental reasoning is apt to misguide us because we can't expect our imaginations to be up to the

desired mark. Bhau ji, after elaboration on Amartithi, drifted to throw some light on Baba's teachings. Bhau ji is amongst a few students of Baba's Tough Syllabus of Practical Spirituality; as such, his version of the teachings is noteworthy. He told that in spiritual domain, there could be two ways of living life. First way of life is "Ideal" the other "Natural". Baba demonstrated "Natural" way of life with truth and honesty. This is sometimes called "simple" life.

Astonishingly all, with pin-drop silence amidst about thousandths heard his speech for over 30 minutes. Neither a single person coughed nor a single baby cried. This was not a miracle, but mesmerizing effect of the words of a realized soul.

After the speech, some foreigners and a few of Meherabad Baba Center began singing Baba's name. The announcer at the stage had told all, to watch big wall clock hanging on the side of the stage; at 12 noon sharp he would raise his hands hailing "Jai Baba" and the very moment all music would stop and 15 minutes' Silence would be observed.

As the clock struck 12, he hails Jai Baba, and the Silence pervaded. Some had closed their eyes in posture of meditation while some just looked around. I kept staring at Baba's photo, and began Silent conversation to him with open eyes. I tried to communicate with Him about the recent episode of His Marzi (Will). I also tried to get some signal about His further Marzi (Will), but He did not tell me. Then I said, "Thank you dear Baba" and by that time, 15 minutes were over. After this, the recitation of His Arti started. Since it was to be repeated in more than seven languages including English, French, German, and Parisian, it took about half an hour. The Main function was over and the stage performances restarted; this time with a new zeal. I waited for about half an hour for thinning out of the gathered mob, and then I set out in search of Dr. Moorty. Not finding him, and hoping to meet in the evening as he had said, I came and joined my friends.

Every one was feeling pity for me that I was not able to bow at Samadhi on Amartithi date. I was not vocal about what I perceived. Until the evening keeping a portion of my attention to what was going on the stage, I was roaming about, meeting acquaintances, chatting about stage shows, occasionally sipping coffee. It may be remembered that since I reached Meherabad on 30th noon until this time (31st, 3 P.M.), I did not sleep. Previously while joining the queue for first bow, I had planned that my Amartithi "Darshan" would be over by 31st, 4 A. M. and then I shall go to sleep until evening. But now that was not possible because I was bound to keep watch as to when token system is declared withdrawn and I may take an Amartithi bow. The speed of the queue was very slow because of unexpected rush. Even now, token number 12 was queued. Somehow, I collected the information that about 27 batches (tokens) are still waiting for their turn. It meant that queue system was going to be continued until late night. With sleepless eyes, weary robes and heavy heart I placed my fate of being able to have "Amartithi Darshan" at His Marzi. In fact, there was no other option at all for me.

It was afternoon now. Variety programs of drama, magic show, dance, and Qawalis starting from 6 P.M. onwards were announced. Mr. D, whom I now envied, was with me. Dr. Moorty had expressed his desire to meet him. I, therefore, had managed to call him. Both embraced each other and talked. I was saying to myself, "Look here! Mr. D neither had translated a book, nor he craved for ritualistic "Darshan"; yet, he was able to take his first bow, then Amartithi bow at exact epoch and after comforting himself a bit, dressed coolly evenly poised, now meeting Dr. Moorty. Conversely, I was sleeplessly still waiting for "Amartithi bow". Was it not a matter of envy? Mr. D informed me that he had bought four cassettes of Baba songs, four posters, and a book of Prof. Hazra. I inspected them all with great admiration and asked that how he selected the book His quick, plain and simple answer was that he liked the cover page photograph of Baba and without any further consideration about the material inside, he bought it. His utterance poured deep in my heart. Here was the example of simplicity and honesty. I remained engrossed in reflections for a long while.

The night was nearing. As I kept on shunting to and fro from the spot near the stage to the stall where my books were kept on sale, my ears were tuned for the stage melody and eyes searched for any occasion to trespass the token-queue. Thus, my all five material senses, viz. touching, tasting, seeing, hearing, and speaking were deeply engaged, and this fact kept me still wide awake. Only one personal care I took for myself, and that was to rush to lower Meherabad and take a hasty bath and change my clothes. The stage program was again at its full swing and I settled for to enjoy it forgetting everything. At about 9 P.M. Mr. D bade Good night to me and said that he was going to have a sleep. I silently bowed to his simplicity and truthfulness and gave him cheerful farewell. He is a heavy weight diabetic person yet brimming with lively life. From stage flowed enchanting Bhajans, Gazals, and Qawalis, while the token queue kept flowing 16 onwards. At 15 minutes to midnight, my ears were hammered by the announcement that queue system was being withdrawn. I jumped on my feet and hurried to Samadhi queue. Only after a few minutes, I was taking off my shoes to enter into the Avatar's abode. I took a bow and cried like a baby. Volunteers helped me out and I saw the clock showing 11.55 P.M. My whole being was overwhelmed. I, after all and nearly 36 hours of sleepless wait, was able to take Amartithi bow.

The morning was near and in a brief conversation it was decided that we should leave upper Meherabad only after a good-bye bow at about 7 A.M. so that coming again after packing our baggage would not be necessary. I too had to wind up my bookseller's account. At 7.30 A.M in the morning, I took three bows one after another, then rushed to the stall for accounting. In all only 65 books were sold, i.e. less than even one third I brought from Lucknow. Silently, once again, I saluted His Will and came down to lower Meherabad.

My whole being was overwhelmed. I, after all and nearly 36 hours of sleepless wait, was able to take Amartithi bow. This saga of Meher Baba, Books & Amartithi Bow shall ever remain afresh in my memory; by penning it down I have tried to tell my tale of inflated ego, His blissful Ways in helping us to workout it. This travel account is not merely from Lucknow to Meherabad, but from Books to Baba via an Amartithi Bow.

Safarchand, Lucknow the 25th February'2005

Footnote references

¹ Refer to 'Meher Baba, His Life, His Messages, & His Followers', Ray Karkhove, Avatar's Abode, Australia 1998

² Chairman, AMBPPC Trust, Ahmadnagar (Maharashtra)

Meher-Brindaban: A Travel Account

Prelude

This is a tale of what happens to one, when he is taken to Brindaban.¹ Brindaban, as documented in “Srimad Bhagwad” and other Hindu scriptures, is the name of the place (presently identified near Mathura City) where Lord Krishna spent his childhood and adolescence; performed enchanting flute recitals, demonstrated the practice of pure love devoid of lust, adored Radha (again a mystical personification) and other Goipis (milkmaids) on one hand and, also performed Miracles like lifting a mountain top on His little finger, killing of demons, making the powerful Kaliya Nag to surrender. I don’t claim all of this to be a historical fact, but nevertheless, if I doubt, it is for our perceptions of the metaphorical symbolism contained in scriptures, not doubting their testimony. One more point to note; it is said that once Lord Krishna sent His friend, Udhawa, who had firm conviction in the Without Attribute (Nirguna), Formless (Nirakar) Divine (Brahma) only to be realized by True Wisdom (Gyana), to preach about his conviction to Radha and Goipis at Brindaban. A Hindi poet has beautifully described Udhwa’s utter failure and of his transformation from a teacher of Wisdom into a student of Love Divine.

Now, for my further narration, I shall be obliged of the reader to rememBer keywords viz. Brindaban, Radha, Love, Suffering, and of hopelessness and helplessness, mystics and Miracles.

Starting from Lucknow on the evening of 21st March, we reached Dehera Doon railway station in the morning of 22nd and were greeted by volunteers of Meher Baba Center, Dehera Doon.

On the Road (22-03-02)

A substantial part of my Govt. service career was spent here. It is, therefore, I was like searching for some 17 years ago lost object on the roads. Crowded roads, which appeared narrow because of high buildings and plazas, hoards of tiny and newly established roadside open-sky vending kiosks, occasional emergence of sophisticated showrooms eluded me. Of course, whenever the car took a right or left turn I would suddenly behold some familiar building, shop or tree and give a low solo shout, “This is Haradwar Road, and from this point Rajpur road begins”, then again got busy to locate some more of past 17 years of what I might knew and still recognize.

When the car drove past my familiar ‘Gandhi Park’, I was convinced that the old city of Dehera Doon had died away to be reincarnated as the capital city of the state of “Utteranchal”. It was then I became aware that our present visit is not for digging the past but to look for the future in the light of the same ‘Ancient Once’ about which we debated in long sessions in the corners of ‘Gandhi Park’ and which is now as “Avatar Meher Baba “. The dramatic changes presented mini-demonstration of the change from mythological Dwapar to Kali Yugas.

Baba had spent 2 years of His “New Life” phase of renunciation, helplessness, and hopelessness and concluded it here in 1953 by giving “Real Darshan” sermon, proclamation of His one of the most esoteric messages, “The Highest Of High” and qualifying Dehera Doon as His “Brindaban”.

Finally, we were driven to and became accommodated at Meher Prasad, a beautiful two-story house, dedicated to Meher Baba at 104, Rajpur Road, Dehera Doon.

A term “aristocracy” silently crossed my mind, which meant just the opposite characteristics of Meher Baba’s New Life phase, i.e. “hopelessness and helplessness”. But let us remember that the term “hopelessness and helplessness” is not a rational but subjective, and bear relative meaning for individuals.

Of several persons we met at Meher Prasad with “Jai Baba” embrace; one Mr. Paul W. Naragon of USA is of special mention. He gave us a pamphlet detailing the series of scheduled

“Meher Mela” programs. As per this leaflet we had to take whole day rest and to attend Sankirtan-Satsang from 5.30 to 8.30 pm at the first floor hall of Meher Prasad building.

The magic of Dehera Doon’s - the surroundings, the climate, and historic significance along with His Divine presence displayed all over. Meanwhile the breakfast was announced. We hurried to freshen up ourselves. Then again, we started chatting, exchanging experiences, noting down contact numbers of new acquaintances punctuated by parenthesis of one by one embrace, as some new ‘guest’ reached. Here when I say ‘guest’, it should be taken to mean the time we first saw them at Dehera Doon. For example Dr. Moorty, who (as became evident later) was more like a host, had reached Dehera Doon 24 hours earlier. We could see him well after 10am. Therefore, that chatting went on even after interruptions.

At 5.20pm, I entered the Sankirtan Hall on the first floor of the building (Meher Prasad). The hall was decorated very tastefully and with aristocratic simplicity. Every inch, (as it seemed to me), was embossed by generous expenditure. The carpets, tapestry, curtains all were speaking about the keen devotion of the caretakers. All which could eloquently tell the tale of the Grace granted by Baba Himself to one lady, Late Mrs. Prakashwati, who was fortunate to receive the benefaction. Her cherished memory was emancipating from each and every object. There were six photographs, one large and five mediums, of Baba, placed over a raised sill for worship and four other photographs viz. Prakashwati ji Eruch Jassawalla, Manija, Mehera Mai. It occurred to me that at this place Baba was manifesting Himself not via His photographs but through the Love offerings of the late soul Prakashwati ji. Most noteworthy was a medium sized photograph of Prakashwati ji on the wall directly opposite to that of Baba and His Mandali. It seemed even to this day she was directly looking on to Baba’s feet in a posture of obedience, surrender, and gratitude. Later I learnt that He has showered bountiful of Grace and “Nazar” on her whole family including her son, daughter, in-laws, grand sons, and daughters. They in turn, had poured their gratitude by ensuring that every Baba Lover coming to Meher Prasad is carefully attended, adored and comforted in every possible way. Had He not said, “Every loving heart is My temple”? It was profoundly clear to us by the time we left Dehera Doon cherishing the memories of Meher Prasad.

Here at Dehera Doon, Baba Had explained the secret of ‘Real Darshan’; and it was, “Not to look at His form and flesh, but to explore one’s real self in His Virat (all-pervading) cosmic self”. Moreover, late Prakashwati ji’s family seemed to do the same. It is here, a flash, of realization crossed my being as to why He, in His every incarnation asserted that He is the slave of true lovers.

I remained occupied amidst these thoughts while devotional music; prayers kept me enchantingly adhered to all the proceedings

By now, I got sufficient information about Dr. Moorty’s association with Dehera Doon. To explain this association I am inclined to build a funny (yet relevant), conjuncture by comparing him (Dr. Moorty) with Udhawa of Dwapar Yuga, who was sent to Brindaban to preach Radha and Goipis the Gyan-Yoga. At that time, Udhawa had returned from Brindaban as a Love-Intoxicated person, gladly parting his Gyan-Yoga (Intellectual Austere). Probably Udhawa, after his return from Brindaban asked Lord Krishna’s permission to disseminate ‘Love Message’ than “Gyan-Message”. At this, the Lord must have said to him to wait until His next incarnation as ‘Meher Baba’. Thus, when Lord came between us as Meher Baba, Udhawa too came down to earth as G.S.N. Moorty; due to his previous Sanskaras he became a ‘Geeta-Bhushan’, preached Geeta to the person like Gandhi ji, obtained a Ph.D. in Vedanta but finally turned out to be extraordinary orator of Meher-Love. I think that Dr. Moorty’s pensive mood, swaying with emotional Sankirtan, which is seldom evident at other places and occasions, explains and supports my conjuncture. Otherwise why ‘Udhawa’ consciousness might reflect ‘Chaitanya’ action? I silently bowed to Baba’s ways to bring home to me the conviction about Dehera Doon

being a true Brindaban of modern times. Kindly let me call it “Doon-Brindaban” from here onwards. This aspect shall be explained further during narration of whole three day proceedings of Meher Mela at Dehera Doon, but in a proper context, so that the reader too, if at all he or she may like to share the lovely fantasy, might enjoy it. (It may please, however, be noted carefully that I don’t venture to impose my own feelings and reflections to any one).

Sankirtan came close to an end at 8.30 p.m. sharp and it was announced that in the next morning at 9 a.m. everyone is required to assemble at late B.K. Bakshi’s bungalow for a procession. Then, all were cordially invited for the dinner. For lunch we had tasted marvelous preparation of ‘Kadhi’(a curry with curd or whey as spiced rich soup). Dinner was no less enriched with emotional servings; all the dishes were just excellent.

Now we were free to sleep. As it is natural in all such congregations, only sick, too tired and self-disciplined people would go to sleep while many of them (myself included) want to cherish every moment of the mass-consciousness oozing to be squeezed. Thus, upon being assured by Sri Rajendra Meher (a dedicated and very talented vocalist) that he would have no objection in performing Bhajans and Gazals until late night, we resolved to keep awake and enjoy his artistry. I made it a point that Mr. D, who by now had generously started treating me as his own brother, must take complete rest. In the given circumstances, his wife made a comfortable bed on the floor and fixed a cassette player of Baba’s Arti and Prayers besides the bed. Then we fled away to the first floor where Mr. Rajendra Meher was to perform before a selected audience of his fans. I happened to be one of them. His program started at about 10.30 p.m. Unfortunately Tabla accompanist was not available; even then, Rajendra ji poured his melodious voice into choicest Gazals. The program could have ended well before 1 a.m., but to our surprise Mr. D appeared before us and his wife gave a muffled cry of astonishment, because he was neither supposed to get up from the floor-bed without assistance, nor get dressed up and not, in any case, could climb up the stairs. Was this his being unable to sleep? Or the boredom of being left alone downstairs or else the magical effect of Baba’s love which was invoked by Sri Rajendra’s voice? – I didn’t know. However, I ascribed his sudden emergence on the scene to my fortune in finding a suitable company to share the musical chant. We were absorbed in listening to Sri Rajendra till about 2 a.m., then went to sleep lest be late for the procession next morning.

Just opposite to the Air Force (CDA) Office at Rajpur Road Dehera Doon, the bungalow of late B.K. Bakshi is situated in a typical Doon Valley’s characteristic setting covering about 5 acres of land. The bungalow is built in 19th century style characterized by its semicircular frontage and Allahabadi tile roofing. Semicircular front verandah leads in to a well-organized drawing room. The whole setting emits noble aesthetics, which, with Musorie Hills in background, cast mesmerizing affect on the beholder. About 50 meters down at Rajpur Road, on the opposite side (westward), there is a lane/street leading to “Meher Dham” about 600 meters away. Further, down on Rajpur Road, about 500 meters away, an eastward lane led 100 meters to “Meher Prasad”, where I was hastily getting ready for the said procession. After I finished up, we strolled slowly towards the legendary Bakshi-Bungalow and at 8.45 a.m. we were there on time. A life size cutout of Avatar Meher Baba in elbow resting pose was fixed on a Jeep. Everyone sought opportunity to decorate, with garlands, the majestic ride of the Lord. Two banners held across the road by two persons each on either side, intended to provide caption to the procession. One banner read, “Avatar Meher Baba Meher Mela 2002”, and the other, “Meher Dham Anniversary 2002”. Brass Band party had arrived and had begun playing Nam-Dhun-Tune. As the first beat on the drum struck, the whole congregation (though a small one) was electrified. All began clapping and repeating in tune with the band, “Avatar Meher Baba Ki Jai...” Persons responsible for escorting and piloting the procession, arranged the formation so as to keep two caption banners in the front, behind which were the clapping and dancing folks encircled by waiting mob of both sexes for their turn/chance to dance; then followed old and

aged ones who might have longed to join the dancing group had it been a few years earlier. These seniors were followed by Baba's kingly cutout, passionately decorated and mounted on the jeep.

During Sankirtan at Meher Prasad in the night before, and now while the procession was moving, Mr. Paul's enthusiasm was commendable. This Baba lover, coming over to India and Dehera Doon at foothill of Himalayas, crossing whole of Pacific, European Alps, and Middle East just to feel, realize, and pay homage to the Silent Master's aura of love, did not understand a single word of Indian languages, yet he had been engrossed in clapping with the tune of Sankirtan and now he was dancing frantically. He held a camera concealed in his pocket and occasionally he would disappear from the dancing groups only to reappear on a sill of some nearby high building or on a treetop to take photographs of the procession. He reminded me of 'Sridama', (one of the childhood friends of Lord Krishna) who would participate in all of baby Lord Krishna so that he may be able just to 'looking at' the Lord with his open physical eyes.

The readers may like to take a note that till now I have given two conjunctures as similes (comparisons); one that of Udhawa and now an Sridama (Paul). These comparisons are solely my own built allegory (or illusions, if any one likes to put as that), and I don't expect everyone to agree with me. It is possible that, since I was trying to behold Dwapar age Brindaban at present-day Dehera Doon, therefore, unconsciously trying to glorify the events and personalities. May it also be the 'autosuggestion' or 'hallucination' phenomenon of my psyche; I am, however, honest in my description.

I too was moving along with the procession, shouting "Avatar Meher Baba Ki Jai", yet a part of my being was trying to recapitulate and connect the remote past and immediate present, trusting the eternity of Divine manifestations, in order to seek the essence of the Silent Master's declaration about this place as His Brindaban. I prayed Baba to reveal the secret of 'Doon Brindaban', and my humble prayer was heard by the compassionate 'Highest of The High'.

The procession reached Meher Dham and converted into a Sankirtan-Satsang gathering in Meher Dham's hall. Before I took off my shoes to enter into the hall, a marble stone scribed on to it a message got hold our attention. It read, "Ceremonies veil me..."

The words worked as if all the fanfare and toil of the procession had been dusted off my psyche. Words warned me to forget about the ritual of procession and try to perceive the reality beyond 'The Veil'.

I had read those words several times in various Baba literatures. However, indeed! It is more important to remember right word of the Silent Master at right place and at precisely right time. In addition, it seems true that all those "rights" (time, words, place etc.) can only be realized by the catalytic action of His Grace.

Meher Dham's hall is rectangular (about 25ft long and 15ft wide). The entrance was on the longer side. Facing the entrance, on the opposite wall, was Avatar's life size stone statue in standing pose mounted on a small 4inches high marble platform. The passage from the front gate to the statue was short (about 15ft) and it was kept vacant to offer unhindered view of The Lord. This passage worked as a partition for male and female gentry. I gazed keenly first into the Avatar's eyes, then on the photographs, portraits and slogans of His messages affixed on to the walls and began to make mental comparison between Meher-Dham and Meher-Prasad.

The setup of the hall seemed (to me) quiet opposite to that of Meher-Prasad's. At Meher-Prasad hall, the personality of a devout Baba loving family was dominant over Baba's portrait, while at Meher Dham His Aura was manifested and dominated everywhere. Along with several portraits of varied sizes (those of Mandali men and women), there were two relatively small ones of others. One was that of late B.K.Bakshi and the other late Mrs. Meher Kanta Bakshi.

Shall I call it a coincidence, chance or merely my own fancy, that none of the photographs – even Avatar's statue - posed a direct gaze into looker's eyes except for that of Mehera. Noticing

this fancy fact, obviously of mere chance, stunned me. Mehera Mai seemed gazing on to me continuously. From the instant, I noticed this until the conclusion of the program at Meher-Dham; rather she (Mehera Mai) seemed observing me incessantly than myself to her portrait. Mehera's photographic gaze seemed silently saying, "So, Am I"; and inside me, Baba appeared signaling audible whisper into my ears, "Do you understand now?"

For a short while all, aloud proceedings of Sankirtan going on incessantly in the hall quieted and "Radha" consciousness overpowered me possessively. Baba had declared Mehera as "Radhika", and it appeared that Radha in the form of Mehera was casting a mysterious suggestion. All this was happening to me at "Doon-Brindaban" in "Meher Dham" as if to convince me of its sanctity. Later in Bakshi-Villa, I happened to look at a photograph of Baba in which He was absorbedly playing Dholak (Drum) like Lord Krishna played flute in His Avataric age. All this occurred to me in a second and lasted until Dr. Moorty announced my name for reading out a Hindi poem. In a near blissful state, I went up to Baba's statue, bowed and read out a self-composed verse. Dr. Moorty had explained the significance of the marble stone used as a pulpit for the statue. The stone, he told us, was taken to Meherabad for Baba's Divine touch. He had not only touched but also standing on it casting downward pressure, said; "Now I am all gone into it". To me this proclamation had, now, even deeper significance because it was on the Mehera's birthday celebrations at Meherabad, Baba had "... gone into it"- the marble slab - now affixed at Meher Dham.

The readers might recall, I was wondering why Dehera Doon was named 'Brindaban' by Baba. On the basis of arbitrary similes (which might appear mere emotional afflictions and exaggeration), I had identified Dr. Moorty and Mr. Paul to be Udhawa and Sridama respectively—and now, here comes the Empress of Love, Radha, as Mehera to complete the glorious Brindaban scenario.

As for the description of Radha in Lord Krishna's context, I am inclined to use the words of, contained in a dialogue in the Hindi film "Lagaan". Famous Hindi writer, K.P.Saxsena says that Radha is like a droplet of water on the lotus leaf, the Krishna; both unmixed with one another, yet manifesting captive beauty of each other; but if separated (the water drop and the leaf), assume natural (divine) individual role, thereby missing the element of "amazing beauty" as a Divine attribute (Sundaram)².

Indian philosophers have described the Ultimate Principle of the creation as a trilogy of "Satyam, Shivam, and Sundaram". If Lord Krishna is personified Truth, Radha is the Law. The Law always, invariably, abides to Truth without interfering, instead glorifying it. A lot more can be found out in our ancient scriptures about "Radha Element" and the students of "Krishna Consciousness" may understand it better.³

Thus 'real Brindaban' was before me. A thrill of realization caused shivering in me. I was astonished to see Dr. Moorty and Mr. T.K.Ramanujam (both of them known for their Udhawa frame of mind) swaying their heads, eyes closed, along with the beats of enchanting Sankirtan at Meher Dham, while Mr. Paul not understanding a single word of the language, kept clapping with the rhythm. Unconsciously my eyes began oozing tears in the Divine atmosphere

Soon Mr. Paul was called upon to speak something about his coming on to Baba fold. He narrated true story of his own death in a truck accident in 1982. After his death (being declared as dead by the attending doters), he saw a bright light. He asked the light if every one sees the same light after his or her death. After the light patch, which now appeared to him taking a human shape with long hairs, nodded in affirmation; then he asked whether he too is dead. Upon being said by the bright light encircled figure that he, of course, is dead, Paul expressed his urgent protest and said that he did not wish to die. The figure gestured smiling nod and then Paul gone into unconscious state only to become conscious in his physical body (which had by then declared a "corpse"). This startled the doctors and his mourning friends. Mr. Paul further

explained that the episode filled him with a conviction that all human, males and females alike, irrespective of caste, creed, breed and belief are in reality one. Thereafter, a lapse of 18 years, one fine evening Paul casually walked into Meher Spiritual Center at Martyal Beach, South Carolina, USA. There he happened to look at Baba's photograph and within a flash, 18 year old memory reeled into his mind because he found Baba figure to be the same one which he had seen in his so called 'dead' state.

I have not told Paul's story to advocate or hint any supernatural phenomenon, but an example of His mysterious ways, which are beyond human comprehension. Baba Himself had warned not to believe on supernatural and magic. He who warns, "Ceremonies veil Me", and clearly says in His message of the "Highest of The high" that "...I do no miracles", must be taken in the literal sense of it's meaning.

Two and a half hours' Sankirtan came to close with prayers, and our lunch was announced at Bakshi-Villa as curtsey offering to all pilgrims of Meher Dham

We walked back to join at lunch, enjoyed it amidst lush green Litchi, Mango, Maulstick, and Amaltash, and many other temperate fruit/wild trees, bushes. All were to rest until 5.30 p.m., when evening Sankirtan was to take place at Meher Dham.

Instead of taking some bed rest, as the women were resting (who knows? must have been rather chit-chatting), I preferred to keep wide-awake to assimilate the prevailing euphoria. I was eager to personally meet one young boy (about 23years of age) named Bal Krishna Meher. He, while being invited for some oration at Meher Dham by Dr. Moorty, had been described as having come via skies from Chandigarh and was writer of a book about Baba. His charismatic maturity of thoughts, firm conviction about the Avatar and profound understanding of the Master's ways and underlying subtle meaning/message amazed us. Later, after the next day, we did have a chance to meet him, but only to intensify our amazement for his unmatched prudence in commensuration of his age. The 'boy' turned out to be a fight lieutenant in Indian Air Force and a "Baba's Baby"(parents being ardent Baba Lovers). What wonderful multiple co incidents – meeting a real 'Bal-Krishna' in late Bal Krishna Bakshi's campus — as if to add-on my 'Doon-Brindaban' conjuncture comprising Udhawa, Sridama, then Radha and now a child-Lord Krishna. This 'child-Krishna' too as surrogate of Lord Krishna, was capable of killing demons of suspicions, superstitions, fear, and to demonstrate sustainability of love, truth, and compassion. I urge readers to keep this Krishna in their memories so that I don't have to repeat the significance what I found in him.

Well before 5.30 p.m. I had come to Meher Dham. In the solitude of nearly vacant hall, silently praying earnestly to reveal His Brindaban, once again, I scrutinized the Photographs, Idol-Baba, and overall sanctity. I felt His strong Presence, but Mehera kept on her photographic gaze as if suggesting She was the Hostess here for the lovers of her Beloved Meher Baba. My whole being lay prostrate to her keeping my head over the mystic marble slab in which her loved One 'had gone into'.

At the close of Sankirtan, it was announced that next day is scheduled for Meher Mafi where Baba Had lived in a hutment (now property of New Life Trust). All were requested to assemble at Bakshi-Villa at 9 a.m. for taking a bus ride. In the evening annual function of Meher Prasad was scheduled. Of course, dinner was being waited upon us at Meher Prasad.

Far From The Maddening Crowd (24-03-02)

In the morning, after breakfast, we walked up to Bakshi-Villa where a bus waited for us. Women occupied front half and men in back. Leaving the main city behind heading towards Hardwar, crossing Rispana River, at a point some meters from railway level crossing, where 17 years ago stood a thick forest plantation, was now a mini bazaar. Our bus took an abrupt southward turn and immediately I guessed it to be the same old forest road where I used to bring

my students for botanical excursion. Today I was the student amidst highly urbanized countryside, headed towards Silent Master's memorial hutment for spirit's excursion to explore as to what "New Life" actually meant.

After about 10 minute's drive, we were asked to get down; a few meters from here the humble Hutment was in-sight as still holding Avatar's and His Mandli's perfume in the serene air. A Pandal was temporarily erected for proposed Sankirtan. Thoughtfully the trustees had just dusted and cleaned it for our visit without decorating and thereby maintaining unadulterated simplicity. This was a testimony to what the Avatar tried to demonstrate, the "Helplessness & Hopelessness".

I feel inclined to refer the readers to travel account of one Mr. Buchanan⁴. Queen Victoria entrusted him (in 1859), to travel eastern part of northern Indian plains and to account for people's lifestyle, ethical-cum-social beliefs so that suitable punishment might be provisioned in the proposed enforcement of penal codes. He traveled and submitted his report, now published as "Eastern India" ed. Martin 1980, Buchanan states, " In this part of the land, people live in minimum possible level of subsistence... Normally a common villager spends his whole life with maximum two or three loin cloths, which are called 'Dhotis', and owns practically nothing. ... I have visited more than two hundred houses and found just a few metallic utensils or pots, earthenware being common in use. I have found only occasional tiled house, the majority being thatched ones..." When Buchanan's report was not made public, a Silent Master, during the years 1949-1952, set out to demonstrate the general pathos of humanity (Hopelessness & Helplessness) as one of the powerful tool of unity, and love. In those days of global debate over '**haves and have not**' (Karl Marks), and '**theory of basic inequality/equality**' (Plato), theoretical postulation as well as practical demonstration of mass-consciousness being One in all beings at a given level of renunciation was, indeed, an Avatic work; which in later years emerged as the concepts of human rights and other akin awareness. Thus, when Baba says, "**New Life shall ever remain alive though there may not be anyone to live it**", we must try to realize as to what does it mean in day-to-day practical life. It undoubtedly means an evolution of universal consciousness through Love and Truth. I may be wrong or ineligible in interpreting the "New Life". Therefore, with due apologies to those who even this day stand as a living witness of Meher Baba's New Life phase, I humbly submit that though "I" is not always right, yet I am happy to be wrong.

Coming back to our tour to Master's humble hutment at Meher Mafi; After taking our bows, obsessed with awe of God-Man, we sat methodically in the Pandal facing a medium size photograph of Baba. Dr. Moorty, our friend, philosopher, and guide, the convener of Meher Mela, told us that with "Parvardigar Prayer" the Sankirtan-Satsang was being initiated there, in front of 'Kutia' but it would conclude at late Mr. Shatrughan's residential campus. It continued to be a wonder that although several sessions of Sankirtan-Satsang went on during all three days at Dehera Doon as spiritual treatment, no two sessions were similar in affect. The highlight of the first half session (at Hutment) was narration of as to how the abandoned abode of Avatar was redeemed by the New Life Trust. Enchanting Bhajans echoed like nightingales chatting while flying in a formation over the ocean of Silence. Absence of loudspeaker & microphone made this possible. I consider loudspeakers as adulterant in human speech by making it dead, electronic/ digital waves. After a few performances and speeches, we dispersed to re-assemble at Mr. Shatrughan's residence.

Late Mr. Shatrughan was historically connected with Baba's stay at Meher Mafi. His family still cherishes the Master's memory and reported to have arranged for Sankirtan and Bhandara (Feast). This house is about 100 meters away from holy kutia (Hutment). The campus was large and in an adjacent building, a school was located. It was in one of the rooms of the school, later half of Sankirtan resumed. This hall too was decorated in a way, which emitted more of Lords'

love than aesthetics. All of a sudden, the phrase “ceremonies veil me” crept into my mind. Indeed, simplest possible settings, absence of loudspeakers and country atmosphere seemed to unveil His Grace that showered on us by way of self-forgetting in the chant of Nam-Dhun and “Avatar Meher Baba Ki Jai.”

It is very personal to mention, yet interesting, that the first book I had chance to read about the Silent Master was “Meher Baba Ki Nai Jindgi” (Hindi), by Bhau Kalchuri; my first visited place connected with Him was a similar Kutia (Hut) in a rural setting at Meherastana (Hamirpur); my first “FFG”(Friend, Philosopher, Guide) about Silent Lord was Dr.Moorty who was (as I knew) committed to work at Doon Valley. It occurred to me that all these “firsts” might have not been sheer chance but some signal for me. To this day, when I am writing this account, I pray my Lord to use me per His Marzi.

By 1.30 p.m. program at Meher Mafi was over. After luncheon, at 2.45pm we took our seats in the bus and returned to the Blissful atmosphere of Brindaban from the denunciative New Life.

The 24th March was annual day of Meher Prasad. Celebration was to start from 5.30 p.m. and we were present on time.

This was our last night halt at Doon-Brindaban. Next day’s program was at Roorkee. All were to leave by 9 a.m. next morning. We, having our advance return reservation, were not able to go to Roorkee lest we might miss our train leaving Dehera Doon at 8 p.m. Thus resolving to utilize next day for meeting old acquaintances, we retired for sleep. At that time, I never imagined that next dawn was going to prove so conclusive as aptly to be named as Radha Rani Day.

Radha Rani Day (25-03-02)

Please let me first give reasons for calling this day as Radha Rani Day. If I say that whole daylong we stayed as guests of Mrs. Brij Rani, (literally meaning Radha Rani), and then there might be none to ask for any other reason for this (Radha Rani) nomenclature. Honestly speaking, there are other reasons too; but let me tell it my own way.

By 10 a.m., everyone had either left for Roorkee or to his or her respective destinations, except for me and my wife, Mr. and Mrs. D, Lt. Bal Krishna Meher, Mrs. MJ and her mother. Our hosts were mainly women (Mrs. Brij Rani and Mrs. Sweetie, later joined by their local friends), and they were too happy to find wife and daughter of Meher Chalisa fame late Babu Keshawa Narain Nigam (Mrs.MJ and her mother) as their guests. Bal Krishna Meher, the young flight Lt., a charismatic speaker, was also an object of joy for all of us. Women hosts adored women guests and soon a sisterhood feeling intermingled with Avatar’s Divine love. We could not feel how the time reeled fast. Hosts too were no ordinary hosts; their family once served as host to the Silent Master. They showed us Meher Baba’s Kurta and a bed sheet as their valued possessions. In addition, a few rare photograph of Baba; playing Dholak was amongst one of them. Lt. Bal Krishna kept us listening spellbound to his interpretations of auto writing, avatar hood and other salient features of Baba-Love.

Now, may I ask for attention of the readers about all the names mentioned above? It may please be noted that all the names either mean Lord Krishna or Radha viz. Brij Rani, Sweetie (meaning Madhuri), Keshawa, two Bal Krishnas (one Late B.K. Bakshi, the other young B.K.Meher), and amongst all, Meher Baba playing Dholak.

I think everyone might agree that, being so memorable day in such a rare company discussing about Silent Incarnate of Love in a heavenly atmosphere apt to be named after ‘Radha’.

Pondering, sitting alone on a chair under Maulstick tree, the crowning factor of Doon-Brindaban became eloquent to me. I speculated that in Dwapar age, after dropping His body, Lord Krishna seemed to have realized the injustice done to Goipis and Radha. Once He left, we are told, that He did not ever visit Brindaban and meet Radha. He, who is Master of the universe, is slave of His lovers. So, when the same Ancient One came on earth as Meher Baba, as paying

for His lapse of a slave's duty for a beloved, adored Radha as Mehera; and brought her off the countryside living in a remote village, to most comfortable place, encircled by Shivaliks and Himalayas, i.e., Dehera Doon, and proclaim it to be His Brindaban. Thus, since Brindaban traditionally belongs to Radha, not to Lord Krishna or Meher Baba. It is, therefore, I named my last day at Dehera Doon, not as Krishna Day, But Radha Rani Day. Nevertheless, our Radha or Mehera wishes not to hail her, instead feels utter bliss in hearing her adored One be hailed. Thus, let us hail Avatar Meher Baba Ki Jai and pray to cherish the memories of Meher-Brindaban.

————— Safarchand, Lucknow,
20/02/05

Footnotes

¹ Brindaban is name of the spot near the birthplace of Avatar Lord Krishna. It was a forest of Tulsika (*Osmium sanctum* Linn.). Here in this forest the Lord used to meet Goipis for Rasa-Leela, the esoteric mysticism of the Bliss.

² Hindi film 'LAGAAN', Dialogue writer K.P.Saxena.

³ ISKON literature

⁴ See 'Martin's Eastern India', ed. Martin 1980, Pub. Munshilal Manoharlal, Delhi, 1990

The Sprouting Of a Seed: Byramangala

“I have come to sow the seeds of Love....” — Meher Baba

The seeds sown at the present time are meant for a tree or plant for the future. In other words, the seeds of a present huge tree must have been sown in the past. The seed and the tree are two different forms of the same ‘existence’. Likewise, also the ‘Time’ too is eternal and a continual phenomenon of a single element; we perceive it and use terms Past-Present-Future in relative reference. Another inherent human nature is to examine, discriminate and analyse the things and situations not subjectively but objectively, not absolutely but relatively. The behavioral character of human mind is to look at the things and incidents in relative context and to take the law of cause and effect as for granted law of nature.

But an Avatar (Advent of the Divine in human form) is not bound by behavioral pattern of human beings. His actions, sayings that may be sometimes cryptic, are bound to be for the ultimate welfare of human beings and according to the Divine ordained plan of evolution of the consciousness. Ages after ages when He comes down to earth in human form, whatever, whenever and wherever He acts or says, it carries more meaning than whatever is apparent. That is why after dropping His body commentaries on His sayings and interpretation of His actions emerge which are tainted by the emotions and conviction of the interpreter or commentator. That is why Meher Baba had told us that an Avatar remains unrecognised by His contemporary masses (leaving a few chosen ones), His past is glorified and His advent is awaited in future with much furry and expectations.

The prophetic saying is gradually proving true in the case of Meher Baba, the Avatar of the age. Meher Baba had told us that He came to ‘sow the seeds of Love in the hearts’, and He did sown it as is evident from large deep rooted shadowy trees grown out and manifested as self-denying, all-loving and denunciative lives led by many of His Mandali and many unknown men and women from all walks of life all over the globe. Many known and unknown Baba-Lovers are living examples of unbounded love and highest human values, which was termed by Meher Baba as ‘New Life’. When He had said that, ‘this New Life would live for ever whether anyone is alive or not to live it’, then it was not a mere poetic exclamation but very close to Sri Aurobindonian concept of the descend of ‘Supramental’. He definitely meant the evolution of a new human consciousness in which, as per His approval of Dr. Gani Munsif’s lines in the song of the New Life: -

Nai zingi ka ye anjam hoga,
Kisi KO Kisi se Na kuch kaam hoga.
Na khana Na soona Na aaraam hoga,
Kasam hoga ham hooge ya ram hoga.

(The resultant of the New Life would be that there would be no need for anyone of anyone; there would be no need of either food or sleep or rest; there would be only either the resolve (for New Life) or the ‘I-ness’ or God.)

This state of terrestrial human life confirms with the future evolutionary pattern of human consciousness as professed by Sri Aurobindo, the great Yogi of our times.

Thus, when Meher Baba says to ‘Sow’ the ‘Seed’ of ‘Love’ two probable substrates or sowing sites come to mind: first the ‘soil’ of the hearts which are abstract and implant site, the area of individual emotion or impulse, and second in the physical fertile soil of the earth, which is objective in nature and attributes. If the seeds of abstract and subtle Divine Love are ever can be sown in the second substratum i.e. the earthly soil, it must mean the ‘Spirituality’. The cultivation of Spirituality appears a vague statement yet it signifies the establishment of such Centre of spirituality that may propagate high morale and disseminate universal brotherhood. Avatar Meher Baba performed this very ‘sowing of the seed’ in the year 1939 at Byramangala, a secluded spot

in the state of Karnataka (India), and 37 kilometers east of the metropolis of Bangalore. He purchased total 574-Acre land, through a power of attorney given to Pappa Jassawala (406-Acre land from Maharaja of Mysore and 168 Acres from other villagers). The land was registered in His name as appeared in government gazette on 14th August 1939.

It is remarkable that although Meher Baba lived or camped at several places in the world and used the properties, vehicles and other assets, yet their proprietary rights vested not in Him but in the name of others. Property at Byramangala was the only one and singular asset in His name throughout His life.

Germination of the Seeds of Love Divine sown in the hearts cannot be visible to physical eyes, however, it can only be realized by the individuals who must tend and irrigate it with the blood and tears ensuing from the alter of self-sacrifice with keen aspiration with no precondition of reward; and then only the subtle plant grows into shady soothing foliated tree, but the germination and the sprouting process of the seeds of spirituality sown at Byramangala can be physically seen. Although not without the Grace of the Divine (Baba) from above and the aspiration from within that are compulsory conditions, the subtle Seed sown in the earthly soil can be seen, felt and beholden. The writer of these lines cannot claim to be a Baba-Lover or boast that he had beholden or understood the esoteric significance and the purpose of the Divine Will underlying the foundation of Meher Baba Universal Spiritual Centre (MBUSC) at Byramangala, yet bestowed with the fortune resulting from some unknown good deed of his past *karma*, fated to visit the place just after its golden jubilee celebrations (16th to 19th Dec-2004).

Sometimes apparent bad luck proves to be good luck in disguise. I felt same way when I finally reached Byramangala. I reached there in the vacuum atmosphere of the golden jubilee celebrations festivities. This Baba-Coincident¹ (as Bal Natu would have termed it) is significant. During celebrations and festivities human sensory perception are channalised through a definite course of emotions, while after the sounds of crowd fade away and the vibrations of mass consciousness are diluted after the congregation is over, the matrix between the objects and their subjective projections are pronounced, may be because of the Silence which is so mysterious and esoteric like the Silence of the Avatar of the age, Meher Baba; and the REAL² things spontaneously permeates to impregnate the individual consciousness of the perceiver.

Before I reached there, I had only casual information that Meher Baba started to establish some sort of worship spot for five Masters and past advents of the Ancient One, but due to reasons known to Him, He later abandoned the project. I was careless in reading all about it in detail in Lord Meher or even some of MBUSC literature. In retrospect, I think that had I read the details before, the impact of MBUSC would have not been so deep as it is now. Thus, I now take it as Baba's ordained plan and His *Marzi* to overwhelm me. Now it has dawned upon me that the purchase of land, start of construction, abrupt outbreak of world war, apparent abandoning and then revival of MBUSC was all in the master plan of the Master, Meher Baba or His *Leela*. If God Himself descends from heaven in human form and *purchases* the piece of *land*, then it must have a Divine purpose and carry more meaning than what may be apparent. Same Divine purpose and its destined goal were initiated by hammering an iron rod into the earth as Central Point of MBUSC on 1st September 1939 by Avatar Meher Baba Himself.³ This was the second substratum, the physical and material Earth, where the Avatar of the age had 'sown' the 'Seed' of 'Love'.

As said above, the second substratum (the first being into the individual's hearts), the physical fertile soil of the earth is objective in nature and attributes. If the seeds of abstract and subtle Divine Love are ever can be sown in the second substratum i.e. the earthly soil, it must mean the 'Spirituality'. And so is the MBUSC Byramangala, Karnataka.

Let us now try to understand the germination and sprouting phenomenon of the SEED. Whenever some seed is sown in soil, many conditions for its germination are required. The

germination depends on the character of the seed. Seeds of leguminous plants like Gram, Peas start germinating within 24 hours, while those of wheat, barley etc have to be hibernated for a few months to an year. Seeds of Apples and some others need weeks of chilling before they can germinate. In the present case the 'seed' is not at all even a material entity; it is esoterically mysterious seed of Love Divine, which after germination, sprouting, becoming a sapling and subsequently growing into a matured tree bears the fruits of Spirituality. Thus, it can't be predicted as to how, when and under what conditions it shall germinate. Yet one prediction is sure and certain that it will grow into a full-fledged tree and also bear the fruits.

When the seed is that of a huge tree, then there are three main features which are interesting to note; first—the germination can only be seen by one or two persons who may be aware of its sowing and observe the progress (in this case it were Princess Norina Matchabelli⁴ and Elizabeth Patterson⁵); second – as the germination progresses and sapling comes out as plant, it is visible to the neighboring keen onlookers (in case of MBUSC, K.K. Ramakrishnan⁶ and Kalyan Rao Joshi⁷); and third — with the growth of the plant its visibility circumference go on increasing in diameter and its fragrance and fruit become within the reach of each and everyone. Above all, there has to be a whole-time gardener to look after the developments and to arrange for timely nursing of the seed and the plant. In case of MBUSC, one Venkoba Rao and his family⁸ was the appointed watchman-cum-gardener. The inception and growth of Meher Baba Universal Spiritual Centre, Byramangala is undergoing similar sprouting process, akin to above.

In September 1939, Meher Baba purchased the land in His name and hammered an Iron Rod as central point and on 17th December 1939 laid the foundation in the presence of about 4000 people's gathering⁹.

Nearly after 15 years, in October 1954, He came to live in one of the nine rooms constructed here.

After another 29 years, in June 1983 the same spot (though lesser land area) was re-purchased in the name of an independent (MBUSC) trust. Within 10 years out of the previous 574 Acre, 55 Acres including the property which consisted the Central Point, nine fully constructed and three half constructed rooms were bought back.

Thus, the SEED sown by Meher Baba took 44 long years for sprouting. Amazing is the fact that this time period of 44 years corresponds exactly with the Silence observed by Avatar Meher Baba.

In 1983 when the symbolic Seed sprouted into a seedling only a few, the 11 persons elected as trustees, were aware of the MBUSC, its existence remained unknown to the rest of the world.

It is interesting to note that as preparatory arrangements for seed sowing e.g. the arrangement for fertilizers, irrigation, watch and ward are made, likewise God ordained arrangements seem to have been made. With the preparation for sowing the seed of 'spirituality' at Byramangala, a seed of Love was sown in the emotional soil of the heart of a simple local young cowherd boy named Venkoba Rao. At that time pamphlets publicizing the foundation laying ceremony of Universal Spiritual Centre on 17th December 1939 were printed and Venkoba Rao was selected to distribute it widely in Bangalore city. He laboriously distributed it but could not read the pamphlet, as he was not properly literate. The same young boy was fated to be the 'gardener' and watchman of the spiritual seedling.¹⁰ One Robert Reser¹¹ (born in October 1939) of USA was fated to be the construction consultant of Universal Spiritual Centre in 1993 and destined to provide a material form to the seeding of spirituality sprouted out from the SEED sown by the Avatar in the earthly soil. Looking at this Divine Plan it can be admitted with pretty surety that *Baba's Marzi* is always destined for a definite purpose or goal that is for the good sake of humanity.

Subsequent history after spiritual seed sowing amidst 574-Acre land, after it was sold out as per instructions of Meher Baba, too is an amazing tale. The said land was 'sold' from worldly angle but its spiritual authority, sanctity and status remained unchanged. The Central Point,

where Meher Baba had hammered an iron rod, and the surrounding circular area containing nine fully and three half constructed rooms, were first purchased by the family of the same Venkoba Rao who distributed the pamphlets, and he took every care to maintain the sanctity of the area. But he subsequently sold the property in 1964 to one Muniyappa Gouda, then Chairman of local Panchayat. Muniyappa Gouda did not have any apparent connection with Meher Baba, yet had mystical experiences around the Central Point. He formed a firm conviction regarding the Divinity of the spot and called the area as ‘Devasthanam’. Later he lost the Panchayat elections, began to head towards poverty. Consumption of country wine affected his health and living. He suffered illness. He sold out his various properties but not his ‘Devasthanam.’ though he was offered a huge sum of money from a sugar factory management, yet Muniyappa was adamant for not selling out it. Venkba Rao and K. K. Ramakrishnan too persuaded him but of no avail. He told that he planned to built an orphanage and home for destitute there. On 19th June‘1983 Muniyappa Gouda undergone a change of heart (yet another *Baba’s Marzi* phenomenon), and he agreed to sell the land to Venkba Rao and K. K. Ramakrishnan. K. K. Ramakrishnan has described the chronological happenings, which are full of amazing accounts¹² (they are not narrated here for fear of space). At last on 18th December‘1993 Bhau Kalchuri, Chairman AMBPPC Trust Meherabad, Ahmadnagar formally inaugurated the MBUSC. Now it is open to all— rich and poor, believers and non-believers, Loving hearts, Devotees and mental gymnasts like me.

Amazing indeed¹³! On 21st March‘ 1993 — Architectural plan of the present day structure was finalized by M.R.Achyta of India and Robert Raser of USA quiet independently, which was later (in the year1996) found to be exactly similar to the plan approved by Meher Baba in 1939-40.

Lastly, let us try to assimilate the truth contained in the lines of K.K.Ramakrishnan¹⁴ while giving an account of the revival of Centre at Byramangala: -

“Man needs a new vision of the ancient truth, the Ancient One gave to the world. Meher Baba planned it fifty-three years ago, when he laid the foundation of the centre at Byramangala; and he has timed its accomplishment at a time when man yearns for a right conception of God, and His function in the affairs of all men and creatures. This is what Baba wants us to depict on that sacred spot. Recall the words of Meher Baba at the time of laying the foundation;

*‘The world is at war today. It has engulfed all departments of life – political, economic, social and religious. **The instinct of self-preservation enhanced by fear and uncertainty of the future is aggressively active in the guise of various pseudonyms and catch words. Exclusiveness is parading as Nationalism; Self-Interest is known as economics; Fanaticism is synonymous with Religion; Libertinism is looked upon as social and moral freedom and exploitation is termed Politics.** This instinct of self-preservation is legitimate and natural with the lower order of life, in the scale of evolution. But when it expresses itself through man it makes of him nothing more than a talking animal and as such, he is yet a long way off from deserving the title, ‘The Best of Creation’. Is it anybody’s fault if one finds himself on the right side of things or the wrong side? No! Every human being has come to serve and achieve a definite purpose and by playing his part to perfection he automatically works out his own salvation. There is this difference however. In the Divine scheme of things individuals or peoples when instead of progressing higher and onward, are about to lapse into bestiality it is suffering that rehabilitates them. Spiritual Masters achieve for humanity the same resurrection much more easily and less painfully by not only preaching but also translating into fulfillment the too familiar words self-denial and brotherhood of man, whose very beginning and whose ultimate end is LOVE. The time for such universal awakening looming large in the near future, to meet which the scheme of a Universal Spiritual Centre is founded today. Mysore will surely realize at a distant date its singular good fortune in possessing amongst many progressive features, the*

*spiritual capital of the world as well. I bless every one of you, the participants and non-participants in the greatest scheme of spiritual regeneration the world has ever known and the foundation of which you have witnessed today. **This scheme of a Universal Spiritual Center symbolizes the character of My Divine Mission on earth. I bless you***”

Let us Hail His Glory for providing our generations and to the generations to come with such a unique LOVE seed sown in the land soil at Byramangala.

----- Safarchand, Lucknow

Footnotes

- ¹ See www.avatarmeherbaba.org — about Bal Natu
- ² ‘The things which are Real are always given and received in Silence’ – Meher Baba
- ³ ‘Glory of Meher Baba’, Bal Krishna Meher, MBUSC publication 1997, page 53
- ⁴ Ibid page 52

Appendix to “*Sprouting Of a Seed: Byramangala*”

Concise chronological events of the *Sprouting Of a Seed: Byramangala*

- 13th August‘ 1939 — Meher Baba’s first visit to Byramangala
- 1st September‘ 1939 — Meher Baba hammered an Iron rod at a point, later to be known as Central Point
- 7th December‘ 1939 — Meher Baba inspects the site for foundation laying ceremony. Young Venkoba Rao is recruited as servant; later to serve at Byramangala
- 17th December‘ 1939 — Foundation laying ceremony.
- 18th December‘ 1939 — Construction begins.
- 16th February‘ 1940 — Contract for Construction terminated.
- ————— Army takes over the entire area.
- August‘ 1949 — Venkoba Rao Purchases 55 Acres out of total 574 Acre for Rs 6500 from Baba.
- October‘ 1954 — Meher Baba comes to stay in one of the nine rooms for three days.
- 1959 — Venkoba Rao goes to Bangalore to earn the livelihood. Byramangala spot given in care of a local ‘Peer Sahib’ and subsequently in the charge of a cousin of Venkoba Rao.
- 1964 — Aggrieved by the mismanagement at Byramangala Venkoba Rao first informs Baba, and then on His orders sells the property to Muniyappa Gouda for Rs 3500.
- 26th March‘ 1982 — MBUSC trust was formed and a Centre was opened at Marenahalli, Vijayanagar (Bangalore). Kalyan Rao Joshi joins for the revival of MBUSC
- 10th to 14th December‘ 1982 — K.K. Ramakrishnan gets mystic experiences and vision at Byramangala and he associates himself with the revival drive of MBUSC.
- 18th January‘ 1983 — Muniyappa Gouda sends a telegram to K.K. Ramakrishnan informing that he was inaugurating an orphanage at Byramangala.
- 19th January‘ 1983 — Inauguration of the orphanage at Byramangala is cancelled and Muniyappa Gouda agrees to sell Byramangala land & property.
- 26th June‘ 1983 — The deal was finally negotiated at a price of Rs 50100.
- 27th June‘ 1983 — Sale deed was signed
- 8th August‘ 1983 — Meeting of the trustees.
- 9th August‘ 1983 — 11-member trust elected and a large photo of Avatar Meher Baba is placed in the room in which Baba stayed and slept for three nights in 1954.
- 11th August‘ 1983 — MBUSC trust registered.
- January‘ 1992 — Construction re-begins.
- 21st March‘ 1993 — Architectural plan finalized by M.R.Achyta and Robert Raser which was later (in 1996) found to be exactly similar to the plan approved by Meher Baba in 1939.
- 26th April‘ 1993 — Bhoomi Pojanam and Construction resumes
- 17th to 18th December‘ 1994 — The Inaugural