

January 2014 E-News

"I am not limited by this form. I use it like a garment to make myself visible to you; and I communicate with you through words best fitted to your understanding. If I used the language of my own consciousness you would not know what I was talking about. Don't try to understand Me. My depth is unfathomable. Just love Me. I eternally enjoy the Christ state of consciousness and when I speak I shall manifest my true Self; besides giving a general push to the whole world, I shall lead all those who come to Me towards Light and Truth."

~ Meher Baba, 1957

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January, 2014

Vol. 7, Issue 1



Meher Baba Center of Northern California

INsights Community Newsletter

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Newsletter wallas:
Lisa Greenstein, Doug Ross,
Alan Talbot & Karen Talbot

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Dear Reader

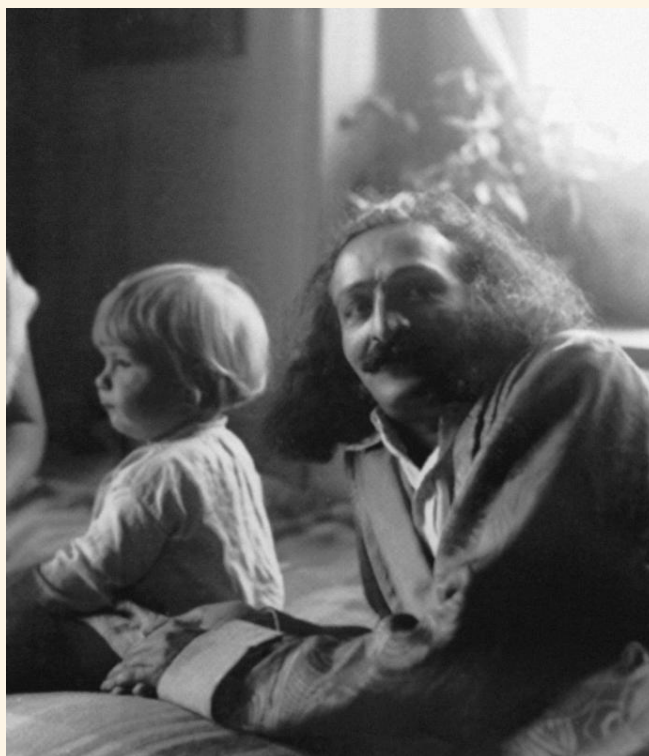
In this issue:

Happy New Year 2014 to all!

Brian Drygas recently made a presentation on spiritual practices according to Meher Baba's *Discourses* at one of the Center's evening meetings. It was very well organized and thought out, so I requested that he share it in the newsletter. This is the first of 4 parts.

There is also a letter to the membership from Janet White regarding Baba's Birthday Celebration. If you would like to lend a hand with the Birthday this year, Contact-volunteer help: Ron Greenstein:510-215-7025 potluck & refreshments: joanharland49@yahoo.com

We would like to dedicate a future issue to your Bhau Kalchuri memories. So, if you wish to be included, please email personal stories, memories, and jpegs of Bhau for an upcoming newsletter to: meherbabacenter@gmail.com



All previous issues of the newsletter are available to read at www.meherbabameherbaba.org

Jai Baba!
~Lisa Greenstein

Letter to Membership from Janet White

Dear friends of the Northern California Meher Baba Center,

A long time ago, I was told that the ancient Romans used the same word for "host" and "guest"-- it all depended under whose roof everyone was gathered. This idea seemed to expand when, at Meherana events, everyone who attended had the chance to take on one of the tasks that such an event requires. This is related to the concept of 'sweat equity', I believe. This has been one of my favorite parts of Meherana events because one can enjoy people's company at work as well as at leisure, and different aspects of ourselves can thereby be revealed.

These reflections are part of my feelings as I give up my role in helping to put

together Baba's birthday celebration. I have enjoyed the opportunities to do this work and am fortunate to have learned in the doing. I have given the Board of Directors all the information I can remember about the way things have been done in the past, and I look forward to the celebration that fresh hands will create.

In His Love,

Janet White

Exploring Spiritual Practice, Part 1

by Brian Drygas

Brian Drygas gave a participatory presentation on "**Exploring Spiritual Practice**" at the Meher Baba Center of Northern CA recently. This is a write-up from part of that meeting.

Here is "**Part 1 - Spiritual Preparation for the Path**":

Meher Baba tells us that there are ways for the spiritual aspirant to prepare for the spiritual path. Here are three of those means. (All page references are to the three volume 1967 version of the Discourses.)

Three of the ways for spiritual aspirants to prepare for the spiritual path are to:

1. Develop divine attributes

"The descent of grace of the Master is conditioned, however, by the preliminary spiritual preparation of the aspirant. The preliminary preparation for grace is never complete until the aspirant has built into his psychic make-up some divine attributes." (Volume 1, page 161)

2. Have an open mind

"Although the aspirant cannot be content with secondhand knowledge, or mere guesses, he does not close his mind to the possibility that there could be spiritual realities which had not come within his experience. In other words, he is conscious of the limitations of his own individual experience and refrains from making it the measure of all possibilities." (Volume 2, page 12)

3. Develop critical and creative thinking

"Critical and creative thinking leads to spiritual preparation by cultivating those qualities which contribute towards *the perfection and balancing of the mind and heart and the release of the unfettered divine life.*" (Volume 3, page 117)

Individual spiritual practices can be thought of as consisting of three aspects:

1. Mind (intention, focus, thoughts, effort)
2. When (and duration)
3. Environment (and posture)

The three categories within the "When" aspect of a spiritual practice can be thought of as:

1. All of the time
2. When opportunity arises
3. At planned times (scheduled and/or periodic)

Meher Baba makes clear the role of love in spiritual practice. "Hence, it [love] has been given the foremost place among the methods which secure release of consciousness from the bondage of *sanskaras*." (Volume 1, pg. 84)

The next article will be: "Part 2 - All of the Time Spiritual Practices".

Brian has been a follower of Meher Baba for over 36 years. He has also recently given another presentation, "The Inner Path - Elements of the inner path as expressed by spiritual texts, experiences of people from different spiritual traditions, and explained by Meher Baba".

Questions or comments? Contact: briandrygas@yahoo.com

Trip to India

by Karen Talbot

We arrived at Meherabad in time for morning Arti on December 15, 2013 which was Mani's birthdate. Each of the songs sung that morning were either songs Mani wrote or songs she really liked. Heather was the first one to sing a song that Mani wrote. We learned that when Baba's twins, Rustom and Sorab, were going to the U.S. for the first time, Mani wrote a song for them. The song, 'Be a Baba Boy, Be a Baba Girl' was sung enthusiastically at Arti. December 15, was a Sunday, so we went to Meherazad that morning. The film, shown by Hughie MacDonald, was created for Mani's Birthday. It was a joy, a delight, and a pleasure to see and hear Mani on the screen.

There was a special program in honor of Mehera in Hostel A the afternoon before Mehera's birthday. Deborah Ash was the emcee. Songs were sung and stories were told. December 22 was Mehera's Birthday. Morning Arti was very special. The Meherabad women residents brought beautiful garlands for Mehera's tomb shrine. Songs sung were composed by Mehera or songs especially loved by her. Since December 22 was a Sunday, we went to Meherazad after breakfast. Hughie showed, 'Happy Birthday, Mehera', filmed by Kacy Cook. That afternoon, under the tin shed at upper Meherabad, many gathered to share stories of Mehera. The day was filled in loving remembrance of Mehera and Meher.

The afternoon before Christmas, there was another program in Hostel A. Alan Talbot was the emcee. There were songs, dances, and a new film created by Bob Fredericks, 'Mehera Christmas'. The only songs sung at Christmas Eve arti were Christmas carols led by Ward Parks. On Christmas Day, there was a

special program at Meherazad. Everyone lined up to enter Baba's room. Many gathered on the veranda to share stories. Inside Mandali Hall, Santa Claus and Mrs. Claus passed out Prasad packets. This is the second year that Alan and I have had the honored distinction of being the Clauses.

In between these celebratory days, we enjoyed time spent at Meherabad and Meherazad. These special places of pilgrimage radiate the fragrance of His Love.

New at the El Cerrito Center

Monday Night Meeting Series

First Monday of the month: Program Committee

7 p.m. at the Center on the first Monday of each month to plan events, gatherings, and activities of the Meher Baba Center. All are welcome to attend and contribute their ideas. Next meeting: February 3

Third Monday of the month: Effort and Grace Series

A monthly meeting with the focus on Darwin Shaw's book, *Effort and Grace*, which is based on Baba's *Discourses*. This meeting will be on the third Monday night of the month. Initial meeting time will be 7 pm. The structure will be open to the ideas and requests of those attending and may change as we go along. We may start by reading together, we may want to read the associated discourse, we may read in advance and just share our thoughts at the meeting, or we may improvise some other way to do this. All are welcome. You don't need to have a copy of the book to attend. Lisa Greenstein will facilitate the first meeting.

Fourth Monday of the month: Discourses Meeting

All are welcome for reading and discussion at the Center at 7 p.m. on the fourth Monday of the month. The people who come to the Center on January 27th will decide where in the Discourses we will begin.

Please check the calendar to be sure the meeting is on schedule.

www.meherbabameherbaba.org click on calendar.

POETRY CORNER

It's me and you
like sky and blue,
like sticky and glue,
like a sole and its Shoe-
or possibly
it's you and me
like a cup and tea,
like One and not we,
like is, was, and will be.
Mind finds endless ways to say "You're like that" or "You're like this."

Heart cries "Meher Baba"- existence, knowledge, bliss!

~Jonathan Steinberg

Jonathan lived in San Francisco in 2009 and frequented our meetings.

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 bookcase 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

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**Meher Baba Information** For introductory information about Avatar Meher Baba, e-mail:

[info@MeherBabaInformation.org](mailto:info@MeherBabaInformation.org)

or write to P.O. Box 1101, Berkeley, CA 94701.

<http://MeherBabaInformation.org>

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Meher Baba Center of Northern California

6923 Stockton Avenue

El Cerrito, California 94530

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www.meherbabameherbaba.org

The meeting schedule is now included in our online calendar (web link above), and can be printed directly from the calendar.

Directions to our Center:

From Highway 80, Interstate 5, going north or south, in El Cerrito, take the Central Avenue exit exiting 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 and phone are listed above.

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**More Local Meetings:**

**Sonoma County** - Arti happens once a month, usually the first Sunday.

Locations vary. Call Ellen Van Allen at 707-528-0357 for specific information.

**Los Gatos** - Sunday Evenings  
At the home of Clint Snyder  
Call (408) 395-6865

contact for messages to newsletterwallas: [newsletter@meherbabameherbaba.org](mailto:newsletter@meherbabameherbaba.org)

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