
WHO IS MEHER BABA

Eruch Jessawala, Mani S. Irani

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ERUCH: 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 nonmilitary 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 behoove 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 behoove 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 interclass. 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 stationary. 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. Their 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 some time 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 react to all these things? To all the different aspects in life at a certain time. He doesn't react to these things because it's His own making. His own experience. He's fighting with the other you see. How can He react you see? That's nothing. The reactions 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 react. 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. [short gap in tape] 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.

MANI: You want me to say it?

ERUCH: Say it.

MANI: So this is the story of how when you come to Baba, He wants you to leave your buffalo behind. Not to bring your buffalo with you when you come to Baba. When we were in Satara and Baba was in seclusion in that separate bungalow and He wanted. He wanted a mast to be brought from Dehradun. The same mast who was here in Meherazad quite some time ago. Nilkanth Wala mast, [foreign] nahi Eruch?

ERUCH: Yes.

MANI: Nilkanth Wala mast. The one whom I've mentioned in one of the Family Letters. He used to say the man-made world must end and God-made world will begin. Something like that. And he was in Meherazad for some time and Baba used to bathe him and all. Anyway he was originally he was, his place was in Dehradun, north India which is near Delhi. So at that time when we were in Satara Baba wanted that mast brought to him. So the person who could do that was Shatrugan Kumar in Dehradun. So either Eruch wrote to him at Baba's direction or sent a telegram, I don't know. But he was to bring that mast Nilkanth Wala to Baba. But there were conditions put. Only if he was free from his work and without neglecting his responsibilities and duties or this and that. A lot of, a lot of conditions were put. Because Baba knew that Kumar would want to come at any cost just to. This was one of the best excuses here to bring the mast to be with Baba. And at the same time that is what Baba wanted the mast and he would do anything just to come with the mast and bring him.

But this string, this circle of conditions were around him. Otherwise he was to send with someone who could equally

meet the conditions. So first of all Kumar. So telegrams and letters went back and forth. Telegrams went back and forth and Kumar did his best to persuade the mast to come. Every day he would go morning, afternoon, evening but the mast somehow just kept saying no, no, no he wasn't coming, no and he wouldn't budge from there. Now that mast was almost totally naked. And so at last when Kumar persuaded him to come and the telegram came back - he's ready to come. So Kumar said, "Now who to send him with? Who to send the mast with?" So Kumar told his. That this predicament was being discussed at home and his mother, a very old woman but a fine dynamic personality and a brave person. Made brave by many adversities in her life, in her younger days, and who loves. She's still living. Who loves Baba just as deeply. She upped and said, "I'll take the mast to Satara."

Now Satara is how far from Dehradun Eruch?

ERUCH: About 1000 miles.

MANI: 1000 miles.

ERUCH: 1200 miles.

MANI: By train you understand? Now she, this old woman you would think that if she were to travel from Dehradun to Satara you would have to give a companion with her to look after her and see that she reaches safe. You wouldn't send an old woman like that from. But she said, "I'll take the mast." Alright. So then he went and got the mast, Kumar. And Kumar said he, the mast got up and put on his suit and boot which meant a piece of a towel. Just a towel you know that he just. He got up and wrapped it around his waist, tucked,

said, "I'm ready." So they were to come by train and they were to come straight in that through train to Bombay and then Baidul and Aloba were to meet the mast and Mataji. Mataji means mother, the old woman. They were to meet the mast and Mataji at Bombay and then they had prepared everything, arranged from there and they would bring them to Satara.

Now as they were leaving. As everything was about ready and Mataji had to leave home, she turns around and says, "Beta", means son. "Remember now, feed the buffaloes from this grain." You see Kumar and his family lived in the countryside. A little bit outside of Dehradun, Manjri Mafi. They have fields, they have buffaloes, hens, goats you know. Like a little sort of a farm themselves. So the women themselves used to tend these things as well as Kumar in his way. But Mataji obviously supervised all these things and Kumar's wife used to actually, personally milk the cows and buffaloes, see to the hens and all that sort of thing. Hard work. So as she was leaving, Mataji tells Kumar. Now remember all the instructions she's given about the animals and remember to feed the buffalo 3 times a day from that grain and remember the buffalo would need this and the buffalo this and Kumar just looked at her and said, "Mother, don't go." She said, "Why? I'm quite ready." He says, "Don't go. Because Baba's one condition was that come if you are absolutely free in your mind," You know. "And you are taking your buffaloes and hens and goats with you. [Eruch laughs].

Because you are thinking of them all the time isn't it? And you are supposed only to take the mast with you. So if you can't leave your buffaloes behind, mother don't go." And she said. She immediately

understood and she said, "No. I'm going. And I don't care what happens to the buffaloes. You can starve it and you can throw it out. Throw out the goats. You can do what you like, I'm not taking any of them with me in my thoughts. I'm just going to Baba and take the mast with me."

And she did. And she had such an adventurous journey because first of all you see even on the station platform when the mast would walk. He would just take a few strides, free and graceful strides you see. And here was the little old lady just hobbling and running after him and saying, "Now don't go so fast. Now, now, now don't go so fast. Now remember I'm coming, I'm coming. Don't go so fast." And he would stop. Just long enough for her to make up. Without turning around. And then again those slow and easy strides which were pretty fast.

Now when they were in the train as you know, third class compartment. Eruch has told you often enough of these travels and what it is like in India and travelling 3rd class. So these two seats were reserved for two people. Now she wanted to make the mast really comfortable. So he could sit with his feet up on the seat. So she gave up her own seat so he could sit in the two peoples' seat and she sat herself down on the floor of the compartment between the seats you see. But still it was crowded and the other people started reproaching her and said, "What is this?" They kept telling her, calling him her son. "Here old woman, why don't you make your son sit up properly. What's the matter? Here we are so crowded we barely have a seat and he's sprawling on the seat." And she'd say, "Look, if his feet are up and he's sprawling, he's sprawling on my seat, which I have paid for. Which you haven't. Your seat is

not being taken by any of us. I am sitting not on a seat but on the floor. So you leave my son alone." And then this mast used to like having talcum powder put on him. So Kumar, so that she could manage the mast said, "Here mother, take this box of talcum powder and anytime you find that you know you want to hold him down or he's having other plans or wanting to walk out of the compartment or anything like that just, just you know. He's very happy. Keep him happy with this talcum powder." So every now and then she'd get up and put some talcum powder on his hair and he would laugh [general laughter].

Now another thing is because of that towel, only the towel that was wrapped around him you see. The towel didn't seem enough for other passengers and they thought that, you know it wasn't decent. So they tell him, "What's the matter? Why don't you dress him properly?" And she would say, "Look, your parts are covered aren't they?" "Yes, of course." "Alright then, you worry about your own self. You don't have to worry about him. I'll take care of him." And things like that. And then they thought [general laughter] that she put talcum powder on him you know to make him look like a sadhu or something so she could get more money out of people for saying you know, he's a sadhu. They had heard so much about so many of these bogus people going around. This wasn't even real ashes. This was talcum powder which was. And at a station, at one station the mast got down and Mataji followed him of course immediately, and he wanted to take a bath. And on these Indian station platforms there is this big tap and we often see men sit under it and have a bath. Wash themselves.

So he wanted a bath. So he sat under that tap. She opened that tap and she was helping him bathe. One eye on the train. What happens if the train goes away? You know, Baba, Baba, Baba. And another, a person on the platform comes over and helps her bathe the mast. And she couldn't believe it. And then when they got onto the train afterwards, just as soon as they got on, the train started.

Alright, that was fine. She got him oranges now and then. She asked anything, he would say, "No." If he liked he'd say, "Yes." Or he'd take something, give it back to her with a smile. He was quite indulgent. Like she was the child and you know he. So when they got down to Bombay, believe it or not, Baidul and Aloba, I mean people who had travelled. Baidul has found masts for Him everywhere. Aloba who's so practical and everything. They just missed, missed the mast and Mataji. They couldn't find them. And poor Mataji, one eye on the mast saying, "Please, please don't walk so fast. Now wait a minute, now wait a minute I'm coming over." And again he'd stop and again she'd make up this long, long platform and then going over the bridge. And then she went to all these taxis thinking that they were in one of those taxis. And they went the other side looking for them. Whatever happened, they missed each other. And then she found out which train was going to Pune. Because from Pune then they have to catch the bus to Satara. And they said just on the opposite side of the platform. So she and the mast. She said, "Baba, Baba come on, come on now let's go." Ah the mast just again walked over with her. They went over the bridge. They just got into that other train and they got to Pune.

Now you see she was going to be escorted after Bombay. But now she was completely on her own. This old woman with a mast on her hand, who are unpredictable to say the least. So then she got there, she got him down at Pune. Somehow she found out about the buses. She got on the bus with the mast, this old woman. And came over to Satara. Fine. Nobody at Satara to meet them. Because they had gone to Bombay to meet them.

Now at Satara they get down and then she says to him, "Alright, alright, now let's go. We'll you know. Come along, come along." So the mast and Mataji walk. She has not the least idea where the bungalow is, where, which part of Satara Baba is in. So she says she'll just keep walking. Now as she was keeping walking, Satara. Right. As she was keeping walking with the mast they came to a bifurcation in the road. It turned to the. One road turned to the right and one road turned to the left in complete opposite direction. There she got stuck. And she wondered, now which to take? Shall we turn to the right or shall we turn to the left? Just not knowing any of the roads or anything. So as she stood there the mast for the first time, he doesn't talk, he just picks up his hand and points to the left. You know showing her that this is the way. So she took the left. Left turn. And sure enough in a little while she came to the bungalow because there the mandali were outside and, "Oh" And they say, "But where is Baidul? Where is Aloba?" They didn't know a thing.

Baba was very happy to see the mast [general laughter]. And then Baba sent Mataji over to the women's bungalow. And she was a joy. She stayed with us for a few days. So she delivered the goods and left her buffaloes behind. That's why

everything went well. The buffaloes would have come so much in the way. She probably wouldn't have made it to Satara [Mani laughs]. The Nilkanth Wala mast. And who did Baba send the mast back with, Eruch?

ERUCH: Baidul.

MANI: With Baidul. So Baidul took the mast back to Dehradun.

ERUCH: And when we first spotted this mast it was in the. At the foothills of Nilkanth. Mount Nilkanth.

MANI: Aah.

ERUCH: So one of the Himalayan ranges. There is a thick forest and infested with wild elephants. And we got, we sensed somehow that there is somebody there right in the midst of a forest there living all alone. And sure enough, what a beautiful spot this mast had selected. There was a sort of a you know, water cascading over a cliff. Into a sort of a fall. And between the cliff and the sheet of water there was a niche there you see in the mountain range. And like a natural bed so to say, of stone. And he was lying all naked there. And the water falling over there.

And we wouldn't have traced him. We wouldn't have found him out. But how did we find out? He was behind the curtain you see, water curtain. He used to carry a stick with him. This thick little branch you see of a tree. All the time he would be just doing like this you know. Tapping [Eruch makes a tapping sound with his hand]. Some rhythm you see. We wondered, we stopped there you see and we admired the waterfall and all that. And we started hearing this noise. So we thought that

what's this? There are wild elephants all around but what's this? There is. This is the noise from some human being you see. How, where could he be? And he was spotted behind that sheet of water cascading over the cliff.

MANI: Was Baba with you?

ERUCH: Baba was with us there. We went right into the midst of that forest and that's the reason why this mast is called Neelkanth Wala. You see, because we got him right from the Nilkanth mountains you see.

PILGRIM 2: Did somebody direct you into the mountains, in the forest?

ERUCH: We had heard that there is somebody living there all alone, on his own. Having left the whole world. And then we traced him and got him there. Long back we had traced him. We used to contact him very often.

MANI: [Foreign] Yeh jara Chatti Baba jaisa slight lagta tha nahi? [He looked a bit like Chatti Baba right?]

ERUCH: Ah [foreign] nahi, yes. He was of a 6th plane.

MANI: No I mean in looks.

ERUCH: Yes. No but Chatti Baba was very sturdy. Very regal appearance. Dignified, yeah. [crosstalk]

MANI: But that is why he was known Neelkanth Wala. I did not know that.

ERUCH: Yeah.

MANI: But then how did you get him out of the waterfall?

ERUCH: Then we went there behind that curtain and all that.

MANI: [foreign] Acha.

ERUCH: We could hear. The place was dry you see the water used to fall like that.

MANI: Like that. So behind that.

ERUCH: Behind that it was a curtain there. A natural wall for him so to say [Eruch laughs].

MANI: But he can't get away from the God-Man even there [Mani laughs].

ERUCH: Then we went once again after some months back to the same spot and we were disappointed. We thought that we would again find him. But then what happened, all of a sudden after many years he left that seclusion and went and stayed in one of the inns there in Haridwar itself.

MANI: Oh ho ho the busiest.

ERUCH: The busiest place there. It's a place of pilgrimage, Haridwar and Rishikesh. Close together, twin cities. But then we heard that he's there. So we went there and then all the time our contacts were there. But first contacts were in the forest. Beautiful spot but men dreaded to go there because of the wild elephants. And we were there with the God-Man [Eruch laughs]. Walking, roaming about there. Finding out where that lost man is you see in the forest. [general laughter]

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] (the race-goers). 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 mast. 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 [greeting newcomer]

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 the 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, 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 rich 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 the 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 we 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 won'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 Wayfarers."

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 an 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 wiremen 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 [inaudible].

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 from the bag. What do

you call the, what do you call these counters you see and showcases. They are all given freedom here in India. They do anything. They go to any restaurant or anything. They go there, sit there and take anything they want. Even money from the, what do you call, counters. Nobody objects to these things.

So in order to create that atmosphere of the town and city life that they are used to, Baba created restaurants there. Tea stalls, paan shops and all that for them.

MANI: All for them [Mani laughs]

ERUCH: All free you see. Yeah, yeah.

MANI: [inaudible][continues laughing].

ERUCH: And to entertain them special musicians were called to play. Sing songs and play harmonium and sitar and tabla. And then they will just be so happy in that atmosphere. And the Lord of Lords sitting there you see.

So there was one mast there who would just roll on the ground on the floor. He would get so much of the masti of the singing that he would just roll on the ground and on the floor. Earth you see there. And then he would eat a lot of paan. So then he would even clap you see. He wouldn't want to spit the paan on the floor. But then he would want me to hold my hands there to take his sputum you see. And there he would just spit out all that you see. And the we had to carry it and throw it out there, wash our hands and come back again.

So such are the things you see. We had to feed them. Treat them like babes. But they were the intellectual giants, you may call

them. Well where their heart was concerned, where their knowledge of God was concerned.

PILGRIM 2: Did the Mandali ever get jealous of the masts? I mean they received all of this attention from Baba?

ERUCH: [laughing] No, no.