
DF-002A: THE EARLY DAYS WITH BABA

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Mehera's Veranda, Meherazad, India

March 6, 1976

45:16

DAVID FENSTER: No I combed my hair.

MEHERA: Ah tie it like that.

DF: And combed it straight back.

MEHERA: Yes.

DF: So it became much darker.

MEHERA: Ah yes it became darker right. But you did act very, very well. Very. Just right [Mehera laughs].

So this was I want to tell you is this that you know 1968 December. Month of December it was in 11th, 12th and 13th I think it was 3 days. No I think it was 3 days or maybe it's 12th and 13th of December. Baba must be feeling some very weak and I don't know what, how? Baba never said what He felt like you know. That time He told me to shave Him. That 2 days I shaved I remember. Yes and remember how Baba did it. How Baba would hold it so I would do it very carefully you know. That and would you believe He also told me to wash His face.

DF: At that time?

MEHERA: But I did not know that Baba's feeling weak or anything. I said just took His fancy. He does not feel like doing it so [inaudible]. So I was too happy to wash His face. Took a little soap and [inaudible]. Just for 2 days it must be 12th and 13th.

And then in the afternoon while having His lunch you know it was now. That was in the morning. Shaving and washing face. Then in the afternoon when Baba came in He had His. He was having His lunch I think and He left half the lunch eaten and left it and He said He wants to go to the bedroom. And so He came to the bed and sit on the bed and we all girls left our food and we came near Baba. Baba said, "Don't worry I'm just want to rest." Like that. He did so that He did not let us feel or know that He was not in good health or something like that. So quietly He. How do you say? What would you call?

DF: He bared that.

MEHERA: I don't know the English word.

DF: He didn't complain.

MEHERA: No.

DF: You know when Baba was young and moving about and everything He was so beautiful.

MEHERA: Yeah Baba was.

DF: At that time did you also help Him do all that washing up?

MEHERA: Yes.

DF: We know He told you to be His orderly once.

MEHERA: Yes. Baba that time I used to wash His clothes and all that. Keep His clothes and what do you call? Sadra smooth because after washing it comes all like that you know. Ordinary muslin what do you call the sadra material is become wrinkle like that. You must with a damp this thing hand you know straighten it out and then fold it very nicely. The sadra is very big [Mehera laughs] I had to do it. And then fold it very well and with a fold put under a bit of weight under the towel or other things and then press down and then Baba had it. When the Sadra is to be used it is not so very what do you call it? Wrinkled or what would you call it?

DF: Starchy?

MEHERA: It's straight like ironed. This is what I want to tell you. And so on. So that time. Yes in those days when we were first with Baba, Baba used to wear short white pants you know that [inaudible]. Baba's legs were bare like this. Very slim and very lovely strong legs He had. Very slim but very strong legs.

DF: Then you know even when you were travelling with Baba going so many places would you also keep to that routine? In the morning you would be the first to come in and?

MEHERA: No, no not to travelling.

DF: That was different.

MEHERA: Travelling was different.

DF: Only after when you came to Meherazad then the routine was [inaudible].

MEHERA: Yes.

DF: But travelling with Baba must have been nice also.

MEHERA: In Meherabad Baba. When the mandali left the room then I and Mani together we used to go in. And then Khorshed would come in and then ask what breakfast and so they would prepare. Naja and Khorshed. Naja was ill that time when we first came to live on Meherabad Hill with Baba Naja was not well from Nasik. She got ill so most of the things I and Khorshed would be doing. Mani helping. So we had to cook Baba's food as well as our food. And that time we washed. You know what do you call it? With ashes we washed and cleaned things. Baba's basin, the mug and jug and other things. To clean those things Baba's 3 things. All that done then I mean that we wouldn't do at once. After Baba had breakfast we had breakfast. Baba was seated talk a little. Tell us what He has to say and then Baba will go down the hill. In Meherabad when we first came to stay on the hill was 1923. 1933 I think. End of 1933.

DF: After Nasik.

MEHERA: Hmm after Nasik. After our stay in Nasik. Nasik stay was 5 years we were there. But Baba had this plan because when we were staying up you know the Prem Ashram and then we went to Toka with them. Baba took Prem Ashram boys with Him to Toka. After this phase of Prem Ashram life what would you call it? Period was over then Baba came down. Otherwise He didn't used to come down the Prem Ashram time. But when that period was work was finished then Baba would come that little. You know rickshaw?

DF: Yes.

MEHERA: Yeah in that. We've got that photo you've seen it. In that Baba used to come sometimes down. The Prem Ashram boys loved to pull it. Or sometimes mandali I don't know. Anyway they all were there together. Because we were not near. We were from far we could see. So what I want to say that Prem Ashram children also and Baba and there were Baba lovers that time. There were many Baba lovers means from Karachi there was Pilamai and there's Khorshed. Then there was this Chaggan with his wife. There was Gadekar with his wife. Then this Irani what do you call? Elderly person very elderly. Not very elderly he was quite robust. He, his wife and 3 children. And all these were there. And so. And we were separate. They were separate in separate house. Then there was a road. Across the road this side there were 2 nice little rooms and there my mother, myself, Khorshed and Naja we stayed there and then cooked for ourselves. And when Baba used to come down the hill then we cooked for Baba. Baba ate at our place.

And then after that Prem Ashram. You know first few months Baba used to come and go and arrange for Prem Ashram and all this talk was going on. Baba would be with the mandali. Then to eat He would come over. Like that you know what I want to say? Then when Prem Ashram was open then Baba was staying with the Prem Ashram boys on the hill. And women were not allowed there. I mean we were not to go there. Adi's mother Gulmai sometimes went. And my sister was allowed once in a while only. Otherwise no women was allowed. Anyway then we girls used to very restless, "Baba's too busy with the Prem Ashram boys." And we used to hear

stories of how the Prem Ashram boys loved Baba and all that. We said, "My, Baba's going to forget us soon." So we used to send for flowers you know and then we used to make garlands and in the morning we send garlands with the Kaikhushru means Khorshed's father was there. He was very nice person. He took the flowers with him and he would put. And Baba was in seclusion in the Samadhi room.

DF: Yes.

MEHERA: And that Samadhi room was not so well built as it is now. It was temporary. All closed but temporary building it was something like that. And Baba. But the thing was there. What do you call? [Crosstalk] Huh. That pit would you call it??

DF: The crypt.

MEHERA: Crypt. That was there and Baba used to sleep in there in the night. Can you imagine that? Yes. And Baba. Seclusion means He did not step out of this room. And fast. And doing work all the time. And on silence. So how much that is strain on. When you've taken physical body. When you're in physical. That strain tells on one. But Baba did His work. Did not step out and the Prem Ashram boys came near the window and Baba would give them what do you call? Discourse you may call it?

DF: Yeah.

MEHERA: You know explanation of spiritual things. Don't you want to sit down?

PILGRIM : No I've been sitting so long I'd rather stand thank you.

MEHERA: You'd rather walk then [Mehera laughs]. Okay. No I never like to stand you know. I get a backache also. What I want to say is this. Then Baba would teach the boys all spiritual. Give them spiritual ideas also and then they were taught class. What do you call it?

DF: Yes regular classes.

MEHERA: Lessons regular also and then. How long Baba had the boys with Him I don't know. There was some atmosphere. That the boys were. Loved Baba very dearly and there was a time that Baba after a certain part of His seclusion and work and what do you call it? Fast. Baba was on fast also. He had told me to send Him two cups of coffee in the flask and that after. And that when that period was over then after how many days that I don't know. Padri would know. Then Baba would step after one month or I don't know that. Baba would step out of the thing and the Prem Ashram boys all would cling to Baba, embrace Him and then you know that [crosstalk]. Baba had loved their hearts with His love.

DF: Did you actually ever see Baba with the boys?

MEHERA: No. No. Not. I mean. Baba. Wait I'll tell you. You know one day Baba after certain part of His work was over. Certain period. The children. Then one day Baba called us women all to come and see the Prem Ashram. That I remember. Then Baba showed us the first room since He had the children. Each one had their little trunk at the head and their little beddings and all that and [Mehera laughs] where they do their lessons and all. Temporary little huts were put up you know. Huts

means little rooms. Temporary rooms. And Baba. That was Prem Ashram on the Hill.

And then when Baba went to Toka. With Toka then in the big bus with Baba we all women and all that family you know how many we could get in the bus we were with Baba in the bus. The Prem Ashram boys and the men all went separate. We came in the bus. And Toka is the other side of the river. There's a nice big river and in a boat we had to go. How to say? Rowing? We didn't row other people did men. And we went the other side. Crossed the other side and then. On the banks there were a temple or two. And there were steps. Long steps coming to the river that is very nicely. And then we go in where there are fields you go inside. There this place was hired or engaged I don't know all these details. But our little what do you call them rooms and huts were all temporary with tin shed and tatta [foreign]. You know tatta? That. Big room for us girls and all. Another room. Then a Kitchen. Everything temporary. And the whole place was surrounded like this wall with tatta. There we were inside private so we were free running and shouting at each other and working fast and all that [Mehera laughs].

Oh yes in the night time we had to. You know. Can you imagine maybe over 100 peoples' chapatis to be made. So you can imagine if somebody eats three chapatis then how many? More than 300, 400 chapatis. So all that dough. The kneading of the flour how can you do it in the morning? In the morning you have to start doing the chapatis. They have to be ready by so and so time you know. So many girls that time as I told you all these family was there. These young ones also there. They all made. We had fire place all in a row like that and each one near the fireplace.

And the tin roof getting hot and hot and the fire flame. What do you call flame and this smoke. So poor things their eyes are running. They getting all red and hot and perspiring, perspiring but they are doing the chapatis. It was so that I can't express to you in a better way. But this is how. But chapatis. Dough, flour? What do you call it?

Wheat flour has to be kneaded very well. They can't do that in the morning because many other things to be done. Before going to bed in the night at 9 'o clock they would all be seated outside. It was a good when it was moonlight otherwise little hurricane lanterns hung here put there. And by the hurricane lantern they had to take. Measure out the flour. Wheat flour, sieve it and the each one had their round tray. I don't know what you call them. We call them thali or [inaudible][foreign]. And each one like that all seated around. Each one doing little bit of dough. So all together that dough is enough for so many people. Because one person can't knead dough that is to be make 300 chapatis I don't know how many. You see. So each one little, little, little was distributed and had to be kneaded very well with little grease, a little water like that. With a little salt in it. And that all dough in put away in the night so in the morning its well.

DF: Risen.

MEHERA: Risen and very nice light chapatis. So every night the dough and also one lot of girls would be doing the vegetables. Cutting the vegetables. So spinach or cabbage or things that can be cut up in the machine. There was a machine. And they were cutting it up like that. 2-3 girls doing this. Some girls doing all this kneading the dough. So in the night

all this. Before going to bed this all had to be done for next morning ready to start on the cooking as well as the chapatis fast as you can you know. It was such fun. And then it was not even quarter to eleven this orders from outside. No men could come in but from outside I think they rang the bell and they called out. And there was one person who kept between the gate and inside here you know. Oh they've come. They want Prem Ashram boy's food now. Or they want the chapatis for so and so. Or they want like this. The mandali's food now. Like that you know. By that time. Before that Baba would come in and eat.

DF: He would come inside?

MEHERA: Baba would come inside to eat.

DF: How about in Nasik though you know when Baba would go into seclusion in Panchgani for a month? Or He would go somewhere Kolhapur or Sholapur or someplace. When you were staying in Nasik. That time sometimes Baba would travel or He would go into seclusion?

MEHERA: Yes.

DF: You must have thought, "When is Baba coming back?"

MEHERA: Ah yes. That we used to wait for Baba. But we knew He will come one day. He's so sweet. Eight days now. Now He will come. Maybe after four days or after five days. We just looking forward to His coming. Like that. By the time we are doing our work and all that. But this thing I can tell you. In Nasik. What I want to tell you is this. After Prem Ashram when we came back. Didn't I tell you about this story of the bullocks? I told you. The oxen.

That the six oxen couldn't pull this cart out. Heavy cart out of the. The wheels were stuck in the. What do you call? No. The river. Bank of the river was. The sand was damp. Not sand whatever it is called. And the wheels had gone in and they could not pull out the thing. It was full of lot of luggage. Means trunks and this and that and beddings and I don't know the cooking things. What carriage it was that I forget now. You must ask properly. Heaped. Very, very it was full with so much load so they said of course they must have. Some say it is four pairs of bullock that is eight. But I think there must be three pairs means six bullocks. That's what I think but we have to find out story. But there were six not less than that this is true. They were harnessed to this cart, carriage and they made to pull out. So they would whip and all that which riled the bullock but the six bullock could not pull out that thing. Couldn't move it even. So Baba said, "Take them out, take them out. They're not useful." I mean they can't take them out. So they were unharnessed and taken out. Then Baba pointed to two other bullocks that were tied far away. Baba said, "Harness those two to the cart." So those people who. The bullocks belonged to Patil in what do you call it? Arangaon. Arangaon Patil. That Patil you may know his name. About him because he loved Baba.

So his two bullocks were good bullocks but six bullocks are something different. Two are. Anyway they harnessed the two bullocks and Baba went near the two bullocks you know and gave them one like this, "Come on, come on." Both of them Baba you know. How would you do that? He pat them hard. You know? On the horse how you? Like that both the bullocks like this and said, "Come on," Like that,

"Now drive them." So when the driver drove them they strained, they strained and the carriage they could pull it out. Out of the thing. So everybody was really wondering that six couldn't do it and Baba wanted these two bullocks to pull it out and so they. This carriage only the two bullocks. So [inaudible] they may not call it miracle but.

DF: You watched this?

MEHERA: No we were not there. We women were not all the time where this all went on. They were all men there. And so that. So then we came Toka then we stayed in this nice our old place. Not in the small rooms in the big post office room near the railway line where I showed you. Very lovely room. It was so beautiful that. Not a sign is left. It looks so uninteresting I cannot believe that that building was there. Thick stone walls so thick and strong stone building. Such big windows. Bars iron bars it was in very good condition. And the flooring was like this very good condition. That rough stone what do you call that?

DF: [Inaudible]

MEHERA: Yes that. Not this is polished. But those big flag you know. The flooring was complete perfect. The ceiling was lovely. What do you call? That roof was Mangalore tiles high ceiling with inside we have this asbestos but there was wooden ceiling along like that. It was cool and nice and so beautiful that room was big, lovely room. Twenty people would easily sleep in it you know. Such a lovely room. It is a pity that the government had it pulled down.

DF: We can build it again one day.

MEHERA: Yes it will be nice. It's nice that you said it.

DF: Ted Judon is here and I've given him the drawings.

MEHERA: Wait but you know you want the. What do you call it?

DF: [Inaudible]

MEHERA: No. What would you call it? Permission of the railway people. The government.

DF: [Crosstalk][inaudible]

MEHERA: Very near there. It can be slightly big but not too big because the spot has to be actually the spot where Baba has lived in His room very first when Baba came to Meherabad. The very first night He was under that neem tree that is near the well it seems. Now that Padri will know. But after that stay in Meherabad house was here. And all the time Baba had stayed here, He's eaten there. He has sung qawwali songs there, bhajans. He has had His bath there. He has slept there. He has talked. And there Baba. I combed Baba's hair first there. Many things. Baba gave me this ring in that room there. So beautiful it was and so precious to us that spot. Sentiment reason you know? So when I see that spot I feel so hurt. So how I feel that how Baba must be feeling hurt. Such a beautiful. New. It was in good condition. This is what. It was not in ruins. This is what I want to say. And so we didn't have the heart to bring it down and there it had a big veranda. Twice this breadth you know. Twice this breadth and length like this. A very big lovely veranda too and Baba and the mandali. Means when we first went women with the. My mother had

wanted to stay with Baba. Baba had promised her He would call her. And He did call her first. Though others knew Baba two years before we knew Baba. Gulmai and there were others. Khorshed's mother. They would come and go. She used to go back to Bombay. Gulmai used to go back to her home in Nagar. But my mother was one to leave her home and to stay with Baba actually. And so she had everything sold and all that. Put at Baba's feet and all that. Anyway Baba. How nice it was in right time because Baba needed to this activity. Once Baba settled in Meherabad Baba's activities had to be to open Babajan school. Needed some money to build up this. Temporary houses and all that and all that. The masters and this and that.

Anyway there was another women who also [inaudible] that time to Baba's. You know Baba needed money that's why. And anyway that's a long story. So then this post office from Toka we came to stay in post office. In Toka we were in the tatta house, floor was like that you know outside. You know how like. But it was cow dung and stamped. And cow dung it was clean. You could not stain your clothes and all that. But we had no furniture. Yes on our trunks we would be seated. All day long everybody's working. And if you have to sit down you have to sit on the trunk. No rest in the afternoon. In the night you just open your bedding and sleep. In the morning you roll up your bedding put it [Mehera laughing] in the trunk. It's very funny. We are just like fakirs we were.

DF: But you liked it?

MEHERA: But we liked it of course. Baba came and went and Baba. But what was I saying. And there was Krishna's birthday in

Toka. As I told you that the Prem Ashram boys were to dress Baba as Krishna and photo was to be taken to we said we girls have to celebrate Krishna's birthday and we're going to do it in our way. So we make a cradle for Baba. So actual a real cradle which Baba could sit down. Not just a small cradle with Baba's photo. But big cradle. And so we. From the ceiling. It was good there were strong poles there. We tied the ropes there and with flowers we decorate the thing. But a sheet you know ordinary sheet we took. The four corners we tied with separate ropes like that you know. Made it like a hammock with the sheet. And we were very proud of it. And when Baba had His bath and the new clothes we said, "Baba we made a cradle now you sit in the cradle. We want to rock and sing to you our cradle song." Baba said, "Alright," Baba to make us all happy because we have prepared it like that. So Baba got in. The cradle was that high from the. It was good that was high. It was that high. So Baba somehow got into the cradle and was like that you know. Sit in the cradle like that and so we were very slowly rocking. And Khorshed others who had voice to sing they sang this nice song. And so. But before the song finished you know what happened?

DF: The cradle fell down?

MEHERA: No. The thing tore.

DF: Ripped.

MEHERA: Ripped right where Baba was seated. Under His seat you know when [Mehera laughs] and Baba slowly, slowly started sinking. Baba said, "What is this?" Baba said. Baba oh Baba. Then we all held Him Baba. And Baba didn't fall out. Baba put His leg out and somehow He got out

of the cradle. Baba said, "What to do now?" We said, "Never mind Baba it's okay. It shows that you are. Today is your birthday so," [Mehera laughs]. And so on we had that fun. And so we all. It was nice it happened because then we all laughed a little. Baba always wants the atmosphere to be light. So Baba found it much amusing as well as we did. Anyway we garland Baba and Baba nice white sadra. Open Baba's hair and lovely hair Baba looks so beautiful in sadra and garland and his hair open. Baba looked very beautiful and He. Then He after like some of them kissed Baba's hands. Some bowed to Baba at His feet and so then Baba went out of the grounds to the Prem Ashram children. And there Prem Ashram children they dressed Baba as Krishna. I think it must be that day that Baba's photo is taken in the boat with a crown. Have you seen that photo that tiny snapshot with the Prem Ashram? And then we turned the Prem Ashram then this happened about the oxen I told you about two oxen. And then you know this story also happened in Prem Ashram. Not Prem Ashram in Toka.

When we reached there it was end of summer and June was very warm and all that but by July I think it was month of July these farmers in Toka they did not know much about Baba you know. They were in their own what do you call it? Village. And so but they had ploughed their field you know with grain and all that. But the rains did not come. And so they were now afraid that it will be too late for the crop to grow and. So they were worried and so when they said, "Oh a saint has come to stay here. Let us go and ask Him to give us rain." So they all came with flowers and sweets to Baba. And they bowed at Baba and they were seated near Baba then started talking a little. Then they brought

up the subject. Tell Baba that, "Baba we want rain. Please we have come to ask you for rain." Baba said, "Yes. Never mind. It will rain. Don't worry it will rain." And so they after taking Baba's darshan when they went home the very next day I don't know from where the clouds came but the clouds just come and it started raining by evening.

And so evening was so late that we were all in our room now you know to go to bed. And we were in bed and the rains came very hard. So the ground outside that is the field you know. The open ground like this. And our, what do you call? Our inside floor or ground you may call it is the same level with the outsides. But we were so tired we are all in bed who was going to think about that? But the water when it rained for 5 or 10 minutes very heavy the outside got flooded and all the water started coming inside our room. And here our beddings all in water. Oh we all jumped up. What to do? Keep our beddings dry. So we rolled them up and put on our heads what to do? No put on the trunks. The trunks were in the water also but not quite deep the waters become. So here we were bailing out water you know with pails and tins. What do you call it? Mugs and all that. The girls had put up their skirts and all that running back and forth. Because we want our room to be dry. We want to rest.

By that time Baba came how well Baba knew and from outside Baba's rooms are far away. And He came from there. "Baba", we said, "Baba its water what to do?"

DF: He came in the rains?

MEHERA: Yes. Baba has an umbrella Baba came. And it was all sticky mud outside still Baba came. And then Baba said, "Get a lot of mud from outside and put it in the doorway." You know on the threshold like this, across. So the two girls went out and dug up lot of mud and put it in the doorway like a little wall you know. High as like one foot high. And so the outside water stopped coming in. So inside water then we quickly cleaned out, dried. How do you say?

DF: Bailed it out.

MEHERA: Bailed it out. And then we had to lie down on the damp wet thing you know. And yes.

DF: Baba came Himself.

MEHERA: And then Baba said, "Now you'll rest. Never mind the water won't come in." So then Baba saw that we were comfortable and Baba went back.

DF: All of you were staying in one hut?

MEHERA: Yes in that big room we all stayed. Then there was another kitchen that had another room attached to it and that also some of them slept. Because we were many. We were many. With servants and all that you know. Servants means they all were Baba lovers. These Hindu women from Arangaon village you know. The village to whom Baba had given prasad and so much love Baba had shown them, given them. And some of the women no they were mothers of the Prem Ashram boys some of them there also. So they wanted to be there with us to serve Baba. To clean the utensils all that because there was so much work that we could not cope with it. So much vegetable to clean

to cut to wash. You know Prem Ashram boys and all. So many mandali and we so many women means much, much work to be done. And the bagona means the cooking pot was so big. That big means the top was so big like that. And then Dolly you know Adi's sister she used to stir with her strong hands she. We all helped the other girls helped to do everything but she also would cook.

Then the chapatis and all this. Baba's food was cooked separate. Naja used to cook. I would help Naja too. Little bit of help Naja wanted.

DF: You would eat the same food that would be cooked separately?

MEHERA: No. The same food that was cooked all in a lot. Only Baba's food was separate.

Then Baba had planned when we came back from Toka we stayed in this post office place because from Toka Baba had sent each one. Not sent but told them they can go to their homes you know. And so many left. Karachi people left and many people left. What is? Chaggan and others I don't know who they were. They all left. Gadekar. And we, my mother and we four girls we were in the post office. And Baba was with the Prem Ashram boys stayed up.

DF: So that was quite a change from Toka and all those people just to you few women in the post office? It was quite a change.

MEHERA: No but we were not staying with so many people in post office. Post office when there were many there were these many different families and all that. They were in post office and on the

veranda. The veranda was divided for this family, for that family and like that you know there were many staying together but they were. Had their own corners to themselves and we were staying across the road. The other side there were two little rooms. We were staying separate with my mother and we four girls. And then Soonamasi means Khorshed's mother later on came with her husband. Means Khorshed's father. And there was another temporary little hut built outside our room and there they stayed there.

And so what I want to say is after we came from Toka Baba would stay up on the hill with a few Prem Ashram boys. There were some Prem Ashram boys that were sent I mean went home. And some very few were still there Prem Ashram children. With them Baba and the mandali. A few mandali I don't know who the mandali were anyway they were on the Hill. And you know Baba has His plans. He knows His activities, His work. What time which work you know all that.

So Baba one day. You know He sent word that He would come to eat down the hill and all that so then Baba told us that we'll have to leave for Nasik. Because here nobody will be staying in Meherabad. So if no many people not staying there then just we women staying there Baba didn't like, like that. So we were to stay in Nasik [bell ringing] in Meheru's parents place you know. But their house was separate bungalow and there was a like this different, separate house. In that we stayed in the compound you know. That is how for 5 years we stayed in Nasik. 5 years. And then Baba had plans to go to the West. That's why it was that we stayed in Nasik where we were some of us together you know.

And then Baba used to. That time Baba went to Panchgani and in the cave Baba was in seclusion in the cave. And I don't know it was a fast and all that because I was not there. So I don't know about that. Was He fasting or not? The mandali would know that of course. But that was the first time.

DF: The others to fast or no?

MEHERA: The cave was 1928 I think. When was the cave?

DF: '30. 1930.

MEHERA: 1930? You sure?

DF: Yeah. It was in April.

MEHERA: It must be '29. Are you sure it was '30?

DF: I think so. It was in Panchgani.

MEHERA: I don't know that. They have written the date. Do you know that date?

DF: See it was started to be built at the end of '29 by Arnavaz's.

MEHERA: Husband means Nariman.

DF: Arnavaz's father.

MEHERA: Father. The cave. The cave was especially made?

DF: Yes Baba ordered them to build that cave. And then He said. Well He kept saying, "Will it be ready by May? Will it be ready by May?" And they said, "Yes Baba it will." And then Baba said, "Okay." Until it's ready He went to Bombay. You know to different places until while it was being

prepared. And it was prepared by May 1930. Then He went into seclusion for a month.

MEHERA: Yes must be. I thought it was 1929 but maybe 1930. Because sometimes they have the. If they've written it in the diary then it's right. Otherwise they make a mistake in dates.

DF: Bhau is the one who told me. He's looked through all his diaries. He wrote Baba's biography Bhau.

MEHERA: Must be. So what I was saying is my mother was given silence when we were in Nasik. That was 1929, 28-29. She was on silence by Baba's orders and say 23 years, 22, 23 years something like that. 1952 she died in 1952. And she was given silence 1929 maybe.

DF: All those years she was.

MEHERA: Then she did all the work also.

DF: Did she use gestures also like Baba?

MEHERA: Yes also write. She can use a slate. She was allowed to read and write.

DF: She died in August '52?

MEHERA: 52 yes.

DF: Is it August?

MEHERA: Must be. Because we returned from Cannes. When did we return from Cannes? No not '52. Yes '52. Yes '52 right. August must be August. August-September.

DF: I was just trying to think if I was your mother because I was born in May '52. I was trying to think, "Oh could I be your

mother come back because I was born in May '52."

MEHERA: Yes. No you can't be. Because you know a female takes a form of a male also to experience both like that. This is true. But Baba said in some cases the same. Man takes a form again as a man.

[Crosstalk]. Like Mani. Mani Baba said she was a man last incarnation and next incarnation she's going to be a man also. That much Baba told her. So she has all the making of a.

DF: [Inaudible]. She's the chairman also. Gaining experience.

MEHERA: Yes. And I feel I was always a woman.

DF: Yeah.

MEHERA: Yes. I was very shy as a child and all that. Mani was not [Mehera laughs].

DF: Yes I think I must have been a woman also.

MEHERA: So Baba had made plans to go to the West. That's why He did not want us to stay in Meherabad you see. So now we are in Nasik and others. Pilamai and others all came. It was a nice place because in half of the house was the Westerners staying. Westerners staying in half house. You know Brahmins were staying. The land lady with her family very nice family they were all staying in half of the house and we were staying half of. So we had company. We were not afraid to stay there. We had good, nice people there. Ramjoo's family came to stay in the house that we were staying. And then the house that my

sister was staying we were staying now there that was empty. Vacated because my sister was now staying in another place you see. So we were. And then from there Baba told us that He was going to West. And that is that '31. He told me to see what warm clothes He had to pack them and give it to one of the mandali. So that means I must hand it to Masi or someone and they would give it to the mandali. Because mandali were not come inside the gate. They were. And so that was in '31 Baba went to the West.
Jai Baba.

PILGRIM: Jai Baba.

MEHERA: So Baba did not return from the West soon so one of the Hindu Baba lover you know she was very this thing. I told you no?

DF: Baba's going to forget us?

MEHERA: Yes. See she says, "Baba's taken up so much with the Western people that He's forgotten us. He has not come. He does not think of coming. He promised us He would come in 15 days and He has not returned so you know He's giving away all His love there and nothing will be left for us." This is what she said her language was sounding so funny. I said, "Don't be silly [Mehera laughs]. Of course it can't be like that."

DF: You must have been so happy to see Baba? When He came back.

MEHERA: Baba yes. So sweet Baba. The first time He came with full moustache and all then He told us that, "The Western Baba lovers tell me to trim my moustache. Now who wants my moustache to be trimmed and who does not want? Who

would like that? So put up hands." We all women many of us were sitting there you know. My sister also. Many of were there. So we all have to put our hand. So I put up my hand way to say that Baba's moustache should not be trimmed. Because I had seen Baba you know at first like that with full moustache. Baba then laughed. Baba said that majority or minority whatever Baba says. Baba says, "I have to trim my moustache because it is now fashion in London." Because in the West if you don't trim your moustache they look at you that who is this person? Like more curious. More conspicuous they say. So it's better to be same to mix up with them.

DF: You know when Baba returned from the West also did they show you all those photographs they took of Baba?

MEHERA: Not many first time. Second time.

DF: [Crosstalk] You were very interested to see how people look there.

MEHERA: [Laughing] yes very interested. We didn't mind.

DF: What He was doing?

MEHERA: Yes. [Mehera laughs]. Yes we heard about Western Baba lovers there.

DF: [Crosstalk]. Newspaper reports of Baba going to America.

MEHERA: What?

DF: There were newspaper articles also about Baba.

MEHERA: That I don't remember seeing but photos we did see of Baba lovers you

know Western Baba lovers young. Like Delia, Minta and Kitty. They were all there and so we had seen some of their photos. Then Baba had our photos taken out to show it to them [Mehera laughing]. Baba's so sweet. [crosstalk].

You know the post office room was being I told you pulled down by the British Government. [Inaudible] All these years it was there. It was built by their orders because it was going to be a military camp. Because many Indian soldiers were recruited. It's not known but many Indian soldiers fought for the 1st World War for the British I mean. With the British. But that was after 1914. Yes 1914 and then when Baba came and stayed. Then 1922 I think even then it was still there in that condition. Then Baba used it for so many years it's still there. And 1931-32 Baba went to West still there. But when they got orders to have it pulled down [inaudible].

DF: It was before Baba's [inaudible].

MEHERA: 38. It was '38.

DF: Must have been.

MEHERA: So that time so when it was ordered to be pulled down Baba's [inaudible] tell them not to have it pulled down.

DF: Ah but still.

MEHERA: Baba sent word. But they said, "If you all don't do it we'll come and pull it down." So that can't be because they would be.

DF: Make a mess.

MEHERA: Be very careless. They will break the Mangalore tiles and you know. Their people they don't care what how the things are treated. So it was so sad we had to pull it down ourselves. To save the material. And then I was very this thing hurt. Because so sacred to us that place. Then I asked and asked. It was here. After Baba dropped His body all this came up can you believe? I made them ask Pendu and Padri what happened to the material? Stones of the walls in which Baba has lived and all that. So they said, "Oh all that is used for making Baba's Samadhi.

DF: Yes.

MEHERA: Samadhi room. So then I felt, "Alright this has been used for this purpose."

DF: It's strange. Just this morning Ted Judson came to my room. The architect. So I told him, "Now you must make some drawings of this post office building because it will be good we'll have it."

MEHERA: But as I tell you have to have orders from the government. Permission I mean.

DF: Yes. But at least we'll have the drawing. What it looked like.

MEHERA: Or you know some people say that there can be a little pavilion. If they don't allow us to live there stay there but that property is Baba's.

DF: Yes. Even this side of the roadside.

MEHERA: You know after the railway lines. The railway lines are here it's on a height then slope. And then there's a dip in the field. What do you call it ground? A dip. And then you can see little height like that where the room were. Of course there is no sign but it was there. So after the dip it's the post office starts from here. So it was too near they say the railway line. Alright leave 5 feet. And then is it enough ask? We must ask them. Then it will be on the same spot again. Just leave out the 5 feet. That can be so.

DF: Well at least we'll make some nice drawings.

MEHERA: Yes. Then people would love to live there because Baba has lived actually in that place and all that. [Inaudible] And Baba before keeping silence on 9th of July 1925 Baba came to our room in this post office room and said that He was going to keep silence from tomorrow and how He asked me to obey His orders and we have to cope and be happy and all that you know. So it was last that Baba talked to us in Meherabad you know that time. In this room it was Baba actually talked. And then when Baba went the next day Baba was on silence.

DF: One day Mehera don't worry. [Inaudible].