

Life in a Hut
The first 5 months of conscious Sadguruship
(January to May 1922)

This is Chapter 17 of an original manuscript authored under Meher Baba's instruction by K. J. Dastur sometime between 1927-29. This copy was given to Francis Brabazon by Filis Frederick and may have been used as background material for his book *Silent Word*.

"Life in a Hut" is a chapter from a manuscript about Baba's life prepared by K.J. Dastur sometime after 1927 when he joined Baba and before 1929. During those days Baba was paying Dastur a salary, and his job was to do writing for Baba. The copyright for the manuscript was with Baba and is now held by the Avatar Meher Baba Perpetual Public Charitable Trust. The original manuscript, (which is handwritten) is held in the Archives at Meherabad.

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CHAPTER XVII.

LIFE IN A HUT.

THE FIRST FIVE MONTHS OF CONSCIOUS
SADGURUSHIP. (JANUARY to MAY, 1922.)

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C H A P T E R XVII.

L I F E I N A H U T :

THE FIRST FIVE MONTHS OF CONSCIOUS SADGURUSHIP. (JANUARY to MAY, 1922).

Soon after His Holiness Mener Baba became a conscious Sadguru, He wrote a letter to His disciple, Mr. Sadashiva Patel of Poona, in which He desired him to take on lease a small plot of ground,—if possible, close by the temple of Parvati or that of Chatarsingi and to build up a mean hut on it. His Divine Majesty, as we may now well call Him, further intimated to Mr. Patel that He intended to stay in that hut, and not in the house of His parents, for at least a few months from the day when He returned to Poona.

In the beginning of 1922, His Holiness left Sakori and repaired to Bombay, where He put up at the house, situated at Charni Road, of Munshi Sheikh Abdurrahim, who is known among the Master's disciples

as Munshi Saheb. Before I proceed further, I think it necessary to write a word or two about him. Munshi Saheb was born at Ghazipur in the district of Kashi, in 1876. He was bred in poverty, but was not unfortunate as regards education. From the humble post of a time-keeper in the P.W.D. of Poona, which he filled for a few years and for which he received the salary of Rs.12 per mensem, he has risen to the responsible post of the store-keeper in the Back Bay Reclamation Scheme Department, for which he receives Rs.250 per mensem. From his early boyhood days he has been religious-minded, in the true sense of the word. Some time before His Divine Majesty Meher Baba became a conscious Sadguru, Munshi Saheb came across Him. He began to consider Him as a saint, when His Divine Majesty weaned a friend of his from his drunken habits and debauchery. His faith in the Master was strengthened, when on a certain day His Holiness called upon him at his house early in the morning and abruptly said to him, "What a nice remedy you took recourse to! A bath at dead of night and two quinine pills to remove your fever!!" Overnight Munshi Saheb, though feverish, had taken bath at dead of night and then had swallowed two quinine pills. He was, therefore, thunderstruck, when the Master, Who came to

to know of his peculiar remedy to remove his fever by means of His superhuman powers, reminded him of it, though he had not spoken to anybody about it.

The first thing that the Master did in the house of Munshi Saheb was to take hot-water bath. This bath He might be said to have taken after the lapse of no less than six months, inasmuch as throughout His stay at Sakori He had not cared to wash His body even once. Though He stayed for about ten days with Munshi Saheb, He did not once stir out from His host's place. It goes without saying that the friends and relations of Munshi Saheb did not fail to take advantage of worshipping His Holiness. The only noteworthy event concerning the Master, during His short stay at Bombay, was the taking of His photograph, by a friend of the host. It was His first photograph after the restoration of His gross and subtle consciousness. The host as well as the friend, who photographed Him, may well be proud of it, for, though countless photographs have since then been taken, the first one is still worshipped the most. After the lapse of the short period mentioned above, His Holiness, in company with Syed Saheb, went to His native city.

In accordance with the desire of His Holiness, a

plot of land, on the Ferguson College Road, close by the Engineering College and the temple of Chatarsingi, was taken on lease, by Mr. Shadashiva Patel, on behalf of the Master, and a hut ten by six feet was erected on it. His Holiness, as soon as He came to Poona, was led by Mr. Patel to this hut. After congratulating His disciple on his success in carrying out His desire, the Master entered the hut and occupied it from that time. After some time, the landlord, on whose plot the hut was erected, fell in with His Holiness. He discovered himself to be a school-friend of His Holiness. On learning the high spiritual position of his old friend, the landlord declared his resolution not to take any rent on any account, and gave permission to the Master to use the land for whatever purpose He liked.

How His Holiness spent His time daily in the beginning of His active Sadguruship it is interesting to know. Early in the morning the Master took tea and breakfast, which were daily brought in by Mr. Khudadad S. Irani, who has been nicknamed 'Sailor' and who is one of the staunchest disciples of the Master. In passing it may be observed that Mr. Sailor had very intimate friendship with the Master when both were school-boys and became the Master's devotee and disciple as soon as he came

to know of His union with the Almighty. At about nine in the morning, the Master was daily visited by His Hindu worshippers of the Ehoi caste, the members of which follow the profession of fishery. These Hindu devotees, whose leader was the late Mr. Arjoon Dagdoo Supekar, used to entertain His Holiness, for about an hour, by chanting Hindu religious songs with the help of the aiktara, which is an Indian musical instrument, to some extent resembling another Indian instrument called the siatara, but which unlike the sitara has only one string. At about half past ten His Holiness used to leave the hut and go to His mother's place on foot for dinner. After taking dinner and rest for some time, the Master used to return to the hut, where He generally stayed for the rest of the day. In the afternoon His Holiness used to read newspapers and in the evening a number of His followers used to call upon Him. The Master was much entertained by His followers, who used to sing hymns and play on musical instruments. His Holiness participated in the Indian games of atya-patya and gilli-danda, which were played daily near the hut. After the games were over, the Master used to refresh His followers by offering them tea, fruits, comfits,

and other eatables. He also gave them pabulum by imparting spiritual instruction to them.

One evening, four stout Irani youths came into the hut with the intention of confusing the Master by asking Him various questions and then to give Him a drubbing. They had taken the Master for a hypocrite. But when they saw Him, not one of them could open his mouth to speak a single word. When they looked into His Divine Majesty's eyes, they turned away their own. Like a flood shame swept upon them. The Master was much amused, as He knew the intention with which they had come to Him. He reproached them with chicken-heartedness. Despite this, the four youths did not utter a single word. They fell at the feet of the Master and went away.

At nine p.m. the Master used to take supper, which was daily brought in by His near relative, Mr. Rustamji Gus tadji Irani, who is one of the oldest disciples of the Master and who is known as Uncle Rustam among the Master's disciples. From nine at night till dawn, everybody, except Mr. Behli J. Irani, whom I shall introduce to my readers in the next chapter, was strictly prohibited from coming into or loitering about the hut. This command of the Master could be disobeyed by anybody only on pain

of His severe displeasure. However, the inquisitiveness of the late Mr. Jamshed R. Irani, one of the maternal uncles of Mr. Behramji F. Irani, got the better of his fear of the Master's displeasure and of his own common sense. So eager was he to learn what was happening in the hut from nine at night till dawn that one night, just after his clock struck nine, with a few friends, he left his house with a view to approach the hut and see for himself what the Master was doing in company with Mr. Behli. Mr. Irani and his friends used to call upon the Master daily at the hut, and therefore everyone of them might be expected to know its exact location. Before it was ten, they found themselves on the Ferguson College Road; but, to their utter bewilderment, none of them could see the hut. They searched for it till five in the morning, but they failed in their attempts. It seemed to have vanished into thin air. Every member of that was awe-struck. At five the confederates inquisitive and disobedient party dispersed and went to their places. At seven the ringleader, the late Mr. Jamshed Irani, called upon the Master. After worshipping and putting at His feet fruits and flowers, ^{he} confessed to him how he and his friends had disobeyed Him and asked His pardon. The Master told him, without showing the slightest indication of displeasure, that though He

heartily pardoned him for his mean act of disobedience, he would have to suffer for it in some way or other. Mr. Irani did suffer, and that too, only after a couple of days, inasmuch as his youngest child all of a sudden breathed his last.

In passing it must be mentioned that when the Master went to bed at night, the duty of Mr. Benli J. Irani was to keep watch in the hut. He was strictly commanded by the Master to remain wide awake. One night, however, he failed in his duty, for he could not give wide berth to slumber. The slumber lasted only for a few minutes; but when he woke up, to his horror he found that the bed was quite vacant. Where had the Master gone? Poor Benli, frightened out of his wits, was just going to open the door of the hut; but strange and weird figures made their appearance before him. The Master had strictly ordered him that, whatever happened, he was on no account to open the door of the hut. Seeing those strange and weird figures, he recalled that order and desisted from opening the door. With sunken spirits he sat down, knowing not what to do. He wept as if his heart would break. After a couple of hours he again sank into a short troubled slumber. When he woke up, to

his joy, he saw that the bed was not vacant. The Master was there on it.

During the first three months, His Holiness Meher Baba used to repair, on every Thursday night, to the Kasba Peth where He was ~~received~~ worshipped by a number of His followers. There the Hindu devotees, in His presence, used to sing their hymns till midnight. On every Sunday, His Holiness, with a good number of His disciples used to go out for a picnic to a suburb of Poona. One Sunday the Master took them to Chinchwad for the said purpose. In the midst of merry-making, the Master, all of a sudden, to the great surprise of His disciples, ordered one of them, who had come with his bicycle, to break it into pieces and to throw all the pieces into the well, which was within a stone's throw from the place where they were enjoying themselves. The Master's order was carried out, but nobody then could understand its significance. But, on the same day, when the party returned to the hut, they learned that at exactly the same moment when His Holiness had made the above order, Mr. Behli Irani had fallen into the well, which was close by the hut, but luckily, almost miraculously escaped being drowned. Mr. Behli believed and still believes that it was the Master who saved him. His Holiness Himself

said, "Instead of allowing Behli to be drowned, I sank the cycle into the well. It was a sort of gross exchange."

... One more supernatural episode. One night, when Mr. Behli was absent, the Master ordered Mr. Arjoon Supekar to keep watch. He was asked to sit just outside of the hut and not to allow anyone to approach it. At about one o' clock midnight, the Master asked from inside, "Arjoon, are you wide awake?" On receiving his answer in the affirmative, He said, "Whatever may happen, don't be frightened." No sooner did quarter of an hour elapse after the above words were uttered than Mr. Arjoon saw two tall men, clad in spotlessly white robes coming towards him. Mr. Arjoon was a great wrestler and was regarded as one of the strongest and bravest men in Poona. But as soon as he saw those two men, he ~~became~~^{turned} pale as death. But, though scared out of his wits, in trembling voice he managed to ask, "Who are you?" The Master from inside of the hut, asked, "What's the matter, Arjoon?" Mr. Arjoon noticed that as soon as His Holiness uttered those words, those two men vanished as breath into the wind. The Master forthwith came out of the hut and expressed His surprise at the fright of His disciple. Terrible, indeed, was the fright with which Mr. Arjoon was gripped. He could not clothe what he felt in words, but he often used to say, "Had

not Shri Baba come out of the hut at that very moment, I would surely have died of fright there and then. " In the morning a great change was noticed in Mr. Arjoon's countenance. His eyes had become yellowish and his face had become distinctly pale. This change did not prove to be temporary. As predicted by the Master, it lasted till Mr. Arjoon shuffled off his mortal coil.

Extraordinary days were extraordinarily spent. The Master, in order to respect the susceptibilities of His numberless followers of all castes and creeds, not only observed, Parsi, but also Hindu and Mahometan holidays. To give an example, the Cocoanut Day, which is also known as Holi, and which falls in the Hindu month of Fagan, which runs side by side with the Christian month of March, was celebrated, at the special command of the Master, with great joy and splendour. His Holiness, late in the evening Himself brought a big hewn piece of felled tree in a petty bullock-cart, which is called chhakda by the Marathas, from the Kasba Peth. A pit was dug out and the piece of wood was thrown into it. Over it countless dried-up leaves of trees, collected by a number of the Master's followers, were thrown. Then all the Hindus present began to sing hymns with the aid of various musical instruments, and the wood was kindled. The whole pit was soon in a blaze,

with sparks flying upwards. When the last hymn was about to be chanted, the Master, to the surprise of everybody present, threw all the musical instruments into the pit. When they were reduced almost to ashes, they were taken out and buried. Over the head of their grave, small models of those instruments made of mud were erected. After this ceremonial burial, the game of atya-patva was started, in which the Master Himself participated, and which did not end till four in the morning.

In the month of May, on the eve of the birthday of His Holiness Upasani Maharaj, the Master, with some of His disciples, left Poona for Sakori. The birthday was celebrated with great joy and enthusiasm, ~~but with~~ ~~splendour and to simplicity~~. Clothes and food were distributed among the poor of the village, at the special command of the Sadguru of Sakori. All the members of the party of His Holiness Meher Baba were drawn to the Master of their Master, doubtless on account of His divinity and magnetic personality. Shri Upasani Maharaj who had welcomed them warmly, thrice took them into His room and advised them on matters spiritual. Speaking about His Divine Majesty Meher Baba, Shri Upasani Maharaj said to them: "Bear it in your mind that Shri Meher Baba holds the key of everything which I have. Every one of

you would do well to stick to Him and carry out all His wishes and commands. With the grace of God, some of you will certainly reach the highest spiritual goal."

When the Master, with His disciples, returned to Poona, He gave out that He would soon leave Poona, as He intended to ^{to Bombay} go on foot, and stay there for a few months. All those whom the Master wanted to accompany Him were asked to make preparations for the journey.

During the period of five months I have dealt with in this chapter, His Holiness drew to Himself some of those who had connections with Him in past lives. The world is an enchanter whose spells are extremely difficult to be resisted. But a Sadguru is a far greater enchanter, whose spells are far more difficult to be resisted by any one who was closely connected with him in past incarnations.
