



## *Volunteer Job Description: Meher Mount Caretakers*

**TITLE:** Caretakers

**REPORT TO:** Directly: The caretaker liaison, who is Board President or an appointed Director.  
Indirectly: The Board of Directors.

**TERM:** A one-year commitment, renewable annually by agreement of both the Caretakers and the Board.

**OPPORTUNITY:** Take advantage of the opportunity to serve Avatar Meher Baba. Interact with hundreds of visitors who are seen as Meher Baba's invited guests. As a member of the Meher Mount team, protect, care for, and preserve this special place of pilgrimage for future generations. Live in a place where Avatar Meher Baba spent time.

### **DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES:**

1. Support and Serve the Purpose of Meher Mount. Make day-to-day operational decisions based on the purpose of Meher Mount, the master plan, and the teachings of Avatar Meher Baba. Help implement the policies, program and decisions made by the Board.
2. Greet Visitors: Greeting and orienting guests is the focus whenever Meher Mount is open to visitors. Guide visitors, provide background information, and engage in discussions about Meher Baba and Meher Mount. Use discretion and diplomacy in interactions with a wide variety of visitors. Be the point person for visitor emergencies.
3. Maintain the Physical Site and Facilities: Keep facilities and equipment working and in good repair. Maintain the grounds, including fire abatement and risk management. Manage facility emergencies. Follow-through and/or manage special project assignments.
4. Participate in Events & Volunteer Days: Coordinate with event organizer(s) and participate to ensure a successful event and/or volunteer day.
5. Interact with Neighbors and the Community: With Board support, be the on-site interface with neighbors. Represent Meher Mount in the Ojai community. Be the liaison with public service agencies, such as health and fire departments.
6. Perform On-site Administrative Duties: Work with the Treasurer in banking and bill paying. Prepare a monthly report for the Board. Maintain on-site records and files.

7. Work with the Board of Directors: Keep Board Liaison informed of project status, problems and issues, interesting anecdotes about life at Meher Mount. Attend Board meetings; identify critical or urgent issues needing Board attention.

**REQUIREMENTS:** Successful Caretakers have a realistic understanding of the expectations and demands of Meher Mount and of their role.

1. See the Position as a Calling: Caring for Meher Mount is a top – if not *the top* – priority. Uphold Avatar Meher Baba as the sole spiritual authority for guiding decisions and activities at Meher Mount. Caretakers need to be willing to undertake the responsibility of daily nurturing, protecting, and representing Meher Mount.
2. Have a Relationship to Avatar Meher Baba: Knowledge of and respect for Avatar Meher Baba is a key requirement. At the same time, the Caretakers must be respectful of the spiritual beliefs – or lack of them – from a wide variety of visitors.
3. Joy in Welcoming Guests: Have a desire and willingness to greet and welcome guests, many of whom know nothing of Meher Baba or Meher Mount. Be ready to welcome guests, whether you want to or not. Be tolerant and not easily offended.
4. Mindset: Recognize that frustrations and setbacks are part of being at Meher Mount. Be trustworthy. Have a willingness to learn. Have a willingness to work in a team-oriented environment.
5. Site Maintenance Skills: General gardening and yard/land maintenance skills; working knowledge of the equipment and tools, or willingness to take classes; handyman skills to handle basic maintenance.
6. Operational Requirements: Caretakers must have a working automobile and a valid driver's license; automobile insurance; renter's insurance; and health insurance.
7. Two Related Adults: The position calls for two adults who are related (e.g., spouses, siblings) with both persons available to assist at Meher Mount. Being a Caretaker can be taxing and having a companion to share the responsibility is helpful. It is also helpful to have complementary skills.
8. Good Physical Condition: Caretakers should have no major limiting physical or medical conditions. Good health with the ability to do sustained physical work indoors and outdoors is necessary with no chronic health problems, no serious back problems, and the ability to withstand 100-degree heat.
9. Flexible Profession or Retired: A flexible profession that allows time to handle Meher Mount duties while still earning a living. Successful Caretakers have been able to do some of their work on site or have been retired. Personal employment should not interfere with Meher Mount's operational hours, policies, or mission.
10. Time Availability: Have sufficient time available to perform the duties and be available to greet visitors four days a week: Thursday-Sunday, Noon to 5:00 p.m. Be on call and responsive 24/7 to Meher Mount's needs and requirements. Meher Mount takes more hours in the months leading up to the fire hazard abatement deadline of June 1<sup>st</sup> each year.

**PERSONAL FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:** The Caretaker opportunity is a volunteer position with housing and utilities provided. Caretakers are responsible for personal expenses.

**SITE CONSIDERATIONS:** The Caretakers need the ability and willingness to live under the physical conditions of Meher Mount:

- Weather: Extreme weather conditions, including summer heat, high winds.
- Water. Meher Mount has a relatively complex water treatment system which requires regular maintenance and occasional repair. The water contains sulfur and other minerals that require filtration and extra steps in its use.
- Remoteness. Meher Mount is at the top of a mountain, and it takes approximately 20 minutes to travel to Ojai or 20 minutes to Santa Paula for shopping, errands, banking, etc. Ventura, with major shopping options, is about 45 minutes away. Travel needs and requirements should be taken into consideration to determine if living at Meher Mount is a feasible option.
- Living Quarters: There is a single structure (Visitor Center/Caretaker Quarters) which acts as both a house for the Caretakers and central administration/meeting/reception area. The “private” or “family only” quarters consist of two bedrooms and a bath. There is a second, shared bathroom for guests. The Caretakers have a kitchen, which is open during events and volunteer days. The main room is primarily used as a meeting room, office, library and Meher Mount orientation. When Meher Mount is closed it can be used as general living area for the Caretakers. The building totals approximately 1,600 square feet.
- Donor Supported: Meher Mount is supported entirely by charitable donations. The Caretakers are responsible for carefully managing scarce resources in the day-to-day operations of Meher Mount.

## NEXT STEPS

1. To learn more: Contact Sam Ervin, board president, at 562-810-2282 or [ervinsam701@gmail.com](mailto:ervinsam701@gmail.com) to discuss the position, ask questions, and determine further interest.
2. Submit an application: Send a letter or written statement answering the following questions for *each* person:
  - Why this opportunity appeals to you and fits this stage in your life.
  - Your skills and background and how they apply to the duties as you see them.
  - Any other professional and personal background and experience that you feel is relevant.
  - How you perceive your role as Caretaker.
  - Your relationship to Meher Baba centers and activities.
  - Information on your profession and time availability to fulfill the responsibilities of Meher Mount.
3. Interview: Initial interview with the Recruitment Committee, either in-person or via Zoom.
4. Volunteer: Volunteer to be temporary caretakers for a week (or longer) with a critical eye to what life might be like living at Meher Mount and serving on a longer term, day-to-day basis. Tour the area to see the surrounding community and environment.