
CONDUCT IN BABA'S PRESENCE

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24:28

ERUCH: And we are sitting in the presence of the Lord, so how much more it should be.

PILGRIM 1: It's just something that has never come up in our talks, never.

ERUCH: Yeah.

PILGRIM 1: And I think it's partly because maybe we don't sit on the floor. The feet are always down because we're sitting in chairs.

ERUCH: Yeah.

PILGRIM 1: And so it doesn't come up.

ERUCH: Yeah.

PILGRIM 1: But I've noticed that you and Mani never stretch your legs out.

ERUCH: But you'll must be having those easy chairs or camp chairs.

PILGRIM 1: Right.

ERUCH: Do you'll put your feet up, legs up there? In presence of people?

PILGRIM 2: Yeah.

PILGRIM 1: Yeah. It's nothing.

ERUCH: Here we don't do it.

PILGRIM 1: Yeah. I've been watching that you don't.

ERUCH: On the contrary there is a real guideline that has been set by Baba. I still remember, Baba always would want us to be comfortable in His presence. He didn't care for it. He's the very sole of our feet. He is our feet, He is us, He is everything. For Him it is nothing. But it behooves us as long as we separate ourselves from Him to pay respect to Him, to behave, to sit in discipline and all that. And that shows the discipline is you have to sit this way, be humble in His presence and so forth. Not only in His presence but at all times. But if you cannot be at all times at least in His presence. Yeah. So that is the rule.

So once it so happened. He on the contrary would encourage. Especially the Westerners who would come and the old people, older generation would come. Easterners and all that. He says, "You must be having a lot of ache there in the knees. Spread out your feet, legs. Spread out, doesn't matter, doesn't matter. Come on, put it out." Says, "No Baba, it's all right." There amongst the Easterners they won't do it. Said, "I tell you to do it, spread out." So he spread out. "Now how you feel?" So Baba Himself will feel comfortable. Says, "Haan it feels comfortable now." [general laughter] Because He feels that ache and pain.

PILGRIM 1: Yeah.

ERUCH: He feels the stiffness you see there. So it's comfortable for me now. He says, "Be comfortable." So He encouraged but that doesn't mean that He gives us license for all of us.

So once it so happened, I still remember at Meherabad, big gathering just as you see in pictures there is the awning put in. So many thousands of people are around and all that. And that was the day of His birthday. It was His Birthday. At Meherabad it was being celebrated. Afternoon, after the lunch hour there was music and the musicians were singing and playing harmonium and things that drums and all that. And people were relaxing. You know specially after food. Yeah how the system works you know. But they can't afford to yawn or feel drowsy. And His presence is such that its live. So they are there but discomfort is there and so forth and so on.

So I still remember after a while Nedford you see. I don't know whether you know Nedford. So he was sitting like this. With his feet facing Baba you see. He was facing Baba of course and he was relaxing and enjoying the music. So he was allowed to do that for about 20 minutes. And I still remember Baba telling me through gestures. Said, "Go and tell him to fold his legs." Because what will the? He doesn't mind about Himself but what will be in the minds of the others who do not have that maturity to understand that He's everywhere. You follow?

PILGRIM 1: Yeah.

ERUCH: So what must be playing in the minds of others. I don't know why He made me do that. And poor Ned you see [crosstalk].

PILGRIM 1: He probably felt [inaudible]

ERUCH: Oh my. He knew that. He knew that because he's a Sufi. He was a Sufi.

PILGRIM 1: So he knew about it?

ERUCH: He knew about it all. And, yeah. But Baba wants us to relax. It was a sahas program and so yeah, he was

there. So then Baba drew his attention. Of course I very gently whispered into his ears and he immediately felt that what was done was wrong.

PILGRIM 2: There was a message from Baba. That's what Baidul says.

ERUCH: Yeah of course. Why should we do it on our own? We don't do it. That's why we don't tell you all to do anything about it. It is Baba who will give you the message. Unless He tells us do we ever say that don't have your back to Baba? Don't have this or that or anything. It is redundant for us to say that. You all have come for Baba, you know how to behave before Baba. Suppose if Baba were here would you sit with your back to Him? No. But you feel that. The atmosphere is there surcharged with Baba's presence and all that. So who are we to let you'll know these things? But when questions crop up like this in your mind, it is Baba now making you speak out this way so that I can speak out what I had in my mind last night.

PILGRIM 2: Aha.

PILGRIM 1: You had this on your mind last night?

ERUCH: Yeah.

PILGRIM 1: Really that's incredible. You know because I noticed you and Mani and sometimes I see some of us sitting with our feet myself too. Just with my feet sort of right, right in your face.

ERUCH: Our faces what is there? It's nothing but crap you see [general laughter] But we have to. Yeah, yeah.

The thing is that most important is where we are. Don't think about us you see. Never give a thought to that. That's the thing. And naturally for people who, like you, potential mothers now who have

conceived so Baba would be very concerned about it. "No take the chair, sit comfortably, have your feet. Don't allow your feet to, legs to dangle. Have a cushion there properly." And so forth and so on. He would be very concerned about it all. Yeah because He feels discomfort Himself you know. He's also you. That's how it is. That's His business, not our business. Our business is when somebody asks we just narrate or recollect and speak out. But this is how it should be.

PILGRIM 3: There was something like that recently and then I went up to the Tomb with shorts not giving it a second thought because in America you know on a hot day you go out you know you wear shorts through the streets. And a Westerner told me that Mansari didn't like shorts you know. So then I asked Mansari and she said, yes, she didn't like shorts.

ERUCH: That's her likes and dislikes but really speaking would you want to present yourself. Suppose if you go for an interview somewhere.

PILGRIM 3: Yeah. So that's what I was thinking. I wouldn't wear that [crosstalk]

ERUCH: You are going there for something which you are longing to have. And you want to see that the other party is pleased with you. Would you go in your shorts or would you go half naked? No. You'll dress yourself properly and see that your hair are properly in shape [crosstalk].

PILGRIM 3: We wouldn't go like this either Eruch.

PILGRIM 2: Right, right so then why don't we wear a suit and a tie to the Tomb? Like we go for an interview we wear a tie, a shirt.

ERUCH: Really speaking it is so, it is so but we are most fortunate and blessed to be His children. We are His children. He's

not our Lord, He's our Father. Therefore He permits us this. It's our weakness. But really speaking it is so. It must be like that. Well dressed. Made yourself most presentable before reaching, arriving there. And so forth and so on yeah. It should be so. That is the code. It behooves us. That's what has been said by the Perfect Masters. It must be. You must make yourself presentable to Him. Suppose if you go to your lady love you see. Whom you have not seen for quite many years and you. Would you go there? You would want to be presentable to her isn't it? You'll be spic and span, tidy, clean and this and that.

PILGRIM 2: Not necessarily a suit. [crosstalk]

ERUCH: No, no not necessary but decent, clean, tidy and everything. So likewise. It is but natural. It's not only necessary and it is obvious, but it's natural for one to make oneself presentable to the Lord. If you consider Him to be the Lord then you will put yourself in a proper suit or anything of the sort. If you consider Him to be your friend you'll go as a friend. You consider Him to be your father you'll go as a child. You consider Him to be your companion you go as a companion. Anything, He can be anything. At one and the same time for all. But it all rests with every individual, how one approaches Him.

How many times, time and again I've been continuing to remind you all that you all are coming here not for us, not for the mandali, not for human beings. You are coming here for Him. You are spending thousands of dollars you see coming here and all this why? Not to just see our mugs. To be with Him. To be in His presence. So present yourself properly. And surely I had this thought I tell you frankly. I had it last night but then I said who am I to tell them? Why should I tell them? He knows. [general laughter]. She speaks out

PILGRIM 3: She's Baba's agent.

ERUCH: Yeah [general laughter]. I was, I was. All the time it was pent up there for me to speak out, yeah.

PILGRIM 4: What was the question?

PILGRIM 1: Well my question was that I noticed.

PILGRIM 4: I heard the answer but not the question.

PILGRIM 1: Just that I noticed that Mani and Eruch never sit with their feet out like that you know. And that, and they sit for long hours and that you know.

PILGRIM 3: Eruch is that anything more than a cultural question?

PILGRIM 4: Is there something intrinsic?

PILGRIM 3: Is there something intrinsic that goes beyond all culture? That goes beyond this culture?

ERUCH: No. It's all culture everywhere. To be.

PILGRIM 3: I mean the feet.

ERUCH: Yeah.

PILGRIM 3: Yeah, you know. Yeah.

ERUCH: It's not proper for one to expose your feet to the one whom you adore.

PILGRIM 3: But for example when we were in the States we're just wondering if there was any intrinsic meaning behind it?

ERUCH: Don't tell about the States. States has only civilization of 200 years [general laughter]. You'll have to learn for 2000 more. And here we are talking about 10,000 years you see.

PILGRIM 1: 300 years.

ERUCH: Okay, 300 years.

PILGRIM 3: And look how much you've evolved in 10,000 years.

PILGRIM 1: It is rude to turn your back to somebody.

ERUCH: It is rude? Is it?

PILGRIM 1: To turn your back.

ERUCH: Yeah.

PILGRIM 4: But we don't have a problem with the feet in the same way. That doesn't happen.

PILGRIM 5: Oh yeah. All kinds of people sit with their shoes off like this on the floor. [crosstalk]

ERUCH: No but most probably here why it has turned out into a sort of an intrinsic value not to show your feet to others because usually our feet are in contact with the earth and mud and muck. So most probably, because you all have your feet just as you'll even have gloves in your hands you see.

PILGRIM 1: Yes, right.

ERUCH: But here our feet are all exposed and they are so dirty. We go out in muck and all that sort of thing you see and come and then all that. But what can you do? But Baba also told us about His past advent once. About this feet business. Yeah. And He allowed it He said. And what was that? That these Arabs who were there. Who had followed. Who wanted to hear from Him the word of truth and all that. They would sit you see. In the beginning what had happened was that they would hear from the Prophet sublime things. And that would be so obvious and yet it slipped off their mind. Anything that is so obvious becomes so simple isn't it. It

is so obvious it is simple therefore it is so obvious and it is obvious therefore it eludes us. It is the case everywhere. So you would say things which was the most sublime and yet never it struck you see. What is it? So that's why they got attracted to Him. That's why they would want to sit for hours and listen to Him.

But then what happened is that nobody taught them, nobody told them anything about what it should be and how it should be. So they would want to loll and this and that. They always used the earth. They were always in the tents and all. That's how the desert life and all that. And they walked bare feet and all that. So Baba Himself one day told us that how they would coax the Prophet to speak out to them something. So they would sit like this, reclining you see and put their feet like this you see at the nose of the Lord [bell chimes] and said, 'Mohammad tell us something more about it.' They would want to [inaudible][pilgrims laughing]. And they would do like that and do like this and this and this. And that's how it was. And He accepted that also. He is not mindful about it all. But how one should behave then He tells. Gradually He brings to our notice. We don't notice such things. Unless and until we are told it is but natural for us to loll and this and that because our body doesn't stand so many hours you see.

Our hearts are yearning to hear, our ears are lent you see to hear but bodies somehow or other they are tired and all that. So it's but natural. So He's anxious that the word should go. Impressions should be created. He's not mindful about these things. But then these things also should be told. They must be informed about such things. So He would tell in His own way. Then they learned. We learned the greatest of discipline from the Mohammedans now. You follow? You know, you know how they. They will never. The greatest disciplinarians are the

Muslims. The way they salute, the way they will sit. This they won't sit like this also. Whenever they pray they would always be like this you see. With their knees folded. Here they would bend like this. They would.

PILGRIM 1: And Mohammed didn't say anything to them?

ERUCH: Very gradually. Not in the beginning. Not [inaudible]. When they somehow or other seemed to be maturing and accepting what He says and all that and He felt that it's now time. It is His responsibility to draw attention to. Or who will draw attention? Nobody will draw it. So do you mean to say that they continued like that? No. They must be taught. So the right time, proper circumstances then He would tell few. Then the few will tell others few. And so forth.

PILGRIM 5: Eruch is this similar to when you're speaking about Baba or someone else not to sort of lay down and.

ERUCH: No.

PILGRIM 5: In Mandali Hall I see that on occasion people are stretching.

ERUCH: Yeah. It shouldn't.

PILGRIM 5: It's not [inaudible] but maybe for a great bit of time.

ERUCH: Yeah, I'm noticing. Everything I notice. Do I not notice? I am here for 13 years now [general laughter]. I notice many things. You see children playing and youngsters playing and older ones lying down and they sprawl on the floor and they even sleep right across here and they put their backs there and they put their feet up and. It doesn't matter to us. It matters very little. But it's an individual concern how an individual. That's why I say you don't come here to face me or my mug but you come for His atmosphere.

So keep all the time the atmosphere of Baba at the back of your mind. That you have come for whom? What are you'll doing? Yeah. Let not. Time escapes. You know how time flies. Without our noticing it. Yeah. Such occasions, such moments will never come. You all have spent but it's not spending. You all are earning while spending it. Yeah. It's not an expense, it's a gain. But then make profit out of it. Make the best use out of it. So that's why it was so. It is there. But who am I to say these things? When the proper time comes the Lord Himself will say it. Yeah. And draw your attention. Bring to your notice. You all will yourself come. Become aware about it. See how they sit? They told me that. Why should we do? We should do. But you can't expect because your culture is such. Many of you'll cannot bend your knees properly. You cannot have that. We know all that. Baba even allowed people to walk in with the shoes on. Yeah. Baba never asked Harry Kenmore to remove his shoes, never. He was blind. We never asked Dorothy Cassidy to remove her what do you call that?

PILGRIMS: Braces.

ERUCH: Braces. She'd walk, so what? My cousin who is a cripple. She never gets out of her push cart. She brings the whole cart here. Not only here but inside the tomb also. So they are quite different you see. Such episodes and instances. But we who can afford, it behooves us to make ourselves presentable to the Lord in the proper way.

PILGRIM 3: I have a question Eruch. Talking about postures and things like that and. Our memories took us to.

ERUCH: I never said anything about postures. I am saying about how one should remain presentable to the Lord. That includes postures. That includes speech. That includes our attitude, that

includes intrinsically the attitude of the mind. Yeah.

PILGRIM 3: I'm speaking specifically about postures though, in the Maitreya of Buddha is sculpted, His being in a sitting posture. Did Baba have anything to say about that? Specifically the Maitreya Buddha is what the neutral Buddha or ?

ERUCH: Maitreya means the friend. Yeah.

PILGRIM 3: But the Buddha is normally depicted as sitting with His legs crossed and what not.

ERUCH: Yeah.

PILGRIM 3: Is there a significance to that [crosstalk][inaudible].

ERUCH: How is Maitreya Buddha?

PILGRIM 3: In the sitting position like this.

ERUCH: Yeah. So He has to.

PILGRIM 3: Baba sat like that a lot also.

ERUCH: Yeah, yeah. Well He has to blend the East and the West [Eruch laughs].

PILGRIM 4: Maybe a crouch and a half way.

ERUCH: No the thing is that Baba didn't say anything about it. I don't recollect anything of it. But then it's but natural you see. He may sit. I have seen Him sitting on the bed with His legs like this as if He's sitting on the chair. Very often, invariably we see Him like that unless He's lying in bed. He would be like that. With His legs like that. Yeah, that's a posture. As you call Maitreya Buddha, but that has nothing to do with us. Our individual postures should be such that it should be made presentable to the Lord. There are people who have come naked before Baba. There are instances where people have taken out

their clothes before Baba you see. And say, 'Accept us as we are. We are naked before you.' And that's how it is. So He accepted all these things. It's an individual approach. Individual approach. So who are we to let you'll know anything about this? It's an individual thing. Individuals do come across and become aware. Do come across these little things and they become aware about it. So it matters very little. But know one thing. That we are in His presence. That's the only thing that I must let you'll know. Yeah.

I have come across instances of Westerners who have laid themselves right across the tombstone of Baba. There are instances in the early years when people made the tombstone as their writing table. To write letters.

There are instances of Hafiz the great. His tomb is there. So one person, an Indian, a lover of Meher Baba thinking that well Baba always spoke so highly and so lovingly of Hafiz the prophet, the Perfect Master so when he went to Iran, his tomb is in Shiraz. So he went specially, he made a special visit to Shiraz. And there are. It's guarded. The place is guarded. It's a garden and all there I hear, believe. And under a dome there is his tomb. Same simple thing. It's not a huge thing. It's simple but nice garden is there. So he was horrified to find the guard who is keeping guard at that tomb he puts his. He was horrified. he wrote to me. Not only in his letter he drew a sketch. And what he did was he was putting his foot there. You know with the boots and all. And there he was standing like that you see, keeping guard. Foot on the tomb of the. It's like putting your foot on the body of Hafiz. You see that's how it is.

So for him it was blasphemous. For the guard it was natural. It's just a stone. For the guard it was, 'Oh what a headache again I have to go this morning you see to keep a watch, to earn livelihood.' For you,

you've gone for the atmosphere. You have made a special visit there. And you see this sight and what will happen? So likewise when people come and they see you all lolling like that or spreading your feet like that. They are horrified to see these things. They don't say it. But their mind react, minds react. And we also notice. We, our minds also get those vibes you see. We are helpless. Because if we are in the presence of the Lord and in His presence anything and everything is allowed. You follow?

But the code is such. Code is such. So it's an individual's approach to the Lord. That's all. Thank you for putting this question. It's so good of you.

PILGRIM 3: Eruch how do you feel about photographs in the hall?

ERUCH: Yeah.

PILGRIM 3: In terms of the [crosstalk] [inaudible].

ERUCH: Why photographs? Any brick, any wall, anything, everything. Your back, your fanny everything. Why this photograph? Everything is His.

PILGRIM 5: You mean taking photographs right?

PILGRIM 3: Yeah, taking photographs.

ERUCH: Anything, anything. You can take photographs, you can do anything. Do anything. It's an individual approach.

PILGRIM 3: Did Baba allow photographs taken in here?

ERUCH: Yeah. Anything. You can do anything. But it is individual approach mind you. It's your own responsibility. Your own responsibility. Sometimes it is good to bring to attention of some people. It is necessary.