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## STORIES: THE FIRST LETTER OF THE ALPHABET; TWO BUDDHIST MONKS

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**Eruch Jessawala**

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20:26

**MANI:** How many innumerable times has this happened? Just as the tide comes in every day and it has gone on and on being for thousands of years. The tide has come in and the tide has gone out. So, all that we are seeking to know, no matter how far back we would be only just that one. [tape break]

**ERUCH:** That Narad. Again I come to that Narad is not a person by the way. It's the representation of the human mind at the time of Lord Krishna, you see. Or you may call one of the mandali or it's a function, it's an office you may call. So, we name it is as Narad. So Narad once remonstrates and says to the Lord, he says, "I'm fed up of this life of celibacy here in your presence." We were dealing with celibacy, where's? Who was the person who was there?

**PILGRIM 1:** Me.

**ERUCH:** Ha yes. So, I'm fed up of all this. So, Narad. Lord Krishna says, "Narad, what's the matter with you? Why is this sort of eruption from you? Why do you feel so much about it? What's this?" So he says, "No, I want to get married. Of what use is this? Now I'm getting aged and I now, when I see around me, I now feel that well I must have some assistant in my old age to help me. See there must be somebody by my side. And I want to get married." And he just remained. What do you call, he insisted upon his getting married. So Krishna said, many times he told Narad not to harbour such thoughts. That it would be futile, useless. After all these years that he passed by His side you see. Why does he want to get himself entangled and so to say throttled by additional burden and responsibility? He says, "Well whatever you may say. You may tell us things like that because you are beyond all this but we are bound by illusion and we feel the need for somebody to help us. By our side when we, when our body is not able to help itself. Somebody must be there to aid us." So, well Krishna relented and said, "Alright Narad. You can have any women in this town where I am not." So well, that place you see where Krishna lived and his followers lived, well, there were 16,800 women there. The population at that time. And that's why sometimes it is mentioned in mythology that Krishna had 16,808 concubines. [Eruch laughs]

**PILGRIM 2:** Or wives.

**ERUCH:** Or wives. Whatever you call them or consorts or anything. Any word you want to use you see. Now it is all symbolic. Because what happened is when Narad went there why it is not said that Krishna had 16,808 wives, why? Because when Narad was given this license, you see, to go and pick any beautiful woman in the town where He is not. Where the Lord is not. So he went wandering you see because he wanted to get married. "I want a wife, I want a wife, I want a wife." So he went in search of a wife. So what happened is that wherever he goes what he sees? The woman there just rocking the, what do you call — the swing. What do you call that?

**PILGRIM 3:** A swing.

**ERUCH:** Yeah - the swing where Lord Krishna is reclining and relaxing. He watches there and again he sees the face of the Lord so he passes by with due respect to the Lord. Goes to another house. There, there is a very beautiful damsel there washing the feet of the Lord. Again the Lord appears. He says, "Oh God. It would have been nice had the Lord not been here you see." [general laughter]

So, he goes to another house and another house and another house and another house. And wherever he goes and Narad being Narad being very well known as the close one of Lord Krishna. He had easy access to the house. In anybody's house he could go. So wherever he visited he found Lord Krishna there. So he couldn't get a wife from the whole town you see. That's why it is said that Lord Krishna had 16,808 wives.

Well, whatever it be, he came back and he was so dejected again. The same old story repeats you see with Narad. That he feels hopeless and doesn't know what to do and he is there and Lord Krishna says, "Well Narad what happened? Did you have your choice? Could you select anybody?" Says, "Nowhere Lord could I find a single woman without You. Wherever I went You were there." So He says, "That's the very reason I say you forget this. Why do you want to get yourself married unnecessarily? Now that so many years have passed by few years are left. Pass them by, by my feet. Remember Me all the time. Take Me to be whatever you want Me to be and that's all. Why do you want to get yourself just, so to say, involved in all these family affairs and all?" "No, I want to get married. I want a wife." "Alright." So, Lord Krishna said, "Well we'll fix a day." So He called all the mandali nearby and says, "Look here, Narad wants to get married. And we must now help him to find a wife. A bride. He has been trying a lot. He wandered from place to place in the whole town. He couldn't find a single woman fit for him. Why? Because all loved Lord Krishna. There was nobody there, you see, who could love Narad."

So what happened is, "Now it's up to Me", Lord Krishna said, "To find a bride for this man who wants to get married." "Well we'll do that." So, what happens, now comes the story you see. He takes, He leads Narad and all the mandali. He says, "Because this is something very, something to do with life and death you see." So He has to be very careful and that Narad should now have a dip in the river, sacred

river, and become pure and clean before anything is decided. So let's go to the river side and there they go and they take. They are just in a playful mood. All the mandali and with the Lord and Narad is there. So Lord Krishna in His playful mood just presses the head of Narad there under the water you see.

**MANI:** While they are bathing.

**ERUCH:** While they are bathing you see. And just He pins him down you see. And he's just trying to free himself from the clutches, you see, and want to get out of, over the surface of the water to breathe. But He kept him there for a minute and he was just struggling over there. He couldn't do what. He didn't know what to do you see. He was so worried and struggling you see to get out. Struggling for his life. That's how those who were out of the water felt and witnessed you see. But what was really happening there inside in Narad was something quite different. And this gives us some concept of time. Krishna releases him. He comes out and he begs of Lord Krishna. He just falls down at the feet of Lord Krishna and he says, "Lord, save me. Save me from this shrew of a women that with whom I have been living for nearly 30 years. I have got 6 children I don't know how to manage with them. And save me from that.

**MANI:** It's enough, enough.

**ERUCH:** It's enough now. When will I get release from all this?" So just Lord. And they all the other mandali you see who were there who knew Narad just a minute before. In a minute he passed 30 years of his married life. 40 years I may, you may call 50 years or whatever it is. But I am giving you a concept of time. A minute of this Earth can be expanded into 30 to 40 years period you see. But there must be somebody to do that. And that could be done by the Lord of time Himself. Where there is no time and no space, it's all just jugglery you see. Yeah it's real. Sheer jugglery you see. It's the mind that plays all those tricks you see.

And Narad got so fed up, so disgusted with his married life that he begs of Lord Krishna to save him. And then again Lord Krishna blesses him. And the hand that is put on the head is enough to dispel him of all this worry and he realized that he had never got married. So then Lord Krishna says, "Do you now realize and recognize the fact that I have been telling you so often? Why you want to get yourself involved? You have never married but just see the fun of it." What would happen. Imagine He says, "What would happen if you were to get married, in fact?"

**MANI:** But he must have experienced 40 years of time.

**ERUCH:** Yes, yes, yeah, yeah. Definitely. He experienced that. To us it appears to be so absurd and fantastic but these are the things that can happen, have happened. [hammering sound in the background] Modern man is very reluctant to believe this, but one day very soon he will have to believe these things. Because even

science will prove these things. Time factor can be capsuled. You know little capsule of one year you see. A hundred years will be capsuled there, like that. And you'll have to swallow it. Because science has proved it. Now you can't swallow it you see. [hammering sound continues] [Eruch and pilgrims laughing]

So there was one person you see by name of Bullah Shah. A child. Of course now we go back to the period when Bullah Shah was a child. Wanting to learn the alphabets you see. He went to school and there the teacher is there trying to teach him the alphabets. Aleph, Be, Pe, Te, Se.

#### **PILGRIM 4:** Urdu.

**ERUCH:** In Persian or, yeah. But he was such a dunce you see that even the first two or three letters he couldn't grasp you see whereas the children have learnt all the alphabets. And the teacher somehow or the other took pity on this boy and said, "Bullah Shah, this won't do. You must pick up. What's the matter?" He says, "Sir, I can't remember this. It is so difficult even to learn the first letter. I don't know what to do." So the teacher tried his level best to teach him. To make him memorize this or go over and over again. Over the formation of the letter, but well Bullah Shah couldn't do it. So, the teacher got fed up and said, "Look here Bullah Shah, you go wherever you want to go but you return to the school only after you have learnt the alphabets. I have done my best. I can't help you further. It's no use you're attending this school." There the poor child dejected leaves the school, not knowing what to do. What his parents would say on the subject you see. Naturally he expected a good thrashing from his parents you see. For being expelled from school like that. Well Bullah Shah grew up. Then of course he came in contact with a perfect master and all that. And then he was the slave of that perfect master for many years. And then after passing I think a period of 30 years or 36 years like that you see, he learnt the first letter of the alphabet. Called Aleph.

The first letter of the word Allah you see. After passing so many years. That is Aleph, "A". And he was so happy you see. He didn't crave for any God realization or anything but that was in his luck you see he got in contact with the master. His perfect master. And then, then he said, "Yes, now I know what it means." But then with the grace of the perfect master he realized.

He realized God and Bullah Shah now goes to the same school and the same teacher who is very old there. And the teacher comes out who is older than Bullah Shah is and says, "Well what do you want?" He says, "I am Bullah Shah, who was expelled from this school. And was invited back to the school when I had learned the alphabets. But I am so sorry to say that I have not learned all the alphabets but I just learned the first letter in the alphabet. That is the first letter that if you want I can demonstrate. And let the other children hear also. Learn the way I have learned it." He says, "What is this in this? Is this is a crazy person or is he really Bullah Shah who has grown up? What's the matter?" Well through mere curiosity the teacher, the old man permitted him to write down the first letter you see. And the he writes

the Aleph there you see. But the way he had learnt it and the way he wrote it you see. And the love that he poured for his own school mates you see. No sooner he put the Aleph there the board cracked. It couldn't stand the weight so to say of the letter. This first letter of our lives. In the word Allah. And it cracked. It had such great import you see. He had learnt it not the way that the teachers taught. But the perfect master taught him. The word Allah. The first letter of the word Allah. Let alone Allah. So, that is the story. And then he told. Then he started giving discourses to the children and to his own teacher. What it is to learn the first letter in the word Allah. Let alone the alphabets you see.

You have heard this Ira before? It's a Sufi story of Bullah Shah. But it's borrowed story. It's not my own or it's from a book.

**PILGRIM 5:** Second hand.

**ERUCH:** It's says third and fourth hand you may call it. [clock chimes] Well this is what I read from a book once. Am I right in copyrights?

**PILGRIMS:** Yeah. [general laughter]

**PILGRIM 6:** After that at quarter to five you have to come over there.

**ERUCH:** What I read was this which has fascinated me and it has stuck into my head you see. There were two monks you see. Buddhist monks. And they went out for a walk.

Keep it. it's a fine story.

**PILGRIM 7:** Yeah. I'm listening.

**ERUCH:** Yeah. So they went out for a stroll. You know how the monks live in the monastery? Well they must behave. No side glances. No talk of women, wine, wealth. Nothing of the sort. Straight ahead, go back straight, right about turn, that's all. Regimentation all the time. All the 24 hours of the day. Well that was the monastic life the monks were supposed to live so they lived. But there was some sort of relaxation too you see that they should mingle with nature and all that under the pretext of that you see.

They were given the latitude to go out for walks, short walks. To return before it's dusk you see. Well the two monks who were close together you see, they went out. It so happened that it had rained that day. So, when they went out you see it was all dirt road at that time. So they went out, they walked, they went through the puddles and all that. Pool of water that was there. They were returning. On their way back what they found was beautiful damsels. Daintily dressed couldn't cross the road. Because of the pool of water that was there. And she was waiting with her skirts lifted and all that. Well the monks were not supposed even to eye her or to just

shun her and go away. But one of the monks dared you see to lift her up in his arms there like that and just cross the pool and just dropped her there.

God's will be done and they went away. The other monk was so shocked with the act of this friend of his. With the thought that now all the connections will have to be severed. How could a monk dare to do such a thing? And it all the time worked. Made a deep impression over his mind and he didn't know what to do. The whole walk was spoilt. When they were about to enter the gates of the monastery you see.

This man couldn't keep quiet. He says, "Brother monk you know what you have done today? You are not supposed to enter the monastery." He says, "What has happened? What have we done?" "What have you done, say that. Not we." "What have I done?" Says, "You know you were not supposed even to see a women. You have bodily lifted her. You have taken her in your arms and lifted her and carried her." He said, "What's it? Oh," He says, "I never knew that. I had dropped her soon after the pool was crossed. But I never knew that you carried her as far as the gate." [general laughter]

So that's how our mind is and our sanctity and our spirituality is you know. You follow the story? How beautiful it is you see. He had completely forgotten the act. Whereas the other man had brought her as far as the gate. You hadn't read this? You read that. I like it. Beautiful story.