



“You also believe that I am God. You do love me, I know. But it was very difficult to love me, to respect me, to believe in me, to have the conviction that I am God, for one who had played marbles with me, for one who had quarreled with me, who had sat beside me at the same desk in school. Don, do you follow what I say? (Don Stevens nodded). It was very difficult for them, for my old school friend, and my own family, but they love me . . . they are ready to give their lives for me.”

*Awakener Magazine, Vol. 4, #2,
page 25-26, July 21, 1956*



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This newsletter (and past issues) will eventually be available in pdf form on the **Center Website**, above.

Dear Reader

On April 26, 2011, Don E. Stevens passed away. In this month's newsletter we present some passages from his auto-biography and memoir Meher Baba, The Awakener of the Age.

The Calendar for group events is at <http://www.meherbabameherbaba.org>.

Events for the next two months include ongoing Sunday afternoon discussion groups; an evening with Michael LePage, June 6; a panel discussion on Baba and Healing on June 11; a Dhuni and Potluck, June 12; a Community Workshop with Daniel Stone on June 18 and 19; a Saturday afternoon walking visit to a replica of St. Francis's porziuncula chapel, June 25; the Annual General Meeting on Sunday, June 26; Inner Path Research exploring written text about inner path experiences, July 23; Adrienne Shamszad celebrates American song writers and poets on July 2 before the July 4th holiday; a visit and fundraiser with Dr. Michael Ramsden for the Meher Clinic near Meherazad, July 24; Brian Drygas will present his investigation into the saints in July, date to be announced; two camping trips, one to Mt. Lassen, July 21-24, the other to Yosemite, August 11-15. The new and improved Calendar can be found at the following web page,

<https://sites.google.com/a/meherbabameherbaba.org/mbcnc/home>

A thorough listing of Meher Baba web sites made their debut recently. It can be found at:

<https://sites.google.com/site/babawebsites/>

Our Web Genie!

Check out the newly updated website, with Thanks to Jeanne Mojé MacDonald (link on sidebar).

Newsletterwallas: Ben Leet, Lisa Greenstein Cherri Nelson



Inner Path Research

by Brian Drygas

Exploring written text about inner path experiences has been a project that I have been researching for the last three years. I have gathered quotes and stories from Meher Baba, the Bible, St. Theresa of Avila, Paramahansa Yogananda, Rumi, Ajahn Sumedho, Hafiz, The Upanishads, Kabir, Guru Nanak, and Edward Salem Michael. Others will be added as well. This presentation consists primarily of quotes on slides with pictures and a few graphs included.

Topics cover experiences on the inner path. Among the items covered in the presentation are:



- God is within
- The difference between consciousness and awareness
- Entering the first plane and the overlap of the gross and subtle in the first plane
- How is the subtle seen?
- The number and descriptions of inner sounds on the planes
- The angle of vision in relationship to the inner eye
- How the consciousness of the planes in past lives affect future lives.

Below is a quote from Saint Teresa of Avila that is included in the presentation:

"God is everywhere;
Where God is, there is heaven,
And the fullness of glory.
Like St. Augustine,
Who found God within himself,
We have no need to 'go to heaven'
Or speak in a loud voice.
He is so near that He will hear us,
However quietly we speak;
We have only to find a place
Where we can be alone,
And look upon Him present within us."



Inner Path Research (Cont.)

by Brian Drygas

The belief that "we are all veiled" has been brought up. One response to this is that clearly Filis Frederick and Esfandiar Vesali were not veiled and they were very close to Meher Baba. Lud Dimpfl made a statement where he said "we". Meher Baba said "Say 'I', not 'we'". The full story is on page 4443 of Lord Meher.

This research has led me to insights about some concepts and understandings that help piece things together. I will be sharing this presentation at the Meher Baba Center in El Cerrito Center on Saturday evening July 23rd at 7:00 P.M.

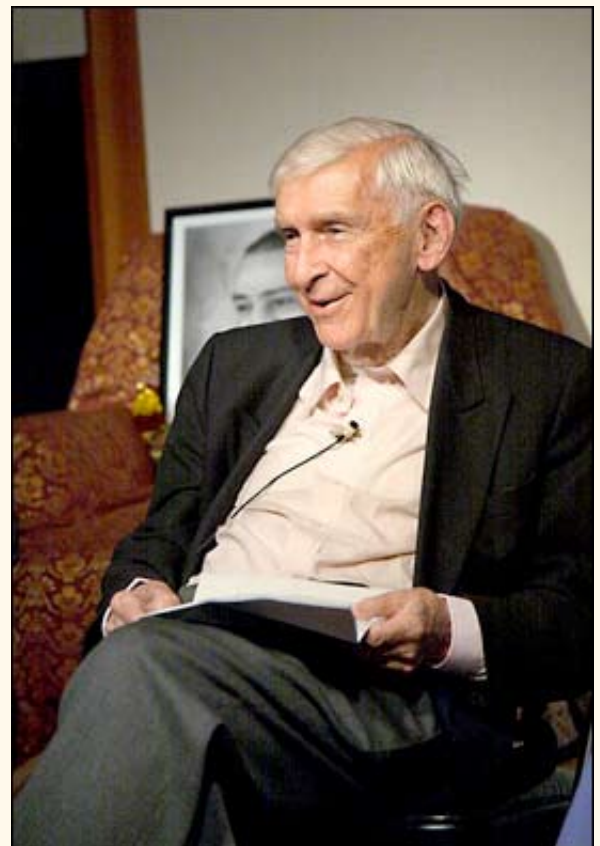
Don Stevens

by Ben Leet

Don Stevens passed away last month, April 2011. He had been an infrequent visitor to the Bay Area, but when he came he would seek to draw out from his audience as much as he tried to pour in. The discussions would begin tentatively as he would approach some issue, reflect about it, call for comments, lead the talk into a depth or clarity that opened up the imagination and mind, and after an hour or so bring it to an end. I always had the feeling of being treated with velvet kindness and slightly uplifted after an evening with Don Stevens. It was special.

Choosing a portion of his writings to present as an example of his manner of speaking was a difficult search. He wrote many books including the great first book *Listen, Humanity* in which he claims the role of editor and narrator, though co-author with Baba also works. His other books include *Some Results*, *Man's Search For Certainty*, *Listen! The New Humanity*, and *The Inner Path in the New Life*.

He also co-edited, and essentially interviewed Eruch, Mehera, Mani and Meheru, to produce *Tales from the New Life* with Meher Baba. I'm missing some of the more recent books in this list, *The Three Bridges*, and he contributed to *Meher Baba's Gift of Intuition and Sexuality on the Spiritual Path*, and he was featured



Don Stevens, photo by Doug Frank



Don Stevens (Cont.)

by Ben Leet

in a booklet of correspondence between him and Bhau. He also performed a major role in editing *God Speaks*.

I chose a passage from his major autobiography and memoir, *Meher Baba, the Awakener of the Age*. In his narrative voice Don very deliberately tries to reduce the distance between himself and his audience. Here are two examples of his conversational tone: "Without trying to argue the logic of this last, suppose for the moment that Meher Baba did indeed know what he was talking about . . .", or "To this day I don't know exactly what happened. I felt wonderful and managed to get through the whole day without collapsing." This next passage sums up his memoir, "There were many inspiring as well as hilarious episodes that occurred in connection with Baba's presence in my life. These went on constantly, even when I was in a far corner of the globe. He had a way of tying all events in one's life back into his presence, into courses of action that in one way and another he had set in motion. From the first time I set eyes on his physical presence, the manner in which the main currents of life and even the smaller streams tied back into his being, his presence, his words, his humor, showed that he was the master and that he had taken on a major responsibility for the working out of the important patterns of my life. I will describe how this happened shortly."

Below is his account of his first meeting with Meher Baba in 1952 in New York City, near Central Park, at the home of Ivy Duce, the Murshida of Sufism Reoriented. Don had flown on a commercial 'prop' plane from San Francisco the night before.

Arriving at the familiar entry to the apartment building in which the Duces lived, I went up in the elevator and rang the bell. Charmie, the Duces' daughter, opened the door for me and asked at once if I would like to go up to her bedroom to wait, as Baba was not yet ready to see me. Several people were with him at the moment.

I went up the rather narrow stairs and into Charmie's bedroom, which I saw at once had two girls already in it. I knew them, not well, and was disappointed that obviously I would have to make small talk instead of being quiet, which I longed for. To my surprise they nodded and went back at once to a busy discussion that I had obviously interrupted. Or at least they pretended it that way. In any case, I was thankful.



Don Stevens (Cont.)

by Ben Leet

As I sat on Charmie's bed my mind went completely blank. I thought of none of the things that I would have to be sure to bring up. My mind refused to function. But what, what is this-the beginning of a cold? My throat suddenly felt sore and scratchy. No doubt I had picked up a bug in the plane overnight. And what a hell of a time for this to happen!

A few seconds later the soreness of my throat became almost unbearable, and I wondered at the rapidity and the force of this commencing infection. Damn, damn, damn!

The next moment I felt tears running down the side of my nose. I had never had a cold set in like this before. Then it hit me. For some unexplainable reason, I was crying. I hadn't cried since I was fifteen and my old collie dog died after being with me for fourteen years. What under the sun was going on? I had absolutely no reason to be crying. It just was completely outside my nature.

My first reaction was to look over towards the two girls, to see if they had noticed these completely uncharacteristic goings-on of staid, stable Stevens. No, they were still busily engaged in their chitchat and not even looking in my direction. With a superhuman effort I controlled my emotions and tried to get rid of the tears without obvious gestures or noises. Not very easy, but I did it. At least, the girls still gave no indication of having noticed what was happening.

I was no sooner controlled than Charmie appeared at the doorway. "Baba's ready to see you now," she said cheerily. The two girls in the room still seemed oblivious to any and all events other than their gossip. I think it was for real. Sometimes girls get like that.

Down the stairs I went and Charmie threw the two library doors open. There in the small but tasteful room decorated in soft yellows and gold was a strange assembly of humanity and kitchenware. The centerpiece was a chaise longue on which I recognized Meher Baba stretched out, facing generally towards the opposite windows. On that side, with their backs to the street, were several obviously Oriental gentlemen, and just in front of them was one of the big, old classic tin washtubs of the day with a large block of ice in it. Just towards the window was a normal sized fan blowing across the block of ice in the direction of Meher Baba's chaise longue. This was the air conditioning for this oppressive New York summer day. It did not work very well.

(Continued on next page.)



Don Stevens (Cont.)

by Ben Leet

But I had little time to test the barometrics. Murshida Duce was on her feet and approaching me, with her warm embrace. I caught sight out of the corner of my eye of Meher Baba making a monumental effort to rise from his chaise longue, and this at once broke my heart. Imagine, the Avatar, trying despite a broken leg to get up and greet me on his feet! I suppose I should really stop the story right here, because there it all is in that one simple act. This is the way God loves and takes care of us. It was not an effort. It just was. It has always been that way, too. The most unfathomable sensitivity and oneness in all things. I do not know if Baba taught me one thing after that. Yes, perhaps a few embellishments and variations on what he did and established at that moment. All my years of learning and finding out possible bases of different unexplainable actions were annihilated in one instant. Here was reality, and nothing else of any importance existed.

A bit strong? No, not at all. Once in a long time, something happens in life, which you know at once to be cardinal. I knew it at that moment, and I knew the man, and I knew also that he knew me completely. Incredible-no?-to have such deep instant knowledge of such important things? But it is like that. Some knowledge comes gradually and with great hardship attached. It is important, yes. But the cardinal arrives at once and with no apparent effort. Maybe I had been spending lifetimes leading up to this moment, and perhaps I had earned it all way back then, and what I was conscious of now was the great wave that broke through the dam of consciousness. I don't know, really, and I don't really care. It was, and I was.

At any rate, I at once protested loudly to Baba that he must not rise and risk his injured leg. Tell it to the winds. Baba waved his hand and smiled and he was standing and supported by two of the Oriental gentlemen. I just felt foolish, but also, so happy and full.

"Baba, this is my boy, Don," Ivy Duce started the conversation. We had known each other for quite a few years already and had come through quite a bit together.

I was not even conscious of the fact that it was Baba doing the gesticulating and someone else doing the speaking: "What do you mean, your boy Don? He is my boy. We have been together since the dawn of time."

(Continued on next page.)



Don Stevens (Cont.)

by Ben Leet

Well, that is quite a statement to be coming from the Avatar, but even before I could speculate on the mechanics of all this, my typical American mind said, "Good heavens, what a pun Baba pulled." Because, of course, dawn is pronounced just like my first name.

Baba never gives you much chance for reflection. At once he asked about my travel, and how long I was staying, and where I worked. I don't know what else, but the truth was that I was back to being a little boy again, and the cat had got my tongue. I could not say a word, only "huh," and "yes," and "not long," and a few nonsensical things of the sort. I did have the good grace at least to be ashamed of myself and wonder what under the sun Baba must be thinking of this dunce from San Francisco. But oddly, I didn't care.

I had just made an incredible discovery, and I knew this to be completely true. Baba knew me completely, everything about me, and in fact, he knew me better than I knew myself. But that was not all. The most incredible fact was that he accepted me totally for just what I was. Now this was what I realized I had been searching for all of my life, one person who just knew me and accepted me without reservations. And here he was in front of me. It was the last thing I had expected. A great spiritual master should know a lot about you, but inevitably that must include a lot of bad spots, and obviously the rest of life would be spent trying to get rid of those bad spots that he knew and that I knew he knew.

But it wasn't like that at all. He just loved and accepted me as I was. And it was and is and will always be like that. Why is it that we cannot imagine that this is the basic characteristic of one who is One? All the philosophy in creation will not produce this, nor substitute for it.

Finally Baba woke me up from my indulgent daydreaming. His gestures, another's voice: "And we will see each other tomorrow morning in Harmon, no?" I had almost forgotten that there was a full day ahead, and that I would see Baba both in the morning to discuss Sufi affairs with Murshida Duce, and again in the afternoon in New York when Baba had promised to discuss honesty with the Sufis. "Yes, I will look forward to it," I managed to mumble, Baba gave me a radiant smile for this gem I had managed to utter, and I was whisked through the library doors and back into the high-ceiling living room. I had met him. He knew me. He accepted me totally as I was. What an incredible event I had lived through in such a short time. I sat down on a small chair against the far wall and

(Continued on next page.)



Meher Baba Center of Northern California

INsights

Community Newsletter

Don Stevens (Cont.)

by Ben Leet

tried to recover my sense of orientation. Literally, it was like living in a new world. All the old standards of importance had disappeared and a new world with totally new structures had taken its place. I reflected. Fortunately, again, everyone had the good sense not to talk to me. I stayed in my universe that had just been created. I was not alone in it, but I really did not know anyone in it yet.

Meher Baba, The Awakener of the Age, by Don E. Stevens pages 70-74

On the web you can watch a few videos of Don.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CDKDBjd2ZCE>

And a seminar about God Speaks recorded at Meherabad.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VkDZ7tjihRo>

Coming Soon

from Jean Moje MacDonald

A new look and added functionality for our MBCNC calendar and website!

Jeanne Moje MacDonald has updated and improved our web page. Take a look. Our current calendar downloads as a pdf file at:

<http://www.meherbabameherbaba.org/calendar.pdf>

She has also reformatted our calendar and placed it at a new web site, taking advantage of the free Google Apps for Non-Profits. The MBCNC calendar has a new look and functionality at its own web page!

We invite you to preview our new calendar at this temporary address:

<https://sites.google.com/a/meherbabameherbaba.org/mbcnc/calendar>



The sky is filled with rain clouds, a rare June
Happening, hiding the lovely crescent moon.

It is cool and still, no breeze blowing in
From the Bay. It is your Name we are glowing in.

Your Name, reviving your eyes' bright glancing.
You came; now it is all lancing and romancing.

By your working, may the condition of this illusion
swim in fair streams.

May it be by your grace that we realize what counts,
not only what "seems."

The waters flow to the sea, the Oceanic source.
Will it all go well? In You, of course!

You are the Singer, the Beloved, the Glorious One!
You inspire, You are the existing beauty in all, our Sun!

Oh David, do not worry about meaning or clouds in June.
Just keep thanking the One, Meher Baba,
for giving you a tune.

June 2011



Meher Baba Center of Northern California

INsights

Community Newsletter

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:
P.O. Box 1101,
Berkeley, CA 94701
<http://MeherBabaInformation.org>

Meher Baba Center of Northern California

6923 Stockton Avenue
El Cerrito, California 94530
(510) 525-4779

Meher Baba Center of Northern CA website

The meeting schedules can be downloaded in PDF form from the website (above). The center is open for drop-in and bookstore visits most Saturdays 1 PM to 4 PM (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 Ave. About two blocks onward, the Center is located on the left side of the street. Refer to the address above.



Meher Baba Center of Northern California

INsights

Community Newsletter

Announcements (cont.)

More Local Meetings (Continued on next page)

More Local Meetings

Lafayette – Sunday Afternoons

Monthly meetings 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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