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## DF-005A: BLUE BUS TOUR STORIES; Q & A WITH PILGRIMS

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**Mehera J. Irani**

Mehera's Veranda, Meherazad, India

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45:49

**MEHERA:** Doormat. It was deeper. A little bit deeper than that. And it was thick portion of carpet all along. Along the what do you call? Passage way. That man was very rich and he wanted us to have all [crosstalk]. Whatever could be done he did. But now this groves and all that we didn't give him time. Otherwise everything would have been very lovely. So anyway.

**PILGRIM 1:** But still the carpet.

**MEHERA:** Drawing room had furniture. He had put furniture in the drawing room and all that. Anyway beds we had to get our own beds and our own furniture. Anyway what happened was this. Now I'll tell you [Mehera laughs]. Kitty and Rano. Baba told Kitty, Rano, Donkin and other mandali that tomorrow you move our furniture in the new house. So you have bullock carts and all the new furniture. Our furniture. Now what kind of furniture ours is ordinary bed, ordinary table [pilgrims laughing]. Ordinary, everything ordinary you know. You know in the posh house.

**PILGRIM 1:** [inaudible] in this fancy house.

**MEHERA:** Ordinary bed which has no what you call it? No polish [inaudible]. You know just like that.

**PILGRIM 1:** Just plain.

**MEHERA:** Just plain ordinary like that. That landlord thought there's a European you know. Kitty and Rano and Donkin are European people they must have such nice lovely furniture. When the furniture came he just looked at this furniture

and what kind of old furniture is this? [Pilgrims and Mehera laughing]. How does he know this is ashram you know.

Anyway then they brought in that furniture. And there was room. Now Rano, Kitty and they must have decided. We were not there. They said the front room of course will be Baba's because He wants to be alone. Because in the night mandali comes. The men there. This there and then this line was ours and then another room and morning room in such a way that from there it was one side all open. You can see the garden have your tea there what not I don't know. Anyway then this was a lovely bathroom, bathing room, and then our bedroom along the passage. So it was all planned. And Naja's bedroom like this and there was a drawing room. Now they want a third bedroom for Rano, Kitty and Margaret.

So there was. What to do? So there was a very nice dining room. At the back that went from the front when you came to the passage there was a room there. Then you come in the back of the house you know. Backside of the house is very lovely. You know this veranda? Some more of it, deeper like that. Deep veranda. Still more. And like this three-sided wall then there is a door here you can go in to my and Mani's bedroom and there's a door here that goes to the dining room. And this deep veranda for the children and people play. There's a bedroom like this here and there's bedroom here and this veranda and then so on. So that man you know. And this is dining room. And dining room had very lovely, what do you call? He was very [foreign] means he had

love for good things. What he did was in this wall, was broad. And in that wall was what would you call? Fish pond I cannot know what do you call?

**PILGRIMS:** Aquarium?

**PILGRIM 1:** In the wall?

**MEHERA:** In the wall. All it was glass. All four sides glass and on the top what is was that I didn't have a way to see. But it was a lovely type of fish. Different kinds of fish and all that. Reeds and rocks and you know that [inaudible]. It was very lovely. It was not very so that you can't see the fish. The fish is all the time swimming. [crosstalk]. Dining room you could see and this fish and also there was such a way open windows that you can see who are swimming. So from the dining room lovely view of the garden far away like that and bathing what do you call pool?

**PILGRIMS:** Swimming pool.

**MEHERA:** Swimming pool and this nice dining room. With a little sink in the corner you know you want to wash your hands because Indians like to wash their hands like that. But the dining room was very beautiful nice. So what Rano and Kitty and Margaret said now they have to have a bedroom. So this would be nice for a bedroom. So they are bringing in the beds in the dining room. So this landlord you know he was standing there watching. He said, "Madam this is a dining room." [laughter]. "You know, you're taking your beds in but this is a dining room." Rano said, "Yes we know but we want to use it as a bedroom." "Oh madam but it's a lovely dining room." "But we want suites we are many of us," You know like that Rano saying that she just made the bed there and pushed in the bed quickly three beds inside and the table whatever. It was very funny. The poor man said, "Now this is new kind of people [general laughter]. They

don't even want a dining room." And so on. But we made our dining room deep veranda you know like this at the back. Behind the dining table there.

**PILGRIM 1:** Oh nice outside.

**MEHERA:** Outside. You could see the garden and we could eat there. It was very nice. [crosstalk] So next room we had this as a bedroom. We didn't need a what do you call dining room. We ate outside. Outside means just like this but it was much more than this. [crosstalk] Deeper veranda very big it was. Very lovely it was. And so on. So that was the story and then we stayed there but Baba said, "This is a swimming pool," in the swimming pool Baba showed us that there were stars on the floor. Stars you know [crosstalk].

**PILGRIM 1:** In the tile.

**MEHERA:** In the tiles. Star design. A star here a star there. So this person was. Landlord he was so [foreign] [crosstalk]. Artistic yes. Good taste.

**PILGRIM 1:** Good taste that he would have stars in the pool.

**MEHERA:** But not shining. White. White stars with this grey blue what do you call it? Tile? I don't know tiles that look like there is a reflection of the sky in the water when the water is clear you know it looks so lovely. Yes. [Foreign].

Then this. This what do you call? This swimming pool was so that very gradually you can go and walk in so the water comes slowly, slowly up like that. There was at the end was so deep there you can dive also it was so deep there. And here so it was children can learn also. So he had his children to learn there you know also. But the swimming pool we used it first so how fortunate he was no? To have Baba's people use his house as well as his pool.

**PILGRIM 1:** Before anyone had been in. [crosstalk].

**MEHERA:** So that was the story of the house how we got in Hyderabad this beautiful house. Then Baba had a plan. So then we were just six of us you know. One day Baba came so we were just staying there for eight days now and Baba said. You know in Meherabad we had many of them except Norina, Elizabeth were not there. But others were. Irene Billo the Swiss girl she was also in Meherabad and others were in Meherabad. Rano, Kitty and Margaret were with us. Now what happened was this. Baba said, "We have a swimming pool also. Place is big there's a." There was a lovely guest house you know. Guest house you may call it. There were two lovely rooms, a veranda and porch and very nice creepers and garden around it. And that was supposed to be guests when they come they can stay there.

So Baba says, "There's space, place for the guests also. We'll send for the ones from Meherabad. Four by four they can come you know. And they also can learn swimming." So we said, "Yes Baba that's a very nice idea." So Baba had it in His mind you know so sweet. Yes and so Baba sent for them so the first party I think Katie and I don't know, two-three of them came. Katie was so excited, "There's a swimming pool. Where's the swimming pool? I heard there's a swimming pool. Where is swimming pool?" She really had love for swimming you know. So then she went and saw the swimming pool, "Oh how lovely." And so on.

Baba had said, told us that in the morning from 10 or I don't know. From 9. From 9 to 10, 10 to 11 two hours that you can swim but after 11 'o clock not to go in. But then in the evening from I don't know half past three or 4 to 5. No half past three I think half past four and five or something. Or half past five. Because there's summers day. Summer day so it's hot. So two hours in the

evening, two hours in the morning anybody can swim so on. So Katie was so ready that as soon as she came she had brought. We had told her to bring her swimming costume so simply what do you call? Just waiting to jump in you know like that.

**PILGRIM 1:** Couldn't wait.

**MEHERA:** Couldn't wait. So next morning the she. I said relax. Breakfast was all just. The enthusiasm for swimming you know she waited, "When it will be 9 'o clock, when will it be 9 'o clock?" And then she put on her swimming costume and here she went you know. And she swam in the thing. She liked it because then she knew a few strokes. Then Margaret taught us more strokes there. How to swim underwater there we were taught. How to float on our back. Everything Margaret taught us there. Then I and another girl. Not Mani but I don't know who it was I don't remember we dived. Learned to dive but of course not the perfect way of diving but.

**PILGRIM 1:** You learned to dive?

**MEHERA:** Yes we used to jump in. How to say? At first [crosstalk]. Yes but Kitty said no I feel [inaudible]. Kitty knows how to dive but she said, "I won't. I'm afraid." The floor no the bottom. "The floor at the bottom is going to hit my head." But I never thought of that. I just dived. It was nice and deep. So then that was in Hyderabad.

And then Baba went for mast work you know. Most of the time Baba went for mast work. Most of the time Baba used to stay in for some time He used to go for mast work also. So one. He was for mast. He had gone for mast work and we were swimming in the afternoon. It was. I didn't go in the morning only in the afternoons. So we were swimming it was about 5-5:30 I don't know. Yes we were in the water and from outside Baba was in the car on the roadside. He didn't come from the car, He was inside the car and He sent

someone to tell us inside, "So tell Mehera and Mani to get ready and come. Baba's waiting outside." Oh you should see us how we jumped out of the pool and we rushed to the what do you call? Shower and this that. We quickly got dressed and here we went. In half an hour we were there and Baba took us to the picture or film. Pictures so sweet. And that was what the film was called? "Frenchmen's Creek."

**PILGRIM 1:** "Frenchmen's Creek."

**MEHERA:** Very good film. [inaudible] And so we were a bit happy. After a long. After many days we saw Baba and then to be with Baba and go to the pictures, and Baba gave us a good time also [Mehera laughs]. Because the car was a Tourin small car so.

**PILGRIM 1:** So He took you there.

**MEHERA:** Yes.

**PILGRIM 1:** [Inaudible] He planned all that and how.

**MEHERA:** So from Meherabad four, four not guests ashramites you know from Meherabad four. They stayed for 8 or 10 days I don't know. Then they would go back and the other 4 will come. Then they stayed for 8 or 10 days that I don't remember. And so on. 10 days must be. And but one thing. The Swiss girl did not come. She somehow I don't know. She was not feeling well. I don't know why she did not come. Otherwise all of them came and went and even you know this Jalu, Gulu.

**PILGRIM 1:** They came both of them? Did they swim?

**MEHERA:** Yes they came with their mother and all that. And they swam to learn. The three sisters they were. You haven't seen the other big sister. She was very sweet. Meheru was very sweet. Very

sane and very nice girl she was. She talked softly. Lot of humour in her. She would laugh and she would be nice and very nice to talk to. But she's the one that died first. Such a pity. She was very. Anyway what I want to say is all the three girls they all the three girls Margaret taught them to swim. And swam so beautifully. Yes. Very beautifully they learned to swim.

Mansari also came. In the last batch. I don't know when she came. Anyway so Mani took this one. The other one. Meheru took the other one to teach and so four of us. No I took Mansari. Yeah see Mansari is small she'll learn to swim quickly. But Mansari never learned to swim [Mehera and pilgrims laughing]. She never. You know I would say, "Mansari when you're under water, position under water must put up above the water. You can't do this. A little bit like that." So when I did this the backside you know the leg went down. Because she was very stiff in the neck. Here stiff. She could not do this. She said, "I can't do this." "You can't do this?" "No." I said, "How will you going to learn? Do it again now come on." So all afternoon everyday urging her and telling her and wasting my time. She couldn't you know. Then somebody told me the next. Tomorrow she's going no? And today somebody tells me, "Why teach her the best stroke. Teach her side stroke come on." All right the last day side stroke. How can that be in one day?

**PILGRIM 1:** In one day.

**MEHERA:** So she did not know how to swim at all.

**PILGRIM 1:** You know Mehera with little children I've noticed that what you said is right. You have to. You know you think it's just the arms but it's the head.

**MEHERA:** The head also.

**PILGRIM 1:** The key. It's the main thing. You don't keep up the head then everything.

**PILGRIM 2:** Falls down.

**PILGRIM 1:** Even the arms.

**MEHERA:** If the head is wrong the water goes in your head and it's not right position on the water. So I had Mansari but I was not successful in teaching her at all [general laughter].

**PILGRIM 1:** It must have been nice. Was it cold the water?

**MEHERA:** Water was nice. Not ice cold. It was warm days you know it was ordinary cold. But I never liked cold water. So when I went in the water Margaret was not in the water. Outside she was seated to direct us. How do you? To instruct us, teach us. Now then I would come I would put my feet in and I said, "Oh It's cold," And like that and water [Inaudible][general laughter]. Margaret said, "Don't go on doing that Mehera. You dive in." I said, "No wait." [general laughter]. "Ooh, ahh", and water came all on my breast. I said, "It's very cold. Just wait Margaret". Margaret says, "Now come on. Start [inaudible]." Every day this went on you know. Didn't like the feel of cold water. It was ice. Not ice cold but it was cold.

But everyday this Margaret would tell me, "Dive in Mehera, dive in." Then once I got into the water then I didn't want to come out. Margaret says, "It's over one hour and one and a half hour it's not nice you might catch a cold." I said, "No I won't." And I went on and on swimming. Two hours I swam, swam in the water. We loved it you know it was very lovely.

**PILGRIM 1:** And you feel so relaxed when you come out.

**MEHERA:** All sorts of things. Floating on back and underwater. Swimming underwater.

**DAVID:** Did you have those rafts?

**MEHERA:** No. There was no need. Because we already learned in Aurangabad and we knew side stroke and underwater. But here we made it complete. I mean how do you say it? Learn it perfectly. All the strokes. Then she told us to do that stroke. What it's called? You know that? There's another stroke. [crosstalk]. Like that like that. Must be crawl. Yes that. Then we were learning that.

Anyway Margaret was quite pleased with our progress [Mehera laughs]. At last Mani and Katie's wish was granted. They knew to swim and because of them I knew to swim also. And the other girls also later they all knew how to swim.

**DAVID:** In Pune you never swam?

**MEHERA:** No. In school none of our schools had swimming pool in those days.

**DAVID:** But your father belonged to the military there must have been?

**MEHERA:** No, no, no. Not Military. He was a forest officer.

Never get swimming pool from those days it was not so in fashion. Because in Pune also I don't remember seeing any swimming pool anywhere.

**PILGRIM 1:** And even now Mehera a lot of people don't know how to swim in India.

**MEHERA:** It's a pity they must know how to swim.

**PILGRIM 1:** They should just for their own protection.

**MEHERA:** Yes, yes they must teach their children. Now it is what do you call?

**PILGRIM 1:** Possible.

**MEHERA:** No not possible. Another word. It must be so.

**DAVID:** Mandatory.

**PILGRIM 1:** Mandatory.

**MEHERA:** What?

**PILGRIM 1:** Mandatory.

**MEHERA:** Compulsory. Many schools. I don't know about convent school. The convent school has not this. But other schools now they choose the girls must know to swim like that you know. If their school don't have then they go to another place and learn. It's very nice to learn.

**PILGRIM 1:** It's fun though to be in the water.

**MEHERA:** Yes. It's very lovely.

**DAVID:** Did you ever see Baba swim?

**MEHERA:** No, we didn't see Baba swim but Baba did go for swimming. The mandali took Baba. It was in Indore. We were in Indore and there was a natural pool somewhere. Natural means water way. There was some place where there was deep waters and mandali. Baba used to go there. We didn't go with Baba. Baba didn't take us there. Only with the men. Baba didn't want us to see Him swim [Mehera and pilgrims laughing]. I don't know why. Baba must be shy. Not that way. He liked to with the men you know. So then that was it.

Indore, when we went to Indore. So nice place it is. Very nice place. And you know this trees and this and that. What do you call? Lush you may call it. Nice. Very nice. Lot of toddy palms and you have such cheap toddy sell there you know.

**PILGRIM 3:** Where's Indore? What's the?

**MEHERA:** Indore. On the map I can point out but. More north than here. But on this coast. On this side of India. This side of India. This coast is called east coast? Or west coast? This is west.

**PILGRIM 3:** West coast is Bombay.

**MEHERA:** It's not on the coast line. It's in but it's north. So in Indore when you know we didn't have motor cars or anything. Tongas. And tongas were very lovely kind of tongas you know. There were seats here and seat here so when you sat we're facing. Two, two people facing each other. Four people like talking like that. Very nice. This here tongas are very ordinary. These tongas are not nice. Those are very nice. And so then we went. Baba took us to see the Sheesh Mahal. Is the. Sheesh is the glass. In English how do we say? Glass Palace you may call it. When you went in the Glass Palace. Glass you know when you stepped in there was nothing but all the walls, everything was glass.

But now I forget was it looking glass? I think must be looking glass. Looking glass means strips, strips, strips, strips, strips. The whole thing was very lovely in the room you know. A lot of shining, shinning like that where everywhere your shadow yourself when moving around. It was very beautiful and very lovely. White crystal like that and there was a chandelier and what not. It's called the Glass Palace but how many rooms and what I don't now remember it. This is one room I remember. Then that's all in Indore. Very lovely place.

And there's Karwar. Vengurla was nice place. There we all already knew now how to swim and all that. Margaret was not there because Vengurla was much later in 1947 or maybe. And Margaret left in 1946. We went to Vengurla and there's a seaside place. Baba likes seaside place He can take a walk on the sea and all.

**PILGRIM 1:** Did you walk with Baba on the sea?

**MEHERA:** We didn't care much for walking. We wanted to swim [general laughter].

**PILGRIM 2:** They were mad after it.

**MEHERA:** Yes, Baba knew that Baba says, "You'll can swim and I'll walk." So Baba used to walk like that like that and we used to be in the water here. And Baba would walk like that by Himself. Baba loved walking.

**PILGRIM 1:** By Himself?

**MEHERA:** Yes, Dr. Donkin was there. Dr. Donkin once what he did. You know Dr. Donkin? In the sand in the fine sand where the sand is a bit slightly damp I think. I don't remember now properly. But what he made I must ask Mani. A face like that you know. In the sand he fashioned a face. Not drawing like that. But moulding it.

**PILGRIM 1:** Sculpting it with his hands.

**MEHERA:** Yes moulding it like that, like that and then nose. High you know nose and very beautifully as if it's raised from the sand. He was very artistic. Very beautiful. Baba called us. All we went running there after we were dressed then Baba said, "Come and see." Then we saw it was so beautiful he had done. Like a sculptor in the sand. Beautiful face he had done very beautiful but man's face.

**PILGRIM 1:** So Mehera Baba would walk up and down fast?

**MEHERA:** Yes. Then one day I told Baba, "Baba it's so lovely to be in the sea. The sea is very healthy now this salt water to be in. Why don't you also swim?" Baba said. I said to Baba. So Baba said. You know I urged Baba like this. So Baba said, "Alright. I will. Tomorrow. But nobody must look this side. [general laughter]. None of

you girls." We were just 4 or 5 of us I don't know. Manpur was there I think Katie was there. Second time. First time when we were there I what do you call? Mani, Meheru, myself and Kitty only. With Baba and what's his name? Hindu.

**PILGRIM 2:** Bhau?

**MEHERA:** No, no.

**PILGRIM 1:** Nilu, Vishnu?

**MEHERA:** Vishnu and Donkin. Two with Baba means 3 and we 4 girls. Four girls or three girls I counted three girls. Four with Kitty we four. First time when we went to Vengurla and the government bungalow means it's not a bungalow. Rooms very nice lovely big rooms. Furnished and all that. Two bedrooms and there's a dining room in the middle and all that. Veranda at the back, veranda in the front and the kitchenette is outside. But there the caretaker is a Mohammedan there an elderly person, beard and all that. He was very nice person. And we went there and what I want to say is this. [crosstalk]. What I want goes off my head. Anyway. This was that. He wanted to get good. He was very generous that cook. He was so that he would cook meat as well as all kind of fish. One kind of fish, two kinds of fish. And we didn't know why the table was full of so much food. We didn't know what to eat. And then one day there was crab curry and lobster I don't know what all. There's so many things I said, "My our stomachs will get upset we going to eat so much." He would say, "No. You'll eat. Children you'll eat well." [crosstalk] He was so happy just to. Because his family's going to cook and he's going to serve all nice food and he was very happy with Baba.

Baba was not talking but Baba had asked after his family. Baba is always like that no? Baba is very kind and nice to him and all. He was so happy. And you know so like he felt at home with us like

that. So then he was very happy and then so on. So everyday such nice food and all that [Mehera laughs]. Baba would just eat his curry and rice quickly and eat little bit of fish that not sucking kind you know what you'll call it? The flesh what do you call pomfret? Just some fish that fresh [inaudible]. He'll eat a bit of that, curry and rice Baba'll go away. Here we were girls still chewing [general laughter] eating. One day then I. They all had got up away. Baba got up the mandali also, the girls also got up after eating. I and Katie were still. I don't know what we were eating you know. We were eating it took time. I said, "We take time. Never mind there's so much nice things we must do justice to it no?" So we were eating I don't know what it was. We take time. That Khansama he was called Khansama you know that person so he came in he said, " Never mind children. Eat slowly, eat well. I'll tell you a story. Listen to the story and then you can eat more."

**PILGRIM 1:** Oh my gosh.

**MEHERA:** Means we have that way you know Indian very hospitality. I mean they're very hospitable. So I and Katie said alright. Katie said [foreign], "Acha bolo." Tell us the story so he told us a little story and here we were amused and in the mean time we ate even more. It was very nice. Then Baba was very pleased with him. He had this daughter. The Khansama has this daughter who was to be married. He told Baba she's to marry so Baba gave him a big gift. 100 rupees that this is from us. Because he served so well, so much love and all there and this is a gift to your daughter for marriage. He was very happy then. Yes that was in Vengurla. Two times we went. Once with Kitty and second time was not Kitty. We just. Second time was Mani, Meheru, Katie, Manpur and myself. Five of us, second time.

**PILGRIM 2:** And Mehera is that when Baba went swimming? The second time?

**MEHERA:** He. Baba told us not to look that side then only He would go in the water. We promised we wouldn't look. We were dying to look that side.

**PILGRIM 1:** Of course [general laughter].

**MEHERA:** So we still don't know if Baba went in the water or not.

**PILGRIM 1:** He made us [inaudible].

**MEHERA:** Don't look this way. Maybe He did go up to here maybe no? I don't know. Baba did not know how to swim I think [Mehera laughs]

**PILGRIM 1:** No I think Eruch tells a story.

**MEHERA:** It's so funny we didn't ask Baba ever, "Do you know how to swim or not?"

**PILGRIM 1:** I think Eruch tells a story that Baba went all the way in and Eruch you know kind of help Him up on the water. But Eruch said that he felt that Baba could swim but He didn't. You know I mean He. If Eruch had let Him go He would have been able to but He liked to sort of play them.

**MEHERA:** Yeah must be that way yes.

**PILGRIM 1:** He sort of splashed.

**MEHERA:** Anyway Dr. Donkin was there. To take care of Baba or Baba take care of him I don't know [Mehera laughs].

**PILGRIM 1:** When He walked He walked up to one end Mehera and come down and?

**MEHERA:** Yes long walk. He would come back. Baba's coming back and then you know He would turn then He would. We are swimming this side then Baba would stop there turn back



again. And Baba would say, "Go on swimming, go on swimming. Never mind." Like that.

**DAVID:** Did you wear swimming caps then?

**MEHERA:** Yes. But those caps made ourselves you know out of material you know. Didn't have rubber caps or anything. [crosstalk] It was too hot and too tight and I didn't like that feel. So we had cloth. Nice thick cloth sort of bluish. I made my swimming costume myself. If I ever find it I will show it to you.

**PILGRIM 1:** Oh I would love to see it.

**MEHERA:** Out of you know cotton. Cotton things we made that. You know it's fun no? When we are like this a bit young then all the new things, swimming, riding and what not [Mehera laughs]. Yes. So I've climbed trees, I've ridden a special horse and I know swimming then what else? [crosstalk].

**DAVID:** Now you have to learn how to drive a car.

**MEHERA:** Drive a car [general laughter]. No I don't have this thing for machinery. I don't have love for machinery. I like nature, natural things. I would like to drive a horse carriage or something like that. I don't like driving. I appreciate others driving and taking us safely back and forth [Mehera laughs] going home and all that. But. And Baba loved car and machinery. Baba loved something that take you fast. And riding with Baba car fast, fast, more fast car went Baba liked it.

**PILGRIM 1:** Very happy.

**PILGRIM 2:** So Mehera when did you climb trees?

**MEHERA:** See so beautiful Baba was.

**PILGRIM 2:** When did you climb trees?

**MEHERA:** At home. When I was eight, nine, ten, eleven. Eleven years old. Twelve years old, thirteen years old. I used to climb the trees. Fourteen. It's nice. That tree that you think is difficult to climb then still to climb it's nice then. You feel like a monkey then.

**PILGRIM 1:** Yeah [general laughter]. I was just thinking of you [inaudible].

**MEHERA:** It was difficult to climb a tree that is straight like that. You must have like this you know you have a few branches going like that, like that. Then it's easy to. So you have to choose a tree that is bit easy.

**PILGRIM 1:** It has branches. Some near the ground some branch.

**MEHERA:** You can step like that on. Baba when was it? Baba in Nasik in 1936/37 with the Westerners you know that time. And what happened now, let me see. Baba's photos taken standing near the tree so I said, "Oh Baba lovely Baba with the tree your photo is taken like that. I love this photo very much." So Baba kept it in mind. So when next time He was in Nasik you know, Baba climbed up a tree. The tree was maybe just sloping like that Baba climbed up in the branch Baba said and Westerner Elizabeth, Kitty when they came from West no? Elizabeth, Norina in Nasik they were. So Elizabeth had a camera, Rano had a camera.

So they took Baba's picture in the tree. Two three pictures in all different posture. Baba sitting, one standing like that. I have it somewhere. So then they were taken then Baba brought those pictures Baba said, "Do you like this?" I said, "Oh Baba," I was very happy. I said, "How lovely Baba you look in the tree you know I like this very much," [crosstalk] So Baba was. Looks very tiny. The tree is big but Baba looks small in it.

**PILGRIM 1:** I think I've seen that. The branches go out behind Him you know.

**MEHERA:** On the top between.

**PILGRIM 1:** In the tree yes.

**MEHERA:** Ah there were three kinds of those photos, two-three. [crosstalk]

Standing. Not standing. In the tree.

**PILGRIM 1:** In the tree.

**DAVID:** In Nasik.

**PILGRIM 2:** How nice for the tree.

**MEHERA:** How nice for the tree right.

**PILGRIM 1:** It's so nice to think of people in the tree. It's nice to think of people in trees.

**MEHERA:** In Africa somewhere is a place where they all must live on the top of a tree. Because there are many elephants or something, no?

**PILGRIM 1:** Something danger [inaudible].

**MEHERA:** Danger under. Elephants or tigers so must be something. And they have to choose a certain tree like and then they build a kind of a platform. [crosstalk]. I think they cook on the floor in the night they sleep up on the tree. Must be that way.

**PILGRIM 1:** I saw a movie of it on TV.

**PILGRIM 2:** Do they have a ladder to go up?

**PILGRIM 1:** And it's like up the whole thing is up and they have. Like she says a ladder but they cook up there.

**MEHERA:** Yes they cook up there also?

**PILGRIM 1:** They do everything up there.

**MEHERA:** But when do they? I mean to fetch things to eat they have to come down.

**PILGRIM 1:** No. They do. They can't.

**MEHERA:** To get vegetables or what food. If you have chicken the chicken eggs are all. There on the tree you can't have everything there. Then how do they manage all that? I mean.

**PILGRIM 2:** I guess they have baskets and they pull it. Pull the stuff up by rope.

**MEHERA:** Somebody has to be down to put it in the basket.

**PILGRIM 1:** That's true.

**PILGRIM 2:** They go down.

**MEHERA:** And I think they must know certain time when its safe they go down quickly gather their food. Then why live in that place no at all? [crosstalk].

**PILGRIM 1:** But they have nice view.

**MEHERA:** Cool and nice.

**PILGRIM 1:** When you wake up and you're in the tree. [crosstalk]. [short speeding of tape].

**MEHERA:** Angry, if it runs amuck then it will. Otherwise it does not. [crosstalk]

**PILGRIM 1:** Sometimes I read a book about [inaudible] when they want something in the trees to eat they just pull down the whole. They just butt and butt and butt and finally it weakens the roots and the tree falls down.

**MEHERA:** What strong heads they must have.

**PILGRIM 3:** They destroy all these forests.

**PILGRIM 2:** I think they log that way. I think in Kerala they put their heads like this [makes sound] The mauli makes. What's his name?

**PILGRIM 1:** The mahut.

**PILGRIM 2:** Makes them and then they push it with their trunk.

**MEHERA:** Yes to gather wood and all that yes. That we saw in Ceylon you know. Thick logs like that big you know 4 or 6 people could carry that big. The elephant is carrying it just in his trunk like that. The mahut is on the top and he's taking. I mean you know carrying the wood transferring this wood to another place. He comes back and the elephant works there. So it very lovely to see the elephants in the palm, you know coconut palms and other. In the forest. Very nice. The look of it is very lovely.

Now David is taping.

**PILGRIM 1:** A tape.

**MEHERA:** You've got that tape of Baba in Prem Ashram? Did I tell you about Baba wearing garlands? Did I?

**DAVID:** You made the garlands and all?

**MEHERA:** You've got that on the tape?

**DAVID:** I don't have that. You can tell them [inaudible].

**MEHERA:** No you've got this once. Baba was very, how to say? Very loving that way you know. To make us happy He took the garlands Himself and put it on. And He was in seclusion. And this person who took the garlands. Jai Baba.

He took the garlands. We were not allowed in Prem Ashram in the Hill here. Nobody was allowed, no women. So we made flowers for Baba. Because there were so many days we didn't see Baba and we said, "Now Baba's going. He's forgetting the we are here. Now He's not thinking of us. We want to remind Baba that we are also in Meherabad. He's only thinking of the Prem Ashram children." And so we wanted to remind Baba that we are here also. You know we were so. A bit like this [general laughter].

Yes and so we said, "Now what to do?" And we were not allowed to send anything from bazaar. What vegetables came from the bazaar we must cook. No chits went out or anything. So we couldn't send for flowers or anything but this Valu, Hindu she was very nice. She said, "I know where the. I can get flowers for you." Then we said, "Where? You know it's all dry here, there are no gardens." "No. There's a river outside far from out from outside the village. There I will go and get these oleanders. Single oleanders." "So any oleanders but just get us some flowers." So in the evening she used to finish all her work. Tired still she would go from Meherabad to the village that is quite about nearly a mile and then crossing the village she used to go beyond the village outside the village where the river is far away and by the that time the sun is nearly setting.

So and then here she was gathering flowers all alone there you know. That means how much she loved Baba. And in the basket full of flowers you know. And then she. Pink ones and white ones also. So she would walk all that way back to the village and from the village to Meherabad. She would give us the flowers and again she had to go back to the village to go to her home. That would be nightfall by that time.

So every day she did that. And in the night after brushing our teeth and all that. We had no furniture or everything our beddings on the floor, carpet and we would all girls sit on that. We were

how many see? Naja, Khorshed, myself. Just four of us and my mother was there. So after everything was finished before going to bed we'd do the flowers to keep them fresh and all that and so we will say, "Now what kind of garland? Pink garland for Baba, yes. Pink flowers. String them. And how long the garland? That long is enough yes alright." And then we have so much enthusiasm, so much care. We used to this sort of measure the thread and it has to be just like that and flowers are picked. All the best flowers, large ones you know and make a garland of it. And then we said, "Let us sew some more flowers. What shall we do? We'll make a crown." [Bell rings]. So we made a crown you know out of flowers and all this we put in the red cloth you know to keep it fresh and next morning when Baba's coffee went up we sent.

You know Khorshed's father was there. So we told Khorshed's father, "Take this up and give it to Baba. Tell Baba it's from us you know." So her father would take it up to Baba and Baba was in seclusion. Baba would be near the window. The flowers were given to Baba. So Baba would take the flowers and said. He would say, "The girls have sent it you know." Baba said, "Alright." Baba opened it and He took out the garland. He said, "This is a garland." Baba is in silence He would take the garland and wear it Himself. So sweet no? Yes and then Baba would hold up the other thing. Baba's saying, "What is this? This small what is this meant for?" "Baba they said it was a crown." "Alright." Baba then put the crown on. So sweet the flowers really. And Baba's hair open, white sadra Baba must be looking so sweet in pink oleander garland and pink crown. Yes Baba's looking so sweet. Baba skin also was fair and brown hair. Baba looks very sweet and that time Baba was young maybe 32 years old.

Anyway then when. And Baba told this person Khorshed's father that, "Tell the girls that I wore the garland you know and they'll be happy there." Oh then very happy we were so proud we

jumped with joy and we said, "Tomorrow also we'll make more bigger garland," And so on you know. Everyday we'll send. For some time we sent. Then when my birthday came then Baba sent word and said that, "That day all can come up for darshan." So we were so happy to come out of our you know this. We had an enclosure like this. We lived like that because the outside people come and go on the road here then you're private like that so we liked it. In front side it was front there also was a little like a partition that you can't see the road like that you know. But otherwise we had a. Backside was a big what do you call? Big space. Barricade, what do you call this?

**PILGRIM 4:** Compound.

**PILGRIM 5:** Barricade.

**MEHERA:** Barricade no? Anyway so Baba was so sweet you know. He knew we would be like this. He in Prem Ashram, we down here. We had not much exercise not much to walk. Ground is alright we come and go and walk and wash our clothes and we are doing enough work and exercise but still Baba had a badminton court put in that ground there. Net and Baba had brought this badminton what do you call this?

**PILGRIM 5:** Racket.

**MEHERA:** Racket and shuttlecocks and all that. Baba told us to. We must play. If we don't have at least for 15 minutes we must play. But half an hour play if not then 15 minutes, 20 minutes. So we all used to get together to play badminton also. Baba was so sweet.

**DAVID:** And then on your birthday you said?

**MEHERA:** Yes we went up and had Baba's darshan. We sat for half an hour with Baba. Baba asked us how are health is now. You know small talk like that. And my. That time also Baba was in

seclusion. Then His birthday came. And then that time Baba also in seclusion I think. Yes. But He was seated. Means He was not going around I think. He was seated outside the entrance door you know. The Samadhi. That outside He was seated. With the cushion at the back on the wall and Baba. And there was a little tent put up in front of that room. A tent was put up ordinary. Means a roof and sides were also. And then Baba's birthday was qawwali songs. In the morning it was you know they worship Baba's feet and flower and garland and all that and then they said Aarti.

And that was morning we were with Baba some time. Baba talking with the mandali and all that. Baba would make somebody sing who did not have the voice to sing. They had to sing and then they all had to laugh and have fun you know. Just fun like that. And then we came down and then were told that in the evening we must come up because there will be qawwali. So we were so happy to go down [bell ringing] and then have our food and all that and evening again come up to be with Baba and qawwali songs and then we were in the tent and then very nice qawwali. If it's only very good then Baba likes it otherwise Baba. Composition is good but Baba wants a good voice also. Yes Baba is very keen about the voice.

**MANI:** [foreign] nachi nachi ne kai challech?

**PILGRIM 6:** Jai Baba. I'm leaving tomorrow. Could you give me a piece of Baba's hair?

**MEHERA:** Yes. Not a drop of Baba's hair but a piece. Alright yes. Yes I will.

Alright I'll say Jai Baba to you all.

**PILGRIM 1:** Jai Baba Mehera.  
[crosstalk] [speeding, then noises on tape to the end]

**MEHERA:** Also like letter B. Anyway the hair of the Ancient One. So when you receive grey hair you'll know that they have been long on Baba's head. And night and day on Baba the Beloved's head. Beloved Baba's darling. And stick it also. You can stick it if you want to. Jai Baba. So be happy in Baba's love and know that Baba is with you wherever you are. And say Baba's name when you are boarding a bus or train or anything. Just say His name and He'll help you [inaudible] conversation.

**KATIE:** Are you going to New York first?

**PILGRIM 6:** Yes going to New York.

**KATIE:** Will you be visiting Meher Baba House?

**PILGRIM 6:** Not planning on it but I can if you want me to.

**KATIE:** No, no just asked [foreign].

**MEHERA:** You'll go to Washington? There you have many Baba lovers as you are.

**PILGRIM 6:** Yes. Right near DC. I live right outside DC.

**MEHERA:** But you go to Centre and other places.

**PILGRIM 6:** I will. I'm going to go there.

**MEHERA:** Then this will. This will go for you to distribute among the Baba lovers. Jai Baba

**PILGRIM 6:** For the Washington Group.

**KATIE:** Some for your family also.

**MEHERA:** You have brothers, sisters?

**PILGRIM 6:** Yes I have three brothers and one sister [bell rings].

**MEHERA:** They follow Baba or not as yet?

**PILGRIM 6:** No.

**MEHERA:** Then they'll come to Baba through you.

**PILGRIM 6:** That's a good way to say it 'not as yet.'

**MEHERA:** Not as yet yes. They will one day.  
Jai Baba. [crosstalk]

**PILGRIM 7:** I'm not used to the poverty and all that so I'm having my troubles.

**MEHERA:** Oh. You must remember Baba's lived here [inaudible]. Born in India.

**PILGRIM 7:** Well that's what makes all the difference.

**MEHERA:** [inaudible]

**PILGRIM 7:** Oh yeah I don't mind that.

**MEHERA:** But you must remember that that also Baba has got. So now this you are doing for Baba. Whatever difficulties you are doing it for Baba.

**PILGRIM 7:** Well I don't mind for myself. I mind for those that are living that way. I feel sorry for them.

**MEHERA:** Okay poverty yes. But we feel sorry for them what can we do? Can you help? No. It's God's wish and will you know. Each one has to have that experience. Maybe in one incarnation we have been in that kind. We have been that kind.

**PILGRIM 7:** So then we are all right I guess.

**MEHERA:** Huh?

**PILGRIM 7:** We are alright now I guess?

**MEHERA:** Yeah. They will be alright one day also. They just going through this experience. It is experience all the time. What to do? We can't help them so.

**PILGRIM 7:** I guess there really is.

**MEHERA:** What can [inaudible]. What is endured [Meher laughs].

**DAVID:** So time to go on the bus.

**PILGRIM 7:** May I take your photo?

**MEHERA:** Oh yes. [crosstalk]

**PILGRIM 7:** How about by those flowers?

**MEHERA:** It's a colour picture?

**PILGRIM 7:** Yes.