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## NEW LIFE STORIES

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### Eruch Jessawala

Mandali Hall, Meherazad, India

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19:53

**ERUCH:** What is in your book I don't know what is in my book I receive so many books. Where is that book which is that book that you are talking about?

**PILGRIM 1:** "The Ancient One".

**ERUCH:** That's not my book.

**PILGRIM 1:** Says Eruch Jessawala.

**ERUCH:** I'm public property. They can use my name also, I haven't a copyright on my name also.

**PILGRIM 2:** Wouldn't let me do it for you either.

**DON STEVENS:** I'll tell you the exact results when I got here. I have gone back to the copy that was given to me here several years ago, printed here in India in the 1950s of Dr. Donny's diary of his part in the New Life. In that the "not" is not included. "Let" despair and disappointment ravage your garden, because you have the resources to re-establish it. It makes sense to me. But then I read on a little further, and under Baba's instructions, one thousand sheets were printed at the time of the New Life still, with the English version on one side which Donny did, and the Hindi version that Donny gives on the other side. So as soon as I got here I asked Bal Natu if by some miracle any of those thousand sheets were still in existence here in the Archives.

So he came back the next morning and gave me two copies. On that original sheet, "not" was not included. So I said what about the Hindi version?

He said I looked at that too, but the words were a little different, but the sense is exactly the same. Let it be, you're in good shape, you don't have to worry. So the original published at that time opened with the English sheet does not include the word "not".

**PILGRIM 1:** What does Naosherwan's version say?

**DON:** It includes the word "not", which is Purdom's version.

**PILGRIM 2:** I see.

**ERUCH:** It should be "yes" or should be "not"?

**DON:** Let despair and disappointment ravage your garden, because you've got the inner resources to re-establish it, that's the sense of it from Donny's original, but he doesn't make sense.

**ERUCH:** Yeah, it was the printed [inaudible],

**PILGRIM 1:** No.

**ERUCH:** No? [crosstalk].

**DON:** I'm not finished.

**PILGRIM 4:** It does make sense. We made a vote on this at a meeting once in London when we were arguing with a 50-50 vote, I think on whether it should be "let not despair" or "let despair". So it looks like both are possible. But I personally belong to the old school, which is the Donny school, which is let despair ravage.

**PILGRIM 2:** Wasn't it because Charles was so offended by that statement that he decided that it must be wrong, and he just put the word "not"?

**DON:** Well, I speculated in the little book that it probably so disappointed his sense of propriety, that he thought it must have been a misprint, and if not, should have been inserted there.

**PILGRIM 2:** His Christian ethic.

**PILGRIM 4:** It's not that at all, Stevie. Purdom was a very well known Englishman and he was hoping to design an area of Rome that he would call "Rome Garden City" and he was very concerned that "Rome Garden City" should not be disturbed. [laughter].

**PILGRIM 1:** That's very bad, very bad.

**DON:** This is a new version of the logic to me.

**PILGRIM 1:** I think it's the rain.

**PILGRIM 4:** The "Rome Garden City" is at the very time that he was doing that. Someone who knows the "Rome Garden City" would appreciate what I am saying. [crosstalk].

**DON:** Anyway, I think we've got to rake Naosherwan over the coals.

**ERUCH:** What to do? No but we should read the original Hindi version very difficult to say whether it was ravaged or not because we didn't have any such sort of being destroyed, there is no such thing as despair, no such thing as joy followed in the New Life.

**PILGRIM 2:** That's what Don Stevens just said - it's the Hindi version that verified what Don said was correct.

**ERUCH:** That's the sense what we also had it while hearing the song with Baba. [crosstalk].

It was very difficult to say whether it was ravage or not. Because we didn't have any such thoughts being described as despair, nothing. There was no such despair and no such thing as joy. We just followed Him in the New Life. It was left to posterity to find out. But I am there as a witness to say that there was no such thing as despair. There was all the time the great joy.

There were hardships, many hardships were there. Difficulties were there, but there was no such thing as despair. Even where there is that example cited of the great doctor who was in tears and all that, it was not through despair, no, not through despair. I am citing Dr. Daulat Singh for example. And he was sent back. Tears did roll down but they were not through despair, but through some past memories.

You know the incident of his daughter having taunted him at the time while he was leaving the house for the New Life? She says, "My marriage is fixed. You fixed the date and what's the matter? Why are you leaving us like that?" He said "No I will leave. I have to go for the New Life with Baba, Meher Baba." Then she taunted him, "This very fact shows that I am not your daughter." That was the day when he was weeping, that night of the wedding.

He remembered the words of his daughter. He says, "Why should she feel that way, why did she say that?" It was that. Feeling sorry for the woman. "The Tales of the New Life", of course Don Stevens has done a good job on it and delighted many a heart. And well, it is because of his persistence, just as he is now going into deeper waters with this "not" that at last brought a good result in the "The Tales of the New Life", sticking his microphone you see, out, he said "Come on now let us have something. Let us have something."

**PILGRIM 3:** His must have been the first of many microphones.

**ERUCH:** Pardon? Yeah. But I still remember Don Stevens at the time of recording these episodes and incidents, he crossed me like anything. But one of the things that almost stumped me, but luckily Baba saved the situation. I didn't tell him anything but today I will tell him if you remember right. Well, the stories went on, rolled out, reel after reel, this and that and all that you see there. And instead he crossed me with this: "Don: Don't you think sir, that all you have said just now is because of the tradition that came from this country that those who are on pilgrimage, they need to be helped and it is considered to be a great blessing to help these pilgrims?"

There is nothing new in these experiences. Nothing fantastic about what Baba tells you to go and ask somebody but you uttered the word that you are on a pilgrimage, naturally they offer you the help." Do you remember that?

**DON S:** I remember some of the questions back and forth.

**ERUCH:** No, but this particular question and I said, "Yeah, it is a tradition in India to help the people who are on pilgrimage and all that. It is so, it is so." Then Don says that, "Is there any instance when the word pilgrimage is not used, and you got that help and whatever you call it biksha [foreign]?" Oh yeah, I remember that now and then the story of Todi Singh comes out. Now you remember that? [crosstalk] Then I said there is a very good story, what do you say to this? That stumped Don. [laughter]

**PILGRIM 3:** You were there, when Todi Singh showed up.

**ERUCH:** Yeah, we were there. I wasn't there at the house, but next morning when Keki Nalavala, means Anza's father, brought the news that something has happened in the night. That this man has come with so many cart load of all these rations, and all that, what is to be done? I didn't

call him and say that you called him. Baba says, "Where is he?" Baba, I'll ask him to put things somewhere else. I don't have any place to store cart loads of ration so I told him to go and store anywhere else. And he was there and Baba said call him so he was dropped and the confrontation took place as soon as he came close to Baba he says, "Yeah, yeah, He was the one who told me to do that." That's how he recognized Baba. And that's how I brought it. And then Baba turns to him and says, "What have you brought?" And he gave all his inventory, so many bags of rice and sugar, dough and this and that and flour, not vegetables, but butter, cans of butter and all that, clothes, dried fruits. See this is our despair in the New Life.

And then Baba says, "What do you expect us to do?" "It is for you, you called for them and they are offered to you." "What will we do with bags of rice and lentils and all that? Who is going to cook all this?" And Baba looked askance at us and turned and we kept quiet. All of a sudden he piped himself and says, "If you order me, my family is there to cook for you all. Of course, what will we do with all this? Can I go and get my family?"

They were not in that town, they were far away, hundreds of miles away from this. He says, "Yeah, go and get them, with pots and pans, who will cook all these things?" And he brought them and did all that. That is a very fascinating story, beautiful.

**DON:** Eruch, what finally happened to the eye doctor who gave all those?

**ERUCH:** By the way just before you came, the topic did come up, I brought the topic up because somebody sent me a clipping that he had just died this month, early this month.

**DON:** But he stayed practicing?

**ERUCH:** Yeah, he was practicing in the hospital there, in the same place, the picture you have at the gate.

**DON:** Did he ever see Baba again?

**ERUCH:** No. That was the first and the last when he went there to beg at his door. Twice he went there, twice.

**DON:** Dr. Nath. He knew it was Baba, but didn't know who Baba really was.

**ERUCH:** No, no, he didn't know it.

**DON:** Yeah it was spontaneously played, an incredible part. The manner that Baba asked for those things.

**ERUCH:** Yeah, that fascinated me too, but we could not speak nor utter our thoughts as to what are you doing? You are lording yourself like that but we knew He is the Lord but we couldn't say that He is the Lord. He told us to take Him to be His companion and we never knew that our companion was the Lord. Nobody would believe such a thing. But do believe, I was there and still the last two of the group that is there, on the top is the group. Yeah we are the only two left now. That is the group taken on the eve of the New Life. Almost all are dead. Let me confirm with Savak Kotwal, but he didn't come in the New Life. Kaka died, Gustadji died, no Aloba is there, Aloba, myself and Pendu. The rest of them, yeah, all died. All are dead except Aloba, Pendu and myself of the men and all the women. You are very tenacious Don. [crosstalk].

**DON S:** They rode in the cart while the men marched.

**ERUCH:** That was the time when Dr. Ghani started the formation of the union, you know? The union came into force at that time. You know that story, Don?

**DON:** Yeah, it's a good one. You know Dr. Ghani was an old person, Gustadji was very old too at that time you see in the pictures there are old people. So Patil was also very old but what happened at the time when it would rain or when longer distances were to be covered, the women would sit inside the caravan and they had to walk the distance and all that. So naturally you can't complain, an order was there of the New Life that you can't complain. So how to blurt it out? So Dr. Ghani figured a response, created a song. The fate of the New Life companions is that, you see, and the men walked and the women sat like ladies in the caravan this is the fate of the New Life. Pendu was the driver of the caravan. Dr. Ghani would sit.

But before he could speak out he would get this idea of creating a song and delight Baba with that and at the same time carry his point, he got a different thought in his mind that he incited all the other companions to go on strike. [crosstalk]. I didn't know anything about it because I would always be with Baba by His side day and night I would be there. So now Baba is now inside his tent it is nighttime. In the night they held around the fire this Baba discussing and debating and they agreed to this all of the New Life companions.

I was there and what happened was it is morning time so I had to collect all the tent and all that, but Baba came out of the tent and He was going towards the rest of the companions. So I followed Him, leaving the tent like that. My duty was to get the tent out and get the pegs and everything loose and all that. I followed Him and He said to call them to Him, and they are all standing in a line near the dispensary so I shout out "Baba wants you all. Come, come to Baba he wants you all," And nobody budged, nobody budged. Baba looked at me and says, "What's the matter?" I shout at them "Go further and said Baba wants you all come, come, Baba is calling you all." But one or two started coming I go still further, three

or four are coming, eventually all came except Dr. Ghani was there.

Baba said, "What is it? Why didn't you all come to me? You have forgotten the New Life orders when I call you, leave everything immediately and come to me." And so they blurted out that we were made to go on strike by Dr. Ghani. [laughter]. Then Baba called out to Dr. Ghani, who said, "All these people who are here are hypocrites. I am the only real one," he is telling for himself. "I am the only real one who speaks the truth. They are the hypocrites. They have agreed not attend to your call and look! Why did you all go away, when you all agreed with me?" And they left me behind and this and that and Baba of course pardoned him. And then He created this song which entertained Baba and Baba had a chuckle and made him sit in the caravan. He had the liberty.

**DON:** He could get away with it. He was the only one.