

After several lifetimes of search, purification, service, and self-sacrifice, some persons have the good fortune to meet and get connected with a God-realized Master. Through their several lifetimes of close connection with the one who has now become a Perfect Master, and through their love and service for this Master, they enter into his Circle. Those who have entered into the Circle of a Master are souls who, through their efforts, have acquired the eligibility for God-realization. When the exact moment for Realization arrives, they attain it through the grace of the Master.

Meher Baba, *Discourses, The Circle*, pg 288

October 2011

Vol. 4, Issue 6



Meher Baba Center of Northern California
INsights
Community Newsletter

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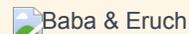
www.MeherBabaMeherBaba.org
info@MeherBabaMeherBaba.org
calendar@meherbabameherbaba.org

Check out the newly updated website, thanks to Jeanne Mojé MacDonald (first link above).

Newsletter wallas:
Ben Leet, Lisa Greenstein, Cheri Nelson & Karen Talbot

Dear Reader

Eruch Jessawala passed away ten years ago on August 31, 2001. He was almost 86.



Meher Baba and Eruch Jessawala

Thousands met Eruch, and thousands loved Eruch. We thought he knew us, liked us, approved of us and enjoyed our company. After a visit to Meherazad pilgrims would load onto the bus and wave good-byes to the Mandali and residents who were standing there in the gravel driveway. Eruch was often there with them. As the bus pulled out, pilgrims in the bus would watch the Mandali recede through the rear window of the bus, their arms and hands raised in salute, with an unmistakable joy and devotion pouring out from them.

Eruch often led the discussions or talks in Mandali Hall for the pilgrims. For several hours a day on visitor days he would find his place in the hall and interrogate the pilgrims, in a nice way. Where did you come from? What drew you to come? How did you hear about Meher Baba? And similar questions. One American man in 1984 had come out of curiosity. He was not a

Baba lover but had been living in India for years. He was a follower of Ram, the Avatar of the Ramayana. With this man, Eruch enjoyed sharing stories about Ram and Sita and relating them to the life story of Meher Baba. This is to say that each got his or her turn with Eruch. And each got his full attention and may have been rewarded with a story from his treasure trove of stories. He was a master storyteller and could shape his repertoire as he pleased.

And at the end of the session Aloba would appear with a bell or something crying "Time for tea," and we would gather on the veranda with an assortment of Mandali and chat. It was amazing. I remember sitting with Rano Gayley quietly one day enjoying tea. That was quite a while back.

There was a certain symmetry in Eruch's life. He was called to serve Baba at age 21 with whom he lived, serving Him for approximately 30 years. Then for another 30 years or so he lived and served Baba's lost generation, us. I don't wonder which 30 years he enjoyed the most. But he did put up with us cheerfully.

Many people have stories about their moments and encounters with the Mandali and with Eruch. A few were kind enough to share them here so that we can revive the memories.

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

A thorough listing of Meher Baba web sites made their debut recently. It can be found at:
<https://sites.google.com/site/babawebsites/>

This newsletter (and past issues) will eventually be available on the website at:
www.meherbabameherbaba.org

Bill Gannett's Story

Passing time in Mandali Hall was perhaps the most rewarding single activity of my life. There are so many priceless memories of, especially, Eruch and Mani serving as mirrors of Baba's presence.

Eruch was absolutely the most impressive man I've ever met. He had exceptional qualities: strength of body and mind, a disarming intelligence and friendliness, robust patience, tremendous concentration, a superb storyteller, an astonishing memory, a razor sharp student of human nature—a true empiricist, a great sense of humor—and more besides, all in devoted service to his Master and Companion.

It was easy to be impressed by Eruch and over impressed. One day, after many hours in Mandali Hall, as we were leaving and as I was about to give him a hug goodbye for the day, I collapsed into the thought of his exceptional singularity-

and worshiped him, so to speak. He drew back instantly, and looked at me quizzically. I mumbled something as the moment dissolved in the blinding awareness of his adamantine humility.

Ed Van Buskirk's Story

In 1976, Eruch was taking a group of us to the Ellora Caves and Khuldabad via the Imampur mosque, which was the last stop in the New Life. As we got in the van to depart, the front windows were open and a big cloud of dust came into the van. I asked Eruch if he wouldn't like his window closed. He replied, "No" then added, "We have become so dusty, even the dust is ashamed of us".

Noreen Graham's Story

I became interested in spirituality when I was 18 years old, and I had studied and read certain teachings. Also, I had studied classical ballet since I was a child, so I was used to a disciplined training and to a controlled life that was somewhat rigid.

In 1990, I traveled to Baba's home at Meherabad and Meherazad for the first time. The bus took us all to Meherazad one day, and we unloaded and filed into line to greet and be greeted by the Mandali. Everyone was so loving and nice, hugging and smiling and chatting. It seemed just too sweet and lovey-dovey to me, artificially sweet and not just quite right. I found a place on the bench outside Mandali Hall and waited still surveying the scene. Without introduction, Eruch came and sat next to me on the bench. My discomfort must have registered on my face. He looked at the gathering and without asking a thing said, "For myself, I like salt on my food."

He had read my mind. He also said that when Baba was alive the atmosphere around Baba was not like the present scene. I appreciated and will always remember how he took the time to reach me and soothe my misgivings in such a direct and uncomplicated way.

Jim Wilson's Story

He Was Known For His Strength

In 1986, Jean and I took our son and daughter to Meherabad where we found ourselves basking in the light and love of the Mandali. I had often read and heard how strong Eruch was, how he was matchless in his untiring service of his Master, Meher Baba.

But upon meeting him I was surprised how small he appeared. I was only 43 years old, six foot tall, 190 pounds, and bulked up from years of hard carpentry work. Eruch, on the other hand, was about 65 and living a life of speaking and administering for His Beloved. His body had aged but I had this sneaking desire to test his strength.

One day at Meherazad, I happened to come face to face with Eruch on the porch outside Mandali Hall. We looked at each other, he raised his two hands palm forward to me, and I greeted him by interlocking my fingers with his. He smiled at me then he stared into my eyes as he proceeded to bend my hands back. I looked at him and resisted the best I could but was unable to bend his wrists back the way he bent mine. I can't remember exactly what I said, but I mumbled to him that he is quite strong for a man of his age. He said to me that many Americans are so big and strong and that Baba liked America's energy. We hugged, and he was approached by other pilgrims.

I remember this very private moment with Eruch even though it was a rather mundane and silly "man thing." But I also cherish that moment as a Baba kiss. He let me see that serving the Master requires a strength that only He can provide. Although it was a physical strength, it was needed in His advent; a time when He travelled the world at an exhausting pace and set the cables for the release of His love and grace. Eruch was His slave, perfectly suited for the work Baba expected of him. Like almost every person who met Eruch, I truly felt happy in his presence. He was such a man.

Paul Williams' Story

My story related to Eruch took place in 1989. I want to be careful not to identify the person in this story.

There was a pilgrim at Meherabad, relatively new to Baba and taken with Baba's personality, affected by Baba's love to the point of being in kind of a daze. One day in the middle of an intense volleyball game this person walked across the volleyball court, and continued walking smack into a tree, fell on the ground and ended up with a bloodied nose. I don't want to call this person unbalanced, but this person was so intoxicated with Baba's love.

Anyway, shortly after that experience this person showed up at Meherazad (where Baba's resident Mandali lived) on the bus with all the other pilgrims. When the bus would arrive at Meherazad, it was common to get off the bus and be greeted by various Mandali and westerners. But I tried to get off the bus quickly and get a good seat in the hall.

So I came into the hall, and Eruch was standing there with a few other people. This person had got off the bus a little bit ahead of me, just a few steps. And this person immediately approached Eruch and began to bow down at Eruch's feet. Eruch had a standing order from Meher Baba to never allow anyone to bow down to him. Before the bow could be achieved Eruch quickly reached out and smacked the person on the forehead with the palm of his hand in a blunt and forceful motion. The impact of the blow knocked the person completely backwards and onto the floor and on their back.

It was very shocking for me to see Eruch strike anyone. But Eruch was completely unaffected by this, and he immediately turned away and continued his conversation with the person he was talking with. Other people there quickly grabbed this person and escorted the person out of the hall. It was so obvious to me that there was no way that Eruch was going to allow anyone to bow down to him.

There is an amazing steely core in the Mandali that most people didn't see. Eruch was willing to go to the extent of striking someone to prevent the violation of Meher Baba's order. It was a revelation to me. At this point in time Eruch was a healthy man but getting on in years. Still he was able to strike this person with such force that he laid them out on their back. This other person was not a slight person, but healthy and athletic. He just decked him with one blow.

A lot of people talk about how sweet and intuitive the Mandali were, but they don't mention how ready and willing they were to sacrifice anything to maintain Baba's order. This person came in and gave no prior warning. There was no thinking about this at all. Eruch's response was instantaneous. He was prepared at any moment to react. He had no animosity or anger, he didn't change his expression. He had no connection to the incident and went on talking. There was no further comment about it.

Alice Klein's Story

A Very Short Story

I was in Meherabad and having a hard time in every possible way: healthwise, emotional, social, and so on. Someone brought me to Eruch (I had been too shy to really meet any of the Mandali; someone else, for instance, set up a meeting for me with Mani).

How long this little visit with Eruch was I don't remember, nor what transpired, except for two things. One thing was that he was very affectionate and put his arm around my shoulders, and it was a time when I needed some TLC.

And the second thing was that he made me stand up next to him and say, "Avatar Meher Baba Ki Jai!" And when I did that, it wasn't loud and convincing enough for him, so he made me repeat it, louder and louder, until he was satisfied.

Dave Miotke's Story

I remember all the wonderful stories in Mandali Hall at Meherabad. The light coming in the window above Eruch as he sat on the floor facing Baba's chair, which was across the room in the corner next to the doorway. The birds would be singing, praising the stories being told about the Beloved of Beloveds. Most of the time, Mani would be there too, adding to the tales of the God-Man.

I remember holding the floor one day, telling about Mahler's *Resurrection Symphony* (#2), how it was completed in 1894, and how the events on and around February 25th of that year inspired Mahler. "Auferstehen, ja auferstehen..." (Rise, yes, rise...) Mahler being inspired to contribute musically in the bringing back of the Avatar. Oh, dearest Rose... (the 4th movement). Mahler conducted the *Eroica of Beethoven* on February 26th. Was there a rehearsal on the 25th in the nearly empty cathedral in Vienna in preparation for the next day's performance, a funeral service for the great conductor Von Bulow? A short time before that, as Vienna learned of Von Bulow's passing while vacationing on the Nile, Mahler was in attendance at an earlier memorial service. There he heard a boy's choir singing *Klopstock's Resurrection Ode*. He said that it was as if he had been struck by lightning. "These are the times a composer waits for..." He had spent six years working on his 2nd symphony and knew that he needed that "something," that inspiration to finish the work. It would be monumental, for chorus, vocal soloists and orchestra. It would call to mind *Beethoven's 9th*, the *Ode to Joy*. How could he dare to try and create something of that scope? Then the "lightning strike." He went home and feverishly wrote and wrote, completing the whole work by the end of spring, I believe. So when Baba was being born, all of this western musical inspiration was happening, calling, desperately calling "Oh Red Rose, mankind lies in deepest need....." "Come, O Beloved."

I went on for quite a while, an hour or so, bringing in Wagner and Cosima, Liszt, Richard Strauss, etc. I described the form of each of the movements.

Most people think of the overall plan of the work as leading to the return of Christ at judgment day. He will then free all the souls, the graves will open up and all will rise to heaven, etc. I see the work as asking "What are we here for?" Are we here to merely live our lives with as many pleasant experiences as we can? Are we here to fight each other, conflict after conflict? Or are we here to seek the inner experience of realization through love and service for the Beloved, in this age Avatar Meher Baba? ("O schmerz, du aldurchdringer..")

Overcoming the all pervading pain through love, active, living, breathing
"Mastery in Servitude!" That's it! O Baba, beautiful, lovely Beloved!

After I finished, Eruch said that I should be a professor, telling stories like that. Of course, these things come about, I feel, as gifts from the All-Knowing One. You work hard to learn things, and you'll never learn enough. Still, certain things impress you in such wonderful ways, and you remember them, you embrace them, so to speak. These things are "wet," like the tears of joy that come from the heart's deepest places. It is Baba.

I remember a day when we all were coming back into Mandali Hall after having tea. A couple of people, who shall remain nameless, were kidding around, sort of going overboard, shall we say. I sensed this as I waited for the session to resume. All of a sudden, Eruch spoke up, saying something to the effect, "Brothers, sisters, let us return to the proper atmosphere, where we regard the Beloved as being in our midst." The worldly kibitzing stopped immediately and we returned to the purpose of being there in Baba's exquisite presence....

Thank you Baba. Thank you Eruch, and all the Mandali. Thank you Beloved Baba, thank you, thank you... Oh, God, how can we ever love you enough? You are All in All, the One with Infinite Attributes. Beyond words. Thank you, thank you, thank you...

Ten years ago, Eruch had just passed away. I had just finished reading the 20 volumes of *Lord Meher*. Bal Natu had just sent me a wonderful letter, encouraging me to keep singing for Baba. So, on September 8, 2001, three days before 9/11, I went into Prairie Sun Studios in Cotati, California, and from 9A.M. to 9P.M., with a break for dinner, recorded the CD *In Dust I Sing*.

It was a great day. The first ghazal I recorded that morning was *How Can We Live When You Have Gone Away?*" by Bhauji. The microphones weren't adjusted correctly, so it was too "hot!" It couldn't be used. We only found that out later. The rest of the ghazals went beautifully and can be heard to this day, available through Sheriar Books, etc.

Rick Chapman Story

Eruch arrived, as usual, in a jeep from Meherazad at about noon. Immediately he was surrounded by eager pilgrims, each wanting a greeting, each savoring a long, heart-filling embrace. Eruch began this Amartithi celebration as he always did, making his way slowly, by dint of the interruptions, from the jeep outside the upper Meherabad library to the back of the tin shed, where he would settle in to continue to greet the constant stream of Baba-lovers who were drawn to his "station" for the duration of the event.

The walk to the tin shed would take just over an hour this day. As pilgrims arrived and spotted Eruch, they raced to him, catching their first of what would be many divinely significant embraces from him, for they would return after taking darshan at the Samadhi, return again in the night, as Eruch told stories about his Beloved deep into the morning hours. And they would not leave Meherabad Hill for their homes without yet one more embrace.

At about four in the increasingly chilly morning, after the crowd behind the shed had dwindled to less than twenty, we headed for one of the impromptu tea stalls at the east end of the Hill. Everyone was bleary-eyed, including the fifteen-year-old kid serving the tea, but such tea has never been enjoyed even by kings, for its company transformed it into a nectar of comradeship in the Beloved's Love! This year I was too slow-Eruch bought the round with rupees produced from one of the pockets in his famous heavy woolen "New Life" coat. Everyone felt honored to have tea that the Slave of the Masters of Masters had

offered as an Amartithi treat. Everyone had a million thoughts that could never fit into a single thought bubble, however large.

Then we headed down the Hill, toward the tents at Lower Meherabad and eventually to the Dhuni platform, where the Dhuni would be lit an hour or so later by the runners from Meherazad. Special times? You tell me. All I can say is that the Grace that makes it possible to enjoy His Presence today was fully present then as well, in spades. AVATAR MEHER BABA KI JAI!!!!!!

(copyright Rick Chapman 2011)

Dick Anthony's Story

Eruch and the Spiritual Value of Authentic Criticism

In 1981, Louise and I and Steven within her pregnant belly spent nine weeks in India. During our stay, I met with Eruch twelve times in his room, for an hour and a half or so, doing body work to help him recover from chronic pain that had resulted from a stroke five years earlier. During those times, I formed many of my most personal impressions of him. One morning I noticed a small scrap of paper pinned to the wall above his desk. It said: "Far more fortunate is one who absorbs even one accurate criticism than one who has traversed all the inner realms of spiritual experience." It was attributed to Meera Bai, a Hindu female saint of the sixteenth century. (I knew that Eruch had been reading a book about her, which he had recommended to me.) "What's that for?" I asked. He shrugged. "I just put it up to remind me." he said. That short interchange has resonated in me for thirty years and has played its part in my struggles to follow his example, as best as I can.

Steve Essley's Story

Bicycling the road from Meherazad back to Ahmednagar one evening in November 1974, I noticed that the huts along the road had many decorative lights. In Mandali Hall the next day a small group was chatting with Eruch, and I asked him about the lights. He explained it was Divali, the Hindu Festival of Lights, and he offered to tell a New Life event that happened during Divali.

In Madras, the men still with Baba in the New Life were looking out for people who were really poor but wouldn't beg. This was a great task set for the Mandali by Baba. At a coconut milk stand, Baba told Eruch to listen to a nearby conversation about a man who lost all his wealth. Eruch got the man's address and they went about 75-100 miles by train to this man's town or village. They arrived at dusk and Baba waited at the station while Eruch went out to find the man's house.

A boy guided Eruch to a very poor locality, but there were lights lit for Divali in the street. Only one house did not have any lights. Inside was a young lady praying to a life-size statue of Krishna and her sick father lying on the floor because there was no furniture. She asked "What do you want?" She spoke very good English. Eruch convinced her to let his "elder brother" visit. Eruch went back to the station and returned with Baba in a tonga.

Baba sat down and washed and dried the man's feet. Then Baba bent down further and put his forehead on the feet of the sick man. He put a large sum of money in an envelope on the man's chest. Eruch said "Please accept this amount as a gift from God and oblige us," as Baba ordered he do for all such offerings.

Suddenly as Eruch was finishing the story he let out a piercing scream, reenacting the young woman who started to wail and fell at Krishna's feet. She said "Oh Lord, I never knew you were so compassionate, so kind and merciful. No sooner do I implore you for help than within a few minutes you send me the help." Baba was very happy.

This is still one of my favorite stories. For Eruch's full detailed version, see *Tales of the New Life*, p. 103-7

Ralph Brown's Story

Whenever a Baba Lover would come to India with a friend or family member who was not a Baba Lover it would amaze me at how naturally and sincerely Eruch would relate to the person. One such instance was when my father visited India in the early '80s. (Unlike the Mandali, who would remember not only the year but the month and often the day of any recollection, I'm lucky if I get the decade right.)

My Dad was a former Communist and an avowed atheist who had little patience for most Baba Lovers, who he generally viewed as self indulgent wastrels who turned a blind eye to social injustice. Eruch, as always, seemed sincerely interested in him, chatting and parrying stories and viewpoints without condescension or any attempt to "sell the program. "

One day my Dad asked me if I was going on the walk with Eruch to Pimpalgaon village. I was surprised, as I knew that Eruch hadn't done this walk in quite some time. I was sure that Eruch was only doing it to provide some entertainment for my Dad. I went along and, sure enough, Eruch walked next to my Dad the whole time, pointing out interesting tidbits of information about the flora and fauna, odd Indian customs, etc. A bunch of Pilgrims trailed behind, no doubt wishing that Eruch would be telling Baba stories and frustrated that he was devoting himself completely to the old guy who wasn't even a Baba Lover. After the walk, my Dad said he had found it very interesting, but never said anything about Eruch.

My Dad ended up living with us the last few years of his life. During this time we were having a small get-together with some Baba Lovers, one of whom asked my Dad what he thought about Meher Baba. He said: "I'm an atheist. I don't believe in God. But, if I did, I think he'd be a pretty good candidate. But I've met plenty of these Baba Lovers. They don't live up to Meher Baba's teachings... except Eruch."

Someone said: "Art, you got that one right."

Steve Kahle's Story

"You Are My True Friend"

The last time I saw Eruch was in 1995 while on my last trip to India. At that point he had been "lingering" for many years for our sakes and that was something I was really thankful for. However, I knew he wanted to go home to Baba but many of us were holding on to him. Because I didn't want to be one of the ones holding him back I prepared myself to release him and say my final goodbye. This happened on my last day at Meherazad as we pilgrims were saying our goodbyes to the Mandali prior to boarding the bus back to Meherabad. My turn with Eruch came and looking into his eyes I said, "Goodbye, Eruch" while inwardly letting him go. Without me saying so, Eruch knew exactly what my "goodbye" meant and immediately thanked me by saying, "You are my true friend" and giving me a big hug!

Poem

When the Signposts Are Gone (2)

O Beloved, how will we find our way when all the signposts are gone?
When I survey the landscape now, I find no shade trees out on the lawn.

We were under their protection, taking our cues from their perfect lives;
They were the lampposts in the darkness, Your true reflection in the night.

They were Your moons, reflecting Your sunlight upon our dark
earthen world;
They were Your evidence-God's Avataric banner quietly unfurled.

They were our most intimate friends, teaching us what friendship
really means;
They were our dearest family, closer than parents and siblings have been.

How do You expect us to proceed in the vacuum of their absence?
Whom can we now embrace, in the totality of Your Great Silence?

The time has arrived, it seems, for the Master's children to become men
And women-mature adults in His Love-for now is no longer then.

Time has come to find the Beloved where we could not find Him before;
Coming of age means diving deeper to be with the One we adore.

Rick Chapman, *Stealing Hafiz*, page 69
(copyright Rick Chapman, 2010, White Horse Publishing Company)

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

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 No.CA website](#)

Meeting schedule can be downloaded in pdf form from website (above)

The Meher Baba 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 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.

More Local Meetings

Lafayette - Sunday Afternoons

Monthly meeting at the home of Kirk and Marlene Allen.

Please call to confirm. (925) 284-4066

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

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

Sacramento area - Meeting 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

contact for messages to newsletterwallas: meherbabacenter@gmail.com

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