

“The present world chaos is the beginning of a spiritual manifestation. For instance, if a man develops a cataract in his eye, it curtains his vision, obstructing things and he cannot see properly. The only remedy is to remove the curtain, which means an operation on the cataract by an eye surgeon. But before the doctor operates he allows the cataract to ripen.

Similarly, the present condition of the world is due to mankind being steeped and drowned in materialism, indulging in self-interest and greed, which has drawn a curtain before the eye, obstructing spiritual vision and development. It has worsened to the point of creating chaos all over the world which is a clear indication of the cataract being quite ripe for surgery.

This is what’s happening in the world today. When the operation is performed, the diseases of ignorance, greed and lust will all be removed and the vision of the world will once again be restored to see things from a spiritual perspective as they are meant to be. The doctor is ready to operate; he waits only for the cataract to ripen!”

Meher Baba, *Awakener Magazine*, Vol. 10, Issue 2, p40

November, 2008 – Vol 1, Issue 4



Meher Baba Center of Northern California  
**INsights**  
Community Newsletter

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### Dear Reader

This month we have an article about the upcoming Lyn Ott painting show and a lovely piece by Jean Ross, based on notes she took during Davana’s talk at the Talbot’s home last August. We invited her to write this for us, and she kindly obliged. Now, we invite you, if you are reading this – to share your thoughts, notes, stories, poems, images, or letters to the editor (that’s Ben!). This community newsletter has over 200 subscribers – including folks from far-flung places like Oklahoma and Ahmednagar!

P.S. Its best to copy and paste the text of your written contributions into the body of your email (rather than attaching text files) and send to [meherbabacenter@gmail.com](mailto:meherbabacenter@gmail.com)

Lisa Greenstein- graphics/ noodge  
Ben Leet- editor





Meher Baba Center of Northern California

# INsights

## Community Newsletter

Davana Brown's Talk at the Talbot's House, August 31, 2008  
photos by Michael Ross

by Jean Ross



Davana Brown



Judith Shotwell

Davana Brown graciously shared her experiences of living in India with Meher Baba's closest Mandali, on this day, August 31, 2008, the 7th year anniversary of Eruch's passing, when he was "lifted up out of illusion" by Meher Baba's hand.

Davana learned about Meher Baba in 1968, but missed meeting and serving Him during His lifetime. This experience sowed the seed of longing in her heart to meet Baba's mandali. She became determined to serve His close ones, hoping that in this way she could learn what it was like to live with Baba when He comes as man, and by trying to be of service to those who served Meher Baba, perhaps, in some way be serving Him. But, it was Baba's grace alone that made Davana's impossible dream possible.

Eruch had said that Baba told the mandali that His "grace preceded Creation and that the fragrance of love is grace." Grace is ever flowing, Baba had told the mandali, but like a man who is thirsty and searching for water, you have to acquire that thirst for Him. Only then will you be prompted to go to the river and drink.

Davana first went to India in 1971. Yet, she didn't get to India to live and serve as a resident until 1981. She learned that whatever our

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# INsights

## Community Newsletter

Davana Brown's Talk at the Talbot's House, August 31, 2008 (cont.)

work may be, the real work is His work on us. "God responds to our heart's longings, but He does it in His way and time. What we think we want and expect is not always what He may wish for us."

Eruch frequently said, "None can cross His [Baba's] threshold unless and until He wishes it" to the many newcomers who came to Mandali Hall, including Davana, and she had to wait a decade before Baba brought her to India to live as a spiritual trainee. She first worked in Dr. Goher's clinic at Meherazad, dressing wounds, giving injections, running whatever errands she was asked to do including the making of home made q-tips out of little twigs that were cleaned and individually wrapped with cotton. She was on call to the Mandali for anything they might need, like mending Mehera's skirt, sewing on a button for Mani, or getting the mail for Eruch.

During the early eighties, Eruch had his first cataract surgery. That event was the beginning of Davana's working relationship serving Eruch. He needed a lot of mandatory rest, so Davana read to him while he rested. Eruch loved the stories of the Great Ones, such as Shri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Ram, Krishna, and so forth. Eruch had grown up with these stories because as a child his mother would tell them to him as bedtime stories. Davana was happy and eager to read and learn these stories because she had no prior knowledge of them. So while Eruch rested, Davana read to him, and she shared with us how every so often Eruch would comment to her about the atmosphere around Ramakrishna, and how similar it was to the atmosphere around Baba. He began giving her a tiny glimpse of what the spiritual life entails.

One day as she read to him a story about a young man who had come to the master to renounce the world, Eruch turned to her and said, "Don't just read these words, imbibe these words, remember them. I want you to inculcate the meaning behind them. Are you hearing them, are you picturing them? Remember, nothing and no one is your own but Him." When Eruch had his 2nd eye surgery, she was again called to help him during his convalescence. This time, Eruch told Davana to "bring me my clipboard," and he began dictating letters for her to write for him. But Davana had no secretarial skills. She didn't even know how to type properly, so she wrote the letters by hand. Being a secretary was never something she wanted or expected to do, and she had no training. But when she would go home to the Trust Office at night, she would practice typing.

Eruch had told Davana when she first started working with him that Baba had told him to always remember to let whatever he heard "go in one ear and out the other." If she was to work for him as his secretary, she must remember this, too. And this she did.

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## Community Newsletter

Davana Brown's Talk at the Talbot's House, August 31, 2008 (cont.)

In those days, there was a lot of correspondence that came to the mandali, and thus they were privy to the entire spectrum of the human condition. Eruch explained that Baba had told them, "Everything that has a beginning, has an end."

Eruch lived in a state of readiness. He meticulously kept everything in a specific place in his room, so that, even in the dark, he could get whatever was needed to serve Baba in an instant. He still kept everything the same way he had during Baba's lifetime. He had a clipboard at each end of his bed, along with pens, stapler, paper clips, stamps and stationery.

When Eruch realized Davana was hand writing all the letters he exclaimed, "You don't type?!" He hit his forehead with his hand and in mock exasperation he exclaimed, "Baba, what kind of a secretary have you given me?!"

Davana was new to this work and life, but from the beginning Eruch would drive home to her what it meant to live that life. One day while she was taking his dictation, someone outside the Manonash cabin began calling out her name urgently. The call was so insistent and commanding that she jumped up in the middle of taking Eruch's dictation to answer the call. In her haste, all the correspondence she had been working on fell to the floor, leaving papers strewn everywhere. When she returned, she apologized to Eruch telling him that the message wasn't so urgent after all. As she quickly picked up the papers, she said in frustration, "I just don't know why I do that - why I immediately jump up like that."

Eruch listened and then said, "Do you really want to know what is wrong with you? All right, I will tell you. You are trying too hard to please everyone, and the result is that you please no one! So why don't you begin to try just to please Meher Baba." Then with a little smile on his face he said, "I had to learn this lesson, too. Would you like to hear how I learned this?"

Eruch then shared his experiences of being with Baba when they were in Bangalore on the Blue Bus tours. Eruch was new to Baba and young. Baba had given him the duty to keep the masts and their quarters clean. Each morning Baba would come to work with the masts, but when He would inspect the room Eruch had just cleaned, he was never satisfied. It seemed that Eruch could never please Meher Baba. Finally after a number of days, Eruch lost his composure and blurted out to Baba in frustration, "I can never please you no matter how hard I try!" Baba told Eruch, "Yes, you will never be able to please me until you are no more, so just strive NOT to displease me."

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Davana Brown's Talk at the Talbot's House, August 31, 2008 (cont.)

Eruch taught Davana many things, most especially that no one can dare to say that "He lived with Meher Baba or served Him." Eruch said that all the mandali who had lived with Baba realized this. "It was He who gave me the strength to serve Him."

As Eruch left Mandali Hall for the last time, he turned to the crowd watching him and gave us the message to remember for our lifetime.

"Remember this: If ever anyone asks you, 'Who is Meher Baba?' Baba has given us the proper answer. Baba says, 'He is the One who provokes this question in you! He is the Being of all Beings!'"

Davana said that Eruch always wanted the attention to be on Meher Baba, not on himself. He was only the slave. And, as the slave of the Avatar, all that he wanted for each and every one of us is to just "be determined to be His."

Eruch said, "It doesn't matter who you are or what you are as long as you are His. He will pick you up from whatever pithole you may find yourself in and carry you through to the end, if only you remain His. Nothing else matters, but to be determined to be Baba's."

Jean Ross  
September 30, 2008

Lyn Ott Painting Exhibit at the El Cerrito Center

by Lisa Greenstein



*"Painting is a great art because of its silence. It is in its way a small part of that great silence, His silence."*

— Lyn Ott, quoted from his book, *In Quest of the Face of God*.

There will be an exhibit of paintings by Lyn Ott (some painted in collaboration with Phyllis Silverman Ott) at the Meher Baba Center in El Cerrito on Friday, November 14, 2008, 7–9 pm, in conjunction with the Stockton Avenue Art Stroll.

These paintings are on loan from local Baba-lovers just for the Stroll, so this is a wonderful opportunity to view a number of them together.

Lyn was a friend in Baba to many of us, and visited California a few times, giving talks to our local group and at the Los Angeles Sahavas.

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Lyn Ott Painting Exhibit at the El Cerrito Center (cont.)

You can see clips of a sahavas talk on YouTube at [Lyn/ LA Sahavas talk](#)

Lyn Ott (Lynfield George Ott, 1926 – 1998) was educated at the Rhode Island School of Design and had several successful one-man shows in Soho (NYC) during the early 1960's. At that time he was considered an abstract expressionist or an action-painter. Ott was well-versed in the visual ideas of twentieth century abstract painting, such as contracting the illusion of three dimensional space. In 1965, Lyn and Phyllis had a meeting with Meher Baba in India during which Baba allowed Lyn to gaze at Him for over an hour. Subsequently, Lyn painted Baba exclusively. He also became deeply interested in a fourth dimension where the viewer enters by intuition into a higher spatial experience.

Ott was not attempting to depict Meher Baba realistically. He strove to capture the spiritual divinity that emanates from Meher Baba's image, so as to bring the living presence of the spiritual master directly to us. He challenges our consciousness to be in the 'now' of seeing.

An extraordinary thing about Lyn Ott's paintings of Baba is that they were painted during the later phase of his degenerative eye disease, retinitis pigmentosa. As Lyn's vision failed, he continued to paint Meher Baba's image using floodlights and placing his face inches from the canvas. The last of Lyn's over 500 paintings of Meher Baba was done in 1978, after which he was completely blind. He spent the final twenty years of his life sharing his ideas, paintings and good humor with the many visitors to Meher Spiritual Center in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina.

The paintings on view either belong to the Center or are borrowed from local followers of Meher Baba and will not be available for purchase.

**'Revelation'** by Lyn Ott (from In Quest of the Face of God)

A glimpse is but a fleeting moment of impression amidst the whirlwind of life.  
To look is to exercise the faculty of sight in the conscious effort of seeing.  
To see is to grasp inwardly by means of vision.  
To envisage is to be lifted up through vision into the realm of art and beauty.  
But to gaze is to burn and burn and be consumed.  
Yet, from just a glance, a pilgrim went blind in having set sail, face  
on, into the all-consuming imageless blaze of a rising Sun.

YouTube clip of Lyn's meeting with Baba in 1965:

[Lyn's meeting with Baba](#)



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## Community Newsletter

Poet's Corner

*Songs of a Modern Disciple*, p 91

### While Man Disputes

by Josephine Esther Ross

While man disputes,  
Sweet nature rules the day,  
And scatters songs and flow'rs  
Along the way.

And still the roses bloom,  
The winds shall blow,  
And mountains silent stand,  
Beneath their snow.

And still the sun will shine,  
God's life to bring;  
And still at dawn and evening,  
Birds will sing.

What matter Democrat,  
Republican,  
Or any other group  
Dividing man?

Beneath our hedge  
The violets grow in May,  
And still shall grow

### Announcements

#### **Center Library Note:**

Would you like to be a "patron"? We have a library for your reading pleasure and convenience. Our library is housed upstairs in a book case at the MBCNC Center on Stockton Street. We have had 14 borrowers over the past year. You may access a list of the holdings at the web page [meherbabameherbaba.org](http://meherbabameherbaba.org); look for library, and open the book or video pdf files. When you visit the Center remember to check out the library books. We would also like donations. For a list of books we need see the section at the end of the library holdings. Contact the Newsletter about donations.

#### **Fundraising Committee**

The Center's Fundraising Committee needs your help. Bring your creative ideas and work to implement them in a Baba loving team effort! Committee meetings to be arranged as projects dictate. For more information contact Celia: [cloffice@comcast.net](mailto:cloffice@comcast.net)

#### **Meditation hour:**

The center will be open on Tuesday evenings, 7pm – 8pm for silent meditation.

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Meher Baba Center of Northern California

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## Community Newsletter

### Announcements (cont.)

#### **The Trust**

All who wish to share in the commitment laid down by Meher Baba through the Trust should contact Jack Mormon, [ambkj@aol.com](mailto:ambkj@aol.com)

#### **Meher Baba Information**

For introductory information about Avatar Meher Baba, e-mail [MeherBabal@aol.com](mailto:MeherBabal@aol.com), or write to:

P.O. Box 1101,  
Berkeley, CA 94701.

Meher Baba Center of Northern California  
6923 Stockton Avenue  
El Cerrito, California 94530

(510) 525-4779

#### **Meher Baba Center of No.CA website**

Meeting schedule can be downloaded in pdf form from website (above)

Center is open for drop-in and book store most Saturdays 1 p.m. – 4 p.m.  
(check website for details)

#### **Directions to our Center:**

From Highway 80, Interstate 5, going north or south, in El Cerrito, take the Central Avenue exit. Exit east, toward the hills. Cross San Pablo Avenue. Go under the BART train tracks, and less than a block after the tracks, turn left on Richmond Avenue. Head north on Richmond Avenue until Stockton Avenue (the first stop light), turn right on Stockton. About two blocks onward, the Center is located on the left side of the street. Address above.

#### **More Local Meetings**

Lafayette – Sunday Afternoons

Monthly meeting at the home of Kirk and Marlene Allen.

Please call to confirm. (925) 284-4066

Sacramento – Several Gatherings Each Month

Times and locations vary.

Contact Mike and Jean Ross, (916) 359-2954 or

Cheryl Johnson (559) 312-3751 for details.

See more information on the [website](#).

Contact for messages to newsletterwallas: [meherbabacenter@gmail.com](mailto:meherbabacenter@gmail.com)

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