

MEHER SPIRITUAL CENTER

SERVING THE BELOVED

*VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES FOR SERVICE
AT MEHER BABA'S HOME IN THE WEST*



The aspirant always has to be in readiness to serve the cause of humanity. He need not apply himself to any type of work irrespective of his capacity. He has to select that portion of work which he is qualified to do by virtue of his individual aptitude and abilities. But whatever service he can render by virtue of his capacity, he renders even when the circumstances are most trying.

—Meher Baba, *Discourses*, 6th ed, vol 3, p. 124



VOLUNTEERING: AN HONOR

The Need of the Hour

Dear Volunteers,

We are so appreciative of your interest and desire to serve Beloved Meher Baba by volunteering at His 'home in the West.' It would not be presumptuous to say that your wish to serve makes Beloved Baba happy or that He uses each one of us as an instrument to help preserve His home in the West and His legacy.

The role of a volunteer is unique in that it interweaves one more fully into the fabric of the Center. The extensive work required to keep the Center running would come to a complete standstill without its volunteers. We currently have 200 volunteers filling 264 roles throughout the Center. These roles involve volunteer support in many functions essential to the life of the Center, such as: security, guest relations, dissemination of information about Baba's work, and much more.

Of course, the Beloved makes all of the work possible by making the best use of our individual skills and knowledge. The staff at Meher Center want to help you discover what work you are drawn to do and match your skills with the role that best suits you.

The following information will give you an overview of the various volunteer roles and opportunities for training and work, including how to create the best schedule for yourself with help from the appropriate group coordinator.

We look forward to expanding our Baba family of volunteers!

QUALIFICATIONS OF A MEHER CENTER VOLUNTEER

- 1) A knowledge of Meher Baba's life and work, including the history of Meher Center.
- 2) An awareness and commitment to the Vision, Mission, and Values of Meher Center.
- 3) A commitment to the purpose of the Center as a place of retreat for rest and renewal of the spiritual life.

How to Volunteer?

If you are interested in volunteering, the first step is to contact Barbara Plews, the Center's Retreat Manager. Barbara will arrange an informal meeting with you to discuss your interests and aptitudes, current volunteer opportunities, and scheduling. You will then be introduced to the appropriate group coordinator who will work with you to schedule your training.





MANY WAYS TO SERVE THE BELOVED

SAROJA LIBRARY

One of the most popular volunteer roles at the Center is serving at Saroja Library. (Saroja, is the Persian name given to Kitty Davy by Baba.) The library sits on one of the Center's most breathtaking spots overlooking Long Lake. The modest building houses over 6000 books on various topics like books by and about Meher Baba, books about different world religions and traditions, and general interest books including children's books. The library also offers a wide selection of videos of and about Meher Baba.

Librarians are required to have knowledge of the books and other offerings. It is also helpful to have a working knowledge of Meher Baba's life and work. Sometimes the library may be in need of volunteers for special projects. Please ask the Library Volunteer Coordinator if you are interested in helping with them.

Hours: Monday through Saturday, 11 am to 1 pm, and 2 to 4 pm
Sundays, 2 to 4 pm

MEHER ABODE – HOSTING AT BABA'S HOUSE

Meher Baba's House is one of the Center's sacred sites. Built under Baba's supervision, and sanctified by His presence, the house is one of the three buildings on the Center that Meher Baba requested be kept in 100% condition, as much as possible. Hosting involves welcoming people to His home, giving tours just as Baba did in His time, being ready to assist elderly and handicapped visitors, and being on hand to help with children, if need be, preserving the quietude, and keeping watch over the treasures in the house. Any volunteer will tell you that hosting at Meher Abode is an honor and a privilege.

Hours: Tuesdays, 11 am to 1 pm Saturdays, 9 to 11 am
Fridays, 4 to 6 pm Sundays, 11 am to 1 pm



GATEWAY RECEPTIONIST

The Receptionist is the first contact person at the Gateway. This is an important role that includes answering phone calls, greeting overnight guests, day visitors and drop-ins. The Receptionist assists Gateway staff during busy times at the office. On occasion, the Receptionist orients new guests to the Center. You could say that, in one sense, the Gateway is the hub of the Center, which means the volunteer has the unique opportunity to participate in the buzzing, vibrant energy of the Gateway, welcoming old-timers and newcomers both as they arrive at the Center.

Hours: 2-3 hour shifts between 9 am and 5 pm, 7 days a week

TEA WALLAS

Original Kitchen Teas

Serving tea in ancient cultures like China, Japan and India is a way to show hospitality. In this tradition, tea is offered at Meher Center three afternoons a week in the Original Kitchen. This kitchen is the one in which Beloved Baba moved about many times, greeting His Lovers with a beautiful smile or a pat on the back or, sometimes, a loving chuck on the chin. A welcoming gesture to new guests and nearby community alike, the teas are a wonderful opportunity for informal conversation, sharing Baba stories and making a connection with fellow seekers. For those who have been to Baba's home in India, Original kitchen teas are reminiscent of Aloba's delightful teas at Meherazad.

Hours: Thursday, Friday, Saturday, 3.30 to 4.30 pm

Dilruba Teas

On Sundays, guests and the nearby community are welcome to meet for tea at Dilruba. Dilruba, which means 'Stealer of Hearts,' was Meher Baba's Persian name for Elizabeth. Formerly the home of Elizabeth Patterson and Kitty Davy, Dilruba, with its unique history, has an especially sweet and intimate atmosphere. Tea Wallas happily prepare chai and coffee for the gathering. The weekly event offers another special opportunity for members of the nearby community and Center guests to come together in Baba's Love.

Hours: Sunday, noon to 1.30 pm



TOURS OF THE CENTER

Tours are an opportunity to show new people around the Center. It is the Tour Guide's privilege to be the first person to introduce a new overnight guest or visitor to the Center and, perhaps, to Meher Baba. This exceptional volunteering role comes with the challenge of and responsibility for accurate and well-informed representation of Meher Baba, His life and work. It is an exciting experience to meet new people interested in Baba and the Center. In addition, one of the essential aspects of the Tour Guide's role is to report back to the Gateway about the individuals on the tour. The Center offers tours to new visitors almost every day.

Hours: Check with Tours Coordinator

ARCHIVE WORK

Meher Center safeguards an invaluable archival collection associated with Meher Baba. The collection includes documents pertaining to the God Man's life, precious relics associated with His Form and rare photos of Him and His disciples. Archival work takes place at the Center archives building. At present, the work is focused on organizing, cataloging and physically caring for the wide variety of historic items and materials belonging to the Center. Skilled help is required.

Hours: Consult with the Archives Preservationist

EVENING GATEKEEPER
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The Evening Gateway volunteer is the guard at the gate. This job comes with significant responsibility for not only the safety of the retreat guests but also for the Center itself. Multitasking is the Gatekeeper's middle name. Apart from watching the gate, the Gatekeeper signs in guests, both new and seasoned, greets visitors and drop ins. In addition, all communications, including those involving emergencies, must go through the Gateway at all times. Of course, quiet moments can be a meditative experience in the silent company of the Beloved.

Hours: 6 to 10 pm

OVERNIGHT GATEKEEPER
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The Overnight Gatekeeper is the guard at the gate through the night. Duties involve checking in the occasional overnight guest who is delayed, watching out for the Center's safety, dealing with communications and emergency situations. The Gatekeeper's Cabin houses the Overnight Gatekeeper. The shift ends when the staff arrives the next morning.

Hours: 10 pm to 8.30 am

EVENING INSIDE CARETAKER
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The Evening Inside Caretaker's main responsibilities are to help maintain the retreat atmosphere, to be on call inside the Center in case of an emergency, and to be available to assist guests. The Evening Caretaker checks in at the Gateway and is informed of all expected activity including arrivals, programs, special occurrences and potential for unexpected situations. The Caretaker maintains communication with the Gatekeeper and both work together to fulfill their duties.

Hours: 6 to 9.30 pm

OVERNIGHT INSIDE CARETAKER
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The Overnight Caretaker has the critical role of manning the inside of the Center through the night. He is responsible for the safety of the overnight guests as well as the safety of the Center property itself. Apart from assisting guests, he is also responsible for maintaining curfew, patrolling the grounds, and taking care of the necessary morning duties. The Caretaker's Cabin is his base.

Hours: 9.30 pm to 8.30 am



CABIN CREW AND GROUNDS HELP
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Cabin Crew

The cabin crew is continuously occupied with cabin turnovers, especially during peak times. Volunteering with the crew involves assisting in cleaning cabins and tending to guests' needs. Apart from requiring strength and efficiency, the love and care involved are what make this job special. One cannot say enough about how special each cabin is to guests and to the retreat atmosphere of the Center.

Hours: Check in with Cabin Crew Coordinator

Grounds and Garden Keeping

Center grounds and gardens require constant upkeep. The grounds staff works full time to maintain the health of the forest and the overall beauty of the Center. The Gardens at Baba's house and the Guest House have a dedicated team of volunteers who work to enhance the charm of those two significant spots on the Center.

Hours: Set by Grounds and Gardens Team

Highway and Beach Beautification

Baba once said, "The Center will, one day, become an oasis in the midst of illusion." That has come to pass: bordered by busy Highway 17 on one end and the beach on the other, the Center is not a retreat in isolation. The Center makes an effort to maintain the beauty of the main entrance as well as the beach entrance.

Hours: Check in with Grounds Crew



SEASONAL PROJECTS

Youth Sahavas

This annual Gala event is the biggest event the Center holds. And unlike any other, the Youth Sahavas brings energy and spunk on Center that reflects a different side of Baba's love. Apart from the Center staff, Youth Sahavas staff and counselors, the event always needs help in different areas before, during and after.

Community Service

As the nearby Baba community grows, and more and more people move to be closer to the Center, there is an opportunity for community service. This is a special opportunity to see to the health and well-being, love and harmony in our nearby Baba family, and to help it grow and remain sustainable.

OTHER SPECIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Meher Baba wants all our offerings and skills in any capacity we are able to contribute. So does the Meher Center! Please feel free to approach the Center with any contributions, time and talent that we may benefit from. All kinds of things ranging from technical expertise to Gondola rides are welcome.

VOLUNTEERS SPEAK

"Volunteering at Meher Center is one of the greatest privileges of my life... Working beside so many other Baba Lovers is a remarkable pleasure and I always leave with the greatest joy, which I know dearest Baba has placed in my heart. I have learned, and continue to learn, so much with each volunteer occasion."

- An Evening Gateway volunteer

"Being a tour guide is one of the most rewarding jobs on the Center. As the new visitors open their hearts to the peaceful sanctity of Meher Baba's home in the West, their transformation becomes contagious. I experience Baba reeling them into His net in the unique way in which He touches each one. It's a marvel!"

- A Tour Guide at the Center

"As I sit at the library looking over the lake and the ocean beyond, its serenity pierces my core. ... I am left with no words to express the depth of my gratitude for this opportunity of being here, enwrapped in His presence"

- A Library volunteer

"It is a blessing to be able to give back to the Center after all it's given me over the years. ...volunteering gives me a reason to spend more time at the Center, something I would not trade for anything!"

- A volunteer who plays many roles

"Volunteering on the Center is saying yes to this opportunity Baba is offering me. It allows me to participate in His ongoing work and most especially in His work on me. It is right at the heart of my inner life with Baba."

- A grounds helper

"To be in Baba's House is bliss. Every time I give a tour, I have the chills to think that He gave tours of His home during His visits here. It is His gift to me!"

- A Baba's House Host

"...working as a volunteer feels like one is really working directly for Meher Baba, for something that He wanted, and that He personally set into motion."

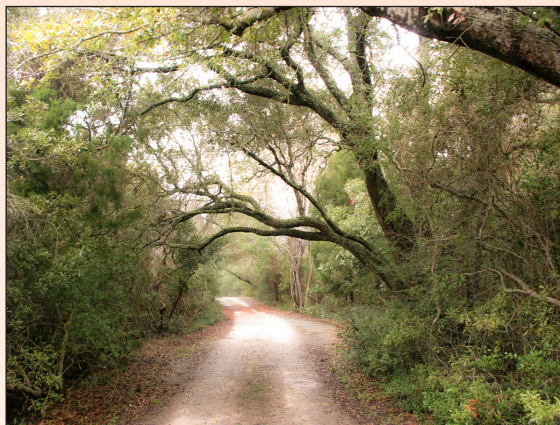
- An Evening Caretaker

"As a Gateway Receptionist, I meet Baba's lovers from all over the world, both in person and on the phone. I also get to field all sorts of questions about Baba, His work, and the Center, ...in some small way I feel I am participating in Baba's work, and in the preservation of the Center that He loved so much."

- A Gateway Receptionist

SERVING THE UNIVERSE

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God as God alone is not consciously man, and man as man alone is not consciously God. The God-Man is consciously both God and man; so the God-Man is both Lord and the servant of the universe.

Lord, in the state of helping all souls toward reality.

Servant, as continuously bearing the burden of all. To serve Him who serves all is serving the universe. Selfless service and love are twin divine qualities. Only the one who loves can serve.

Serve your Beloved God-Man and you are serving your own self in every other self.

The service He exacts is for your own spiritual benefit; but this service must be spontaneous, willing, wholehearted, unconditional and not expecting any reward. This service is an ordeal which tries body, mind and spirit; or else wherein would the perfection of serving if it were to be easy and at one's convenience?

The body suffers, mind is tormented, but the spirit of the selfless server of the Master experiences the bliss of satisfaction.

Only the one who has can renounce. A king giving up everything and becoming a beggar exhibits true renunciation; and so only the one who, without any question and regardless of consequences, serves the God-Man really serves; otherwise it would be just like paid labor.

—Meher Baba, *Treasures*, ed. Jane Haynes, pp. 49-50