
2018

Meherana
MESSENGER



We Are Alive Here for You

by Melinda Abeles

I STOOD SAFE and sound on Buckingham Mountain facing west on the second night of the Detwiler Fire in Mariposa County last August, 2017. I was watching as flames that were miles away were burning full speed across the land towards my home and towards Meherana, like charging horses on Fire. It was all in Baba's



hands and there was no choice but to surrender to His Will. Period. What to do but watch and be in awe. What to do but be willing myself to come Home to Nothing—to let go into Him. The feeling was like laying my head down on Baba’s tomb for the first time and disappearing —while instantly knowing that every soul of everything everywhere was right behind me.

I liked it. I liked it a lot. It felt like such a blessing to be relieved of householder duty, so to speak, and all the worldly games that must be played to maintain the physical form of a personal life. I felt, YES! Baba, I am willing to be evacuated and stripped of the Old Life to be born into the Fiery Free one, where the charging horses are sparks of His Love burning everything in sight, leaving ashes and the Only Reality behind.

The Fire indeed roared through my land, but left my house completely intact, thanks to the firefighters of the Mount Bullion Volunteer Fire Department who were on the ground and saved it. Meherana, on the other hand, was another story, detailed later in this newsletter.

Baba saved my home. I was almost disappointed. I had so wanted to hang on to that freedom felt during my evacuation from the burdens of the world, and to become “a wandering Love Dog in my VW camper with hardly a name”^{*} For me it was like the story of Abraham, where he became willing, because of his love for God, to sacrifice his beloved son for Him. It was Abraham’s willingness that was the key. I had been willing, and received Baba’s Grace.

As the months go by after the Detwiler Fire, one can see new green growth at the bases of bushes and the tops of trees. After two splashes of autumn rains there is the faintest hint of fresh grasses on the ground, bringing life and nutrients back to the land for the next generations of forms. I am reminded today of the Everlasting Light that can never be extinguished as we head towards the winter solstice, the shortest day of the year, which gives rise to a new beginning.

What WILL generate from this burned -out landscape? Maybe it all burns so that we can recalibrate and remember the essentials of the words, and live them. Maybe it all burns in worldly fire so that we can remember to be sparks ourselves.

“Will you allow Meher Baba to burn you out if necessary?”
 – AGNES BARON


^{*} Rumi, translated by Coleman Barks with John Moyne, *The Essential Rumi*, Castle Books, 1995, “Love Dogs,” p. 155

*OH BABA, oh everlasting Light as Fiery Love
 You come as the sun out of control
 Drawing Life out from all corners of Everywhere.
 Even shadows move away eventually.*

*Oh Meher, Master of infinite spiraling Change
 Of Fiery ends and phoenixes rising in forms
 Of little green things that make our breath.*

*We are breathing, Baba.
 We are alive here for You.*

– MELINDA ABELES



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Editor: Anne Haug; Layout: Gay Dunn

Photography: Marianne Ashelman, David Branch,
 Becky Caraco, Greg Dunn, David Greenstein, Chris
 Pearson, and Therese Williams

Production Assistance: Greg Dunn, Michalene Seiler

Contributors: Melinda Abeles, Marianne Ashelman,
 Kebi Brown, Ralph Brown, Becky Caraco, Greg Dunn,
 Billy Goodrum, Christine Pearson, Cathy Riley,
 Tom Riley, Nick Skok, Jim Wilson

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In the Fiery Free Life, all the frailties of the ego-life are completely consumed; and there is complete emancipation from all wants, desires and temptations. And the result of this Fiery Free Life will make the world understand that Meher Baba and everyone is one with God.¹ — MEHER BABA

Meher Baba wrote that “the light of love is not free from its fire of sacrifices”² and the past year brought this quote to life in a most literal sense.

Year of Fire

In 2017 fires raged throughout the Western U.S. resulting in a staggering loss of lives and homes. The destruction in populated areas such as Santa Rosa was especially heartbreaking. Well over a million acres burned in California, including Meher Mount in Ojai and Meherana in Mariposa. At Meher Mount, Baba’s landmark tree was damaged. To read more about Baba’s Tree and its recovery and protection plan, go to www.mehermount.org.

fire last summer, destroying acres of trees along with key structures. By His grace, Baba’s Cabin, the Meadow Cottage and the Caretakers House

were saved, but the experience engraved upon us all the meaning of surrender to His Will.

Now, many months later, we can view the fire as a cleansing preparation for new growth. We notice greenery sprouting throughout the property, birdsong in the air and a growing membership committed to Meherana’s future. His hand is everywhere and although much was lost, the fire has cleared a new path of love forward.

Here are a few first-hand accounts of those harrowing days:

Meherana fell squarely in the path of Mariposa’s Detwiler



Meadow Cottage, the children's pandal, the tent cabin by the children's pandal and the tent cabin by the Meadow Cottage are all untouched!!!!

Amazingly the Caretaker’s House was perfect! And when we got out of the car, the brave caretaker kitty "Ram" ran to us meowing—so thankful to be rescued! He's home with us tonight, but will see Marianne tomorrow!!

Next, we saw that the old Sahavas kitchen (now known as K-storage), the K-shed, the stage, and the bookstore are completely burned to the ground! But, on the bright side, the volleyball net is still intact!!!

The fire burned right to the cement veranda of Baba's Cabin! A firefighter was stationed there to protect it, just as others were at the other buildings that were saved!

And in the eerie smoky silence we drove up to the Meadow Cottage to see its fate, and discovered two fire engines and these firefighters hanging out on the deck of the Meadow Cottage! I must have thanked them a thousand times! And they said "Well, it was a team effort."

The fire raged through the area and

definitely would not have left anything standing if it weren't for the amazing firefighters who stood at each building defending them!

The ground is black EVERYWHERE and many bushes and trees were incinerated! What a joyous discovery that most of our treasured buildings survived,



Fire emails:

July 22nd, 2017
from Becky and Jacko Caraco
Avatar Meher Baba Ki Jai!!

Jacko and I happened to see that Hwy 140 was opening this evening (July 21, 2017) I think it must have been 8 p.m. already, so we decided to see if we could get a visual for you all!

Driving out Hwy 140 from Mariposa was freaky! Unbelievable how much damage the fire caused! We arrived at Meherana and saw that EVERYTHING was black from being burned. Honestly, I had no idea what we would find! But the Caretaker’s House, Baba's Cabin, the





but in the daylight tomorrow, the devastation will be all too clear to see.

What a week it's been, and it's still not over! The fire continues to threaten homes and wild lands!! Baba willing, this will be over soon!

Sending love and Jai Baba!
Becky and Jacko

**July 24, 2017 9:47 a.m.
from Therese Williams**
Subject: Firefighters Express that Baba's Cabin Is Favorite Structure

Jai Baba everyone!

Yesterday when I was at Meherana, I was thanking the fire fighters so many times for continuing to protect Meherana.

One fire fighter, David, from the Tahoe station who is in the photo standing in front of Meher Baba's Cabin, said to me that he knew the cabin was special, and that it was his favorite structure on the property and of all the structures he has

seen in Mariposa while fighting the fire. I asked him why, and he said all the fire fighters peeked in the window and they could feel a special energy; and not only that—he thought the stained glass was beautiful.

He said they also looked Meherana up on the website, so they knew a little more. David said he is going to mention Meherana to his mother. I asked him to have her contact us for more information if she needed.

I spoke about the Sahavas we have, plus I spoke about Meher Baba. He was attentive and asking questions. How blessed is David and all the fire fighters who worked at Meherana for Meher Baba!!

In HIS love,
Therese

**Jul 24, 2017 9:56 p.m.
from Marianne Ashelman**

Hi everyone,
Thanks to Greg Ennis for seeing to the Meadow Cottage internet and for the great "Action List for Recovery." Hats off to you Therese, Paul, Mike, Kebi, Ralph, Chris, Christi, Becky and all others who have worked so diligently to do what needs to be done.

I left Meherana about 4:30 a.m. Tuesday morning with smoke inhalation

problems with Sita only, as Ram could not be found. I walked Sita in the town park until Pony Espresso opened at six. At sevenish, I texted Peni Choi and asked if I could spend the day at her house. Little did I know I'd be there until Saturday! I moved over to Melinda's then, where I am until the house has power.

I wish to give my most heartfelt thanks to the Choi family, and to Melinda, for giving me much comfort and love in the form of smiles, hugs, nice beds, lovely food cooked with love, and room for Sita to be happy.

Many thanks also for the offers of space in your homes from so many. I love you all and feel so cared for. It has been quite an experience to be an evacuee! Melinda has been one as well up till Friday (or was it Saturday???) Time and dates have become like marshmallows, all so expanded and mushy!

Love is an Ocean of Fire that you have to cross to meet the Beloved. So Love, more love, more and more love. ³
— MEHER BABA



Having Sita's loving and constant presence has been really reassuring in the constant changes.

It's been rather overwhelming to be in the midst of all this organized disaster relief, and to see/feel the power of love in our community at large and in our own Baba community. I feel we are all learning so much about trust, action, service, and commitment to doing our best. Baba's powerful presence can be felt at Meherana and, I feel, in all the emergency personnel that I've met and those that have been on the property.

It's amazing to walk around Meherana and see the buildings that are standing compared to those that are not. There is actually a sheet of metal roofing hanging in a tree half way from the propane tank explosion at K-storage and Baba's Cabin!

Onward and upward! We're holding fast to His daaman and getting on with the job at hand!

In His perfect love,
Marianne

1. Meher Baba, *Meher Baba on the Fiery Free Life and Seven Other Messages*, p.4, AMBPPCT, 2013
2. Compiled by Filis Frederick, *The Path of Love*, p. 67, reissued 2010, Sheriar Press
3. Kitty Davy, *Love Alone Prevails*, p. 154, Sheriar Press, 1981
4. Bal Natu, *Glimpses of the God-Man*, Vol. 3, p. 181, Sheriar Press, 1982

My message to the world, which has been a message throughout eternity, is Love. This Love has two aspects, and both aspects are real. Any other attachment, which we, through ignorance, call love, is nothing but the illusion of Maya.

Love for God Personal or Impersonal with intense longing for oneness with the Beloved is one aspect of real Love. Such a lover forgets everything, forsakes everyone and annihilates himself in the fire of divine Love. In the second aspect, he loves humanity at large as being part and parcel of God. Here, the lover forgets his own interest, forsakes his own happiness and tries to make others happy or uplifted. If this love reaches its height, he also, like the Divine Lover, forgets himself completely and is lost in Love, and Love alone.

My Fiery Life is based on this Love by which the Lover is lost in the Beloved after being consumed in the fire of Love. ⁴

— MEHER BABA

To the Members and Friends of Meherana

As President of Meherana and chair of the Volunteer Committee, it is with much Baba cheer and delight that I report to you that following the fires, our two volunteer work weekends were extremely well attended.



In addition to the Mariposa locals, we had folks come from up north, down south, and from the west, ready and willing to roll up their sleeves. It was dirty and hard work removing and burning trees, and developing new paths to the Meadow Cottage, but we all joined together in Baba's love to work with smiles and laughter.

We thank our beloved Meher Baba for His ongoing support for our efforts to maintain Meherana in love and service to Him. I am excited for the future of Meherana and for the many involved who work tirelessly for this center dedicated to Him.

Jai Meher Baba!!!

Therese Williams





Meherana Recovery Update

by Ralph Brown

The initial steps following the fire included filing an insurance claim, documenting the damage, and then removing the debris and contaminated soil caused by the fire. Sahavas area debris, contaminated soil, the walking bridge, dump truck, tractor, and carport were all removed. The insurance claim initiated back in July has been mostly settled with a few minor items outstanding.

Donations, along with insurance payments, are providing the resources to replenish a long list of items: rakes and shovels, weed-wackers, axes, pruning saws, picks, mechanic wrenches, screw drivers, drills, and hammers.

We are searching for a tractor with road grader, flail mower, and bucket loader for the spring seasonal work. We will be purchasing tables and chairs, utensils and other necessities for meal service. We have already replaced some of the tents, cots, futons, lanterns, and brooms.

We have done repairs to water lines and electrical lines. New phone lines were run underground by Sierra Telephone. We have set a new 5000-gallon water tank on the hill to replace the damaged one. Two donated shipping containers were installed out of sight above the Caretaker’s House, and are being used for temporary storage of tools and Sahavas supplies. A new pathway has been built from the upper meadow down to the bookstore area bypassing the old footbridge. The main breaker box to Baba’s Cabin has been replaced. One gate and some fencing have been repaired. We are engaged in restoring the gardens and orchard damaged in the intense heat: cutting down countless dead trees and brush, placing them in burn piles, cutting up the cord wood pieces, and cleaning up the grounds have occupied many work days by enthusiastic volunteers.

Preparation for our first Sahavas since the fire will be keeping the Site Committee and other volunteers very busy.



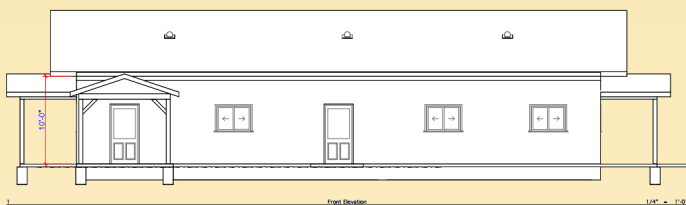
Saved were Baba’s Cabin, the Meadow Cottage, Caretaker’s House, tent cabins, children’s pandal, meadow toilets, and shower building.

Destroyed in the fire were all four structures in the Sahavas area: K-Storage, K-Shed, the Bookstore, the Stage and adjacent storage building. In addition, their contents were destroyed, including Sahavas supplies (tables, chairs, outdoor heaters, cooking/ serving supplies, etc.); collection of tools; bookstore contents; tractor and dump truck (which were uninsured due to low value).

Destruction in other areas include: the walking bridge going up to the Meadow Cottage, the carport at the Caretaker’s House, phone, water, and electrical lines, the electrical panel outside Baba’s Cabin, and one water tank damaged beyond repair.



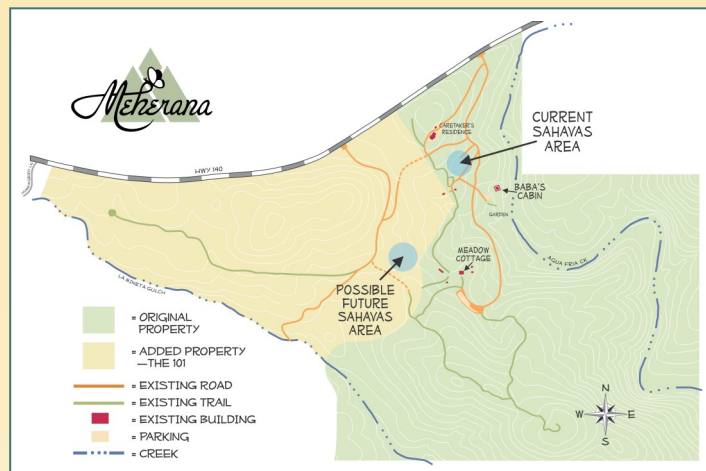
MULTIUSE BUILDING , front elevation



Planned for Near Future

More fence and gate repairs are planned along with the ongoing cleanup of the grounds.

Most notably, we will construct a sizable multiuse building in the Sahavas area* to provide storage space for tools and supplies, work areas, bookstore, pantry, and garage for the new tractor and new truck, if and when they are purchased. We envisage this building will also play a substantial role as a central nerve center for work stations and future development of buildings and infrastructure. Bids were solicited and a builder has been selected for this project, with construction to begin as soon as possible. ♥



* The Master Plan refers to the current Sahavas location as the "Old Sahavas" area. The plan calls for developing a "New Sahavas" area on the 101 property west of the meadow at some point in the future, with the "Old Sahavas" area then designated for maintenance and storage.

Ah! Meherana's Bookstore

by Kebi Brown

Meherana's bookstore was always a fledgling enterprise, formed primarily for those attending Sahavas and other events, as well as to serve the local Mariposa community. It had most humble beginnings—books first being brought by other Baba centers for the events, until those on the Board felt it was time for Meherana to actually have its very own bookstore. So books were bought and kept in boxes and out they came to be unpacked under a 10x10-foot canopy for each Sahavas and then—voila—it expanded to a 10x20-foot canopy, with everything packed away at the end of each event to sit in storage until months later when another event happened.

This most humble canopy soon experienced so many travails that it would be hard to say exactly which one came first—was it the mice that moved in during "Forty days with Bhau," or was it the huge out-of-the-blue windstorm that blew it over, catapulting it toward the campfire or was it the huge rainstorm

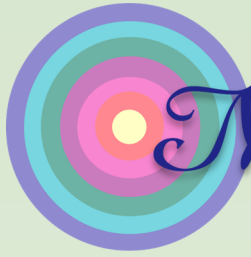
that broke through all barriers to shower down on the books? Through it all, the bookstore shone brilliantly, displaying for sale books by and about Beloved Baba as well as DVDs, CDs, photos, and trinkets, making the bookstore a go-to spot for attendees at events.

Then came the wonderful day when the Board felt that the bookstore could have its own 12x20-foot building and so it came to pass that the bookstore moved into four solid walls with shelves and tables and all the displays that could be left up with books and more available all year long. It had many, many happy days with ever so many people popping in to check for new books as well as to buy old favorites or to pick up that special laminated card or pendant. There was joy when one found a piece of Baba art they couldn't live without, and all in all the bookstore fared well, being reflective of Beloved Baba's loving presence at Meherana.

And then—the FIRE! Yep, last summer

the Detwiler Fire did its number on the bookstore despite its metal roof. And what was once an 8-foot-plus structure was now reduced to ten inches of ash. The books were amazing as you could see the pages outlined perfectly but when touched, they disintegrated into a substance finer than talc. The metal of the table legs was twisted this way and that, and the door and window glass had melted, forming odd shapes. We found remains of Baba buttons and pendants with their metal backs, but nothing else could be said to be anything "real" other than the ash.

Now, through the efforts and love donations of so many around the globe, Meherana's bookstore will soon re-emerge with its new home in a corner of the envisioned multi-use building at the Sahavas site. By Beloved Baba's grace, construction will soon begin with the goal of having the bookstore up and running for this year's Spring Sahavas over Memorial Day. To this we say "Avatar Meher Baba Ki Jai"! ♥



REFLECTIONS on

Meher Baba's Darshana

A personal response to Ward Parks' nine-day study course in the literature of His advent, held at Meherana, September 2017.

by Jim Wilson, Portland, Oregon

For the past six Septembers, Meherana has hosted Dr. Ward Parks as the guide, or presenter, into Meher Baba's literary oeuvre. Although Baba stated that He had not come to teach, but to awaken, I am amazed at the enormous volume of written words He left to mankind. He not only oversaw the writing, editing, and publishing of His discourses, but set up a publishing committee for that purpose, and personally scrutinized every word in the publishing of many of His talks, discourses, and most emphatically His crown jewel, *God Speaks*.

In the 1920s, the *Intelligence Notebooks* were written down by Baba's mandali as He lectured them on the many spiritual and esoteric themes in which He wanted them versed. His *Tiffin Lectures*, recently made available, show His repetitive and thorough explanations, with analogies tailored to the mandali's ability to grasp and comprehend. In the index under "analogies, examples, and stories," ninety-five such explanations are listed. Baba also spoke at length to the Prem Ashram boys on these very subjects, and in the wake of these talks some of the boys experienced spiritual elevation into the subtle planes!

In the early 1930s, these lectures stopped as Baba began His travels to the West and around the world. His work with the masts, His seclusion work, and a flurry of activities took Him away, for the most part, from lecturing and publishing until 1955 when *God Speaks* was published.

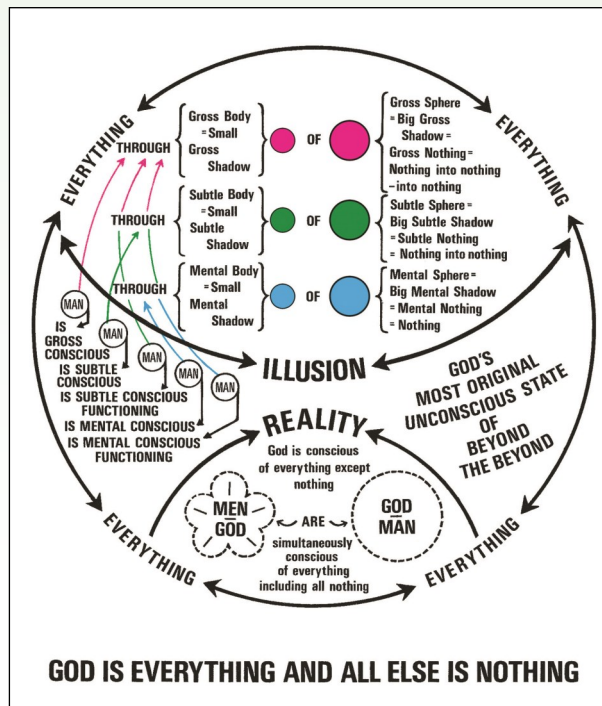
I have often wondered why He left such a volume of "words" when He Himself was keeping total silence and once said, "enough words have been spoken." Over the past forty-four years I have struggled to love Him and obey Him; and as the years go by, His words matter more and more to me. I graduated from the University of Notre Dame with a

degree in philosophy that, at many moments in my life, I felt had been a waste of time. Baba said that philosophy was "making something simple into something difficult," so I concentrated on remembering Him in prayer, music, and companionship with His lovers, especially the many living disciples He chiseled down into remarkable lovers and servants. How fortunate we were to experience the aura of their physical presence! Philosophical questions seldom came up. His discourses guided me, and the incredible stories and biography of His life filled me with meaning and peace.

So why this darshana of knowledge that transcends our ability to understand? Why did Baba put Himself through the struggle with chalk and slates, alphabet boards, and hand gestures to communicate to His scribes all these apparently intellectual workings of the mind that most of His contemporaneous lovers never read or were even interested in? Even today there appears to be very limited interest in His "philosophy", as His lovers long only for His intimacy and companionship. This, of course, is what we saw in the mandali and in their relationship with us.

In the last couple of decades, we have witnessed the

passing away of His mandali and simultaneously the publication of *In God's Hand, Infinite Intelligence*, *Meher Baba's Tiffin Lectures*, and a re-edited edition of the *Discourses*. We have learned that Baba had asked Francis Brabazon to re-work *God Speaks* to make it clearer and more readable without changing its meaning or content, although Francis died before he could complete this task. Why was Baba overseeing these publications of Knowledge and Truth when His spiritual emphasis was always on love, remembrance, self-effacement, service of the master, and service to humanity? Is His literary work only for bookshelves?



In the course of participating in these workshops, I have developed a personal approach to that question. In my philosophy education as a young man 19 to 22 years of age, I was given answers to questions I hadn't thought to ask. I was exposed to the substantial inquiries that have occupied the minds of great thinkers for the past forty centuries. There seemed to be a branch of philosophy to cover all the big questions of the searching, penetrating, and curious minds of each epoch, each great civilization. These questions and their associated branches of study could be briefly stated as follows:

- "What is the soul and who am I?"Philosophical psychology
- "What is reality and the structure of the manifested and unmanifested world?"Cosmology
- "What is truth and how do I know what I know is true?"Epistemology
- "What is evil and why does it exist?"Moral philosophy
- "What is the purpose of all that I see?"Teleology
- "What is being; what is existence?"Ontology/Metaphysics
- "Is there a God, a prime mover?"Philosophical theology
- "Is there a principle that unites all the multiplicity in the universe?"Metaphysics
- "How am I to live a good life?"Ethics and
- "What happens after death?"Eschatology

That last question is perhaps THE question that still troubles thinkers and poets. Philosophy—literally "the love of wisdom"—opens us to search for meaning. For centuries, mankind generally relied upon a belief in some higher reality, such as a God, to answer questions of the unknown. But several hundred years ago the "age of faith" succumbed to the "age of reason" and "the age of enlightenment." Many concepts at the foundation of western (and eastern) thought, such as metaphysics, were dismissed as "mere conjecture" compared to the rational explanations and speculations of modernity and its scientific methods.

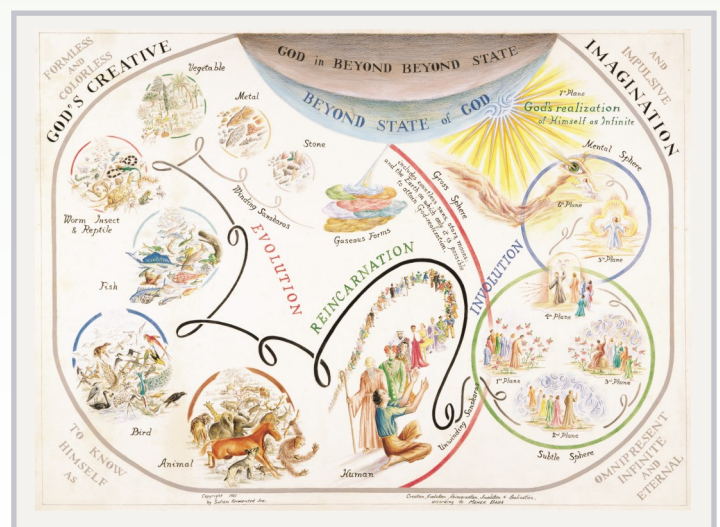
Yet every one of these questions and inquiries are major topics in Baba's publications. It seems clear that He has validated the ongoing search through the centuries, that quest for knowledge which lies beyond reason and relates to realities that transcend the observable and material physical universe. What lies beyond is the metaphysical, the Spirit, the Reality. What does Baba say about these things? How is that important to me and to society? Does it make a difference?

I can imagine that Baba's dismissal of philosophical interests as "the intellectual convulsions of the mind of man" (Part 10 of *God Speaks*) is an affirmation of the ultimate futility of the limited, finite human intellect speculating on realities far be-

yond its experience and province; or, possibly, He might have felt that the term was a good description of modern philosophy itself! Baba's Darshana is nothing like the thinking of an ordinary philosopher using logic and theoretical assumptions to arrive at conclusions. Baba's triune nature of Infinite Knowledge, Infinite Power, and Infinite Bliss is the source of Truth, and that Truth has the power of His authority; or as Don Stevens would say, His words contain "atomic bombs of spiritual energy." Broadly speaking, Baba shed divine light on mankind's deepest and most hidden yearnings for understanding and truth. Thereby He trues our participation in the Real, Infinite Mind of Paramatma.

In the nine-day study course we encountered concepts, principles, and realities fundamental to the journey of the soul from unconsciousness to consciousness. Perhaps the most fundamental statement of Baba's revelations regarding the architecture of consciousness can be seen in *The Divine Theme*, a booklet written in 1943. One of the two large charts folded into pockets of the booklet was used for meditation under Baba's instruction. The *Theme* describes the individualized *jivatma* (soul) emerging from the Om Point into stone consciousness and details its long journey through the stages of its evolution to reach full consciousness as a human being. But *sanskaras* (a vital keystone to Baba's explanations of the workings of consciousness) keep even the infinitely conscious *atma* ignorant of its true Self. Innumerable lifetimes are required for the experiencing and eventual working free from *sanskaras*. The soul then enters the Divine Dream or the subtle and mental planes, and eventually with the help of a Sadguru enters *Nirvikalp Samadhi*: Unity with Self, God consciousness, the *Shivatma* state.

In *Infinite Intelligence* Baba reveals the novel concept of "thinking the imagination" and its two aspects of "creating the imagination" and "realizing the imagination." This use of the term "thinking," unseen even in the Vedanta, is a characteri-

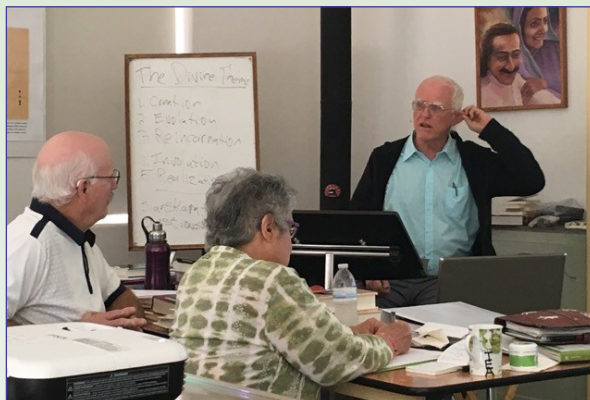


zation never expressed in any other spiritual teachings. Baba clearly crowns “thinking” (or “consciousness”) as the source and reason for all phenomena. Strangely, He never uses this terminology or discusses directly the concepts it embodies in any of His other writings, but “thinking the imagination” plays a huge role in the first of the *Intelligence Notebooks*.

The newest addition to Baba’s “words” is *Meher Baba’s Tiffin Lectures*, published in 2017. In the months from April 1926 to August 1927, Baba gave fifty-two lectures to His mandali, written down by Chanji and others. Baba did not see to their publication; nor, of course, would He have seen or commented on this 2017 publication that we now have. Some questions about Baba’s authorship have arisen, since nowhere is Baba’s signature seen, nor are there any written directions or instructions from Him regarding their correctness, accuracy, or authenticity. Dr. Parks, a textual scholar by profession, explained at length the “textual” and “content” signatures that identify Baba as the only possible author, of these lectures. After a thorough examination of the people present at the time of these talks, all of whom followed Baba as their Master, and after analyzing the environment and history of all the activities, buildings, and charitable works conducted at Meherabad, Dr. Parks concludes that little serious or reasonable doubt could fall on the fact of Baba’s leadership and full knowledge of what was being said and done there. Furthermore, a comparison of those texts well-documented as Baba’s to these undocumented ones—a common practice in the literary world—provides another means of establishing authorship. So, although one cannot say that these lectures have the confirmation identified with publications Baba personally reviewed, realistically, what is the possibility that the mandali manufactured this material? Only the most skeptical would challenge Baba’s authorship. Nevertheless, the importance of this issue is emphatically acknowledged, and it is carefully elucidated and addressed in the supplement.

That having been said, these lectures emphasize the intensity of the Master’s intentions to train and educate His mandali in the knowledge He wanted them to have. The lectures explain to them the Mind, the Self, the hierarchies of the human being from ordinary gross consciousness to the highest level of Sadguru. Wonderful explanations of the states of God and the unity of all being; of anger, lust, and greed; of the Paths to God; of the Circle of the Perfect Master and his chageman; and of many penetrating scenarios of the spiritual

panorama fill the pages with Baba’s presence. Each lecture is complete; each leaves the reader marveling at its depth and clarity. What one wouldn’t give to have been present at those talks! As a source for understanding and meditation these lectures merit continual re-reading just as the *Discourses* do. The book includes many pictures of early Meherabad and mandali and ashram members, as well as details of the history of the period when Baba gave these lectures. One can easily imagine His lovers, individually and in groups, enjoying and sharing this book for ages to come.



The breadth and depth of this study course—about forty hours of sessions—incorporated readings from many of Baba’s major publications in a weave of interplay and cross-examination. Baba’s literary style, aptly characterized by Dr. Parks as one of “excessive redundancy,” brings home the weight and importance of His revelations. His words stand as the fundamental Truth that will

undoubtedly blossom into the greatest manifestation of this cycle. Imagine life in a society wherein it is widely understood that “Atma = Paramatma;” wherein all living and non-living entities are understood to be the Divine Presence—God in different stages or “states” of the individual soul’s journey to its Paramatma State! Imagine Baba’s revelations as the building blocks of individual and social existence!

Now at age seventy-four, when I look back on my philosophical education, I can appreciate its practicality in my life; in particular, many of the principles expounded by St. Thomas Aquinas provided me with guidance in making decisions, choices, and evaluations in my life. With Baba’s Darshana, I have another avenue of opportunity for real inner connection and insight as I make my pilgrimage to Him. Sometimes I ask myself, “What will I do with this knowledge?” But I think it’s the wrong question. The right question would be “What will this knowledge do with me?”

Baba, in a lecture He gave on August 19, 1926 on the significance of His explanations (*Tiffin Lectures*, page 241), said this: “On the other hand, what I give to you and what I explain to your mind is a knowledge which exceeds the scope of the ordinary mind and cannot be grasped or understood by it. Even though these explanations themselves are mere shadows of the real Knowledge, they transcend what the limited mind is able to comprehend. Making the mind understand that knowledge which is beyond the mind—that is what these explanations of mine do, and that too, for those who are prepared to digest them.”



Baba encourages us to assimilate these explanations into our minds and hearts so they become part of our thinking and living, like breathing in and breathing out. They promise to rearrange the landscape of our consciousness, our daily thinking, and actions. I recognize that the real work in these study sessions is impossible to summarize in mere words. The astonishing narrations and analyses that Baba has given must be embraced as an individual quest of inner work.



As Baba's Avatic period on earth ended in 1969; as His beloved mandali have passed on; and as even those who spent time with the mandali are aging, future waves of His lovers will have the greatest legacy ever passed on by any Avatar or Perfect Master. Baba's words are truly HIS, and have the immediacy of His promised Avatic presence and divine compassion. He personally saw to it that all humanity for ages to come will have His words without having to doubt their origin. Such a Beloved is He!

In conclusion, I remember a story from a tape I heard decades ago of Adi K. Irani speaking. He remembered how Westerners began arriving at Meherabad after Baba's death, and how they would sometimes ask Adi questions about *God Speaks*. Adi frowned in disapproval, wondering why they would ask about philosophy when Baba was the Divine Beloved in their midst! What did they care about philosophy? Then, he said, it dawned

on him that His lovers were also seeking Baba through His books and words. So Adi became adept at answering their questions and thus, continued to serve his Master lovingly. Certainly, the acts of reading and meditating on Baba's words are rendered more valuable by a submissive will and deep devotion for the Master. Perhaps if one needed a reason, Adi's insight that Baba is also accessible through His writings would give one motivation to undertake the study of Baba's Darshana, His vision, and this new dispensation of Truth from the source of Truth Itself. ♥

In Memory of **Georgene Tarbox**

by *Christi Pearson*

My relationship with Georgene was based upon serving Baba. We served on boards and committees of the Los Angeles Group and Meherana for forty years together. While spending some beautiful final moments with Georgene as she lay unconscious in the hospital, I reminisced with Nick about our long years of service together and he remarked with his quiet humor, that it was like I had "sort of a marriage with her." I laughed with joy and reflected on all the changes and adjustments we went through together during those four decades. We were both involved from the very beginning with the formation of Meherana and the drafting of its Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws. In our discussions, Georgene could be counted on to offer unexpected and different ways of seeing things, usually



founded in a deep sense of sharing and fairness. To this day her suggestions sparkle out at me from the final documents.

Georgene was a dear friend and an incredibly unique and caring person—artist, social worker, real estate agent, stage decorator, UCLA laboratory technician, expert skier, and horse-packing mountaineer cook among other things. Her health declined shockingly over the last few years, but she never complained—yes, she would keep you fully informed if you asked (as I did)—but she accepted her situation bravely with great grace and perseverance. I will miss her very, very much. God Speed, sweet Georgene, on to your next life of service and companionship with our Beloved Lord and Master, Avatar Meher Baba.

For video click this link: [In Memory of Georgene.](#)



Caretaker's Corner

by Marianne Ashelman

It's truly amazing how beautiful Meherana is now! All the blackness is being replaced by lovely green grass and I know the wildflowers aren't far behind. We who have the great good fortune to live in the Mariposa area are taking full advantage of the miraculous rebirth happening right under our noses. It's so wonderful to be able to report to all of you that our Beloved's Meherana is even more gorgeous than ever. Maybe we celebrate more deeply because we could have lost so much more than we did. Baba's Grace shines through it all.

Some months ago, I purchased a used all terrain vehicle—actually, it's a utility terrain vehicle. He's become my best friend as caretaker and really lives up to his name, "Buddy." He goes anywhere and allows me to do my security checks around the property lickety-split. He has a dumping back bin and I can haul loads of chipped branches, wood, tools, plants, supplies



for the Meadow Cottage, furniture, and well, just about anything. He's become such an important member of the family that now I don't know how I would get along without him. He really shines on the rough terrain of the Sierra Telephone easement that runs the length of the property along Highway 140.

I'm getting ready to go on vacation after a long and difficult year. My love for Meherana will be refreshed by a little distance and time. There's a big

difference between visiting and living here, where the concentration of Baba's perfect presence is real and pulsating. It's sort of like living in a pressure cooker or being pickled! As much as it is a great privilege to live here, it's also a daily responsibility that can be tiring and draining. For those of you who have been fortunate enough to visit or even live in India, you'll know what I mean. Or, like visiting the mother you love so much—all that love can be overwhelming. Even so, I'm looking forward to my return even before I leave, knowing I'll be relieved to escape the busy world once again back to heaven.

We're experiencing a very mild winter so far and it would be an ideal time for you to come and enjoy Meherana. Soon the redbuds will be blooming and the Meadow Cottage is waiting for you. Come soon! ♥

Above: Fresh winter grass at Meherana

Far Left: Roy and Kebi are preparing Hugelkultur raised beds in the orchard.

Left: Marianne and "Buddy"





Meherana Spring Sahavas 2017

Baba's Living Presence

by Cathy Riley

Meher Baba surely was present at Meherana this past Memorial Day weekend. Tom and I were overwhelmed many times by His Living Presence and felt His Love vibrations as He walked among us all in that beautiful, wild landscape.



I was struck right away by the close companionship with our Baba family. Seeing West Coast friends who are rarely able to come east to the Myrtle Beach Center (or who travel to India instead) was like reconnecting with long-separated cousins, nieces, and nephews, as well as the older aunties and uncles! We were thrilled to see so many of the

younger generation there as well, some with sweet children of their own.

The first happy surprise was seeing the Meadow Cottage and being invited to stay there. What a gift this building is to the Meherana community! Thanks to the Pearsons, Williamses, Browns, and all the many others who worked to build, furnish, and decorate this treasure of a building, and to all who supported it with donations.

I must mention what wonderful hosts Greg and Michalene were; as well as loving Meherana caretaker Marianne Ashelman, who came right over and welcomed us to the Meadow Cottage, making us very comfortable and treating us like old family. It was so sweet. When it proved quite cold a few nights out there, she brought a sweater and a jacket of her husband's for Tom, who had come unprepared for such nippy nights and early morning weather.

Billy Goodrum, Tom and I were the three guests staying there. It was so enjoyable for us to spend time with Billy whom we knew from Asheville but hadn't had lots of time with before this to just share and schmooze!

Friday evening's highlight for me was the loving kindness which the assembled Baba friends showered upon Tom and

me after his first talk. They assured Tom that his stories brought Baba strongly into our love-feast gathering under the *pandal*, and that meant so much to him. And I enjoyed singing for Baba—a solo and then a duet with Billy.

Tom's Saturday talks were presented chronologically—Saturday morning Tom spoke of 1958, and events of 1962 were shared during the afternoon session. We were thrilled at the gathering's positive feedback. Tom once again relived those sacred years.

I had asked to lead a choir to share my original Meher Baba choral compositions. Choir rehearsals were fluid and ever-changing. I felt Baba exhorting me to do my best while giving up expectation of anything—and that was difficult for me. I am such a perfectionist and am very attached to my musical compositions. Gay and Greg Dunn, veterans of many years of choral concerts at Meherana, yet with little time to prepare and perfect, kept reminding me to enjoy the process of "Do your best and leave to Baba the rest." I tried to do just this and to let go, and in the end I was thrilled with our choir—with its enthusiasm and its wonderful blend of voices and happy hearts! We all wanted to praise Him and please Him through song and I felt we





achieved just this. Thanks to Gay and Greg and the core of that choir for all of your dedicated hard work to make our singing for Baba as good as it could possibly be!

My singalong on Saturday afternoon was super! A high point was having some of the youngest set come up to sing my kids' songs with me. What a happy thrill! I had planned a concert, but felt that a singalong of oldie goldies was what was most needed at that time as I looked out and saw so many of my oldie-goldie friends, and knew that our hearts particularly open up when singing these treasure-songs from the early 1970s!

During the weekend, at a women's

tea held at the Meadow Cottage, I was asked to share stories of my time working at Dilruba for Elizabeth Patterson and Kitty Davy. The Meadow Cottage was filled to capacity with our lovely community of women. It was a joy in itself just to see the number of fabulous women assembled in His Love. I kept the presentation short so that everyone could have tea and share time together afterwards. The tea and goodies were amazing and the helpers and tea wallas worked so hard and created such a perfect cozy atmosphere!

The Dhuni was a special evening event. Tom was honored to light the Dhuni and the communal singing that followed touched my heart deeply. I

especially loved the leadership and participation by the younger set! Hooray for our young gems carrying on in singing His praises!

After the choral presentation and after Tom finished his last talk, the resounding cries of "Avatar Meher Baba Ki Jai" filled me with thankfulness and joy! Thank you all, thank you Beloved Baba!

As the Meherana organizers and worker-wallas went into break-down mode, their focus and dedication moved me. I was really astounded to think of their many days, weeks and months of hard work to make this Sahavas so successful! Thank you Baba in one and all, for such a heart-filled weekend overflowing with Your Love! ❤️

The Story of Meher Baba's Letter to Tom

by Tom Riley

When attending Fred and Ella Winterfeldt's Monday night Baba meetings in New York City, Fred took me aside and suggested that I initiate a correspondence with Adi K. Irani. One letter from Adi remains forever engraved in my memory. It has to do with the deep-seated question of religion. The following scenario leads up to the letter:

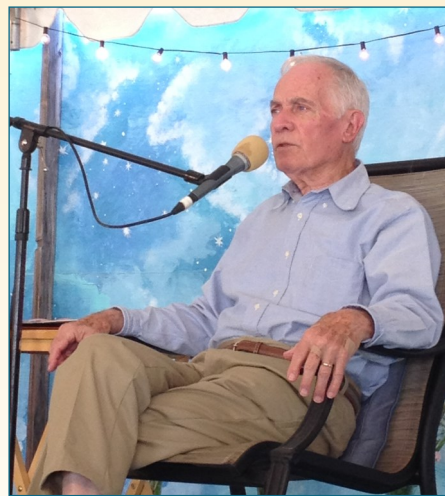
Throughout the summer of 1956, I had the occasion to spend my weekends in Woodstock, New York. One of the taverns there was called The Seahorse, where artists loved to gather. One evening while there, I met a young woman who was a student of painting. She and her husband were Jewish and He was a well-known writer who wrote book reviews for the *New York Times*

newspaper. An event had recently occurred in her husband's life which impacted her so seriously that it caused a schism in their relationship.

The source of her anguish was her husband's connection with an American priest who was a personal friend of the Catholic theologian, Thomas Merton. The psychic energy created by this connection had proved transformative for her husband. Though Jewish, he became captivated by Catholicism and converted from Judaism. She was seriously troubled and confused by his conversion and he was firmly fixed in his new direction. So unhappy and bewildered was she by this event that she had temporarily separated from him.

Later I ran into them and discovered that she had also converted to Catholicism and that they had remarried in the Catholic Church. Though the atmosphere of this connection appeared at the moment to be congenial, I experienced within myself both disappointment and despair.

Returning to my apartment after this encounter, I decided to write to Adi, expressing my grave disappointment



over the entire complex issue of organized religion. It contradicted my firm belief that organized religious structure was unnecessary as a pathway toward the ultimate Reality.

My letter to Adi was read to Meher Baba and He Himself directly answered my concerns and resolved them with the following statement: "Absent yourself from all religious forms, structures, ceremonies, and religious shows of any kind. They are not for you." This statement released me at once from any burden of concern about religious adherence. ❤️



The Magic of the Divine Spark

by Billy Goodrum



I feel very fortunate to write and sing songs of praise and longing for the Beloved. Even more fortunate that I'm invited to perform these

songs to receptive audiences and that some have even found their way into hit films. There is something special about songs that have Baba as the subject and songs that include the repetition of His name. When sung with a group, they seem to raise the frequency of the atmosphere. I have experienced that many times, including at this year's Meherana Spring Sahavas.

But I can't honestly say that I intentionally set out to write Baba music or spiritual music per se. I simply like to write songs, and sometimes they are specific to Baba and sometimes they seem like they aren't. I say "seem" because in my mind I don't classify music as "Baba music" as opposed to "non-Baba music." I think of all music as Baba music because He is in everything—music comes from nowhere as a creative whim and is ultimately invisible. And something that is invisible that can move people emotionally and physically seems to have the magic of the divine spark behind it. That's simply my perspective.

I try my best, with varying results, to think of Baba and focus on Him every day and I hope that influences my music. Even though I think of all music as Baba music, I have on occasion gone into my studio with the intention of writing a Baba song only to fail. I tend to overthink it. Other times I casually pick up my guitar or sit down at the piano and it just happens. A lot of lyrics and ideas come to me on bicycle rides. Very natural and with a

sense of ease. Most of my songs that focus on Baba have been written that way.

Sometimes, when I'm working on a song, I do try to think of a way to include Baba. A quote. An idea. A concept. I have a song entitled "One Big Zero" that happened that way. I was writing about the artificial nature of the online virtual world and remembered Baba's saying that ALL creation is one big zero. So the chorus oscillates from "It's all One Big Zero" to "It's all ones and zeros" in describing all creation and the virtual world respectively.

I have played music since I was four. It's a very natural thing for me and I have the best results writing when I can simply let it flow without intellectualizing it. In Eruch's book, *That's How It Was*, he emphasizes being natural and that "...this is what Baba wanted and what He wants." Eruch also writes that "...we are most unnatural...but Baba wants us to be as natural as children...." So as I slowly, slowly try to become more natural, truthful and authentic in my life, I hope that naturalness informs my music in a way that pleases Baba. ♥

A Memory of Elizabeth Patterson

from Cathy at the Women's Tea

Elizabeth would have me drive her into the Center to check the cabins for every detail in preparation for new guests, always very concerned that bed sheets and pillow cases, etc., were spotlessly clean and laid out properly, and that guests had everything they needed for a comfortable stay.

I was accompanying Elizabeth into the Center to check on a guest coming in for a



restorative stay. The guest was a woman specifically coming to find inspiration for completing a book she was writing. Elizabeth parked in front of her cabin, then instructed me to go get two more pillows with pillowcases. When I looked at Elizabeth

questioningly, she explained that she knew an important detail of this woman's habits—the writer most enjoyed working while sitting up in bed. So Elizabeth anticipated her needs perfectly and silently, with no fuss or show. This impressed me deeply. ♥



Work weekend volunteers

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Welcome to Meherana



Weed eating volunteers, courtesy of the Chois, helped keep fire damage to a minimum.

Upcoming Events 2018

- ◆ Baba’s Birthday—3:00 pm, Sunday, February 25, at the Meadow Cottage, Meherana.
- ◆ Spring Sahavas with Ross and Jenny Keating—Memorial Day Weekend, May 25-28.
- ◆ 9-Day Study Course on Meher Baba’s Tiffin Lectures led by Ward Parks—September 15-23.
- ◆ New Life Sahavas “Entertaining Baba”—October 5-7. All are welcome to come entertain Baba.

For more information regarding Meherana, visit our website:

www.meherana.org

or email: info@meherana.org

Avatar Meher Baba Trust

Meherana participates each year in sending grants to the Avatar Meher Baba Perpetual Public Charitable Trust for the development and ongoing expenses of Meherabad. Donations made to Meherana are tax-deductible. For more information on how you can help the Avatar Meher Baba Trust, please contact:

Kebi Brown
Phone: (209) 742-5053
Email: kebi@meherana.org

Meherana Mission Statement

Meherana is a universal center for spiritual renewal dedicated to Avatar Meher Baba and His principles of active love and service to both the Meher Baba community and all humanity. It is intended for the enhancement and strengthening of spiritual life, without supplanting professed religious convictions or beliefs.

The center is to be made available for Sahavas, meetings, and retreats, both group and individual; and for the development and support of service projects. It is to be organized and implemented according to democratic principles.