

The Meher Baba Washington Gathering

September – November, 2008



Washington, D.C., July 30, 1956

“To penetrate into the essence of all being and significance, and to release the fragrance of that inner attainment for the guidance and benefit of others, by expressing in the world of forms, truth, love, purity and beauty—this is the sole game which has any intrinsic and absolute worth. All other happenings, incidents and attainments, can in themselves have no lasting importance.”

—Avatar Meher Baba



Calendar of Events

September 13th
Pamela Butler-Stone's Home
5:00 P.M.

Reflections from the Youth Sahavas and India
Indian Feast prepared by Saleem
Music by Michael McConkey, Daniel Stone, Eli Chanin and others.
Come share the glow with those just returning from the Youth Sahavas and India. There will be stories, photos, food, and music.

September 20th
Sufi Center on Manchester Lane
Meet at 1:30 P.M.

Second Annual Baba Community Softball Game;
Baba Film; Dinner on the Veranda; Singing
Remember to bring a change of clothes

October 4th
Pamela Butler-Stone's Home
7:30 P.M.

The Real Treasure
This is the first in a series of meetings to read and discuss stories from Volumes I and II by Rustom Falahati.

October 18th
Marian Lobred's Home
7:30 P.M.

New Life Meeting
To honor the anniversary of Baba's New Life, we will read from Bhauji's wonderful new book entitled *Meher Baba's New Life*.

November 1st
4:30 P.M.
7:30 P.M.
Terry & Rob Barton's Home

Gutta
Bring some food to share as well as ideas for upcoming meetings.
Special Guest Jim McGrew
Jim had the rare fortune of meeting Meher Baba in the late '60s when Baba was largely in strict seclusion. He is the author of the recently published book, *Avataric Advents*, about which he will talk this evening.

November 8th & 9th
Michael McConkey's Home
& Eli & Marc Chanin's Farm

2nd Annual Autumn Retreat in the Blue Ridge Mountains
Come enjoy music, walks, Baba camaraderie and a Dhuni fire.
Please RSVP to Pamela by November 1st at 301 946-0236
See details in this Newsletter.

November 22nd
Marian Lobred's Home
7:30 P.M.

Gratitude Meeting
Baba once said to a devotee to always be grateful and to give thanks to God every day. As we approach Thanksgiving, let's come together and reflect on Baba's many blessings in our lives.

Meeting Locations

Terry & Rober Barton	6951 Duncraig Court, McLean, VA	703 883-8093
Pamela Butler-Stone	11227 Dewey Court, Kensington, MD	301 946-0236
Marian Lobred	3215D Sutton Place NW, Washington, D.C.	202 362-0664
Eli & Marc Chanin	124 Coles Farm Drive, Afton, VA	434 361-1222



News from the Gathering



“To love God, we have to keep ourselves ever present before Him and never be absent from Him. While discharging all our duties—thinking all thoughts, speaking all words, doing all deeds—we have to remember Him as the source of everyone and everything.”

—Bal Natu, *Glimpses of the God-Man* p. 31

The summer has presented rich opportunities for deepening our awareness of Baba’s Presence. In late June and early July, Bill and Diana Le Page visited with us for a wonderful week filled with Baba stories, informal sharing, and lots of great meals together.

Hearing Bill tell of times spent with Mehr Baba in India and Australia brought Him very much into our midst, creating a beautiful atmosphere of Sahavas. Diana shared an inspiring slide show of her extensive portfolio which contained her early sculptures, numerous charcoal drawings of Baba and her most recent project: a visual depiction of the various phases of Baba’s work which is now on display in the dining hall of the Meher Pilgrim Retreat.

Sixteen young people from the Washington, D.C area attended the Youth Sahavas at the Meher Center in Myrtle Beach in late July. It was a rare opportunity for them to come together and share their experience of growing up with Meher Baba. Seven of the young people were there as workers, volunteering their time in various roles to help keep the Sahavas running smoothly, and also to continue their involvement with the Youth Sahavas which has been such a meaningful part of their lives.

Being in India at Baba’s Samadhi and with His close Mandali is a very powerful means of clearing one’s focus to see that Baba alone is real. Six of us from the Meher Baba Washington Gathering were fortunate to make the pilgrimage to India during July and August. It is always a great privilege to experience the power and intimacy of Meherabad and Meherazad, and spending time with Baba’s few remaining Mandali is a precious opportunity not to be missed.

Reflections from Bill LePage

Bill Le Page was extremely fortunate to spend intimate time with Baba in India and Australia. He was

invited to the Three Incredible Weeks in 1954 and helped to arrange both of Baba’s trips to Australia in 1956 and 1958. Bill was a major link in Baba’s work with Australia. It was during this time that the extensive correspondence between Baba and Bill began. He attended the East West Gathering in 1962 and was later invited to stay with Baba and the Mandali at Meherazad for two weeks in 1967. In Bill’s own words, he describes what it is to be a devotee of Meher Baba: “Always, I am overwhelmed with the realization of all that I have received over the years with Him. It is not something I could detail. That would be impossible and in any case it is as though it is constantly changing, an endless treasure chest. But more, it is a sense of being filled with Him, and in the midst of the shadows and mist of this person called Bill Le Page, ever within is a pool of joy and well-being and enthusiasm that I know is both His creation and Baba Himself. That I do not always experience that pool, that so often I seem to forget its existence, that I wonder frequently where is my service to Him—all that I can accept, content to have what He has given me, knowing that He is there, and that I happily await His call.” (*Turning of the Key*, p.325)

A Treasure from India

Rustom Falahati has just released a new book: *THE REAL TREASURE II — Life of a Resident with Avatar Meher Baba’s Mandali*. Rustom, who lived and worked as a resident at Meherabad, Meherazad and the Trust from 1989 to 2000, shares profound stories of lessons imparted to him by the Mandali. Reading his stories, one can hear the voices of Mehera, Mani, Eruch, Bhau, Mansari, and Bal coming through. There is great wisdom contained in these pages. Rustom writes with honesty, humor and sensitivity about his experiences with the Mandali. To give you a taste of the gems contained in this book, we are including one of the stories here.

Become His

Although I had heard so much about Divine will and free will through stories from the Mandali, yet in my day to day work I was left confused about the application. The main confusion was how much effort one should make with respect to a particular objective and accept the failure as Baba's Will. So one day when I got the opportunity, I asked Bhauji about my doubts. "Bhauji, when one fails in achieving a particular objective, it is expected that he will make a greater effort the next time and achieve his goal. In fact, there are true stories of people failing numerous times and not giving up and eventually meeting success. However, there are just as many stories of people making numerous attempts and never getting success. How can one say when to stop and accept the failure as Divine will? After how many efforts of one's free will should one give up and accept the situation as Divine will?"

I was walking with Bhauji when I put my question to him and he stopped, held my hand and said, very seriously, "Forget everything that I have told you or anyone else has told you about free will and Divine will and listen carefully to what I am telling you now. There is no such thing as free will for those who are His. So try to become His completely. When you become His you cannot help but act according to His will and wish. Every act of yours is no longer yours but His. You become His instrument for the Divine work. For such a one only Divine will exists. Do not forget this. Remember this and do not forget."

On another occasion, I happened to ask Eruch about a doubt which prompted a reply from him on this very subject. There were many times, in my day to day work at the Trust, where I was not sure what the correct action to take was in a particular situation. I was not sure when faced with options as to which option would please Baba. So I raised my doubt with Eruch when he was at the Trust Office. I asked him, "How do we know, how can we be absolutely sure when faced with options, whether the option we choose is right and will please Baba?"

Eruch replied, "Don't worry about right and wrong. Become His and right and wrong will take

care of itself. When you become His, then your acts no longer spring from your limited ego self, but rather they are prompted by the Divine Being. So why worry about right and wrong? Let your main worry be to remember Him constantly and to become His. If you do that successfully, you no longer have to worry about anything. So don't create confusion in your mind by thinking about useless things. Rather think about Baba, for it will end all confusion. See that all your efforts are directed towards His remembrance, whether you work or relax. Remember to do it for Him. All this will eventually help you to become His and, when that happens, everything falls into place."

It reminded me of the following quote of Beloved Baba's, "If at all you must worry, let it be how to remember me constantly. This is worthwhile worry for it will bring about the end of all worries."

—Rustom Falahati

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Blue Ridge Mountain Retreat ...the Second Annual!

Come to the mountains for our autumn retreat the weekend of November 8th and 9th at the neighboring McConkey and Chanin Farms in Afton, Va. The gathering will begin on Saturday at 1:00 P.M. with a potluck lunch and will continue through lunch on Sunday. We will once again have a Dhuni/bonfire with music by Michael McConkey and anyone else would like to join in. During the day there will be time to relax, go for walks, and be together in a beautiful setting. Following the Dhuni, we will have an Indian feast prepared by Saleem. There will be some sleeping space available in the two houses. Please RSVP to Pamela by November 1st. Check the website, www.meherbaba.dc.com for updates. In case of rain, the weekend will be rescheduled.

In His Abiding Love,

Pamela Butler-Stone and Terry W. Barton