

EF-001B**Eruch Jessawala**

Mandali Hall, Meherazad, India

1980s

48:27

Note: Style of this "transcription" is précis, rather than literal. This tape is defective. There is some left-over music in the background, but Eruch is mostly speaking and you can hear his speaking over the music. Apparently as it starts, Eruch has said that there was a story his mother used to tell him, and it involved some inanimate statue or something having come to life, and he asks the other Indians present if there could be any substance to it. The tape is going out of speed so it's the voice of Eruch to start the tape even though it doesn't sound much like him.] [One story of an inanimate statue coming to life is about the child whose mother tells him to take a meal to the statue of Krishna, and the child thinks the purpose of taking the meal to Krishna (Vithoba if I remember the story correctly) is actually to feed the statue. The child implores the statue to take the food, which it eventually does. The mother wants to beat the child for stealing the food, but they go back the next night, the whole family, and the statue again takes the food, thus testifying to the love the child has for God.

The story doesn't in any way appear to be a continuation of tape elf001a, though from the date it is apparently on the same day.

Content

Eruch: "My mother had that habit to incite love for the lord in any way, so she wasn't limited to telling objective stories, and I still have the habit of embellishing stories to increase love for the Lord."

President Jagannath story: After Sai Baba dropped his body in 1918, and Upasni Maharaj had been under the grace and nazar of Sai Baba, Upasni thought of going to Kashi for a Shradh in the memory of Sai Baba. Shradh or Shradha is an annual ceremony, a memorial to a departed one. [Merwanji, our Meher Baba, was with Upasni at the time. There is some disagreement about the word Eruch uses, because he isn't a Hindu, and it's a Hindu ceremony, so the Hindus in the hall at the time set him straight about how to speak about it.] It was not in 1919, but 1920 or 1921, "I forget the year. This story was told to me by Gustadji. Maharaj went with some of his followers and stopped under the Kashi railroad bridge. Maharaj said they would perform the Shradha of Sai Baba. You have to cook food and offer food after invoking the grace of the lord. [There is something about how one should feed Brahmins on that day, so that the food may reach the spirit of the departed one.] Upasni himself being a Brahmin, this was suitable as a ceremony, but there should be no non-Brahmins around, because they were really caste-sensitive. When the Brahmins came to the site, they were much annoyed that persons other than Brahmins appeared to be there working on preparing the food. Some Brahmins put a question to Upasni Maharaj about who that person over there (meaning Merwan) was. He wasn't dressed like a Brahmin. They asked his name.

Upasni Maharaj responded that Merwan's name was "Jagannath", which means lord of the universe. [All get a good laugh out of it. The story is in LM, page 220-221.]

Eruch's mother's story takes place in Northeast India, and there is a temple there dedicated to the Lord of the Universe, and in that temple there is a statue of Lord Jagannath. Every year there is a huge gathering, and they take the idol around the town. After all, the statue is the statue of the lord of the universe. Entry to the temple is restricted, and low caste people are not allowed to enter.

One devotee of Jagannath was a carpenter, Sudra, of too low a caste to get into the inner sanctum of the temple. His devotion reached such a height that he couldn't go on without getting into the inner sanctum to worship. Some Brahmin told him he could no longer go into the inner sanctum because his presence had defiled the purity of the inner sanctum. Even they didn't want him to be outside the door, and he was thrown out of the main gate, and though he strained his neck, he couldn't see the lord's statue. All he had seen, all he could worship was the feet of the lord, but being a carpenter he carved the feet and legs of the lord in his hut, and he used to worship the legs and feet.

Gradually the legs of the idol in the temple started to wither, waist-downward. Termites?

They came to know about the carpenter who was talking to the statue in endearing terms, and they thought it was a woman, and they got all rumors started that some woman was with the carpenter, and eventually the news of the statue's deterioration reached the king. What was the cause? So lots of messing about, trying to find out, and finally they concluded that the carpenter was the cause of it all, and they came to find out that his devotion gave life to the legs he had created and caused the other legs to wither.

The carpenter said he was innocent, and they made him the priest over there. That's the story.

Note: Eruch tells the story of Satya Mang's coming to visit Baba. This is told many places. Gustadji told this story to Eruch and Gustadji was the store-keeper in those years, so he has a slightly different slant, though not significantly.

Satya Mang was so adept that he could climb a smooth wall, face-downwards and feet upward. He made an entry into some house and as soon as he entered he saw Baba staring at him, and he fell at Baba's feet and ran away, and came to Baba the next day to confess.

The sequel: Baba went to Iran, taking His mandali with Him, but Boman Shah's family were there in Meherabad -- himself, wife and two daughters. Baba entrusted a stock of grain and other things to keep them safe and fed. Satya Mang would come, every now and then, and take some food from them, from the store that Baba had provided for him and them. But, on one occasion, when asked where Boman Shah was, the wife said that he had gone into the village to beg for food. This set badly with Satya Mang. "I take this food

away, so he has to go out and beg?" He went out and begged, and begged for them thereafter. That's how he and the family were sustained, until Baba returned.

Note: An Indian asks a question about when Baba was really born, and on what day? Rather than directly attack the question of astrology that probably prompts this question, Eruch tells that there used to be chaos about the date of Baba's birthday, because there are so many calendar systems in use, and there is a Zoroastrian anniversary based on their lunar calendar. Baba, in the 1940s, set that it should be 5 AM on the 25th February. Baba fixed this date for posterity, and entertained no deviations linked to the issue of the various calendars.

[Same Indian asks about visit to Peshawar, and Duzdab in 1929. Difficulties with the English authorities are mentioned...]

In later years, Eruch says, being Him that He is, He does His work through us, and His work is to shred our egos, and time and again he would work in this dimension on the mandali. A simple example would be that Baba would ask someone what the time was. That person might say, "It's 10 after 12, Baba." A few minutes later, He would ask again, and maybe someone would give some other time. He might ask again and again, and Eruch often would give an approximate time. Baba would ask for exact time, and eventually Eruch would become exasperated. "Because of His compassion, he would allow us to live with him, in spite of our faults. There is nothing new about this, in any era of His working. [He used to do it all the time.] Of course, we tried to carry out the orders all the time, but we have no guts to say that we did it. He got it done through us."

There is a story about Krishna Nair in print somewhere. [These people know Krishna who is retired from the docks, and lives in Bombay.] "To be with Baba in the night, it is my experience that He keeps watch over us, we do not keep watch over Him." [All laugh.] "It is good that He keeps watch, because it is so tedious to be the watchman, and He will scold us for not doing it right. Our yoga was to do it as well as we could, but He would come to our rescue from time to time to keep us alert and keep us from dying a living death. We have seen many people who tried to do it, but for whatever reason we are still here, in spite of the fact that they did it better than we did it."

"One night, the mosquitos were eating Krishna Nair, and he was quite miserable as he kept watch. Baba told Krishna to do something the next morning -- to get a tonga and take Him to see a saintly yogi [one of many] who had been standing on one foot for years. Krishna did it, but Krishna was so sour [in the aftermath of the preceding night watch] that it was difficult for him. Baba sent Krishna back the next day to the yogi with a message, but when he arrived he discovered that the yogi had dropped his body that very day after Baba's visit. The followers had just returned from the funeral, and told Krishna that the yogi said that he had met the lord of the universe and 'my purpose is finished,' and he dropped. That reminded Krishna that Baba was what He is."

Extended discussion of the children in a city who worship Baba in bizarre ways, as sent in by Madhukar B. Khandale. Eruch cautions that it would be better not to be bizarre. The

mandali have discouraged bizarre, showy ways of worshipping Baba. Villagers feel that the Baba people are casting spells on these children.

Tape ends