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## MAD ASHRAM MAST SIGNS

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**ERUCH:** In the year 1936 to '38 or '36, '37 there was the mad ashram that Baba visited at Rahuri. Baba lovers were told to go out on the streets in Bombay, Pune, Calcutta, here, there, everywhere. Nasik, Ahmednagar. And try to collect the mad who were not violent but being discarded by their families or friends and relatives, had no shelter. So Baba lovers went out at different cities you see, in different cities and collected the mad. Well mad in the sense that well they were not normal. They were. Nobody is normal after all, no human being is normal there's no doubt about that. But they seemed to be either sub-normal or abnormal or whatever the term be. What we call it commonly mad in the worldly sense you see. So they were picked up and brought to Rahuri ashram and there Baba treated them in the sense that there was no medication that was given to them, but love. Pure love. And Baba loved them, helped them to take bath. Gave them baths. Scrubbed their heads, clipped their nails, fed them with His own hands, clothed them, massaged them and all sorts of personal treatment so to say. As if the mad was His own kith and kin, who was helpless and that He was his nurse.

More than a mother would look after her own mad son in short. The only mad son, the only son in the house who is mad. And if you just imagine the affection of the mother for that child you see. Well so the mad ashram was conducted for a couple of years there and Baba would pay visits

every day or every alternate day from Ahmednagar to Rahuri or stay overnight and then come back and so forth. In the year 1938 there was a great change that took place you see. The Rahuri ashram was disbanded totally. Mohammad was the only. The other mad people you see were sent back to their respective places and not just thrown back on the streets. But then each one. The Baba lover who had brought the respective mast, mad was enjoined upon by Baba to see that he found out a man, responsible person in that locality, of that town who would look after this man, feed him and give him some shelter and all that. So it was a permanent settlement done for that particular person. It all rested now with the person who was deputed to do that and paid for completely. So everybody who left the ashram had a shelter to go back to.

Then Baba started on that Blue Bus tour there as we call it. Completely what do you call? Disconnected with His mast/mad activities. Activities with the mad. Not the mad activity [Eruch laughs] but the activities with the mad. So, what [Eruch continues laughing]. What a funny language English language is you see when we can't speak it properly. So what happens is now in the Blue Bus Baba lovers, both Easterners and Westerners are cramped in with the God-Man, travelling from place to place. Baba didn't take these people on an excursion trip or anything of the sort. Whatever work was done of course it was done by the God-Man. But

one of the most prominent work was that whenever He halted at a place, He would send us out you see. Kaka and I were the ones, the two men who were there in the Blue Bus tour while travelling. So either He would send both of us out or one of us. Depending upon the work that was necessary and the presence. Whether Baba wanted one of the men to be with, by the side. By evening time we would be reaching a city or a town or a place. The women would be made to rest you see. And we, one of us or both of us would go out and find out whether there was a mast. There was no, what do you call? We had nothing to do with the mad people now. That's how the mast work started you see.

Now you will put this question as to how do you differentiate between a mad and a mast? We were after all human beings. We were absolutely gross conscious human beings, Kaka and I. But in spite of it Baba's hand was behind us, helping us to trace these people out. Not that that we were infallible. Sometimes we did drive in some person who was a mad man you see. And Baba would feed him and just send him back saying that, "No, he's mad." But very often we, our selections were really good you see. So the signs that Baba gave was, the first and foremost was that know that you do now know who is a mad and a mast you see. The difference between mad and mast. But then I want you to know one thing that you will from within feel that he is the mast you see. Another sign of it is that his eyes would tell you. His eyes will not be the eyes of the mad man you see. Would be quite different. His behaviour would be such, his personality would be such that you wouldn't want to just be familiar with that personality you see. It commanded dignity. Then He gave us certain signs that the mad wouldn't do like

that. Signs like there would be lot of rags, a bundle of rags. Or many bundles of rags or then that there would be somebody without any rags or anything of the sort but absolutely dirty. A mad man is not dirty. But here it would be absolutely full of. Say a person who is, what do you call? A barrel of oil is poured over the body and if the body is not looked after for 6 or 7 months what will happen with that, with the clothes and the body? With all the dust collecting here in India you see over the body. You'll never find a mad man like that you see. And yet in spite of it Baba said that there won't be any stink near his body. You follow? That's how these little signs were given to us.

Then either he would be very ferocious or very mild or he would be very loving and tender. Or he would be absolutely indifferent. So these were the little signs but of all the signs the most important thing that we had to remember was the urge from within us to say that, 'yes, he is the mast or he is a mad.' And discard him. Or mast, if he is the mast, if our conscience or if the voice within us were to tell us that he is the mast then get hold of him and bring him to Baba.

For a mad man we can drag him to the hospital or to our home and feed him or to Baba. We know that. We have handled mad men and there is no difficulty. If we are strong, of course and bold enough we can drag a person. We can catch hold of him and just, what do you call? Cling to him and subdue him. Howsoever ferocious a mad person is. But howsoever mild and loving a mast is, you won't be able to manhandle him. There is some, something that a crowd will not, wouldn't want to touch him or do anything. That's the difference. Yeah.

So when in the evenings after our halt there in the Blue Bus trips we would go out in search of this. And another sign was that such people are known to the local people of the town you see. But then local people of the town are apt to commit mistakes. So first of all we used to collect names and the addresses in that town from the local citizens you see. And we would go to the spot and find out and the greater the popularity of the man you see the greater the surety that he's somebody great. You follow?

Now what happens? Why do these people in the town or cities come to know of these masts you see? Not for any spiritual gains or anything of the sort, no. But through them somehow or other they feel you see that they profit through them. So these gamblers, race goers, those who dabble into cotton figures as they are called. Opening and closing and all that. They sit around these masts you see. They feed them, they serve them and they do all sorts of things you see, trying to please them and to get their pleasure won over. And say's that [foreign], "Bolo na, Bolo na." Means say, please say, please say. So they don't say, they are disconnected but what happens is, suppose of the mast sits with his four fingers like this you see, outstretched like this you see. Immediately the persons around leave the mast, immediately as if they have nothing to do with him now and then they gamble on figure 4 you see [general laughter] racegoers. Yeah, so these are the things. Suppose if a mast you see lights or a [foreign] beedi or a cigarette and once you light a match and it's extinguished. The cigarette is not lighted because of the breeze, the wind. 2 matches, 6 matches on the 7th match or the 6th match stick the

cigarette is lighted, immediately they will not even see or feel or have any sort of feeling that the cigarette is not even lighted you see properly or the puff is not out of his mouth you see of the mast's mouth. They will leave him and run and put the figure 7 there you see. So that's how [general laughter].

So out of. Suppose if there is a crowd of 20 or 30 people there around a mast. If 5 or 10 profit by it, without the mast saying anything you see. So what happens? Well they say that we have profited by the masts. The signs that are given to us. And then when they profit by it then they bring food and all sorts of variety of dishes and they try to put clothes on the mast and all. Mast doesn't care for it whether they bring it or not. They. It's just a sort of a nuisance value you see. But then what could you do? Then there are others who profit by them through. Naturally the masts are to be looked after by somebody isn't it? They have no connection with the world. They are Baba's beloved children so Baba somehow or other, through any instrumentality you see sees that His children are well fed and well protected in spite of their not caring for all these things. So these are the instruments you see. The people who gamble, the people who go over there. But they do it with love and because of expectations. Jai Baba.

So then what happens is that this is how the masts are looked after in a city or a town. And the citizens who are somehow or other closely connected with these masts you see who look after them they are, they also profit by them. But of all these people there are a few who really love these masts. They do care, take care of them. Not for any worldly gains but knowing fully well that they are totally

absorbed. They are totally absorbed in their love for God. So that's how.

**PILGRIM 1:** Mohammad was one of these who Baba [inaudible][crosstalk].

**ERUCH:** So what happened, yes. So Mohammad himself told us also about it. Formally he was very communicative in the normal sense. When we had brought him in the early stages at Rahuri also. So he would say, he would say that. You know his name is Tukaram. He's not a Mohammedan, he's a Hindu. Mohammad is a Hindu. His name is Tukaram really. He has wife and children. And he hails, he comes from a place called Ratnagiri, coastal town. From Bombay you have to, there's a ferry system that takes you to Ratnagiri. And mangoes are very famous from that place you see. So he comes from Ratnagiri.

So it so happens he says that he came to Bombay and somehow or other he had that spiritual inclination and he found himself on certain plane. On a certain plane. And he didn't care for the world or anything. He used to roam about. But then the people would pester him. This is Mohammad's story from his own mouth. And then you know he says these. He would use the word, 'these blokes' in Hindi. I am translating it. They would sit around him and just he would feel so fed up with them that he would sometimes run away from them and they would run behind him he says. Thinking that he's somebody greater than what they expected you see. Because he shuns the company of men. So then they would run after. So eventually he had to sit down quietly and just sit there. Then these people started pestering him like this. As I have just now narrated and then they would bring food

and all. He says although I was a Hindu I was converted into a Muslim you see and they named me as Mohammad because somehow or other I was in a Muslim locality there and they called me Mohammad you see. That's why I'm called Mohammad you see.

**MANI:** Not converted in [inaudible] [crosstalk]

**ERUCH:** Not converted in sense of conversion.

**MANI:** My circumstances.

**ERUCH:** The circumstances. Just named him Mohammad that's all because he was in a Mohammedan locality. And another thing is that he said that in order that I should get rid of the crowd I would simply say 4. To some here he would say 4 to some he would say 7's, to some he would say 6 and allow them to go away from him. So what happens from the crowd at least 5 would win the number you see. So in spite of dispersing the crowd those 5 will come in the evening bringing this food for him he said. And it was another headache. And he says it was very difficult till Baba called me to Rahuri and then he was there at Rahuri.

**PILGRIM 1:** Who went and found Mohammad?

**ERUCH:** Pleader was the one who found Mohammad. Pleader has died. But then Aloba's story is also very fine story because Aloba was there. Then after some years you see Mohammad wanted to go back to his hometown, Ratnagiri. So he all the time told Baba that he would like to go back and all. So Baba had to arrange for his going back you see. When mad ashram

was disbanded and all that. Baba asked him whether he wanted to continue or go back? So he said he wanted to go back for some time. So Aloba was in charge. He was deputed to see to Mohammad's return to Ratnagiri. Then that's a different story altogether.

**MANI:** That's a very, very interesting story.

**ERUCH:** Yeah. That's a very interesting story. You ask Aloba in his own way he will describe it. Very funny, very humorous. The headaches that Mohammad gave him and what happened in the whole locality and how Aloba dreaded the very sight of Mohammad you see, later on.

**MANI:** If something happened with the mast.

**ERUCH:** It's no joke.

**MANI:** It's just no joke.

**ERUCH:** Because their behaviour is quite different. They are absolutely independent of the crowd. They don't care. We have to.

**MANI:** So you can imagine how living with the God-Man must be. [Mani laughs]

**ERUCH:** We have to live in a society following a certain civic code you see. They don't do that. [Crosstalk]

**PILGRIM 2:** [inaudible] used to explain all these things.

**ERUCH:** In the beginning he used to do that, He used to talk to us.

**PILGRIM 2:** Because when you see the pictures of Mohammad in Rahuri he [inaudible] [crosstalk]

**ERUCH:** No but he would get in certain. Certain times he would get in mood. Yeah he has talked with me. I am the person who heard this from him. Especially you know in 1938 when Mohammad returned again and there was that mast ashram there on the hill itself where Kaikobad lives now. There I heard this story from him.

So then what happened was, not that the mast hunt started in 1938. Even prior to that you see sometime in 1925 or so or '26 or '7. There was one mastaan in Meherabad all the time. He died there. He was in charge of Sidhu. Sidhu was the first one who was given the charge to look after a mast. And that mast you see would just in his masti would rip open his nails like that and feel nothing, nothing, nothing mattered to him. Yeah.

There are other stories about. You ask Sidhu about it. In his own way he'll tell you about the.

**PILGRIM 1:** He'll tell me in Hindi or Marathi.

**ERUCH:** No but then, but then Nana is there. When Nana comes down or something happens. There is somebody, Padri. Padri was there, you ask. Because it is better to have first-hand information than this third hand information from me you see.

**MANI:** Was Pendu there? Maybe.

**ERUCH:** Oh yes, Pendu knows about it but Sidhu was in charge of that mast. One mast was there. And when Baba went to Quetta for the first time there also Baba contacted the mast. But regular mast work,

the phase started in 1938, '39 and then onwards.

**PILGRIM 1:** What would Baba do when He contacted the mast?

**ERUCH:** What He would do is all. First thing that He would do is as soon as we bring Him to the mast, Baba would ask us to leave Him and the mast alone you see. That's all, we don't know. But later on you see how do we know what He would do? We don't know what He does. Because even when the masts are brought here to Meherazad or to some place of sojourn of Baba what He would do is that outwardly what we find is Him serving him. Serving the mast as if he is the most honoured guest. Or if the mast is, if he is really old and disabled you see physically. So He, Baba would be there you see as the great most honoured guest he would treat him. Feed him, clothe him, everything. Wash his feet. From head to foot and everything. And clean his body and feed him and massage him and then sit with him and all that. But then what He used to do with the mast in behind the closed doors nobody knows. Nobody knows that. Outwardly He used to help him with all this. Like Chacha, whose clothes were stuck to his body you see. We were the ones by Baba's side. His hat, his cap was stuck to the scalp. I remember that.

**PILGRIM 2:** I don't know why I had to bring some [inaudible]

**PILGRIM 1:** [inaudible]

**ERUCH:** Yeah. Yeah. It was a horrible thing and what patience Baba must have had to bathe that man you see and that too a mast mind you. Of the type of Chacha. To get

his clothes out of the body for the first time in many, many years.

**PILGRIM 1:** How was that done?

**ERUCH:** Ripped open. Baba scissored through you see. What do you call?

**MANI:** Scissors.

**ERUCH:** Yes.

**PILGRIM 3:** But wouldn't the mast object? Wouldn't the mast object?

**ERUCH:** But we were there also at the same time.

**MANI:** He didn't like it. The mast didn't want to be bathed. That Chacha.

**PILGRIM 1:** So how would it?

**ERUCH:** But then we had to cajole him. We had to quieten him. We had to offer him certain things and so forth.

**MANI:** Yes. And that's in the Wayfarer.

**ERUCH:** Yeah.

**MANI:** How Chacha, remember? I think Don had to dress up as a.

**ERUCH:** And another thing is about the masts you see, their ordinary thing, ordinary way of life you see. As I, I don't know whether I told you or not what little things that I have seen. There was once in Bangalore in the mast ashram there. Baba also established a mast ashram in Bangalore at a place called. In the compound of the bungalow called 'The Links.' There's a huge property. So there, there was a electric pole. I was in charge

of that mast ashram there at the time in 1939 I think, was it? '39?

**MANI:** Yes.

**ERUCH:** So there was some sort of short circuit and the pole that brought in the electric mains for the private consumption. There was some short circuit there. And even if you were to cross the earth you see at that spot you'd feel a shock there. So great was the short circuit there, yes. So I of course I immediately sent for the wireman to repair it. But then as soon as I turned my back and all that there were a lot of masts there you see. What do I find one of the masts there? See he holds the pole and goes round. Takes rounds you see like a merry-go-round you see. And he doesn't feel anything. So what I am saying is.

**MANI:** Clutching the pole.

**ERUCH:** Pole yes. You know how children sometimes play? Clutching the pole and they go round. What do you call that?

**MANI:** Maypole something?

**PILGRIM 2:** Swinging, just swinging around the pole.

**ERUCH:** Yes. Just going round and round holding it.

**MANI:** Anybody else would have probably died.

**ERUCH:** Of course. We couldn't even cross that place you see let alone the pole. How can you touch it? So such are the potentialities within one's body you see. I don't know what it is. But that's what I've seen. Then there was another mast. He

used to as soon as there would be singing going on you see and all that he would just lie on the floor. Baba would be sitting there. To entertain them Baba would call special musicians you see to sing to them you see. To entertain them and to have the same atmosphere as the masts had. He would create restaurants over there so that they should not feel bound by anything. Because they would go there to any restaurant and ask for [foreign] beedi or matches. Take it out.