

Herman Alvarado's Story, Part 2

In 1956, Herman Alvarado and his family had the good fortune to meet Meher Baba in San Francisco. Herman took this photo at that time. In 1958, the Alvarados traveled to Myrtle Beach to be with Beloved Baba again. Here is the story of their visit:

Our second time to be with Baba was when He came to Myrtle Beach for the 1958 Sahavas. With great expectation came departure day. Two days earlier I'd had a hemorrhoid operation, and taking a bus ride for thousands of miles in four days was quite a challenging endeavour. Needless to say, it was torture but with a delightful outcome. To relieve my discomfort in sitting for long hours, I stood up, hanging by the straps and repeated, "God Alone is Real, and the goal

of life is to be united with Him, through Love" many times. That night, when the bus stopped in Indianapolis, many people were attending the Indy 500 car race. I guess God heard me, because among the souvenirs available was an inflated wheel doughnut representing the logo of a car club. I bought it, and what a relief it was. From there on, sitting on that doughnut was like sitting in a king's throne!

Hallelujah! We made it to Atlanta and then, finally, to Myrtle Beach. We stayed at the Mike and Ann Motel, a couple miles away from the Center's main entrance, where the next day our spiritual romance with Baba continued. By good fortune, our motel neighbors were two lovely ladies. One was Marguerite Poley, an artistically minded lover of animals, who once worked doing trick-riding on horses. The other, Christabel Bevan, came from the Faeroe Islands north of Scotland, had lived many years in France, and came to meet Baba by an invitation of a friend, Dana

Field, when she was living in Mazatlan, Mexico. This lady was very quiet with an enormous sense of mystical perception. In her younger days she visited Tibet's Buddhist monasteries and saw the Dalai Lama. She was not a psychic per-se, but she could see peoples' auras. When some-

body asked her what she thought of Baba, she explained that He was pure light. Later I learned that Baba has no aura, but a halo.

When I embraced Baba, He kept asking me how I was feeling and I said, "OK." Perhaps because of my lack of sleep, my eyes looked tired, because He pulled down my eyelid and, with a penetrating look, told me, "tomorrow, you see Dr. Ben Hayman," an English physician who had come with Charles Purdom to the Myrtle Beach Sahavas.



Baba with the children at the Holiday Lodge, San Francisco, 1956. Top row: Sandra Alvarado, Bill Dimpfl, Baba, 3-B Dimpfl. Bottom row: Joanie Dimpfl, Skeeter Smith, Magda Alvarado, Laurie Smith, Lily Smith.

Of what essence divine and enigmatic is this search for God? Perhaps the essence of a sublime emotion called Love. I had to admit that we loved Him. Ever since I first met Him in that San Francisco airport, I felt impelled by the silent inward force coming from the gentle, but penetrating, eyes of His Nazar. That I can never forget. And now I was not only meeting those magnetic eyes again, but He was touching the eyelids of my own tired eyes with His index finger.

"With a good night's sleep and some eye drops, you will be O.K.," Dr Hayman told me. How true it was. Dr. Hayman gave me the comfort of my body but Baba gave me the comfort of my soul. He knew me inside and out. I felt so good — strong enough to volunteer to bus dishes at the dining hall. I had a hard-working partner who became an illustrious judge: Henry Kashouty. That job gave us an advantage, as well as having an ego-deflecting effect. We

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could get information about the activities of the day in which we could participate. In another way, we were unknowingly learning a lesson in humility.

The scenery with His followers had an internal meaning beyond my comprehension. Again, things were not what they seemed to be. It seemed that He wanted to communicate a spiritual message to the world by using the ocean. After all, there is only one ocean circumscribing the whole world and He is also an Ocean of Love. That is why I said that my living depends on sailing the oceans. On that beautiful day I got my turn to carry Baba's palanquin at the front end, watching very carefully my steps through ocean debris and sand dunes, until we stepped on the wet, smooth, sand of the beach. There, the smell of the air and the roar of rolling waves were sweet melodies, sometimes accompanied by tiny elusive beach crabs,

playing hide and seek in each wave of foaming tide. Then, all of a sudden, my shoes started squishing and I felt the cooling sensation of a refreshing retreating wave. Looking over my shoulders, I expected Baba to signal me to turn around, but instead, with His right hand, He made the motion to keep going straight ahead. I knew He wanted to wet His feet, but the water was at my knee then and I began to worry a lot. Only a

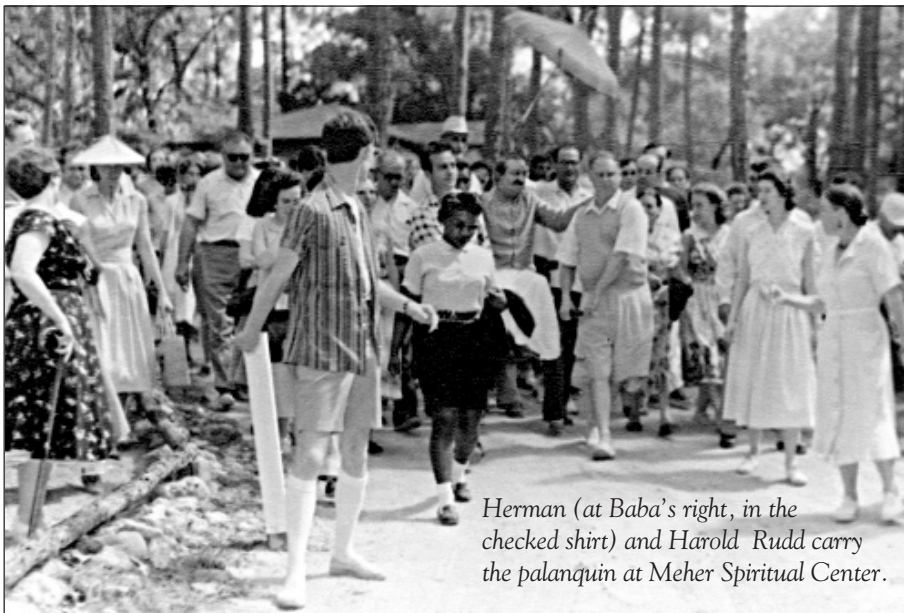
couple days before, when strolling on that beach, a lifeguard had been instructing some youngsters in the dangers of an undertow. With each step forward, my fear grew stronger. With the water at my groin, Baba again motioned to continue. In that moment I thought of Helen and my two daughters. I was leaving this ocean for the one of eternity. My fear then became an avalanche of courage and I thought, "Why not? This is my best chance to go with Him, and not be separated from the Ocean of Love. There is no other way." In that moment, when I decided to take the plunge, Baba raised both hands and somebody hollered, "Stop, Stop!" My heart almost stopped, too, not knowing if it was for joy or regret, when we made the turnaround toward the beach. Once on solid ground, the palanquin was lowered and many Baba lovers came, greeting Him and looking for a towel to dry His feet. None could be found until my wife Helen, out of her devotion, took her sweater off and, with great affection, dried His feet.

We left the Center after songs and Arti, but I could hardly close my eyes at the motel that night. Instead, my mind

was in a reverie, daydreaming on a fantasy ship, sailing on turbulent uncharted waters and searching for the beams of a lighthouse and safe harbor. In my soul, I knew I had found that spiritual lighthouse, although in my mind the fog was dense, keeping me looking and wandering through enchanted ports of call, in the one ocean of a vast gross world. My ship became my body when I heard the ring of a bell; not the one at the bridge house, but the one at the motel calling for breakfast time and return to the center. At the Center were many friends, old and new, nationals and foreigners, enjoying too many activities for me to enumerate. One, however, had a great significance for me. Baba gave a birthday party for all the children within the Center's grounds. He asked Helen to light the candles so the kids could have cake and ice cream. Quite a common and ordinary party you may say, but for me it meant so

much. That sunny and warm day was Helen's birthday, but she alone knew that. Even I had forgotten, as I was distracted in so many other ways. But Baba knew it, in His omniscient silence, inspiring me to never forget it again.

Yes, we had wonderful experiences and an unforgettable time, but the time was coming close for Baba to leave us. That evening a group of men, who had formed a club calling them-



Herman (at Baba's right, in the checked shirt) and Harold Rudd carry the palanquin at Meher Spiritual Center.

selves the Alligators, gave a performance at the barn. A young man sang, "He's Got the Whole World in His Hands." When the show was over, I told them, "see you later, alligators."

The next day, Baba gave us discourses as a loving courtesy farewell. Margaret Craske's dancers carried Baba outside His house on the front lawn, with his chair located in the middle. Suddenly His expression looked sad and far away, as if He were in another realm. Resting on the arm of His chair, His fingers slowly started moving, like He was playing a Schubert melody on the piano. I thought something was wrong with His hands and went forward to assist Him, but Adi immediately stopped me, explaining that He had been working in the inner planes and should not be disturbed. After a couple of minutes, He was with us again in our gross-conscious world. We had not been ignored; He had been taking care of the affairs of the universe. Then we were free to ask questions and some devotee brought Him an audiotape of Buddha's discourses.

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

March 5th - Ursula Reinhart's Story of Meeting Baba

On March 7th, 1966, Ursula had the great good fortune to meet Meher Baba at Meherazad in India. On the 39th anniversary of that meeting, she will tell her story.

March 12th, 6 PM - The Super-charged 70s, a Potluck

Come see Eruch, Mani, Mehera, Goher, Pendu, Aloba, Bal and Padri as they were when the first wave of Baba's western lovers arrived at Meherazad. We'll see slide compilations and a DVD. Please bring your photos and a dish to share.

March 19th - Deborah Ash Fundraiser Concert

Critics say, "Her voice is like cellophane catching fire!.." Deborah Ash has performed on stage with Joe Cocker, Bonnie Rait and many others. She has just released a new recording, and is coming up from LA. tonight to help raise money for our Center. \$15.00 suggested donation. This will also be the last night to bid on silent auction items (Baba photos and other treasures from our office archives.) Come early to view them and bid!

March 26th - No meeting - Easter Weekend

April 2-3- Urban Sahavas with Roshan Kerawalla and Musical Guest Robert Een

Excerpted from an introduction by Mehera, Roshan's daughter:
"Roshan Kerawalla's father, uncles and aunts were among the first in Ahmednagar to recognize Beloved Baba's Avatarhood, and their whole family became very close to Him. Her father, Homi, was called 'Jolly Mama' by Baba because he always smiled, no matter what — even though he had great personal difficulties in his life...
Roshan grew up seeing Baba all the time. She was carried on His shoulder up Meherabad Hill, cooked His meals when He was in Poona for the summer, had her marriage arranged by Him and had two daughters at His direct command. Roshan inherited her father's smiling nature and total acceptance. She knows that Baba is with her, so she gets on with her life, always smiling and happy..."
Robert Een is an acclaimed composer, singer and cellist from L.A. Described as "...lively, raucous and sweet," he has composed several movie soundtracks. His CD *Your Life is Not Your Own* is dedicated to the mandali.

Saturday, April 2, we will meet at the El Cerrito Center from 11 AM - 6 PM, with a lunch break.

Sunday, April 3, we will meet at the Talbot's, 721 Crossbrook Drive, Moraga, from 11 - 5 PM. Call (925) 376-4325 for directions. Bring potluck lunch.

Suggested donation: Full weekend (Sat and Sun), \$25 for adults, \$10 for ages 18 to 29. \$40 Maximum per family. Single day (Saturday or Sunday), \$15 for adults \$5 for ages 18 to 29. \$25 Maximum per family.

April 9th - Rabi'a of Basra - A Talk by Janet White

The great saint Rabi'a al-Adawiyya of Basra lived from 717 - 801 CE (common era) in Mesopotamia. Come hear stories of her life and her meetings with other spiritual figures. Share your favorites of her poems and sayings.

April 16th, 6:30 PM - A Katie Evening

At 6:30 PM we will enjoy potluck dishes prepared from Katie's cookbook and then watch a video of Katie reminiscing about Baba. This event will be hosted by Vern and Annie Stovall at their Walnut Creek home. Please call Annie at (925) 938-2126 for directions and to coordinate potluck contributions.

April 23rd - A Coming-to-Baba Story

Ron Ormerod will share the tale of how the Beloved ensared him. He first heard of Baba in the mid-60s from Mik Hamilton. Come hear how Ron's story intertwines with Jerry Paulson's. Jerry was the last westerner to meet Meher Baba.

April 30th - Sing-Along and Boogie with Our Own Raine

Have you ever wanted to croon away to "Melt Me," rock out to "Divine Rememberer" and "Rock You Merwan" or jazz & scat to "Dazzling Stars?" Go to: <http://home.online.no/~solibakk/rainsing.html> for selections and the words for tonight's sing-along boogie.

May 7th, 7 PM - Cathy Riley in Concert at the Talbots'

Cathy Hass Riley is visiting from her home in Asheville, NC, and will give us a special concert. Her beautiful, melodic voice is a rare treat. Don't miss this event.

Sunday May 14th, 1 PM - Mehera's Tea at the Talbots'

On May 20th 1989, dearest Mehera reunited with her Beloved. Kacy Cook will share her memories of times with Mehera at this Mehera-style tea. Bring treats to share, along with your own memories and/or photos.

Sunday, May 22nd, 4 PM - Inspiring Sunset Hike

Meet fellow Baba lovers at 4 PM in the parking lot at Inspiration Point, Tilden Park. Expect impromptu dinner plans with hungry hikers afterwards.

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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URBAN SAHAVAS



Young adults and the young-at-heart gathered last summer for an Urban Sahavas themed “Growing Up In A Baba Family.” Guest speakers included (Top right) Meherwan Irani, son of Amrit and Dara Irani, and Meherdil Irani, whose father is Rustom, one of Baba’s twin nephews. Local young adults also spoke about their family experiences. Billy Goodrum, with his sidekick Ben (in diapers) provided musical entertainment.



Adele Wolkin spoke to us last month, recalling her life in the New York household of Baba’s western women mandali in the 1940s. She and her good friend Filis Frederick, both still in college, were invited to live with Elizabeth Patterson, Norina Matchabelli and Nadine Tolstoy. Adele described those early days vividly, and also spoke of the development of the Meher Spritual Center in Myrtle Beach. Our musical guest for this sahavas was Julie Rust, from Nashville Tennessee, whose soulful lyrics warmed all the hearts in her audience.

Digambar Gadekar spoke and played harmonium at our third Urban Sahavas last December. His wonderful first-hand stories were a rare treat. His father was an early mandali member, traveling with Meher Baba when He was still speaking. As a child, Digambar played on Baba’s lap. He sang bhajans before Baba as a member of the Poona Bhajan Mandali group. He has a local connection: while he attended the University of California in 1959 and 1960, he was befriended by Lud Dimpfl’s family, often staying at their home in Kensington.

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So far I have been giving you my personal account and, as a family man, I think it is only fair let my daughter Magda speak for herself.

Magda's story: "He Knew"

I was seven years old when I visited Myrtle Beach. I remember running around and playing near the buildings, woods, and beach, without a care in the world. We had presentations of lectures, songs, and skits in "the barn." I recited a poem for Baba called *Beautiful Day* by Frederick Kettner. My father had coached me all week on it. But the most remarkable thing that I remember was the day Baba had all the children come to him at the house so that He could give us gifts. I was sitting on the carpet near His feet and I saw a basket of small trinkets and gifts. My eye caught sight of a small, flat, brown-red leather coin purse. It had one black snap and was decorated in reds and browns. I immediately knew that I wanted that particular object from the basket. When my turn came to receive a gift, Baba gave me that exact coin purse. I don't know how He knew I wanted it, for I had not said or done anything to indicate my desire. Yet He knew. In 1984 I received a letter from a Baba lover who had been present that day in Myrtle Beach and had witnessed the event. She wrote me that before Baba gave me that little red purse, He made the motion of stuffing His love into it.

The following two poems were the ones that I recited to Baba that day in the barn.

Little Flowers

Dearest little flowers
Won't you clearly talk?
Tell me your secrets, please
While 'round you I walk.

I admire your grace
For the span of a day:
Yet I know not the depths
Of your mystery way.

What is your mission?
Why are you here?
Disclose the true meaning
Of your growth, without fear.

Dearest little flowers.
Thank you for your talk.
I'm glad I got some secrets
While 'round you I walked.

Beautiful Day

by Frederick Kettner - *Life and Spirit*, 1948

It's raining, raining,
Pouring, pouring,
"Ugly day!" the people say.
But for me
The inner sun is shining, shining,
Warming, warming,
"Beautiful day!" I say.

"But how can this be?"
You may ask.

Simple, it is, my friends.
I speak to the Nameless One
Who guards
The sunshine
Hidden in the Soul.
Then miracles are wrought,
Words become light,
They change into laughter,
And gone are the clouds!
How could they remain—
Clouds are not the way
To the Nameless One.

It's raining, raining,
Pouring, pouring.
But for me
The sun is shining, shining,
Warming, warming,
"Beautiful day!" I say.

Herman resumes: At the end of the day Baba gave us all Darshan in a funny way. He pretended to throw the candy to a person in the group, while simultaneously diverting the candy direction to another person, causing joyous, eager yelling competition among the group. I tried to catch one, when the person behind me gave me a push and I missed the candy. Well, things are not what they seem to be. Years later, I had my reward in visiting with Baba in India. I am closing this chapter with Baba in the U.S.A only. From the Atlanta airport, we gave Him the last good by, until His plane disappeared in the clouds, taking our hearts with Him.

YOUR CENTER NEEDS YOU!

For the past 2-1/2 years, the Meher Baba Center of Northern California has based its activities from its "new" Center in El Cerrito. The Center accomodates meetings and gatherings of up to 40 persons. It houses a Baba Bookstore, a lending library and an office. It has a good public presence on a busy, partly commercial street. We maintain a large window display which changes every month or two, and attracts many passersby. We also keep a wall tray stocked with free literature (pamphlets, Baba cards, newsletters, schedules, etc.). This tray is located next to our front door, adorned with a beautiful gold Mastery in Servitude caliphon. The Center is now open every Saturday from 10 AM - 2 PM.

In the fall of 2004, we were running at such a deficit that even the monthly rental on our space was not covered. Thanks to the generosity of our local community, we met that goal by the end of the year!

Our next goal is to raise \$300 a month for ongoing expenses such as utilities, telephone, and printing and mailing of our newsletter. We continue to rely on your loving donations at special events to cover our share of the expenses for the special guests who inspire us with stories of their personal Baba experiences.

If you can give a one-time or monthly contribution of any amount, please act now. To donate by credit card, contact Doug Ross (510) 388-6529 docrross@comcast.net. Checks should be sent to The Meher Baba Center of Northern California, 6923 Stockton Ave., El Cerrito, CA 94530. If you have any questions or ideas, please contact Dawn Dolan, Finance Committee Chairperson at dawndolan@neteze.com (707)795-6134.

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



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 or Jeanette 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:

General Info: www.garlic.com/~cdjohnso/SacMeherBaba/
Public Meetings: 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: elist@MeherBabaMeherBaba.org

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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