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## DF-004A: BLUE BUS AND NEW LIFE STORIES

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Mandali Hall, Meherazad, India

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**MEHERWAN:** And then of course the whole ashram was taken there. And there was huge crowds you know and Baba just led all of us into the museum and it was Baba's order that we should follow Him and not fall behind you know. So here all were running behind Him as it were. To watch the museum would take about at least a day you know. And here Baba was just flying passed all the exhibits you know. Nobody would be allowed to even see what's there [general laughter]. And here [recording error]. Slowly. So Baba would keep clapping. And so Baba's mother finally got very annoyed and she says, "Have you brought us here for a horse race?" [pilgrims laughing]. Baba said, "Nothing doing you must keep pace with me, otherwise you shouldn't come at all." And here they were also trying to keep pace. And that's how we saw the museum.

**ERUCH:** Baba had gone to Mathura. The place where. You know it's a sanctified place and believers in Krishna take Mathura to be *the* place of pilgrimage. And there's a temple dedicated to Lord Krishna there. Ancient temple. So it's beautiful in its architecture and historically it is important. Naturally there are the priests over there. The high priest is there. The subordinate priests are there. Now Baba wanted to show this temple to the women. And at that time the women were strictly cloistered you know they were not permitted to even hear the voice of the

male members and all that. So now what is to be done? So Baba said, "Will you be able to go and make arrangement?" We were in the city of Mathura. So from there He gives me orders to make arrangement at the temple that no grown up male member should follow Him. Because He'll be visiting the place in the morning and, "Tell the priest, the high priest and all that to keep away from there. We don't want any interference there."

So first of all I had to find out the time when there wouldn't be any public or anything of the sort. So morning time was considered to be the best time at the time. So I went there and had a talk with the person in charge of the whole temple. The priest the high priest. So he was very reluctant to agree but when I said that well you will be given good tips for that so he agreed [general laughter] and I said that, "Well look here the thing is that, that not that we would not want any interference from anybody. We would like to have a guide. But is there a child who can guide us? This party?" He says, "Yes my son is an adept like that." I said, "Then we'll pay him the fees also." So he was very happy about it. "Will it be possible for you to keep the child there at about 6 o'clock in the morning?" So he says, "Sure. Why not? He'll come. 6 o'clock is not too early for us." "So then it's good. We are going to visit the place at 6 o'clock. I will not be there in the temple mind you myself. So beware you don't be there too." Says, "No

we'll keep ourselves aloof and aside and let them come and see. I understand what you say. I very well understand what you want," And all that. So he was well happy. Made happy because of his palms being greased you know [pilgrims laugh].

So then I told Baba that everything is settled and fixed and on the appointed day and the appointed time I drove Baba in this very Blue Bus I still remember. The whole compliment there they got out at the temple. There were steps there leading to the temple there. Temple was on a high elevation. So they all went. I kept myself down. It was winter time I still remember. I had my great coat on you know the hat and all. And well I saw that high priest there. He met me and from a distance you see that was very wonderful. I said, "Keep aside and allow them to go now they have come." I asked whether the guide has come he says, "Yes." He was a nice kid. Like Martin you know. Very good. Everything was wonderful, perfect.

Then what happened after 10 minutes of the whole thing what I find is Baba all of a sudden dragging this hefty priest you know by the nape of his neck you know. And just brought him there and just thrust him down the steps. Because he was all the time nagging. He was behind them you know. From there He says, "Hold him there and keep him there." I said, "Alright." So well he just. He couldn't. He lost his balance he came there you see and I caught hold of him [general laughter]. So he says, "What is this? In my own temple." I said, "Look here now come on keep quiet. Come on sit here." I held his wrist you see and made him sit there. Said, "Well don't you get upset. Didn't I tell you that? You shouldn't be there." "But I was." I said, "Look here. I told you to keep

yourself away from there. Why do you want to go there? What need is there when your son is there? Come on keep yourself here. Now tell me the history?" And I kept him so preoccupied you see with all that. I still remember just He. Baba just shoved him in down that steps there. Such are the things.

**PILGRIM 1:** So he got pushed by Krishna?

**ERUCH:** Yes [clock chimes]. What is that 3 o'clock?

**PILGRIM 2:** Time for tea? I don't know what?

**ERUCH:** What happened to Aloba?

**PILGRIM 3:** He's asleep.

**ERUCH:** I think it's a day of judgment [general laughter].

**PILGRIM 2:** The bell ring? [inaudible] [crosstalk]

**ERUCH:** What else do you remember Meherwan?

**MEHERWAN:** There was once a time when we were travelling in the Blue Bus. And Baba had given instructions to Kaka that, "See that you don't make any detours. Keep on the main road." That was the instruction He had given. And Kaka just said, "Yes." And Baba was in another car you know driven by Elizabeth. And the bus and another small car followed Baba's car [bell rings announcing tea time]. So then on the way.

**ALOBA:** Come for tea please. Come for tea.

**MEHERWAN:** On the way there were.

**PILGRIM 2:** T his clock is fast.

**ERUCH:** Oh I see.

**ALOBA:** Come for tea.

**PILGRIM 2:** 4 minutes fast.

**ERUCH:** Yeah.

**MEHERWAN:** One minute. On the way there were marriage arches you know. Some big marriage party was to pass by and they had made arches and buntings. So now bus was to pass through it and you know it used to be fully loaded with all the luggage tied on the carrier there it was about a story high you know. So here Kaka suddenly feels that if he were to pass under that main arch it would be broken to pieces. And it was very nicely decorated and they had spent a lot of money on it.

**ALOBA:** You are requested for tea.

**ERUCH:** Yes.

**MEHERWAN:** So to avoid the damage.

**ALOBA:** Without further delay [general laughter].

**MEHERWAN:** So to avoid damage to that arch Kaka instructed the driver to make a slight detour you know forgetting Baba's instructions. And the moment the bus left the road it just suddenly entered the small diversion. But as soon as it entered that diversion it got stuck. There wasn't any slush or anything but the bus just couldn't move forward or backwards. And here Kaka was in a quandary now. Because the women had instructions not to climb out

of the bus you know [pilgrims laughing]. So neither could the bus be made light and they were all sitting inside and there were small children.

**DAVID:** You were there also?

**MEHERWAN:** No I was in another car. But I was seeing all this you know. And there was Meheru's small brother was there Jhangu and [bell rings] he was crying loudly. And here this bus couldn't move forward. So then Kaka was not knowing what to do he got some bullock carts you know. And then he tied a rope and tried to pull the bus but no response. It wouldn't budge you know. In the meantime Baba sensing trouble came back you know in the car. There He saw the bus stuck up. And He soundly berated Kaka, "Why didn't you follow my instructions? Didn't I tell you not to make a detour?" So I remember Kaka doing all this and pinching his ears [pilgrims laughing]. He said, "Baba save me. I completely overlooked your instruction. I tried to save that arch." So he. Baba said, "Is the arch more important than my order?" And all that. Then Baba told Elizabeth to just tie a small cable and pull the bus out you know. And just it came out in front of our eyes. We were amazed to see the big bus just being led away by the car you know. And here we were back on the road again. But then it was getting dark you know and there were very big ghats [foreign]. Ghats means?

**ERUCH:** Zig-zag.

**MEHERWAN:** Zig-zag.

**ERUCH:** Hairpin curves.

**MEHERWAN:** Hairpin curves on the mountain there. And it was quite dark you know. And suddenly we found that the bus had no lights on. You see when that bus had entered the ditch the internal cables must have snapped and we didn't know that and here it was all dark, pitch dark and no lights. So Kaka thought that this punishment is being continued for him.

**ALOBA:** Come for tea please. Come for tea.

**ERUCH:** Yes, yes.

**MEHERWAN:** People. He made people sit with small flashlights on the dash boards you know. The mudguards.

**ERUCH:** Mudguards.

**MEHERWAN:** And then they would show the light and here this bus was trying to negotiate the curves. It was a very bad time we had. Then we all arrived very late to our destination. That's what I remember.

**ERUCH:** Take this.

**MEHERWAN:** Thank you.

**PILGRIM 2:** No tea for late comers [general laughter].

**ALOBA:** Come for tea.

**MANI:** David.[crosstalk][general laughter]  
So there you are.

**PILGRIM 5:** Did you cross the sea several times?

**MANI:** Yeah.

**PILGRIM 5:** Good. You got few more left to go.

**MANI:** No, no I must have because the English Channel. Isn't that so? And then we went to Ceylon. Looks like it I don't know. Yes and first time we went to Cannes we went by sea. Oh it was good. I really like it by ship.

**PILGRIM 2:** Even if you go by plane you can still cross over the seas.

**MANI:** That's right. I never thought of that.

**PILGRIM 3:** Sure.

**MANI:** Ship.

**PILGRIM 2:** Just a bit higher up.

**PILGRIM 3:** You're just [inaudible] that higher crossing right.

**PILGRIM 2:** You didn't go to Australia? [Inaudible]

**MANI:** No we didn't go to Australia. The men did. The men mandali went. Twice wasn't it, Baba went to Australia?

**PILGRIM 2:** Yes. Once to Sydney. Once to Avatar's abode.

**MANI:** Not in the same trip? No not in the same trip. And to England of course. We were there. Will and Mary Backett were there and of course Delia and [inaudible]. That's the only time we were there isn't it? When we came in 1952? [crosstalk]. That's the only time, right. We went to Cannes France before that only.

**PILGRIM 2:** And that place [Inaudible].

What was the name of that town [inaudible]?

**MANI:** What's the name of the?[Inaudible]

That was in Baba's trips to the West. Portofino that's. Do you know any of you that the Trau-Fishers were in Vienna? I very recently. Somebody said she had died. Alice and Victor Trau-Fisher. Because she always rode to Portofino. She'd send me [inaudible] in Portofino. She remembered Baba's Portofino days so well.

And I'd sometimes be at my aunt's place. So in the evening. My aunt's place wasn't far away. My mother's sisters. So in the evening my mother would send the old servant saying, "Bring Mani." So she would carry me like this you see.

**DAVID:** Really?

**MANI:** Yeah carry me around. I was 3 years maybe. So I had a secret. [inaudible] I had a real secret. Because I would see the moon and while she carried me, I would see the moon walked with me [general laughter]. And yet when I stood and I saw somebody else walking I kept an eye on it. That moon didn't go with them [pilgrims laughing]. It walked just for me. And for a long time. It was such a lovely thing. Just between the moon and me. She walked with me and she didn't walk with anybody else.

Did you see the comet? There's a comet.

**PILGRIM 6:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. I haven't seen it but [crosstalk].

**MANI:** Just today we got up very early. Much earlier than usual. And we were out we had to go for Jal Bahi. So I think it must

have been half past five when we were out [inaudible]. And this comet. But the tail we call it a tail but it's like this. Not like a tail but like foxes' tail you know [inaudible].

**PILGRIM 6:** Was it very prominent?

**MANI:** Very prominent, very prominent.

**PILGRIM 7:** Which direction?

**MANI:** In the East.

**PILGRIM 7:** Will it be out tomorrow? You think it will be out tomorrow?

**MANI:** Yeah.

**PILGRIM 6:** It's close to the sun.

**MANI:** Yes.

**PILGRIM 7:** Have to get up before sun rise.

**MANI:** It rises so. Meherwan? Right behind Baba's tree because it's the East. So where we were standing. Oh it was this.

**MEHERWAN:** It's got a nice bushy tail.

**MANI:** Very nice. It's like one of those foxes. Nobody knows the name. I'd like to know the name.

**PILGRIM 8:** Of the comet? We should give it a name.

**MARTIN:** Cathy.

**MANI:** Cathy. Cathy the comet.

**PILGRIM 8:** Very good.

**PILGRIM 7:** That wasn't [inaudible]

**PILGRIM 8:** Yes it was.

**MANI:** Yes Cathy the comet.

**DAVID:** Mani, you know Eruch was talking today about going to Meherabad as a child and they used to play out in the open there whenever they would go to visit Baba. Did you all play together? Do you remember Eruch as a child? Did you ever meet him?

**MANI:** No.

**DAVID:** Their whole family? The sisters and everything?

**MANI:** No.

**DAVID:** When do you first remember meeting them?

**MANI:** I remember meeting them in the '30's. 1930's.

**DAVID:** After you came to stay with Baba.

**MANI:** Yes.

**DAVID:** Not before.

**MEHERWAN:** '38 I think.

**MANI:** Huh?

**MEHERWAN:** 1938.

**MANI:** '38? [Inaudible]. In Nasik of course we didn't go to Nasik for the birthday. They were there in all the Nasik pictures and we four. In fact I didn't talk to Eruch till 19.

**MEHERWAN:** '56?

**MANI:** What was the next trip after 1952?

**MEHERWAN:** '56.

**MANI:** '56. Yeah. And we were in Ashiana in Arnavaz's place in Bombay. And as always the men were different. So it's a flat. So many rooms flat. So they would be in this room and the women would be quite separate here. So if they were going down then Arnavaz manipulated and so on. Baba walks in and says, "Come here," to me. And He points out to me. Eruch who was sitting by the desk like this. The door is here and Eruch is sitting like this. And He says, "You know he's never heard "Begin the Beguine". Now go and sing it to him "Begin the Beguine."" And I must have looked. I mean were so used to doing what Baba wants no questions asked but I couldn't help thinking, "I've never talked to the man and I got to sit next to him and sing?" But I did it. So while he was like that I sat like this. He was sitting like this. Facing his ear. He couldn't have been less interested in "Begin the Beguine" or any song [general laughter]. He just sat. And I sat there and said, "When they begin," [Mani laughing] And the whole thing I went through. And then Baba came at that time. Once or twice He came [inaudible]. And He said, "Good." And then He tells Eruch, "Nice isn't it? Isn't that? Yes." And I just rushed in, "Begin the Beguine," to that.

**PILGRIM 9:** How old were you then?

**MANI:** Huh?

**PILGRIM 9:** How old were you then?

**MANI:** 1956.

**PILGRIM 2:** 10 years ago.

**MANI:** 10 years ago. So if I'm 57 now I must have been 37. And when we went into the New Life I think I was just 30 then. '48. No 1949. New Life '49?

**MEHERWAN:** 1949 [crosstalk].

**MANI:** I'm getting old [general laughter]. It was all so long ago.

**PILGRIM 8:** How old were you in 1949?

**MANI:** Well it was October and I'm born in December so I suppose you can count backward. In '39, 18.

**PILGRIM 8:** 31. No 30 and then turns 31 right?

**MANI:** 1949 we went right. Say we call it 1948 because this was in December [inaudible]. 30, thirty. Thirty years old.

It's funny. These things seem like it happened yesterday and yet they seem so long ago you got to think of dates and which was. And yet the happening the thing itself is like right now.

I remember when we were in Belgaum during the New Life, Belgaum the place. Not so far from here still in Maharashtra. And that was sort of the training camp as it were. We were there for a number of days and then from there we started out in earnest. We went from here we walked a lot. Miles and miles. First time we walked was 17 miles without stop. And that's a long walk when you have not walked more than a furlong before a few furlongs or walks like that. But the Belgaum was where we settled for some time. From where Baba said, "Now we start out in earnest." It was a sort of a training camp. And there Baba as the companion was

doing work, labour equally along with the men mandali. So when they were drawing water from the well we would hear that the wheel [Mani makes the sound like drawing water from the well] and there when we looked at Baba was. Baba was drawing water from the well or there was a time when we were doing the cooking. When I said we I mean the women. And then the men were far away there. So. And vegetables bazaar would be brought by Vishnu and Baba. The vegetables had to come over to the women's side from the men's side. And Baba was bringing over the vegetables. And He had a basket of vegetables on His head. And I tell you the sight of it. We were so excited, "Oh look, oh look."

And anyway once I was doing cooking because Naja wasn't with us in the beginning. Just the four of us. Mehera, Goher, Meheru and Myself. So I was doing the cooking and I made a stew. And ah what it tasted like. I just couldn't. You know I am a cook that goes more by taste you know. Taste um a little salt might be good. Um maybe this kind of flavour maybe that. Oh it's gone too thin. Put in a few potatoes. Gone too thick. Put a bit of this. So nothing would make it go right. It was wrong. And I had to admit it.

Baba comes on and says, "What stew? What are you cooking today?" And I said, "Stew Baba." He puts a thing in. And I said, "It's not going right Baba. [inaudible] just gone wrong." Then He tastes it, "Hmm." So He asks me to bring the spice boxes whatever was there. I tell you He just took something from one of the tins and put it in and He did something. Just a little touch and then I put it on the fire, stirred it and when I tasted it we had never, never had such stew or any vegetable like

that. It was so delicious. And that evening word came from the men's side. They didn't, wouldn't come, but no word came it was sent over that, "Today's stew was the best they've ever had." I said, "Baba," [Mani laughs].

And once we made potato patties and Baba said, "That's not the way to do it." And He [inaudible] and tell us what to put and did it Himself. Ah that patties also we remember very much. And when the stew was done Baba said, "It was Bhagwan's [foreign] stew." Bhagawan istew. You see for stew Indian pronunciation would be istew. Not 'stew' but 'istew.' Now there was a famous shop, place in Pune who's stew was very famous. This restaurateur or this person who would cook and sell. His stew was famous. And he was. His name was Bhagwan. Now Bhagwan also means God. So the Bhagwan istew became very famous. So that day when Baba made the stew He said, "It's like Bhagwan istew." And then I realised how literally so. Bhagwan God's stew. And it was so delicious [Mani laughs].

And then we took. We took the harmonium along with us. The one that is right here in the hall. Which others are practising on, singing on sometimes. We took it along and then that came along in the New Life. And so did so many animals come in the New Life. They were the four footed companions. And that was, that was just [inaudible]. So when the New Life song was sung on the harmonium in the new life during the New Life when it was done. But I'll tell you something. When we first walked. The literal walking which was from Supa to Shirur which was known as Ghor Nadi. Because that's the name of the river. Nadi means river. And that was 17 miles. And one of the New Life

companions among the men was Dr. Ghani. Abdul Ghani Munsiff. And Munsiff, he was a joke in the Baba family. About physical labour or physical movement. I mean if he could sit he wouldn't stand. If he could sleep he wouldn't sit. You know that [pilgrim laughing] But to walk imagine. All the other mandali would tease him and here he had to walk and he walked 17 miles. It was just unbelievable. That was a miracle I tell you. In the end but Baba although Baba had blisters on His feet from just His sandals Baba would walk you see to the men sometimes back to the women. Or to the men and to the ones who were walking at the tail end. Because there were a number of men.

So Baba didn't neglect anybody. I mean He would keep an eye, sensitive. Who was doing what or who did. And Baba knew that Ghani was just making it. And Shirur was not far away. But he just couldn't make it anymore. So that he had a stick. He was allowed to take a stick. So poor Ghani. Ghani was putting the stick behind him. You know you would put a stick in front of you and lean on it. He used to keep. Put stick behind and push himself [general laughter]. Push himself forward. And Baba came, smiled and [inaudible]. And then He took the stick and Baba took the end of the stick and He walked. So like you lead a blind man. So Ghani just held on to the stick and Baba pulled him along.

And so later, later when. I have to jump because otherwise it's an endless story. But later when there was the tonga [foreign]. There was this horse.

**PILGRIM 2:** With the white horse.

**MANI:** The white horse. The taming of the shrew. He was really that. Anyway this

horse and the tonga, the carriage. So they had to. The tonga would go ahead and then we all the companions walking, trudging miles would go behind. So Baba then said, "All right Ghani. You can sit in the tonga instead of doing all this miles of walking on one condition that when you get there you do the bhiksha [foreign]." This was at a later stage. The asking for food. Begging for food. "You do it on behalf of the others and keep it ready so by the time we get there then Kaka is ready to cook it." Because it would be flour or rice and things like that. So he was very happy about it. He said, "I'll do that." Because he had a glib tongue. He was very intelligent. Very intellectual and intelligent you know. He liked mental work. It's the physical labour any physical movement that slayed him. So he said, "Fine Baba I'll do that."

So he would go ahead and then stop the tonga and Kaka and Baidul would be there while Ghani would go into the village. And he would be so successful in persuading the people to give him the alms of food, bhiksha. He was so successful they not only gave food they wanted to come along with him and to join the New Life [pilgrim laughing]. And so we would be there and this flour usually it would be flour wheat flour. It was there on the sack. And Baba says. Ghani said, "But Baba they gave it all to me but now they. I've stopped them I said please I'll ask you but they want to come and join the New Life." And Baba said, "Only food. I don't want men and people. Don't you ever do that again or you'll have to walk." "Oh no, no, no," Said he. Baba said, "Don't be too eloquent. Be a little less eloquent. Just get the food and go."

And one day while we were all sitting and Ghani had gotten the things and these

bhiksha thailis [foreign]. Others and gone too. Others also had gone in to beg food and they had hung their thailis, sacks, bhiksha thailis on branches of a tree. They were all sitting under the tree. And we were trying. Our side of it we were trying to clean out and make the leaves you know so that for the night we would be prepared. And then there was sudden excitement and everybody was running and we didn't know what was happening. And there were monkeys and the monkeys ran away with the satchels. They ran away with the food. The things that were hanging on the branches and the flour [Mani laughs]. And so Baba said, "No food today. Just drink water and sleep." And the men we heard that they're groaning and said, "Oh." Those terrible monkeys.

And also Baba knew. Because the only Westerner who was a companion in the New Life was Dr. Donkin. William Donkin. We always call him Don because it is very English at least in those days when you ask the name they would say the last name. And the first time when Dr. Donkin came and Kaka, Kaka Baria, the hobbit as I call him, had asked him, "What's your name?" And he said, "Donkin." So it stuck. So later Donkin we made into Don.

He was the only Westerner companion in the New Life. He represented. But it was very hard for him. But he. I mean he did as well as the rest of them. Just as well. But Baba knew. Baba knew that his physique was such, his constitution was such, that if he didn't eat for a long time no matter what it's not this or that but just without eating for so many hours he would just you know. His body wouldn't stand it. And Baba remembered that. Because there was no asking no complaining nothing of that

sort in the New Life. But Baba even that little thing He would remember. And while they were just walking Baba suddenly asked for an orange and came back to where Don was, put it in his hand and said, "Eat it." Afterwards Don told us. He said, "You would never know what that meant." Each one.

**MEHERWAN:** Mani tell them about that they had a lavish dinner once and then they had to beg there.

**MANI:** Huh?

**MEHERWAN:** They had to beg at the same place.

**MANI:** Huh?

**PILGRIM 8:** They had a lavish diner then they had to go back and beg at the same restaurant remember? Baba told them to go out.

**MANI:** While we started out walking during those 17 miles in the beginning we stopped at a place. We still see it on the way whenever we pass by we say, "Ah here we were with Baba." And so we stopped. We sat there and in the New Life we had not to be obliged by anyone you know. Not to accept anything except when Baba had told you to beg or you had to buy it. But not. So Baba said, "Tea. Tea for everybody." You know what about tea? But where? What would you do? So it so happened. It seemed as if it's just coincidentally happened that where we were there was this little hamlet where we could sit on the opposite side. Where this man had once. Was in a position that he owed something to Baba. He had. To the mandali. He had been done a service for which he had owed something so from

him Baba allowed the men to accept tea. So tea was made and tea was brought and oh it was such good tea.

But as far as begging went, we were very, very much impressed with the way things would go. For instance it is said in the. In the Hindu scriptures, in the Hindu. In the old, old books that. It is said that if anybody comes to your door, no matter whether he's genuine or not, give him if he asks. Never send him away empty. Who knows someday it may be Ram Himself who will be at your door. And this happened I tell you this happened. So the poor, the one who had very little to give were the ones who were fortunate, who were blessed to give to Ram. To God when He was at this door. Because even though He may have sent Eruch to go to their door when He sends it on His behalf it is Himself going there.

And on the other hand those who were a bit educated and had learned about sadhus who were not genuine and this and that, which is also true. I still remember there was Kaka. We were in a town. Now this is a village. The first what I'm telling you this where they gave so freely was village. And the other was town. And you know Kaka Baria? He was nice, hefty. He was not a [inaudible] by any manner or means. Nor was Dr. Neelkanth. I mean he was in his college days a wrestler [inaudible].

He was not like that anymore but still. So Nilu and Kaka. Baba said, "Now your turn. Go out and beg." So they wore their robe. I mean they were wearing their robe in the New Life not because they were sanyasis [foreign], not because they were seeking anything, not because they were doing for any. Simply that's what Baba wanted them

to do. Alright so here we were doing it. If Baba told them to put on a crown they would do it. Put on these robes they would do it. So it was very, very cold up in the north. So the robe wasn't enough. The kafni [foreign]. The kafni wasn't enough. So what they would do is put whatever they had underneath you know to keep warm and then put the robe on that. That really made them hefty. That really made them look big. So then they both walked along. Now Nilu, Dr. Nilu was the doctor. He was of a very high class Brahmin family. Very sensitive to being snubbed and things like that you know. So here was Kaka and Nilu they went and asked for bhiksha.

Man opened the door and lashed out at them, "You! You can think of begging? You look like wrestlers. Why don't you go and work?. You've got hands you've got feet. What's the matter with you?" And then oh after saying a lot of things and banging the door. And Nilu was just kept grumbling to Kaka not to Baba, "Never in my life has anybody said such things to me. I mean this is terrible," [Mani laughs]. So they came back empty and the story was told to us.

On the other hand when we were going to. After having walked say about 5-6 miles and having started very early in the morning without breakfast or anything. It was very beautiful. I mean we would see the sun rising. It was cool in the morning when you started. Very, very cold that's true. We would be hungry. But then we would pass through fields of mustard. Where mustard was growing and the flowers were pretty. We would stop by a well and drink water. So at one time Baba and Eruch were walking in front. The caravan and the donkeys and the cows

and the bullock carts all had gone ahead. It was that phase. So Baba would stop Eruch and He would come walking back and He said, "Hungry?" And we said, "Yes are we hungry!" So Baba went back to Eruch and said, "Go into the village and beg for something. Beg for food." And then He came back and we were sitting around.

So Eruch goes to one of the huts and he says, "Give bhiksha with love." So this women who's just making bhakri [foreign] bread. That jowar bread. Baked bread on the skillet. On the tawa [foreign]. And so now when the village people do that, it's just the meal of the day. Or their breakfast of the day. They don't have things like storing in the larder or for today or for. They just cook and the family is fed and that's that. And the next day is the next day. Even then she said, "Oh please wait, wait. Don't go away. This will be ready in a minute." And she turns it over and takes that nice piping hot bhakri she puts [foreign] which is a bit of you know some vegetable. Little thing but very hot. They have it little but hot so you can. You don't have to eat much of that. But you eat it with the bread just enough to be able to have it. And so Eruch brings that. And then Baba sits around and He breaks the bread and puts a little bit on each. And we sit on the stones. Roadside stones and eat that what Baba had given with the view so beautiful around. And it was so delicious. We still recall it, "Ah," we said. But the bhakri. That bhakri and that kharda [foreign] we've never had it like that.

And then at another time again when the same thing happened on another day and Eruch went, there was this women who didn't have anything in her house. And she said. But she didn't allow Eruch to go to somebody else's door. I don't know what

how they. She said, "Wait, wait please. Don't go from here." And she goes to her neighbour's hut, borrows the flour, borrows the things. Comes back, lights a fire quickly and makes it and gives it. So again although it takes about 20 minutes or so again there's. You can barely hold it it's so hot. He goes like this and Baba brings it over. He gives Eruch some and then He brings it over and breaks bread. And we have it. So you see the ones who didn't have much to give and they didn't know, they were not so educated but they say, "We must give. Give to one who asks." And it was useful for them. Even if they may have done it for years, lives. But their chance has come.

It's difficult though it's difficult because like when we were in Benares with Baba once during the Blue Bus tours. I'm talking of the Blue Bus tour. And Elizabeth was there and Norina all, all Nadine and all of us. And there was a gathering, a congregation of sadhus. It was one of the melas [foreign]. One of the fairs when.

#### **PILGRIM 8:** Kumbh Mela?

**MANI:** It may have been Kumbh Mela I'm not sure but that was in Haridwar. This was Benares. There was some mela and so many thousands of sadhus had come here. And we were going with Baba and seeing the ghats [foreign], seeing the people and suddenly Baba whipped out His board and I read His finger saying. He said, "There are eight thousand sadhus gathered here," He told Elizabeth. And she said, "Yes Baba dear eight thousand." And then He smiled and said, "Only eight of them are real or genuine." So how can you? How can we tell the eight from the eight thousand? To us they would seem the same. Absolutely the same. Out of eight thousand.

But you see Baba would. Baba once let slip the remark. And then I think once He said about it that wherever there would be many people gathered, Baba would do collective work and Baba would do Individual work. The collective work was where many people were congregated together. Were gathered together or happened to be together and all were focussing one pointedly on one thing. Like watching a cricket match, watching a film. When you're in a cinema house whether a film is good or not all the people that are sitting there collectively they're all focussing on now what's happening? Now. You see it's one point that their attention. The focus of their attention is at one spot. And Baba was. Wanted very much to be there at times like that.

Sometimes we'd even stop the car when we were going and lot of people had gathered there. We could barely see the game that was going on, the cricket game. But there were so many people even outside the boundary. You could watch free. And Baba was sitting and watching and then if you look down you can see Baba's finger. Just one finger really moving like He's writing or something. And I think that's one of the reasons why Baba would go to the pictures. And if it's not a good film I suppose your attention, the focus of your attention is not so strong and not so intense. And that is probably why if it was not a very good film we used to see it to the bitter end. But if it was a good film or exciting and everybody. Baba's work must have gotten done sooner because sometimes, not always, but sometimes you see just before the end I would suddenly feel a nudge from this person, "Baba's going, Baba's." "Oh Baba's going." Well it's pitch dark you know.

**PILGRIM 8:** Yeah right.

**MANI:** And you very often. And a number of times we've lost a very good scarf because you haven't seen it fall off your lap in the dark. And then [inaudible]. And I was very. Well anyway. I used to try and get out the last you know say, "Yes, yes, yes you go I'm coming, I'm coming." And try and get to be the last so I could see on the screen. Be the last to see what was happening [pilgrims laughing]. Was Pauline still hanging from the cliff or had somebody rescued her? And so when I'd come out they'd say, "What happened? What happened?" I'd say, "I don't know."

**PILGRIM 2:** Did Baba ever go to movies just for recreation?

**MANI:** Well that's what He would make us think. Baba would always use the most natural means. He'd play the game perfectly. Perfectly He'd play the game. He would take great pains not to reveal you know what or why He was doing that. But He would always use the most natural circumstances so that it would appear, "Ah Baba's taking us for recreation. Oh yes, because we have no other outlet wherever we go.

Baba's taking us to the zoo because we love animals." But it wasn't so. It was no. We would later realise that it was His work with the animals by some stray remarks that would.

There is one story of Rano's of course you must let Rano say. But when she and Kitty made up their minds to say, "Alright Baba we will not come on this trip because it means so much trouble for you," Because Baba kept saying, "I got to see to so many details and then it will be such a job." There was some sightseeing to do. And Rano and Kitty told themselves, "Why should Baba go through all that trouble? I mean we needn't go." So they were very gallant and they went to Baba and said, "You know it's alright Baba, It's quite alright Baba we won't feel. I mean we'll stay behind." And Baba gave one look at them and said, "Do you think I'm doing that for you? It's for my work. My work comes first." It's a long story that's why I didn't want to say this is Rano's story but after that she said, "We never bothered to do things like that." But He would make it appear you know very natural. Very.