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**DF-004B:**

**LIFE WITH BABA AND MANDALI'S LIFE NOW; BABA'S PARENTS**

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**Mani S. Irani; Mehera J. Irani**

Mandali Hall, Meherazad, India

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47:00

Recording starts from 0:50 seconds.

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**MANI S. IRANI INTERVIEW**

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**MANI:** So then she'd come for a few days. After the accident when we were in Switzerland. It was wonderful because Anita used to be able to make Baba laugh you know. The way she would say it. And. So Baba had a cast on His leg and Anita had had an accident sometime before when she had a cast. She had [inaudible]. So they were comparing and she said, "And Baba darling you know how it itches inside." Baba said, "That's right." And then she would you know. [Mani claps] They would just compare how it happens when the cast is on. Yeah.

**PILGRIM 1:** Did anybody sign Baba's cast? [general laughter] That's the custom you know.

**MANI:** Yeah I know. [crosstalk]. There isn't anybody higher to sign Baba's [Mani and pilgrims laughing].

No, but to give you an idea how Baba used the most natural way of doing things you know. Never dramatic or saying I'm doing this work or that, never. It would be so natural, so casual. He would go to such lengths, to such pains to hide that from us rather than to. So I will give you an example.

We were in Guruprasad and one of the summers. And there was this Baba lover from some part of India I think in Maharashtra or south somewhere who was transferred to a way out of the way place in the north. Not only in the north but you know an out of the way place where communication is not so easy or he was out in the I wouldn't say wild but away from the cities and towns. And he was very sad to go because it would not only be far away from Baba lovers, it would be far away from his family and he would be very lonely there.

He didn't know the language that was spoken there and in fact he felt very low about it. But Baba had asked Eruch to write and say, "Don't worry. I am with you wherever you are. You're never alone and I am your companion." And so and so. So that was quite some time after that had passed. And then the man went. At last he went to that wherever he was transferred. And this story this man told us actually this story he told us in 1969 during the Eastern Darshan. So we didn't know this part of the story till we heard it in 1969. But I'll tell you the other part of it.

Anyway what happened was when he got there he was very lonely. He felt very isolated. He said, "I wonder do they remember me?" And, "Will I ever get a

letter?" And "How happy I was where I was. There was my Baba family and I could talk about Baba and there's not a single person here I could talk about them. I don't know the language," and all that sort of thing. And then in a few days after that it was his birthday. And that made him more despondent than ever. He said, "I don't suppose my parents even remember me. But it's my birthday. If they do have they written? Will it reach me?" Oh no, no he just felt very low. Very broken. Just then, before he could start out for work the postman came. The postman came and he had a telegram. And in India especially in the isolated parts or in the villages a telegram means something very, very important. Either death or birth. Somebody's died or somebody's born. A happy news, a very happy news or a tragic news.

So when the postman delivers the telegram he looks at the person and if he sees the face glowing when they're reading the telegram he waits. He knows that he would want to share his happiness and give him a tip. And if it's a sad news, if his face looks sad, then the postman just bows his head goes off. But this time it was a very puzzled postman [general laughter]. Here was this man who looks really happy and yet he was crying. These tears were going down his cheeks. And so at last he said. He didn't know what to say but he said, "Bad news sir?" And the man said, "No, no the best on the world." He suddenly became conscious of the postman. Went and embraced the postman. Gave him a tip. The telegram was from Baba, "My love and blessings to you on your birthday and always." Now that is his side of the story.

You see where Baba is concerned it is between each one and Baba. We who are close by might see one side of the coin. The one who received it would have. The story would be the other side of the coin. So his side we heard in 1969. Now what happened to our side was so natural and it seemed so just coincidence and just you know circumstantial. What had happened was that Eruch was reading out the mail to Baba one day. It was in Guruprasad Hall. In the morning when Baba would go over to the men's side and would you know the post would be read. So some letters He would ask to be read out. Others He would say, "Alright." Some He would ask to reply from Him.

So there was this letter from just a Baba lover. And so when Eruch was reading it out Baba said. He [Mani slaps hands], He said, "Ah I remember, I remember him. He was transferred way out somewhere you know." Eruch said, "No Baba. This man is in such and such place and he's been there for 20 years and he has a job in which. No, no Baba. This is." "Oh," Baba said, "Ah, ah, ah I made a mistake." And then Eruch reads on another letter and then suddenly Eruch says, "Oh Baba I've just remembered. You must have been thinking about such and such a person. So and so, who is the one who has been transferred. Not the one that I read the letter from but you must have mixed him up with this person." "Ah," Said Baba, "That's right. I must have mixed it up and sort of my mistake."

And then Eruch reads on and then suddenly Eruch says, "Oh Baba, by the way it's that man's birthday day after tomorrow." "Is that so?" Baba looked so surprised, "Is that so? Send him a telegram from me with my love and blessings." So

that is how as if so casual, so natural in just a casual way. But Baba knew that to reach that Baba lover. Baba knew the need. Baba knew the longing. Baba knew the measure of his longing. And it was sent so specially, so directly and yet He made it appear like that.

So when that man came in 1969 he asked, "Can I stand up and say something to the rest of my brothers and sisters here?" And he said, "When I talk of Baba I can only talk about His love. That His love is greater than the love of any mother on Earth. The love is greater than father, brother, sister," And you know he started like that. And then he told this story. And he said, "There I was. It was like I was in a desert. Just dying of thirst as it were. And then what could. When water is given to one like that what does it mean? That is what it meant to me to receive that love telegram from Baba on my birthday at that time." So it wasn't casual at all. But this side He was playing it like that. This side He was doing it. Only when the two were put together we realised that it was between the Beloved and the lover. And we were witnesses but we couldn't see the other side.

Now you see what happens? Because you'll don't talk I have to do all the talking. Or is it because I'm doing all the talking you're not talking? [pilgrims laughing].

**PILGRIM 2:** Therefore you are recently [inaudible] Because you said something which we did not know of.

**PILGRIM 1:** Did Baba let everybody celebrate their birthdays normally like people would celebrate their birthdays? [inaudible]

**MANI:** Well you see what would happen with Baba. That was a. Things would happen in phases. You know there would be a period. There was a period when birthdays were celebrated. Everybody's birthday. And we were a number. We were quite a number. And it was no joke believe me. And we each had to give a present. We were about 30-35. And say it's Susan's birthday but all the others, all the thirty of the others had to give a present and we. It wasn't like anybody's. It wasn't like going to the bazaar and buying what you wanted. There was no buying, there was no outing, there was no this and that. But we would fumble through our things and find something and [inaudible] and there would be the "happy birthday" and there would be enjoyment you know.

Just wishing happiness. There would be the birthday happiness. And she would be would happy and we'd sing "happy birthday" and all the presents she would go and put by knowing very well she will have to give about 30 presents to 30 people on each of their birthday. That's exactly what would happen. And the funny part is that sometimes you would get back the present that you had started out with. And when my scarf came back to me I was really so delighted [Mani laughing]. But still you don't keep it. So it was really like that game you have where the kerchief is passed round or the ring is passed around. It was just a circle it was going in a circle. Yes, yes you see. And I don't know how the pattern was made but each present went round and all those 30 people again to that person and to each one. It was great fun.

But much later for many, many years now it's just mostly mainly Baba's birthday and Mehera's birthday. In fact in the very latter

years Baba was having Mehera's birthday celebrated more here in person where we were. And that's why we keep it on. Specially with the last few years. There was a very big congregations here. I think it's some of it in some film. Where the women are carrying Baba from here and the Maharani Shanta Devi and all had come.

I used to ask my father because when we are little. Actually the Zoroastrians as far as I knew we used to really celebrate our birthdays up to the 7th year. After that nobody. I mean I didn't remember when my mother's birthday was or whether it was celebrated. But still I knew that birthdays were there and it was celebrated. My birthday was still being celebrated so I asked my father. I said, "Bobo when is your birthday? Why don't you have a happy birthday? When were you born?" And he first tried to hedge and I insisted and so he said "My birthday is on the New Year. The Irani, Persian New Year which is 21st March." And I believed it for a while. I still don't know [Mani and pilgrim laugh]. But my nephew, one of my nephews was born on 21st March after that, so we named him after father, Sheru.  
[crosstalk] It does.

**PILGRIM 2:** Fast forward.

**MANI:** I'll never forget once we.

**PILGRIM 2:** We had it about half way down the [inaudible].

**MANI:** The first long playing record we had, the small one you know not the '78.

**PILGRIM 2:** Yeah.

**MANI:** Yeah. And we were very excited. It was I think 1958. We were in Bombay

seeing Baba off to the States. And there was the gramophone and everything and we said. We told each other. I said, "This, this, this is no it's quite different from the rest of the thing." And it was Marlon Brando singing the thing.

**PILGRIM 2:** Oh no.

**MANI:** And we were all very serious. And I put it on and I said, "Now listen, no talking. Please be attentive. You know this, this is it." And I put it on and everybody was seriously listening. And the tape went [Mani imitates the sound of a record on fast forward]. I tell you [Mani laughs] [inaudible] we doubled up with laughter. After that it never sounded the same and we adjusted the speaker. Poor Marlon Brando was out [general laughter].

But Jim Reeves. Jim Reeves was. I wish we had [inaudible]. Baba and Jim Reeve's music was being played. You know Baba would do that even if it was well during lunch time. And then He'd say how it touched. He'd do that. Touched my heart. It touched His heart. Then He'd have more curry more rice and. Very lovely.

I should ask Jack Small to tape some more Jim Reeves. You know he plays it in the car.

The child mustn't hear, talk in Irani. And I just look up and say, "But I understand Irani." They couldn't believe. I mean now what are they to talk? But it's so naturally one can absorb all those languages or anything that you're really going to be good. Want to be good at later the nucleus the seed has to be when you're a child. You've either heard it, you've learned some of it, you've seen it. You've absorbed it in some way. And it's so important. It's so.

And it's silly to think that, "They're just children and they won't know," No, but they are capable of so much. Of receiving and storing so much. We are not when we are older. But a child you can do much more than we really think they can. It just depends on us.

**PILGRIM 2:** Yeah. [child laughing]. I know, very good, very good.

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## MEHERA J. IRANI INTERVIEW

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**MEHERA:** But the water and the [inaudible] heavy went down, down, down [Mehera laughs]. I'm glad that Baba was how to say? Satisfied. So then that weight was off. But I really stood. Put our pillow you know from our bedding put pillow here and then on the pillow [inaudible].

We will go in next bedroom. What are they doing? Oh they all practising to swim. Mani come on even I also want. I and Mani go to our bedroom. Take out the pillow. Put on the thing [Mehera laughs]. We also [inaudible]. When we returned from the swim. And so after five days you know we were given the test. We finished. We could do just three strokes. Finished. [inaudible]

**PILGRIM: 8** You must have spent a long time without air? Underwater. You must have spent a long time before you breathed again? Only for 3 you got to get a 7 without breath.

**MEHERA:** Oh yes. Everything happened very fast. No 1, 2. One [Mehera takes a breath], 2 and 3 and 4, 5, 6. I went down. They pulled me out. Baba says, "Very good," So very good. I said it's okay as long as Baba's said good. He didn't want me to become like. Me and others to come and learn anymore so see.

So I was so naughty like that. Anyway but Baba saw that we did learn to swim. That was in. We were in Lahore. In Lahore there was no sea. But Baba talking to this one person. Someone came from outside you know. He was a Baba lover. And through him they found out that there is a school somewhere. School you know. School

where they teach children. It was not a convent but it was a school. And in the school they had a very lovely swimming pool. So if we get permission from the school that such and such an hour when the children are in the school learning you know at say half past three. So their school stops half past four. Stops means when the classes. [crosstalk] So by that time you must go and swim.

So we all went I. So Baba in Lahore, myself and Mani Baba told Margaret to take us. So Margaret, Kitty, myself and Mani we just four went to the school. Far away you know we had to go in a horse carriage. Went there at that time we had swimming costume it was good. And so I did swim a few strokes. Margaret said, "There told you, you can swim. You know because of those slacks you could not swim," And so on. And we learned to swim that time. But we got the idea of it in the sea. Because the sea is why easy because it's salt water. In India the sea has more salt in the water.

**PILGRIM 9:** So it's easier to float.

**MEHERA:** Because it's easy to float.

**PILGRIM 9:** It's no point you get heavy trousers on.

**MEHERA:** Yes. And then I had this bathing costume then Margaret said, "I told you know how to swim because of those things," [Mehera laughs]. But then but it was nice. In the swimming pool there was no body. It was we and this European lady who came with a little girl. Mrs. Richards. And she swam and we swam across like this. And that is the time we learnt to swim. Margaret taught us side stroke. All

the strokes. Underwater and what not oh my. Everything.

And then after knowing that then of course we came back to Meherabad. After this few places we went. Karwal and other places and we came back to Meherabad. Sometime we stayed in Meherabad. Then Meherabad then Baba went to Aurangabad. 1943 it was Aurangabad. Aurangabad is not far from here it's how many miles, just 50 miles, 60 miles. There was an ordinary house but this house belonged to Mohammedan. He had a family and all that. But this house was near in the middle was a nice broad lane and this side was this nice house. Ordinary house but it was very nice, clean. Veranda and a compound of its own little not quite a garden but a few trees and all that.

And gate and wall that was like private and all that. Very nice it was.

So it was my first day and there one day Baba took us to you know from this house you have this bit cross arch. I can't tell you courtyard and from the side of the courtyard when you went that side where we girls did not go only Baba took us we would go.

So Baba showed us, "See." It was like a swimming pool. A very big swimming pool. Rather very big one. I don't know what it's supposed to be. It was supposed to be in the Moghul time you know. Moghuls have it. So there was like a.

[Recording ends 45:38]