

Remembering Dr. Goher

The following message is from a cable dated 30 June 2004, sent by Meheru, Katie, Arnavaz and the Meherazad family:

Avatar Meher Baba took His precious Goher R. Irani into His warm embrace on June 30, 2004 at 12:40:15 p.m. in Meherazad. Goher passed away due to congestive heart failure; she was 87 years old. By Baba's order, her ashes are to be interred on Meherabad Hill by the side of Baba's Samadhi.

"Goher" means "jewel," and the quality of Goher's unique service to her Beloved Master has been a shining inspiration to all who came to know her. Both disciple and doctor, she brought to life Baba's precept of "selfless service." As Baba's personal physician, she cared for Him with total dedication night and day, as well as tending to His beloved Mehera and the resident mandali. How fortunate she was to have lived with Baba and served Him until the very end.

In more recent times, Goher reached out with great love, kindness, warmth and compassion to all who came in her contact. This naturally included not only the Baba-family but also the local villagers, whom she lovingly cared for through the Meherazad dispensary for over 30 years.

In dearest Goher's life of love and service, and in the countless number of hearts she touched, Beloved Baba has given His lovers a sublime example to cherish. His jewel will be sorely missed.

AVATAR MEHER BABA ki JAI!



Dr. Goher on her trusty bicycle in 1987.

Goher's Life with Baba

Many of us remember Goher as the person with the softest hands in the world, someone any of us would have wanted as our doctor and friend. In remembrance of this inspiring woman, we review her life, with quotes from Judith Garbett's 1998 book *Lives of Love*

Goher met Meher Baba when she was a child, when He would visit her family in Quetta. She had fond memories of playing games with him when she was six or seven, and of being stumped by his puzzles.

She must have been a teenager when, one day, Baba asked her what she was planning to study and told her, "You become a doctor." From that day on, becoming a doctor was her goal. When the expense of her studies was becoming prohibitive, Baba told her parents that He would pay so that she could continue in college.

Needing a place to live while she went to medical school, Goher was sent by Baba to live with Arnavaz's family, whom she described as "a family full of love. I have never seen so much love. They took me in like one of their own, and they gave me so much love that I never felt I was a stranger but belonged to the family. Baba used to visit their house very often, as if it was his own house, because there was so much love there."

"After a couple of years in their house I went to stay in a girls' hostel, and Baba gave me very strict orders. No men must come to visit me, I must not touch men or go about with them. Baba said I should write to Him every week, or once a month, whichever it was, and He replied to every letter."

N E W S L E T T E R



Dr. Goher laughs with Jal and Dolly Dastoor in 1987.

Goher's heart's desire was clearly to be with Baba, as she was "more drawn to be with Baba than to our own parents' house, and wherever He was, Blue Bus Tours, Meherabad, anywhere, every holiday we spent with Him. Once in Bangalore there was a question of my marriage. Baba told me, 'Don't worry. You should not think about it, don't ever marry. You have to come to Me after you have become a doctor.' So that was always in my mind, and I knew that Baba would call me some day to live with Him permanently."

After Goher finished medical school, Baba called her and told her to come and live with him, but it was not to be so simple. "Well, my mother made so much fuss about it, saying, 'I won't be able to meet you, and why should you go permanently, you can go and visit Baba when you like.' There was such a row about it, so I wrote to Baba, and He said 'Don't come now.' I felt very hurt and sad, but knew that I must leave home and wrote back to Him, 'No, I am coming, in spite of my mother's protest I am coming.' Baba was quite happy then and said 'I'll call you. So you must be ready whenever I call you.'"

Finally, in 1947 at Satara, Goher joined Baba permanently, tending to Norina's medical problems and treating lepers in a local colony. When she came to live at Meherazad, she was given the job of taking care of hens and ducks! Goher said, "I was so frightened — I had never held a hen in my life and was afraid they would peck me. But I did it because Baba told me. I had to see to their feed, that the pen was kept clean and that they would lay eggs; but Baba never let us eat that poultry."

A pivotal time came when Baba started planning the New Life. Goher thought, "Well, I came only recently and of course Baba will never take me." This made her "all the time very sad and depressed." She went on to say, "I was watering the garden at the far end, very slowly and sadly. Baba came out on the front verandah of the house and Mehera was standing beside Him. Baba clapped and that was the sign for me to go there, which I did. Baba said, 'What are you thinking about?' At first I didn't say anything, then Baba told Mehera, 'She is mad.' Again He said 'What are you thinking about?' I said, 'Baba, I was feeling very sad because now that you say you will be going away in the New Life, there is no chance of us ever seeing you. And I don't know what to do with myself. I thought I'd end my life. I thought I couldn't live without you, and I know that you won't take me because I have just recently come to live with you.'

Baba then told Mehera, 'She is a fool. Tell her that she will go with me.' And I think that was the happiest moment of my life."



Dr. Goher beams in a lovely red sari, which was her mother's. She later gave this sari to Raine Eastman Gannet, who provided this photo.

Personal Memories of Dr. Goher

A meeting at the Talbots' in remembrance of Goher evoked many memories of this inspiring woman. Here are a few:

Madeline Doucas: Everyone has always been struck by how immeasurably soft and gentle (though strong) Goher's hands were. This softness and gentleness reminds me of a story:

In 1978, I was in India and needed medical attention and Goher referred me to a clinic in Ahmednagar for a diagnosis. I was sitting in the waiting room, the only westerner in a crowd of village women with their various ailments. These women in their Maharashtra saris, prematurely aged from their labors, with such calloused feet and work-hardened hands... there was no way we could communicate, but somehow I understood they wanted to know where I came from. I said "Meherabad, Meherazad". Then the woman sitting next to me stood up, took my chin in her hard, cracked, calloused hand and with great tenderness, said "Goher."

Jamie Dillon: My one trip to Meherabad was in 1987. Goher, knowing I was working in hospitals as a speech therapist, took me under her wing and showed me lots about her work. Actually, she tucked herself under my arm! Here are the notes from my journal:

Goher took me by the hand as soon as I got there and showed me all around her clinic. She pulled files and talked about difficult cases they'd had, introduced me to a young man who was having his scalp patched after dropping his motor scooter. With Goher sternly translating, I told him about the head injury work I do as part of my living, and how dicey it is to ride without a brain-bucket.



Dr. Goher with Sue Jamison in December, 2003.

Goher's affection made a huge difference to me, the way she called me sweetie and was so proud to show off the clinic. Like so many others, I'd for so long felt that I was putting a civilized exterior on a thoroughly unacceptable creature. But here was this wise doctor with an obvious sharp sense for people, who liked me just fine.

Cindy Lowe: Several years ago during an India trip there was an outbreak of bubonic plague in the neighboring state of Gurjurat. Although the threat of plague in Ahmednagar was very real, the medical team was extremely well-prepared and there was not a great deal of concern among us pilgrims.

One day during teatime, my friend Melodee Koska and I rewrote the words to the song, "My Favorite Things," substituting very funny words about the very un-funny plague. The next day we sang it for the ladies and pilgrims on the porch at Meherazad. Dr. Goher was greatly amused! Tears were streaming down her face and she was doubled over with laughter. Later I found out that she had directed Dr. Gus to make 70 copies of the lyrics for her personal use. I'm not sure what she did with them but presumably she distributed them to other medical personnel in the district. I felt very pleased to have had a chance to make her laugh so hard because I knew that her suffering was great. Thank you Baba for this happy time with her.

Alan Talbot When Karen and I were first married we wanted a child very much and were having concerns about conceiving. On our trip to India in 1980, Dr. Goher gave Karen ayurvedic aloes. They worked! Our son Matt was born at 11:50 PM on August 3rd — Dr. Goher's birthday.



Raine Eastman Gannett with Dr. Goher in 2000.

C A L E N D A R

Meetings are held Saturday nights at 7:30, doors open at 7 PM. Directions to the new center: From Hwy 80 in El Cerrito, take the Central exit east, toward the hills, cross San Pablo, go under the BART tracks to Richmond Ave. turn left, go a few blocks to Stockton (the first stop light), turn right at Stockton, go a couple of blocks, park on the street. The center is on the left side of the street, 6923 Stockton Ave. El Cerrito, CA. Message Phone: (510) 525-4779

Monday, September 6, 3:00 pm - Labor Day Pot-Picnic at Cerrito Vista Park in El Cerrito

Join us for games, food and fun. Bring something to barbeque and a side dish to share. Bring outdoor games to play, too! The park is near our center. From Hwy 80, take the Central exit, go under the BART tracks, left at Richmond, then left at Moeser. Park is at the corner of Moser and Pomona. Enter at Avis St. Call the Jamisons for further information. (510) 236-7993.

Sunday, September 12, 5:30 - 8:30 pm - Dr. Goher

Alisa and Robert Dreyfuss will share slides and stories of their experience of being present at Goher's passing to Baba and her funeral. Bring your personal stories and photos of Goher. Potluck dinner. Please bring a main dish or salad to share.

Saturday, September 18, 7:30 pm - LeRoy Parker Sings the Blues: A Kitchen Benefit Concert

LeRoy Parker will sing the Blues tonight to help pile up enough dough to install a kitchen counter and sink in our center. Janet White will provide refreshments. Suggested donation: \$15.00.

Saturday, September 25, 7:30 pm - God in Human Form, the Life and Work of Avatar Meher Baba

We will see this new 65-minute DVD by Peter Nordeen, featuring Meher Baba's life and teachings. Discussion to follow, moderated by Brian Drygas.

Saturday and Sunday October 2-3 - No meeting. New Life Sahavas at Meherana

Sunday, October 10, 5 pm - Sunset Hike at Inspiration Point

Meet at Inspiration Point parking lot in Tilden Park by 4:45 pm. Hike will begin at 5:00 sharp. For directions, please contact Ed Munnich at (510) 847-9106.

Sunday, October 17 - Men's meeting on the Bay

RSVP to Harold Jamison if you'd like to participate (510) 932-3656.

Sunday, October 24, 2 - 5 pm - "Meeting Meher Baba," a Talk by Khaled Alfaqih at the Talbots'

Khaled Alfaqih met Meher Baba at the 1962 East-West Gathering. He was a young man in his 20s then, wondering what to do with his life. Khaled tells his story in a way that speaks directly to the heart. Don't miss this special afternoon. The Talbots live at 721 Crossbrook Drive, Moraga. Call (925) 376-4325 for directions. Please bring tea treats to share.

Saturday, October 30, 7:30 pm - An Evening of Kirtan, led by Raine Eastman Gannett

Kirtan, Indian devotional singing, helps us to remember the Beloved. Raine will lead us in sing-along Kirtan, which includes a new version of the "Meher Chalisa" (40-verse Kirtan of Meher Baba's praise).

Saturday, November 6, 7:30 pm - Cabaret Night

Let your inhibitions go. Come sing along with the karaoke. Share poems and songs. Enjoy a candlelight nightclub ambiance. Light hors d'oeuvres and drinks will be served.

Saturday, November 13, 7:30 pm - Film Night

The Avatar on silver screen; see the REAL Reality show.

Saturdays, November 20 and 28 - No meeting

YOUR HELP IS NEEDED!

We hope you are happy and encouraged by the increased participation and enjoyable variety of program activities in our new center. These events encourage fellowship and provide a means of spreading Baba's message. We have gracious volunteers and our regular financial contributors to thank for helping to make this possible. Are you a regular contributor?

Our El Cerrito center is currently running in the RED – at this point, we are almost \$500 short every month to meet our rent payment! What is needed is a regular monthly contribution, preferably by credit card, that can be counted on. This way, additional donations that come in don't have to be held aside for rent. They can be used for programs for us to gather in His Name. A great big THANK YOU for being part of this center and a loving thank you to those who are already contributing financially and in so many other creative ways!

To donate, either call Doug Ross at (510) 388-6529 or send checks directly to the Meher Baba Center, 6923 Stockton Ave. El Cerrito, CA 94530. Any amount will be very much appreciated. - Dawn Dolan, Fundraising Chairperson

Meher Baba Center of Northern California, Inc.

President, Brian Drygas, Vice President, Laurie Brook, Secretary, Fred White, Treasurer, Cheryl La Rosa Longo

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Office Manager: Pam Johnson • Bookstore: Katie Mink • Trustwalla: Jack Mormon (P.O. Box 2288, Richmond, CA 94802-1288)

Remembering Neala

Neala Haze slipped away from this world from complications of cancer on Sunday June 6th in Berkeley, California. She was born September 27th, 1947 in Denver, Colorado. Her talent as a dancer and love for people led her to pursue degrees in Dance and Counseling Psychology at Colorado State University. At this time she was introduced to the teachings of Avatar Meher Baba and from that time on was a lifelong devotee. She attended the 1969 Darshan and continued her close relationship with the mandali for the rest of her life. She returned to India many times, most recently with her husband Bill.

In 1993 she founded and directed the Authentic Movement Institute in Berkeley California where she integrated her knowledge of Eastern mysticism and thought, humanistic psychology, body-based and creative arts therapy approaches into her teaching and private practice. The Institute continues to develop new training approaches to psychotherapy, artistic endeavor, and the enhancement of daily life. Neala's intuitive work has touched, changed and enhanced many lives.

The sense of community that developed around her during the last 18 months of her illness touched us all with its depth and meaning. She leaves behind her best friend, husband and companion of 21 years, Bill Weintraub, a stepson, goddaughter, and her many friends in the Meher Baba and dance communities, with whom she shared her life. Her grace, poise, sense of humor, infectious laugh, beaming smile will be missed but never forgotten.



Neala and Bill's wedding photo.



MEHER BABA GLOBAL MUSICAL CELEBRATION – AN ONLINE EVENT

All Baba-lovers worldwide are invited to participate in the Meher Baba Global Musical Celebration that will take place on the weekend of November 6th and 7th, 2004. Musicians from throughout the world will share music inspired by and dedicated to the Beloved. This online Celebration will also feature discussions of Meher Baba's favorite music and his favorite performers. Registration is free, though it is limited to the first 1000 registrants.

To participate in this Global Musical Celebration you will need an internet connection and a current web browser. For information, go to www.meherbabacelebrations.org

This Celebration is an opportunity to join others in our global Meher Baba community in a worldwide sharing of love, music and conversation. Come and experience this unique event.

You can participate in the following ways:

Celebration Attendee

- Listen to a wide range of music from musicians devoted to Meher Baba
- Join question and answer sessions about the creative process; what inspires a Baba-lover to compose a song or write lyrics in celebration of the Beloved
- Engage in panel discussions about music and spirituality
- See presentations about Meher Baba and music Celebration Musicians
- Share your music with Baba-lovers worldwide (You will get assistance in putting your music in the Celebration)
- Respond to questions about your music and/or lyrics
- Offer information on how to obtain CDs or tapes of your music

Celebration Worker

- Provide MP3 technical assistance to musicians and attendees
- Work on Celebration publicity and outreach
- Moderate Celebration forums and panel discussions
- Assist attendees on how to navigate the Celebration site

AVATAR OF THE AGE AT THE PALACE OF FINE ARTS - A GRAND EVENT

The two-week showing of Irwin Luck's film *Avatar of the Age* at San Francisco's Palace of Fine Arts last July was a grand event. Beautiful ads, with Meher Baba's photo, appeared in many Bay Area newspapers, giving Baba great public exposure. In the lobby of the auditorium was a lovely art exhibit, with nearly 100 works of art, from paintings of Meher Baba to collage, to needlework, even two hooked rugs with Baba's face. One weekend, the Sufi Choir sang. The movie itself was breathtaking, showing Baba traveling with His mandali in search of masts. He was filmed meeting several of these souls, and their mutual delight was clearly evident on screen.

In a great cooperative effort, many local Baba-lovers helped with the event, and, with so many new people coming to see the movie, interesting stories emerged. This is one:

An old college roommate of Bob Royeton, a Sufi, came to the film looking for him. They hadn't seen each other in years. In the late 1960s, Bob and his roommate were both drafted. His roommate was sent to Viet Nam first, then Bob was sent to Korea. Before his friend left, Bob asked Murshida Duce for a Baba memento his friend could take with him overseas, and she gave him a bronze medallion with Baba's face on it. (When Bob went to Korea, Baba Himself sent him a similar medallion, with instructions to wear it continually.) His friend also wore his medallion continually, not taking it off even to shower. He was caught in a skirmish, wounded by a grenade, and shot. The bullet deflected off the medallion, entering his chest, but missing his heart. "I owe my life to Meher Baba," he told Bob.

FOR ADDRESS OR PHONE NUMBER CHANGES:

e-mail amba42@yahoo.com or write or call:

Paul Christy 28 Domingo Ave. Apt.A,
Berkeley, CA 94705 (510) 525-4779



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LOCAL MEETINGS

Lafayette - Sunday Afternoons

Monthly meeting at the home of Kirk and Marlene Allen. Please call to confirm. (925)-284-4066.

Los Gatos - Saturday Evenings - 8:00 PM

Arti, singing and readings at the home of Clint and Sharon Snyder. Call them at (408) 395-6865, or Betty Lowman at (650) 323-1900.

Petaluma - Sunday Mornings - 11:00 AM

Arti, readings and fellowship. Contact Hermann or Jeanette Loew at (707) 778-1195. Please call ahead.

Sacramento - Sunday Mornings - 11:00 AM

Discourse readings and occasional gatherings. Contact Mike and Jean Ross, (916) 359-2954 or Cheryl Johnson (559) 312-3751 for information. Introductory meetings listed on our web page: www.premsay.com/MeherBaba

Check out our Web Site:

www.MeherBabaMeherBaba.org

See program information and much more.

THE TRUST

All who wish to share in the commitment laid down by Meher Baba through the Trust should contact Jack Mormon, P.O. Box 70383, Richmond, CA 94807-0383.

To receive e-mail updates from the Center, send an e-mail to Fred White: faledw@aol.com

MEHER BABA INFORMATION

For introductory information about Avatar Meher Baba, e-mail MeherBabal@aol.com, or write to P.O. Box 1101, Berkeley, CA 94701. See our online catalog of books and other materials at www.MeherBabalInformation.org.

MEHER BABA CENTER

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