

Meher Baba's New Life
From the Great Seclusion to Manonash;
An In-Depth Review

(16th October 1949 to February 1952)

A Seventeen-Session Course of Study
Meherabad, starting September 2025

On 16th October 1949, Meher Baba renounced the Old Life that He had lived until then, with all its trappings of Perfect Masterhood and followers and ashrams and so-called “spirituality,” and with twenty companions set out on a New Life of “helplessness and hopelessness.” Cutting all ties with His Old Life disciples and devotees, for two and a half years Baba and His companions wandered without fixed residence or headquarters around the Indian subcontinent, at times begging for food and sleeping under the stars. Baba’s activities encompassed the so-called begging, gypsy, langoti and labor phases. He drafted three major “plans” for His companions. He served the poor and worked with the masts, and He completed major seclusions. The New Life came to a head between October and February 1951–52 with what Baba called “Manonash” or the “annihilation of the mind.” And through this radical act Meher Baba drew the New Life to a close, stepping into a new kind of “LIFE” in which the Old and New Lives were both encompassed. This was the “LIFE” that provided the platform for His public declaration of Avatarhood in February 1954.

While the community of Baba’s lovers generally agrees that the New Life holds a special place in the progression of Baba’s life and somehow prepares the ground for a New Humanity in the ages to come, it remains profoundly enigmatic and often baffling. What exactly was the New Life? Most of Baba’s statements describe it in purely negational terms, setting forth rules and restrictions and prohibitions. Yet amid the impossible difficulties, in the years afterwards some of the “companions” that we met said that this was the freest time during all their years with Meher Baba. How to reconcile such stark contradictions? How to fathom the essence of a life that exhibits no visible positive content and indeed eludes unequivocal terms of characterization? And what are we to make of Baba Himself, and the roles He played, through this three-year interlude? During the Old Life, He generally presented Himself as a God-realized Sadguru. At the outset of the New Life He stepped down from this office and became an ordinary seeker of God. But through the course of Manonash He seems to have regained His divine station, and indeed, augmented it, to the point of establishing the grounds of His Avatarhood. What work was He engaged in through this strange process? Who was this Man? Was the Meher Baba of the New Life the same One that His lovers pray to today and relate themselves to as their Friend and Beloved and Master?

The course of study. Since the New Life produced few texts of a “philosophical”

variety, this seminar the study program will be historically grounded and segmented chronologically, with much attention given to “tales of the New Life” and their meaning. This approach organizes the schedule of sessions and topics, as below.

Schedule of Sessions and Topics

Sunday afternoon, September 7, 2025, 5:00 – 6:30 p.m. EST	Session 1. An Overview of the New Life	Topic A. The significance of the New Life in Meher Baba’s greater Avataric Career. Topic B. A brief historical survey of the New Life from 1949 to 1952. Topic C. Several Major New Life themes
Sunday afternoon, September 21, 2025, 5:00 – 6:30 p.m. EST	Session 2. Early Adumbrations, and the Great Seclusion (January–July 1949)	Topic A. Some characteristic themes of the Old Life. Topic B. Adumbrations of the New Life, from the beginning of 1949 through the work at Mount Abu. Topic C. The Great Seclusion of June-July 1949. Topic D. The role of ceremonial occasions in the New Life.
Sunday afternoon, October 5, 2025, 5:00 – 6:30 p.m. EST	Session 3. The August 1949 Meetings, and Preparations for the New Life (August–October 1949)	Topic A. The Meherabad meetings (15 th –20 th August 1949). Topic B. The meetings with the women (16 th August 1949) Topic C. The “Circular of Conditions” (31 st August 1949). Topic D. Preparations for departure (early October 1949). Topic E. The verbal dueling of Ghani and Khak Saheb.
Sunday afternoon, October 19, 2025, 5:00 – 6:30 p.m. EST	Session 4. Training and Labor in Belgaum (October–November, 1949)	Topic A. The final preparations (in early October, 1949). Topic B. Setting out: the journey from Meherabad to Belgaum. Topic C. The labor phase in Belgaum. Topic D. Stories from the early stages of the New Life. Topic E. “The Song of the New Life.”
Sunday afternoon, November 2, 2025, 5:00 – 6:30 p.m. EST	Session 5. The Benares Interlude (November, 1949)	Topic A. The move from Belgaum to Benares Topic B. The Benares stay and the many outrageous requests. Topic C. The visit to Sarnath. Topic D. The four phases: the Labor, Begging, Langoti, and Gypsy Lives

<p>Sunday afternoon, November 16, 2025, 5:00 – 6:30 p.m. EST</p>	<p>Session 6. Wandering: The Begging, Langoti, and Gypsy Phases (November–December, 1949)</p>	<p>Topic A. The chronology and narrative of the journey from Benares to Dehra Dun, 12th December 1959 through 12th January 1950. Topic B. The Begging Phase. Topic C. The Gypsy Life Topic D. The New Life “strike” and other stories. Topic E. Utter impoverishment and the New Life hardships. Topic F. The “vacuum period.”</p>
<p>Sunday afternoon, December 7, 2025, 5:00 – 6:30 p.m. EST</p>	<p>Session 7. Manjri Mafi and the Three New Life Plans (January 12 through March 1950)</p>	<p>Topic A. The Manjri Mafi connection. Topic B. The three plans. Topic C. Living at Manjri Mafi. Topic D. Baba’s fifty-sixth birthday.</p>
<p>Sunday afternoon, December 21, 2025, 5:00 – 6:30 p.m. EST</p>	<p>Session 8. Meher Baba’s Work at the Kumbha Mela (March–April, 1950)</p>	<p>Topic A. Major thematic background no. 1: The Kumbha Mela. Topic B. Major thematic background no. 2: Meher Baba’s work with the masts in the 1930s–40s. Topic C. Meher Baba’s New Life work at the Kumbha Mela in Hardwar. Topic D. Major conflicts and a new New Life plan. Topic E. Baba’s visit to Hardwar with the women.</p>
<p>Sunday afternoon, January 4, 2026, 5:00 – 6:30 p.m. EST</p>	<p>LIVE Q&A</p>	
<p>Sunday afternoon, January 18, 2026, 5:00 – 6:30 p.m. EST</p>	<p>Session 9. Final Months in North India: A New Plan, the Labor Phase, and the New Life Ghee Business (14th April through early June, 1950)</p>	<p>Topic A. Conflicts involving the properties of Dr. Ghani and Sadashiv Patel. Topic B. The stay in Manjri Mafi resumed (14th April through early May 1950). Topic C. The New Plan. Topic D. The Labor Phase in Delhi and the New Life Ghee business. Topic E. Closing out the stay in Delhi and the shift to south India (May-June 1950). Topic F. An overview of the stay in North India.</p>
<p>Sunday afternoon, February 1, 2026, 5:00 – 6:30 p.m. EST</p>	<p>Session 10. The New Life Moves South to Satara (June–July, 1950)</p>	<p>Topic A. A survey of the thirty-four New Life Circulars. Topic B. A review of the New Life diaries of Dr. Abdul Ghani (16th October 1949 through 21st January 1950) and Dr. Nilu (mid-January through 1st May 1950).</p>

		<p>Topic C. An introduction to the Satara District</p> <p>Topic D. The stay in Satara. (</p> <p>Topic E. The New Life on the women’s side..</p>
Sunday afternoon, February 15, 2026, 5:00 – 6:30 p.m. EST	Session 11. The Meeting at Mahabaleshwar and Work with the Masts and Poor (September–December, 1950)	<p>Topic A. Baba’s message of 11th September 1950.</p> <p>Topic B. The meeting at Mahabaleshwar on 16th October 1950.</p> <p>Topic C. Baba’s six-week whirlwind tour and His work with the masts and poor.</p> <p>Topic D. Back in Mahabaleshwar for the Christmas season.</p>
Sunday afternoon, March 1, 2026, 5:00 – 6:30 p.m. EST	Session 12. The Great One-Hundred-Day Seclusion and the Move from Mahabaleshwar to Hyderabad (January–May, 1951)	<p>Topic A. Preparations for the move to Hyderabad and more work with the masts and poor.</p> <p>Topic B. The one-hundred-day Mahabaleshwar seclusion begins: the first forty days.</p> <p>Topic C. The second sixty-day phase of the Mahabaleshwar seclusion.</p> <p>Topic D. A short period of rest in Hyderabad.</p>
Sunday afternoon, March 15, 2026, 5:00 – 6:30 p.m. EST	Session 13. The Meeting at Hyderabad (June, 1951)	<p>Topic A. Early arrivals: 20th–27th June.</p> <p>Topic B. The main gathering of the seventy-five men, 27th–30th June.</p> <p>Topic C. Baba’s “Declaration” with its “Corollary: What God Has Determined,” 28th June</p> <p>Topic D. Baba’s discourse on the mind, ego, and the paths to God.</p> <p>Topic E. Closing the meeting with the comic talent show.</p>
Sunday afternoon, April 5, 2026, 5:00 – 6:30 p.m. EST	Session 14. The Inauguration of Manonash (July–November 1951)	<p>Topic A. Preparations for Manonash.</p> <p>Topic B. Seclusion in the Manonash Cave in Hyderabad.</p> <p>Topic C. The journey from Hyderabad to Aurangabad</p> <p>Topic D. The significance of Khuldabad and Ellora.</p>
Sunday afternoon, April 19, 2026, 5:00 – 6:30 p.m. EST	Session 15. The Culmination of Manonash (8 th November 1951 through 6 th February 1952).	<p>Topic A. Manonash at Aurangabad.</p> <p>Topic B. Baba’s work on Tembi (Seclusion Hill) and the shift to Meherazad.</p> <p>Topic C. Baba pays respect to His departed ones.</p> <p>Topic D. The final month of Manonash</p>
Sunday afternoon,	Session 16. The Free Life (February 1952 through April 1953).	<p>Topic A. Baba’s first Life Circular on Manonash.</p> <p>Topic B. The three phases of the Free Life—the Complicated Free Life, the Full Free Life, and the Fiery Free Life.</p>

<p>May 3, 2026, 5:00 – 6:30 p.m. EST</p>		<p>Topic C. A brief review of the history of the three Free Lives, March 1952 through April 1953. Topic D. Life Circular no. 9 (28th March 1953) and Baba’s messages on Freedom, Divine Love, the Purpose of Life, and Honesty. Topic E. “The Highest of the High” (7th September 1954).</p>
<p>Sunday afternoon, May 17, 2026, 5:00 – 6:30 p.m. EST</p>	<p>Session 17. Review and Summary</p>	<p>Topic A. Topic B. Topic C. Topic D. Topic E. Topic F. Topic G.</p>
<p>Sunday afternoon, June 7, 2026, 5:00 – 6:30 p.m. EST</p>	<p>End of Series LIVE Q&A</p>	

The focal texts. Our principal source text will be Bhau Kalchuri’s *Meher Baba’s New Life* (2008). We will also devote attention to some of the significant publication from that period, particularly *The New Life Circulars* and some shorter pamphlets published by Ramjoo Abdulla and others. “The Song of the New Life” will receive special attention. Participants are encouraged to peruse other accounts as well, particularly the reminiscences of Eruch, Mani, Mehera, and other companions in *Tales of the New Life* (a new edition has just been published and is available); Vol. 2 of Bal Natu’s *Glimpses of the God Man*; and the volume devoted to the New Life in *Lord Meher*.