

## Roda Mistry's Cheerful Acceptance

by Judy Robertson

Roda Mistry passed into Meher Baba's waiting arms on July 8, 2006 at the age of 82. This was the culmination of a life lived in devotion and acceptance of Beloved Baba's wish and will.

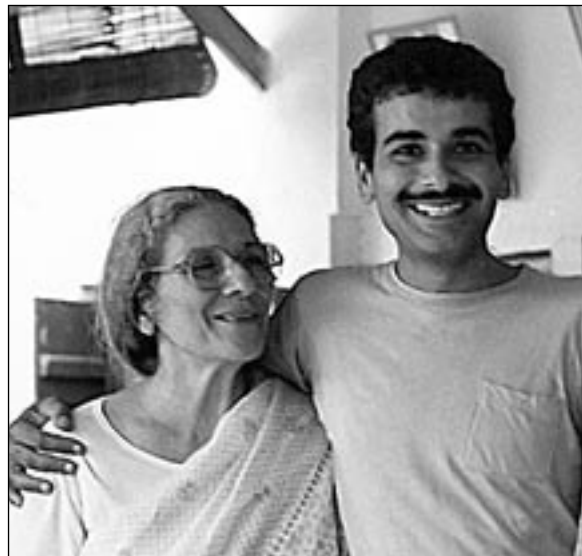
Roda first met Meher Baba in 1927, when she was only three years old. Her paternal uncle, Framroze Dadachanji, was Baba's first secretary. Chanji, as he was affectionately called, had resided with Meher Baba for three years, and he was anxious to draw the rest of his family into Baba's fold, so he invited Roda's family to come on a picnic to Meherabad, where they first took Meher Baba's darshan in the building that is now the dharamshala.

As a result of these early contacts, Roda and the rest of her family became deeply devoted to Meher Baba. She had numerous opportunities to be with Baba and the women Mandali as she grew up, as well as during her married life. Her husband, Jimmy Mistry, served as a Meherabad Trustee for many years, and her three sons – Meherwan, Falu and Sarosh – as well as their families, are all devoted to Baba. Her son, Falu, has resided at Meherazad since 1978, and he now serves as a trustee for the Avatar Meher Baba Trust.

When Jimmy and Roda retired in 1979, they moved to Meherabad and lovingly served in many capacities there. One of Roda's main responsibilities was to care for Meher Baba's Samadhi, which she did with a quiet but palpable joy.

After Jimmy passed away in 1996, Roda moved to Meherazad, where her sister Arnavaz and her son Falu were living. Roda would greet pilgrims as they would arrive each day, and generously share with them from the treasure-trove of memories of her years with Beloved Baba.

During the last several years of her life, Roda suffered from a serious heart condition. This especially affected



*Roda and Falu Mistry, September 1987*

her when she fell and broke her hip. Because of the vulnerability of her heart, surgery to repair her hip could not be performed. This meant that Roda experienced excruciating pain whenever she moved her legs or torso even slightly.

I had the good fortune to be part of Roda's care team during the period immediately following her hip injury. The acceptance and cheerfulness with which she endured significant and unrelenting pain continue to amaze me. Roda's heartfelt resignation to Beloved Baba's will is a gift and a teaching that I will always cherish. She would often say, in the midst of tremendous pain, "I saw Baba

suffer from the pain in His hip after His second accident – this is nothing."

Throughout the final years of Roda's life, she maintained a joyous and cheerful attitude in the midst of suffering that was uplifting to all those around her. Her loving and joyous spirit and her unfailing focus on Beloved Baba will be treasured by all who knew her.



*Roda with Urdmila and Gokaran Shrivastav, February 26, 2006*

# Reflecting on Meher Mount's 50th Anniversary

by Raine Eastman-Gannett



Saturday, the 5th of August was a cool, sunny day with breezes, and the mountain looked very beautiful as we came to Meher Mount, Ojai, to celebrate the anniversary of Beloved Meher Baba's visit there in 1956.

The day began with continental breakfast under marquees, across from the huge beautiful tree, possibly 300 years old, that Baba sat under when He visited there. As arti was held under the tree, with a little low altar with flowers and a pretty Samadhi cloth marking the spot where Baba sat, that lovely Baba feeling filled the heart. Billy Goodrum, the musical guest, led prayers and some songs as others arrived from near and far.

There is a sweet fragrance of suffering and struggle around Meher Mount and all involved with the property, especially, of course, for Agnes Baron, who lived on the mountain for many years and was called Agni (fire) by Baba. A huge fire swept through the property in the 80s and left us with the tree and a brick fireplace, which features a photo of Baba from His visit in 1956. A lovely Santa Fe style building has been built with a modest hall, accommodations for the resident caretakers, a kitchen and a bathroom for pilgrims.

The opening program was a dramatic reading of *The Song Of The New Life* with many readers. It was moving and most effective and somehow imparted the feeling of Meher Mount, its struggle, and of Agnes and all she went through to hold on to this property. Adele Wolkin, who was part of the group with Baba the day He came to Meher Mount, talked about that day. Then an unusual and lovely letter written by Dr. Ned Burleson was read. Dr. Burleson cared for Baba and the mandali injured in the 1952 accident in Prague, Oklahoma. Baba was on His way to California at the time of the accident, which delayed His coming to Meher Mount until August of 1956.



Billy Goodrum sings near the altar under Baba's tree.



Adele Wolkin with Meher Mount board member Jamshid Ebrahimzadeh

Ray Johnston, the caretaker, led games of marbles during the day, and one could see images of Baba at Meher Mount on a TV screen anytime. The music was organized by Billy Goodrum, who announced that he and his family would be moving to Asheville, North Carolina. Billy reminisced that a few years earlier he, too, had been a caretaker at Meher Mount. He told stories of the wonder and difficulties of that time. He sang and led a few singalongs, including Robert Een, Raine Eastman-Gannett, and Jim Whitson for a song or two. Then Ed Flanagan read of Baba's visit to Meher Mount from *Lord Meher*.

Great food, bought up to Ojai by all the anniversary attendees, so delicious, as good as any restaurant, punctuated the day's reflection. Coffee and tea were available at all times, and no one wanted to leave this glorious Baba spot. Many signed up for a lasagna dinner. The dinner became a great setting for Baba stories, one after another. After dinner all went over past the tree and gazed at the beautiful view of a nearby city and stars and bright three-quarter moon, while the mystical Native American mountain Topa Topa, gazed over at us.

Meher Mount is quite distinctive in its ability to reveal a spirit of Baba that is new and refreshing, a side of Baba that is both difficult and free. The Meher Mount Board, who run its Trust, are aware of that unique quality. Caretakers Ray and Elizabeth Johnston work extremely hard to make sure that Meher Mount, and its history with Baba, are beautifully preserved. Emerging new stories and many old memories created a perfect 50th Anniversary.

## Going to India?

Take a book or two with you to share with the children at the Meher English School (ages 3–14). We have a box of children's books at the El Cerrito Center in the hallway, across from the office. Please deliver the book(s) to Bhau's son, Mehernath Kalchuri, at the Trust Office in Ahmednagar.

Last spring at Meherana, Tom and Jai Hart's daughter Pearl wrote a sweet greeting in the front of *Curious George*, expressing her love for Meher Baba and her appreciation for the Meher English School children, whose artwork and singing are featured in the video *When Merwan Grew Up*. In the box now are two Harry Potter books, inscribed with a special greeting from Ivy Rose McClure. Please help bring these books to their destination. Happy Trails!

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# C A L L E N D A R

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**Meetings are held Saturday nights at 7:30, unless otherwise specified. Doors open at 7 PM.** Directions to our 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. Phone: (510) 525-4779

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## **September 2-4 - Labor Day Weekend, No Meeting**

### **Friday, September 8, 7:30 - Book Club: Mehera**

We will be sharing our impressions of Mehera's autobiography. Simply titled *Mehera*, this coffee-table size book, released by Beloved Books in 1989, is a compilation of transcribed talks and audiotape recordings intermixed with gorgeous photos. Please feel welcome even if you don't have time to read the text. Hosted by Jo Marie Munnich.

### **Friday, September 15 - Film Night: Bring Your Own Dinner at 7:00, Film Starts at 7:30**

Irwin and Eddie Luck spent 1971 traveling, interviewing western and eastern Baba lovers. We have access to one set of these partially restored and edited videos, and some will be shown at film night once a month. Hosted by Keith Gunn.

### **Saturday, September 23 - Leroy Parker in Concert**

Leroy Parker returns for his Third Annual Equinoctial Concert and Art Sale, to benefit the Break Room fund (our goal is to pay for the permit). Come hear him play and sing, see his art, and sample refreshments by hostess Janet White. Suggested donation \$15.

### **Saturday, September 30 - Remembering Roda Mistry**

With the recent passing of Baba's dear Roda, we remember so much: breakfasts with the Mistris in Mumbai when staying with her sister Nargis, Roda's years of leading Arti and caring for the Samadhi in the 1980s, when she and her husband Jimmy moved to Meherabad and served on the Trust, and her later years of living at Meherazad near her son Falu and sister Arnavaz, after Jimmy passed away. But mostly we remember with joy her glorious voice, which Beloved Baba so enjoyed from the early days at Meherabad in the 1920s. Her Uncle Chanji and her family's love for Baba brought her close to Baba from the time of her birth. Come share your memories of Roda and hear about her cremation from Alisa Dreyfuss, who just returned from India. Hosted by Alisa and Raine Eastman-Gannett.

## **October 6-8 - No Meeting**

### **Friday, October 13 - Film Night: The Ancient One**

Come to see this original multimedia presentation created by Cheryl La Rosa Longo and Michael Le Page for Avatar Meher Baba's 90th birthday celebration. Bring your own dinner at 7:00, film starts at 7:30. Hosted by Sue Jamison.

### **Friday, October 20 - Introductory Meeting on Meher Baba's Life and Message of Love and Truth**

A short video, *Avatar*, will be shown, followed by a Q & A forum. Invite your friends and relatives who have shown interest in learning more about Baba. Hosted by Ben Leet and Ron Greenstein.

### **Saturday, October 28 - The Games Baba Played**

Meher Baba devoted considerable time to playing games of all kinds with His Mandali. Come and play some of Baba's favorite games and ponder the intriguing fact that Baba spent more time discussing the rules of games than meditation techniques. Hosted by Harold Jamison.

### **Saturday, November 4 - Seekers of Truth**

Known for his book *Memoirs of a Zetic*, Amiya Kumar Hazra is widely respected in the Baba community of India. Keith Gunn, intrepid interviewer of Amiya and other Indian Baba lovers, will present stories from Amiya's new book *Seekers of Truth*.

### **November 11-12 - Urban Sahavas with Naosherwan Anzar**

Naosherwan Anzar first met Meher Baba when he was two months old and Baba held him in His lap. Naosherwan saw Meher Baba many times while growing up in a Baba family. He is the editor and publisher of *Glow International*, launched under Meher Baba's direction in 1966, which he has been publishing for 40 years. He is strongly committed to preserving, documenting and sharing the story of Meher Baba's life. Towards that end, he has launched Beloved Archives, a non-profit, tax-exempt foundation in the United States. Sahavas locations and times to be announced later.

### **Friday, November 17 - More Films from the Lucks**

Excerpts from Irwin and Eddie Lucks' 1971 interviews with eastern and western Baba lovers. Bring your own dinner at 7:00, film starts at 7:30. Hosted by Keith Gunn.

## **November 23-26 - Thanksgiving – No Meeting**

### **Meher Baba Center of Northern California, Inc.**

*President, Dawn Dolan; Vice President, Ann Holm; Secretary, Fred White; Treasurer, Cheryl La Rosa Longo*

*Board of Directors: Laurie Brook, Dawn Dolan, Ann Holm, Kristi Marshall, Katie Mink, Jo Marie Munnich, Natasha Nelson, Fred White, Janet White*

*Newsletter: Alexandra Cons, editor; Betty Lowman, Hugh MacDonald, Laurie Brook • Website: Brian Drygas, Priscilla Hazlewood, Christine Ozuna*

*Finance: Harold Jamison • Program Planning: Alisa Dreyfuss • Center Maintenance: Fred White • Office Manager: Natasha Nelson*

*Urban Sahavas: Brian Drygas • Bookstore: Becky Kent • Trustwalla: Jack Mormon (P.O. Box 2288, Richmond, CA 94802-1288)*

## Notes from the Board President

It is a new fiscal year for our El Cerrito Center, and promises to be an exciting one. A main topic at our AGM (Annual General Meeting) this June was our Center's location. This is the last year of the lease on our current space. We do love it but, to be fair, must consider all options. If you have any interest in participating in this process please let us know.

Another main topic was the plethora of events and visitors that we have had – Urban Sahavases, talks, concerts, parties and gatherings to suit a variety of tastes within our community. This year promises not only more of the same kind of wonderful events, but an increasing range of available dates, and the bookstore has expanded hours. It is now open Saturdays from 10 AM to 4 PM.

We heartily welcome three new members to the Board: Ann Holm, Natasha Nelson and Jo Marie Munnich and send many grateful thanks for all of the contributions made by those retiring, Suzie Dolan and Pamela Johnson. Also, a HUGE thank-you goes to all who so quietly and 'out of the limelight' keep our community going – you know who you are!

Do remember to take advantage of all of the information available on our beautifully designed website located at [www.meherbabameherbaba.org](http://www.meherbabameherbaba.org)

### Photo Credits

Page 1: top: Dave Lowman, bottom: Hugh MacDonald

Page 2: altar: Bill Gannett, other two photos: Ray Johnston

### MEHERANA EVENTS

**October 6-8: New Life Sahavas** with Shireen Bonner and Franey Irani. Best to register by September 22. You can download a registration form on the Meherana website, [www.Meherana.org](http://www.Meherana.org) or call the Pearsons at 209 966-5078 for info.



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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 - Sunday 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 Loew at (707) 778-1195. Please call ahead.

#### 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 info. on the web: [www.garlic.com/~cdjohnso/SacMeherBaba](http://www.garlic.com/~cdjohnso/SacMeherBaba)

### FOR ADDRESS OR PHONE NUMBER CHANGES:

e-mail: [mbe3@sbcglobal.net](mailto:mbe3@sbcglobal.net) call: (510) 525-4779  
write: **MBCNC 6923 Stockton Ave. El Cerrito, CA 94530**

To receive e-mail updates from the Center,  
send an e-mail to: [elist@MeherBabaMeherBaba.org](mailto:elist@MeherBabaMeherBaba.org)

Our Center's Web Site: Program information and more!  
[www.MeherBabaMeherBaba.org](http://www.MeherBabaMeherBaba.org)

### 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.

### 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. See our online catalog of books and other materials at [www.MeherBabalInformation.org](http://www.MeherBabalInformation.org).

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