
TRAIN TRAVELS

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ERUCH: Of course there are quite a few stories you see of the crowded compartments in which Baba travelled during His tours for the masts and for the poor and needy you see. And some of the stories, some of them I think a couple of them have already been published. That's what I heard. About the old man sitting by His side. Hm? Yeah. Yeah. And then I don't know whether this is printed or not you see. This story that I will tell you now.

We were somewhere in the North on a very long tour with Baba. And the days where when there was war. World war II going on you see. And India also there was no war as such in India but the conditions in India were such that lot of supplies was to go from India. Supplies of man power and food and fuel and what not was to be supplied to the fighting forces in the world you see. So India was also equally busy and especially the transportation you see. And to travel in those days was an ordeal. But if you find and go through the records and find the records Baba seems to have travelled the most during those years. When men dreaded to travel. And Baba travelled in the lowest compartment. Class-compartment that is the 3rd class compartment. It was impossible to find room and seats over there. Compartments were packed. People used to get suffocated and faint you see. Such were the conditions. And to enter into a compartment through doors was an impossibility. Even at the time of junction you have to fight your

way through the door you see. Even when from the place, the starting station you see. But to catch a train and get into a compartment you see on odd stations was something. Oh should be considered a great achievement you see if you could get your seats inside you see or standing room inside.

So usually what we used to do. We had to get in to the compartment through the windows. So Baba had to be lifted bodily up you see and then there would be two or three mandali following Baba on the tour and one or two would get inside. Find the way inside you see jump in through the window. People around Baba usually they were sturdy people you see. They were not weaklings in those days. They were also young. Baba was also young. Not too old. But older than the rest. And there were strong people, strong men around Baba those days you see. So what we used to do- Two of us would jump inside the compartment and there would be lot of row there naturally. Verbal exchanges and sometimes fists were exchanged too. And two from outside you see would lift Baba bodily and just try to make Him enter the compartment through the window. So the two inside would help Baba get inside. And in that row you see Baba would be made to sit somewhere or stand somewhere or do something.

Once all of us would get inside then of course our attitude would completely change and we would like to befriend the whole, the compliment of passengers

there. That's how Baba's presence was always you see. So somehow or other with our talks and our attitude towards them. We would befriend them and at least we succeeded in making one get up and give up his seat for the sake of Baba you see. Not knowing that he was Baba but somehow or other we would try to coax and make him feel that Baba needed a seat to sit. And we succeeded in getting such things done you see. We were adept so to say in this art. After long experience of course.

One day it so happened. Haan by the way another important point to be noted was that there were very few trains left for the regular passengers you see to ply up and down. All the trains were supposed to be special trains running up and down for the army. For the soldiers you see. It was very difficult to get any seat or accommodation. But Baba travelled and travelled a lot during those years. And there was one day when we were at a small junction you see. And we wanted to board a train and we knew that it was impossible to get any seat. So when the train arrived at the station and stopped at the platform we knew that we had to do something to get inside. We were very tired and we did not know when we would go home you see. Under the conditions, go back home. We were heading towards our place here.

So, Baba encouraged me to request one of the army man who was by the side of the window you see and with great persuasion and all sorts of things including bowing down and just trying to brush his beard so to say. He was a Sikh gentlemen you see. And all that I, you know the usual way of pleading with an Indian is to put your hand towards his chin you see. And touch his chin as for a mark of pleading. A great request, a favour. So with great difficulty you see I could make that man feel interested in

our plight you see. And with the consent of the rest of the military personnel there inside the compartment he permitted us to enter the military compartment which is reserved specially for the military. Something very unusual. So we were very happy. And we were given a tiny corner inside the compartment.

I can't give you the picture of the compartments that we have in India. Different types of compartments are there but there is one compartment, the long, big compartment accommodating about 125 people or 64 people and there are lavatories you know. Toilets at the either end of the compartment. And there is a small space left you see by the side of the lavatory. There that is also given [inaudible] berth there, a seat there. So just that little bit was given to us. Although the whole compartment was not full with passengers. It was half full. But in order that they. We being the non-military people you see, passengers, we were just kept away from the military. It was good of them to have given us this separate little seat. We were very happy because Baba could be accommodated comfortably there and we remained seated on the floor of the compartment.

The train started and we of course were very grateful to the people there. At least the Baba people were grateful to the military people that accommodated us. And grateful more so because we felt that Baba was comfortable inside the compartment. The train stopped at the next junction. And there was a great rush of the military people there you see wanting to get inside the train. They were commissioned to go to a certain place you see. So they had to catch the train. So they were there. So finding that compartment half full, the rest of the train was full you see. That was the only compartment where they could accommodate themselves. So they

rushed there you see. But the people, the passengers inside, the military passengers inside wouldn't permit them to get in there. Because the compartment would be overcrowded and they wanted some rest while traveling.

So there was that tussle. Whether to permit the rest of them or not to permit. But the crowd outside was so great that it prevailed upon those that were inside you see and forced their way inside. And when they entered you see then there was a lot of row there and a lot of verbal exchanges and abuses and it started into a fight you see. They were carrying their guns you see. With the butt end of the guns they were. There was some sort of confusion there. They lost all their equanimity and there was a free fight there. The train already started and Baba. Had Baba not been there, there would have been that mutiny so to say. Among themselves they would have killed people you see. But very rare occasions we find Baba coming up as the great rescuer so to say. So all of a sudden what do we find? Baba had that day, because it was summer or something like that had taken out his coat and all that and He was in that sadra posture. You know that sadra? What do you call that plain, thin, white robe. We call it sadra. So He was wearing that sadra there and nothing on His body. The usual. The informal dress that we find Baba in. And He stood up on the seat there you see. And He clapped. His clap was so authoritative you see it drew the attention of the people it seemed. In that melee you see, that great fight that was going on there. Hand to hand fight but His clapping I don't know how it was but I still remember that.

All of them you see just stood there as they were with their hands up about to hit the other you see. And I of course then interpreted His gestures there.

People there inside the compartment didn't feel that Baba was silent you see. Somehow or other. So the gestures that were interpreted were such that Baba told them that, "You must stop fighting immediately. It doesn't behove army personnel to fight amongst themselves. How will they be able to discharge their duty towards their country if they were to fight among themselves? It doesn't behove them to raise arms over their own brethren." So they stopped fighting you see. They came back to their senses. "After all we are all travellers, we are co-travellers," Baba says. "We have to go to our own destinations. But en route we become brothers and little time that we have en route we can show our finer feelings and accommodate one another with great love and regard for the discomfort of others. Why can't we bear with little discomfort and help others?" So they just looked at Baba you see. They were taken completely by surprise you see. And then Baba says, "Take your seats. Try to settle yourselves down and in no time you'll feel that all of you'll have got accommodation here inside the compartment."

So they tried to settle themselves down and Baba then immediately said that, "Now at the next junction there will be a great tea party in honour of all our brothers who are going to fight for our country." And they felt so happy. They cheered Baba you see and they settled down. And Baba, somebody, some Baba lover en route you see while, during our travels had given tins full of sweets. So instead of carrying them back home Baba said we'll distribute this at the next junction and we called for tea. Some 125 cups of tea were called you see and Baba distributed with His own hands. Each one was served with His own hands. And a handful of sweets to each one. And they had a merry time and then they joked and they laughed. They completely

forgot about the fight you see. Completely forgot about the fight. And when they got down at the destination, oh they were so proud you see and they shouted [foreign], 'Hind Mata Ki Jai' and 'Jai Hind' and all that you see. And they went. They got down happily and Baba saved a very critical situation there in one of our travels.

There's another story. It's a story soon after the war you see. The situations did not improve in railway transport. What happened is soon after war there was that movement in India for independence. Everywhere in India you see there were uprisings and clamour and cry for independence. One good day independence was granted by the Britishers. And then there was another movement you see. Exchange of population between India and Pakistan. And in that exchange there was massacre. Where millions of people were killed on either side. Railway tracks lined up with corpses you see. And trains were running now to remove the corpses. To their destinations or to the places, respective places you see. There were no military personnel but there were corpses and their relatives. The trains were full with that. Even in those days you see Baba never stopped travelling. He continued His travels. And we travelled and travelled in spite of great dangers you see to our bodies at the risk of our lives, Baba travelled. And Baba being in our midst we had nothing to fear. Not that we had risked our lives but then what was there you see? After all what's life you see? When Baba was with us after all what is life and what is death? Nothing. It was just the same thing to us. So we were travelling.

Once it so happened. Another thing is those were the days when nobody was respected. Not even the authorities were respected here in India. Nobody cared

for the other. Might is right there's no doubt. Even a ruffian you see, a wanderer or a scoundrel who had some strength, he superseded over the authorities that were there you see. Crowds overwhelmed the police forces sometimes. They snatched away the guns and all that. There was complete chaos here and the world knows about it. There's nothing to be hidden from the world. Those were the days when nobody respected the other. Those were the days when respect, whatever little semblance of respect was was for a corpse.

So, one day we were travelling. And we had a small compartment to ourselves. It is always called servants compartment attached to first and second class officers who travelled in trains. But there was no such category of first and second class officers at that time. The whole, all the compartments of the train you see, carriages whether they be first class or third class or second class or inter class. There was another interclass also. Between the second and the third there was an interclass. And then the lowest was the servants class. And the servants class was a tiny little chip of a compartment. A space that was given you see. Just one bench there. So that the servants could travel with their masters in the adjoining compartment. Serve them and again relax and rest in the night in that servants compartment and they could be handy, at the beck and call of the master from the window you know. That's called the servants compartment. Now you follow what it means.

So somehow or other through great difficulty and coaxing and all that the tricks that we had to play. We could secure. It was a very long journey and we could secure that compartment and it was just adjoining the engine itself you see. That whole carriage with the servant

compartment next to the engine. So naturally when the train entered the platform, the engine would be far away from the platform so we were always on the safe side you see in that compartment. From the crowd of the people and the rush and the riot that prevailed. People were being killed there inside, while sitting inside the compartment. If we are passing through a State or through a place where Mohammedans predominated they would just come in a crowd there and just try to search. Not the pockets, not their wealth, not the riches. Whether you are a Mohammedan or a Hindu. If the Mohammedans search you and find you to be a Hindu finished, you are no more. If the Hindus search and find the people to be Mohammedans finished. They're all. So those were the days when we were right in the midst of all that riot and chaos and confusion in the Country. So we were in that compartment there. Quite happy and safe for some time.

But as the carriages got filled in, stations after stations, junctions after junctions with corpses and their relatives. Corpses and relatives and the more the corpses the more the relatives, the greater the fury you see because they see all this. You see. And therefore the subjects, the citizens, through which the trains passed you see they couldn't tolerate this you see. And therefore they were just mad. They did any act. Committed any act. Rapes, murders, killings, beating, thrashing anything they wanted to do. Well we were there. As the train compartments got filled in gradually what we found that the people collected. Coming towards the compartments and carriages near the engine you see, stages after stages. So every time when there would be a stoppage you see at a junction or a station we would feel frightened you see. Because now maybe the next moment our compartment will

be over crowded that's all. So Baba always wanted us to be on the watch and look out. What's the position? Without getting out of the compartment of the train. So we said, 'Baba now this is the end of it. People will come now. They are coming towards us now.' So Baba immediately told us, 'Fetch a white sheet.' You know white sheet, the bedsheet? And then immediately told us to cover His whole body and then Baba posed Himself as a corpse and laid down on the seat. Without any motion or stir.

So Baba asked us for a sheet you see and He covered His whole body and remained stationery. And posed as if He were a corpse lying there. And we were made to sit still and quiet with solemn expressions on our faces. And as expected the crowd approached our compartment and just looked through the window. And found us there. Taking us to be sad at heart with a corpse by our side, they just wouldn't venture to get inside. Although it was a very large crowd but on the other hand you see instead of trying to thrust themselves inside they just folded their hands you see. The palms in a salutation, a humble salutation and then they just turned their backs and they didn't want us to be disturbed and they left us. The train after sometime started and then of course Baba threw away the sheet and got up on the seat and sat down and was very pleased to have helped us you see in our plight. Baba said, 'This helped eh.' He gestured in that way. I said, 'Yes Baba, it did help.'

So every time there would be a junction or a big station you see He would pose himself to be a corpse and saved us from all sorts of troubles you see and dangers on that journey. Till we reached our destination. He brought us safe. How could Baba re-act to all these things? To all the different aspects in life at a certain

time. He doesn't re-act to these things because it's His own making. His own experience. He's fighting with the other you see. How can He re-act you see? That's nothing. The re-actions that you see, that we see you see amongst ourselves. His reacting on a particular situation is nothing but our own experience. How we react. It's His reaction. Because for Him there is nothing to re-act. He just takes it in His stride as if nothing happens around Him. But then at certain, on certain occasions as you find He just rescues us so to say. He has a hand, helping hand you see. Like a babe you see just gets stranded. A person who is grown up, he can cross the stream. Cross, what do you call that little streak of water? What do you call it you see? A pool so to say that comes in your way.

PILGRIM 1: A gutter.

ERUCH: Yeah, gutter. Whereas a baby just stands. So what does the grown up do? He just lifts the body of the babe you see and just puts it on the other side, that's all. He's unmindful of it. What has that gutter to do you see? You can take a stride over it and walk, go ahead. It's like that. You follow? The whole situation, the world conditions are like that. It's for Him, what is it. It's His creation, it's His. It's a great gain that's all. To us you see it appears to be, oh there's a war, oh there are these riots, these killings that are happening. Nothing of the sort. 'Nothing happens', Baba says. And He says, 'If ever anything has happened or happens it's but by His will.' First of all He says, 'Nothing ever happens. If ever anything happens it's but by, because of His will.' He's everything. That's the thing. We lose track of that little understanding that He gives us you see that He is everything. First of all He has given this understanding you see that He is in everything. You see. I am not Baba but

Baba is in me. But who am I? Then the question is He's everything. Because I am nothing [general laughter]. You follow?

PILGRIM 1: Yeah.

ERUCH: It's like that. But if I were to. If Baba were to say that I Am everything then how can Baba be everything, how can He be the chair and how can he be the earth and how can He be this and how can He be that you see. So first He begins with this little understanding that He says, 'I Am in everything.' And then He gives us a better understanding, a greater understanding and He says, 'I Am everything'. And then there is a further greater understanding that absolutely there is nothing but Me. He says, 'I Am the only one. There is neither everything nor nothing.' So that's the thing.