



INsights

Community Newsletter

The God-Man (Avatar), however, may be said to be both the Lord and servant of the universe at one and the same time. As the One who showers His spiritual bounty on all in measureless abundance, He is the Lord of the universe. As the One who continuously bears the burden of all and helps them through numberless spiritual difficulties, He is the servant of the universe. Just as He is Lord and servant in one, the God-Man is also the supreme Lover and the matchless Beloved.

Discourses of Meher Baba, The Man-God III, page 287

March, 2010

Vol 3, Issue 1

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Dear Reader

The editors feel very fortunate to be able to bring you this month an accounting of the recent Urban Sahavas where Diane 3B Dimpfl Cobb related her stories of meeting and being with Meher Baba during the 1950s and 1960s. Our friend Cherri Nelson wrote the majority of the text, recording out of memory what she heard on the first day that Diane spoke. Then Diane went over the text for accuracy. We hope you enjoy Diane's story and that these Urban Sahavas continue to be so rewarding.

Besides Diane's story, Ron Greenstein also provides us with a memory of the recent Amartithi celebration at the El Cerrito center.

This newsletter (and past issues) will eventually be available in pdf form on the www.MeherBabaMeherBaba.org website.

Newsletterwallas: Ben Leet, Lisa Greenstein Cherri Nelson



Diane Cobb - 3B's Story

by Cherri Nelson
edited by Diane Cobb

On Saturday, September 19, in El Cerrito Diane Cobb, who was once renamed by Baba as 3B, "Baba's Beloved Baby", shared her memories with us. She began telling of her dad's, Lud Dimpfl's, discovery of and coming to Baba. This also led to 3B's introduction to Meher Baba in the 1950's as a young child.

Her father had been brought up in the Catholic Apostolic Church, a church that believed in the imminent return of Christ. By the time Lud had finished college and was working as a chemist for Standard Oil, he became interested in atheism, and enthusiastically rejected the idea of God. There at Standard Oil where he worked he met Don Stevens, and Don and he would have friendly arguments about the existence of God, pro and con. Lud respected Don as a scientist and was surprised to find him championing God! Eventually He learned that Don was a Sufi with a San Francisco woman, Ivy Duce, as his Murshida or spiritual teacher, and this position was given her by a man in India, a certain Meher Baba. He was, according to her, the living Christ! Lud was on fire with a wish to learn more. After meeting Murshida Duce, Lud learned all about Baba and became as ardent a lover of Baba as before he'd been an atheist. Even Diane, his small daughter, heard a little about Baba, and was attracted at once.

As many know, Lud eventually joined Sufism Reoriented, a sufi organization that had been reoriented (or redirected) by Meher Baba. A growing closeness to God is its goal

Lud once brought home two framed photos of Baba signed by Him, and allowed his small daughter to pick which one he would get to keep, by putting both behind his back and letting her choose one. (Lud liked one, but Diane liked the other.) Bingo! She picked the one she liked, the one with long hair, and she felt sure Baba had pulled this off - He was in cahoots with her.

When Lud eventually brought Diane to meet Murshida Duce as a child, the girl felt that she knew her already, and knew that Murshida Duce was also someone very special. When she would go with her father to the Sufi center she would thereafter attach herself to Murshida Duce, following her everywhere. Murshida, she related, was at first a little startled by it, and somewhat cool, but accepting, and often allowed her to be by her side when Diane (later 3B) was there.

Life for 3B began to center around news from India and anticipation of when Meher Baba would come to the west and America. She remembered feeling excited when news finally came of his impending visit to the United States. When Baba arrived in San Francisco in 1956 and she first saw Him, Murshida had given her a yellow garland from the Sufis to put on Him, and she remembers running to greet Him. And, subsequently each time she saw Him during that visit, Baba showered Diane with much love and attention. (It was on this trip that He gave her the nickname BBB - "Baba's Beloved Baby" - later shortened to 3B.) It turned out to be significant that she'd always run to Baba during that trip.



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Diane Cobb - 3B's Story (Cont.)

by **Cherri Nelson**
edited by **Diane Cobb**

3B then told of how she had hesitated when first seeing Him on the next two trips with the family, once to Myrtle Beach in 1958 and then to India in 1962, to be with Baba. In 1958, this may have been because she was trying to understand, as an older girl, what she had joyfully embraced as a little one. But by the time she met Baba in India in 1962, she understood that the real love of God is demanding and is not so easy as it at first looks. Baba can be warm at one moment, very cool the next, as His work demands, as she learned in Myrtle Beach.

On arriving in India in 1962, Baba's close woman disciple, Mehera, called her at the Turf Club Hotel in Poona to come meet Baba early, before the darshan, shortly after 3B had arrived with her family. Arriving at Guruprasad, 3B had two suitcases that she hadn't yet put away, one in each hand. She (somewhat dramatically) threw them down, then walked slowly toward Baba, playing for time. She realized that love for Baba can lead to heartache, and was feeling a bit careful. When she neared Baba, she saw He had terrifically aged. He had been through a lot. He looked up at her and said, "You should have run to Me." She felt He was telling her that you should always run to Him, no matter what you feel - or, even, don't feel.

During the San Francisco tour of 1956 there was one of several incidents that demonstrated how Baba looks out for everyone, even while apparently favoring one person in particular.

Baba was about to go on a car tour and 3B had been invited along. But her brother Bill was left standing on the curb with others, feeling left out, a witness to a lot of attention being poured on his big sister. At the last minute before leaving, Baba invited Bill also, and Bill got to sit right next to Him, and he became aware that Baba cared how he felt - a memory that has stuck with her brother all his life.

During the time of Baba's stay in San Francisco in 1956, 3B's dad, Lud Dimpfl, often was able to be Baba's driver. 3B said her Dad was a pretty fast driver to begin with, but Baba often asked Lud to go still faster, making even her Dad nervous. And, she remembers her ride with Baba at breakneck speed down Lombard Street on Russian Hill, the "crookedest street in the world" and San Francisco.

3B's mother, Bea Dimpfl, (one B Dimpfl?) did not like this spiritual man who was disrupting the life she had planned with her beautiful family and life in the community. She resented that Lud had become enamored with this guru. And, Lud wanted to go live with Baba, leaving his family, and mother knew of this desire. But 3B adored and loved Baba. During that San Francisco visit, their family and those who were traveling with Baba had various apartments near to Baba at the Holiday Lodge on Van Ness Avenue. 3B was enjoying the fact that she had finally allowed her hair to grow longer. However, her mother had decided it was time for a permanent, which also meant cutting her hair. Horrors! And, further, mother firmly told 3B not to go running off to tell Baba about this either.



Diane Cobb - 3B's Story (Cont.)

**by Cherri Nelson
edited by Diane Cobb**

After she had made her point, mother left for something. Murshida Duce's daughter Charmian came by with little Tara Frey, to invite 3B to go off and have some fun. She couldn't, of course. Her mother had told her to stay right there. However, a short time later, before her mother returned, the girls came running back breathlessly to tell her that Baba wanted to see her immediately. Of course given the choice between mother and Baba, Baba won. When 3B went to Baba, He told her to tell her mother she was not to cut her hair. So that was the end of the permanent. 3B kept her hair long for a very long time, until she finally decided, when older, that Baba hadn't meant all her life. Poor mother.

Lud eventually had his opportunity to ask Baba to let him join him for good. Before he was able to broach this, however, his wife headed him off at the pass by interrupting the interview with a demand that her own needs be met. Baba paused and asked her for what she would like to ask of Baba. Fearful of the future and of raising the children alone, she shrewdly asked Baba for insurance and a bigger house, plus a college education for her four children. Baba said granted! Mother got a bigger, wonderful house, and Lud stayed as provider and father to his family.

Four years earlier, at the Men's Meeting in India, Lud had come with the idea of asking Baba to let him stay with Him and not return to America. When Lud finally had a private interview with Him, Baba asked him if he had a request of Him. But, Lud said his mind went blank at the question. Baba asked twice if he had a request, and when Lud couldn't remember the second time, Baba told him to sit and contemplate on it. But Lud never remembered his request to join Baba during that whole interview. So, Lud was stuck and had to return to the U.S. to fulfill his duty as a family man.

3B told of a visit Baba once made to her home in 1958 when she had not been there because she was still in Myrtle Beach at the end of the Sahavas period. Baba was in route to Australia and stopped over at Lud's family house in Marin. When 3B returned home and heard about Baba's visit, she learned that Baba had stayed in her room and slept in her bed, also leaving for her, wrapped in a kleenex, some clippings from having His mustasche trimmed in the family kitchen. Much later Mehera told 3B how rare it was for Baba to sleep in a bed other than His own. Perhaps because Baba had been distant from 3B during His Myrtle Beach visit, Baba "threw her a bone" in this way.

Another loving story was about a sadra that was kept inside the altar at the Sufi center. Before meetings, 3B as a little girl, would open the side door of the altar and thrust her hands upon it, gently squeezing it. One time her father saw this habit of hers and told her that the sadra was for everyone, not just her and not to touch it anymore because her hands were probably dirty anyway. This was shortly after she had met Baba for the first time in 1956, and she was already corresponding with Mehera as instructed by Baba. Shortly after being told not to touch the sadra, a package came with a letter from Mehera. Mehera wrote that



Diane Cobb - 3B's Story (Cont.)

by **Cherri Nelson**
edited by **Diane Cobb**

she had asked Baba if there was something 3B would really like to have, and Baba told her. In the package was a sadra worn by Baba. And Mehera wrote that it was not washed, as she knew 3B would like it best that way.

So it's an often-heard story in the Meher Baba community of the loving attention Baba gives when first being with Him. But, then later, feeling left out, plotting to be nearer to Him again and sometimes being just downright jealous. Such was true for 3B. She told several stories on this theme from her family's trip to the Myrtle Beach Sahavas in 1956. Charles Haynes had become the new "golden boy"! Yes, the jealousy ran rampant for her. 3B had an Aunt Elinor, introduced to Baba early on through Lud, who also became an ardent Baba lover. 3B and Aunt Elinor, who had joined in on that trip to Myrtle Beach, became co-conspirators in plotting many ways to get nearer to Baba.

Aunt Elinor and 3B would walk up and down by the entry road to Baba's house inside the wooden stockade there, the house built for Him by Elizabeth Patterson. They waited for Baba's car to come through on His way to the morning meetings in the barn. Sometimes the wait was pretty long. They were hoping for a smile or a wave. Sometimes they got this, but not always. One time they walked up and down in the rain for some length of time. Eventually Baba's car came by, and they were spotted, soaking wet. Baba sternly demanded what they thought they were doing (!), and ordered them into the car! 3B says she remembers it being one of the sweetest times with Baba ever. However, disappointedly they were promptly dropped off before Baba reached His destination.

In their plots and schemes to be near to Baba, one was to create a club, inspired by a club some of the men there had created. There was a popular shirt worn by the men during those years with the small alligator logo sewn on them. The men organized an Alligator Club. The girls had been at a show put on by this club for Baba, which had entertained Him greatly. And the men had made Him an honorary member, crowning Him as head of the club. So, !, 3B and Aunt Elinor decided to create the Stinker's Club. 3B said they even made up little cards to give to members with a cartoon picture of a skunk on it. Being such a talented artist the skunk was very cute. She showed an enlargement of one card she'd done for Eruch.

Having created their club, they kept trying to sneak in to get an audience with Baba. Earlier, they had tried several times to go in behind others who had an interview with Baba, only to be caught and told to leave. Now, again, they lurked by the door of the Interview Cabin, but the constant presence of the Mandali door-watchers foiled them. They finally requested Adi (a Mandali doorwatcher) to ask Baba if they could tell Him about their club. Adi told them that Baba had said they could come in to see Him anytime they "asked"! That provided a laugh for everyone, of course.

They got their interview, and Baba was pleased with their club and let them make Him an honorary member. In fact, they made Him president, with the title of, The

(Continued on next page.)



Diane Cobb - 3B's Story (Cont.)

by **Cherri Nelson**
edited by **Diane Cobb**

Biggest Stinker, which made Him laugh so hard, one could hear it, through His nose.

Back when 3B was 13, it was announced that there was to be a Sahavas in India, but no children under 16 were to be allowed. 3B was 13 and very disappointed. After Baba returned to India, she wrote to Mehera and Mani and requested they ask Baba if she could come. The reply was that Baba said that of course 3B was to come. However, this Sahavas was later cancelled.

Meher Baba instructed 3B as a young girl to correspond by letter with Mehera and she shared many of these on Sunday, September 20th. Although Baba had asked her to write Mehera, she was more attracted to writing Baba's funny sister Mani, who she began writing at the same time.

Mani kept hinting to 3B that Mehera always comes first. But 3B, in love with the vivid personality of Mani, did not realize the luck she had to be writing to the consort of the Avatar, the woman who represented the highest love for Him in human form. 3B kept writing more to Mani than Mehera until, after a few months, Baba sent a telegram from India to California putting a stop to her writing Mani anymore. Not only that, but a letter from Baba followed, telling 3B not to even mention the names of anyone in India in her subsequent letters to Mehera. 3B never knew if Baba ever told Mehera why she stopped writing Mani, but she believes He did not.

3B contacted her family members to add their impressions and memories of Meher Baba to share, which in turn inspired memories she had forgotten. An interesting aspect of her family is that her brother, now an agnostic, and originally very antagonistic toward Baba, now remembers Meher Baba as being that very kind, gentle, wonderful man from India. She told of a trip the family made to Pune to the Pumpkin House, Baba's home when growing up as a child in India. Western devotees there for the East-West Gathering filed in line to take the tour of the house. She remembered that when her brother went into the room with the rock, where Baba had repeatedly banged His head to bring down His consciousness, she was very aware that he came back out very changed. His hands were like ice, and he said he felt what Baba had felt, as though "worlds were exploding" in his head. Although Science has since talked him out of God, Bill was the one who prodded 3B into going to the Great Darshan of 1969 when, because of a new baby and a husband who forbade it, she was not sure she could attend.

3B's beautiful paintings of Baba were cycled through and shown on a blank wall behind her during her talk. She talked about some of the paintings and their inspiration. Some faces and places were painted from memory or imagination and some from photos. One painting of the New Life, 1949-1952, was painted from various photos of the members accompanying Baba on those journeys. It is a beautiful painting with Baba in the foreground, one of the Mandali driving the wagon, a horse being led, donkeys running free, the four women walking behind them, while the other Mandali surge forward behind Baba.

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Meher Baba Center of Northern California

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Diane Cobb - 3B's Story (Cont.)

by **Cherri Nelson**
edited by **Diane Cobb**

3B said that Baba was not always the ingratiating, nice man she had initially met. Sometimes He could act distant and removed. She does not know if Baba would even glance at her if there were an occasion to see Him today. I understand that clearly to indicate Baba's way of working on our egos and sanskaras, wiping them and the mind clean.

During Sunday's talk, October 20, 3B talked about her on going correspondence with Mehera. Our correspondent Cherri Nelson, though attending, only remembered and wrote the many wonderful stories recited by 3B from Saturday's talk. So the editors are unable to bring you an account of Sunday. We thank Cherri and 3B for enriching our lives.

El Cerrito Amartithi

by **Ron Greenstein**

During the day following the gathering commemorating Avatar Meher Baba's forty-first Amartithi held at the Meher Baba Center in El Cerrito, it occurred to me that those who did not attend might appreciate hearing a bit about what took place. On Saturday evening, January 30 at 7:30PM the setting up and gathering began. Chairs were arranged in a circle, which as time passed grew close to maximum size. Refreshments were set out. We eased into the evening with introductions and chitchat. Then more focussed activities began which included singing. Some songs had been planned and were accompanied with guitar, and then other songs were spontaneously selected from songbooks and sung acapella. Personally, I had not seen this much enthusiasm or participation for singing along for quite a long time. The suggestion to read The Avatar from Discourses was taken up by the group in the pass around fashion. Then a poem was read out.

At the point where we took a refreshment break, the circle had grown quite full — just the right number with no chair unfilled. I am always awed at how Baba manages to do this. Those attending came from as far away as South Pasadena, Davis, Healdsburg, and Sunnyvale. During the break a few left, and others arrived. We adjusted the seating so as to view a couple of videos, one of which was Baba in Greenwich Village in the 30's.

At 10:30 we began observing a fifteen-minute period of silence that coincided with the silence kept by those celebrating in Meherabad. The silence was followed by prayers and artis. This year the entombment film was not shown. However, as it turned out, among the last to arrive was a lovely Baba family who has recently moved to Sunnyvale from Seattle, they included Meher Prasad (with wife, Satya and their two sleeping children), who, as a two-year old, had attended with his father during Baba's week of entombment.

All in all it was a relaxed evening of charming moments, warm family feelings, and Baba presence. Most important of all, and I'll go out on a limb here, I think Baba was pleased.



O Meher, a wonderful quote of Yours
from a half century ago.

But I prefer the gesture You made
this morning over breakfast –

the gesture for love and forgiveness:
a welling up from the heart, an overflowing...
pulled from the chest by Your graceful hands.

After all these years, I no longer come to You for guidance.

I come to You for companionship.
You give what cannot be taught...nor learned.

Courage, poise, faith, patience – these qualities
do not enter the heart through ear nor eye.

Awakening involves being broken open.

What words can accomplish that?

O child of God, words of the Avatar are precious gems,
but His companionship is the treasure without equal.



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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; 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.

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

Meher Baba Information

For introductory information about Avatar Meher Baba, e-mail info@MeherBabaInformation.org or write to:

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Meher Baba Center of Northern CA website

Meeting schedules can be downloaded in pdf form from website (above).
The 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 (first stop light), turn right on Stockton. About two blocks onward, the Center is located on the left side of the street. Address on previous page.

More Local Meetings (Continued on next page)



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Announcements (cont.)

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 Marilyn Buehler (916) 812-9496 info@premsay.com

Los Gatos – Sunday Evenings

At the home of Clint Snyder

Call (408) 395-6865

Sonoma County - Arti happens once a month,

Usually the first Sunday. Locations vary.

Call Ellen Van Allen at (707) 528-0357 for specific information.

See more information on the website.

Contact for messages to newsletterwalla: meherbabacenter@gmail.com

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