

## **KG-012A**

### **Meherjee Karkaria**

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Meher Center, SC

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44:32

### **Themes**

Parsee Railway driver

Day of the 1956 Automobile Accident

Prem Ashram

### **Content**

[Did you go on the mast tours, Meherjee?]

Meherjee:

"At some times, not always."

[On the Blue Bus?]

"No. Blue Bus was not a mast tour. You must have read 'The Wayfarers,' the book has very simple language and all factual information is given there. I had been with Baba on mast tours. Baba used to tell us different types of masts.

"Well I was not in India for some years, but from 1946 onwards I went with Baba on some mast trips. [In response to question...] Yes, it was a game, hide and seek, and Baba invariably when He told us to go to such and such a place, He knew that some mast must be there. When He asked us to find the whereabouts of a certain mast... [interrupted by a questioner who apparently knows more about the topic than Meherjee...] We would say that our elder brother was interested. And Baba also traveled incognito, suited, covered head to toe, dark glasses...

"Sometimes His way of mixing with people was so peculiar. People might sit quite near Him, who were aware of the appearance of Meher Baba, but yet they didn't recognize that it was He who was traveling near them. I think I gave you one story the other day, I don't know where, I forget. One day we were returning to Meherabad after a mast trip. We were just on the outskirts of Bombay, an hour out of Bombay, when a big cyclone came up, and all the trees were uprooted and the railway line was impassable, and the train stopped at that particular place. We were traveling third class, Baba and some of us, and the carriage we were in was directly in back of the engine. The engine driver was a Parsee. In our country, railway engine drivers are happy-go-lucky people. They drink, they smoke, they talk in their own slang language. So when the train stopped moving, he could see that we were Parsees and he came back and sat with us. Both Baba and Gustadji were keeping silence, not speaking. The man went to the extent of bringing us boiling water so we could make tea and make rice for Baba; he was helping and even playing cards with us as we waited. For practically a whole day we were held up there. This man was talking nonsense

also, such terms. But he never realized that here was Meher Baba and Gustadji, and he didn't notice that they were silent, either. Baba used to laugh like anything, all nonsense he was talking, vulgar. All the way to Bombay we went in that carriage, and the driver never realized with whom he was interacting."

[Questioner says she is surprised that many Indians she meets in the US haven't heard of Meher Baba.]

"Most of the people know Meher Baba in India. But it is not a small country. Five hundred and fifty million people..."

"You want to hear that again? [in response to request for a particular story] Babajan -- when I was with Baba in my early days, 1928 to be exact, all of a sudden Babajan comes to Meherabad in a car. Never she had been to Meherabad, never had she moved from her place. In Poona also there was a place where she used to sit under a tree, and [at most] she would go to Bund Garden and sit under a different tree. She never had come out of Poona, but one day she comes in a car to Meherabad.

"Baba and we were on the hill, when a message came from down below that Babajan has come. Baba asked us to go with Him and take her darshan, bow to her. Baba was using sandals which now are in the museum in Meherabad. You must have seen -- torn, stitched, very old. He kept sandals for a long time, though they became torn. For some purpose of His own, this was, and He never changed them for some time. That day He discarded the chappals [sandals] and came with us walking down the hill. You have seen the stones on the hill -- they are just like spikes and Baba's delicate feet, but He came walking bare-footed. He stopped at the railway line. Baba said this was in respect for His master. Baba was Avatar but still they were both perfect. Baba always remembered Babajan much more than any master. So to give her respect, He discarded His sandals and came down walking. Of course, He did not cross the railway line. Similarly, she did not leave the car -- she remained seated in the car. He ordered us to go bow to her. One by one, we were in a queue, and when my turn came and I bowed to her, she just scratched my face. What for I do not know. One of Baba's very early companions, Behramji [Bua Sahib], was in the darshan line, and he was known to Babajan, whereas she did not know me. He was always going to Babajan in Poona, and was with Baba the whole time. He had a big mustache, and she took it and twisted it so much that the skin bled. Compared to this, the scratches to me were nothing.

"How can we question why this happened in such and such a way? It is beyond our understanding.

"Another incident worth noting: Baba used to go to see cricket matches, test matches. It was not that Baba wanted to see the game, but in Bombay the stadium held about 40,000 people, and when the foreign teams would come from the West Indies, or Australia or England, the stadium would be fully crowded for these test matches. Sometimes Baba used to go with us to see the test match incognito in a suit and a hat and everything, but still some people would recognize Him.

Still He used to sit in the stadium in the galleries with thousands of people there, and I have noticed [on those occasions] that though we might be taking interest in the match, Baba was somewhere else, His fingers working, and He was looking at somewhere, something. His purpose in going to the matches was not to see the game, though He loved the game of cricket and He used to play the game with us also. But He told us that when 30-40,000 people are gathered in one place concentrating on something, He took advantage of it to do His work of contacting the masses. Same way one day he specially came from Dehra Dun to Delhi to see such a match. This particular match was played for charity between the President's eleven and the Prime Minister's eleven [eleven is the size of a team, and eleven here means "team"]. All these elderly people came, and the President came in his dhoti to play then. That was a festival match, so to say, not really a game. But Baba did want to go and see that. Everybody had come to see ministers and parliamentarians and the president, and even business men and the members of the diplomatic corps were among the spectators. All types of humanity were there.

"Many times we used to go see a picture [movie]. Charlie Chaplin was a favorite; He liked comedies. Serious pictures He would never go. But then He would not sit for the whole way. Maybe half an hour, forty-five minutes would have elapsed when He would say, 'Come on, let us go out.' His purpose was to contact the masses, but He wouldn't say that He was going to the pictures for some spiritual work. He would just say, 'Let's go to the pictures.'

[Questioner asks about 1956 auto accident.]

"That is a nice story. One day, Baba said, 'Let us go for a picnic,' and members of the near mandali from Poona, Bombay and Ahmednagar were called to join. Baba was staying at that time in Satara, 68 miles from Poona. He said we would play cricket and then eat the picnic. We had to select a place at which to play the match, Baba selected a place about 12 miles from Satara at a dak bungalow which is a place for travelers to rest. It was a farm only and cricket was played with a rubber ball, not ordinary balls. [Kids playing in the street in India use these rubber balls, much less problem of injury.] Baba had asked some dry eatables to be brought from Bombay. Nothing was cooked there. Baba insisted that we should play the match there. There were two teams, ten each, and Baba was the captain of both [to make up a full side of 11 -- Baba fielded, typically as wicket keeper, on both teams]. Baba arranged to give prizes for the batsman taking the most wickets and [for other plays of distinction]. We were all grown-up people, we were not young boys. Sarosh, Myself, Adi [K.] -- we were all there. We played the match and two innings complete were played there. We started early morning and by noon it was all over. We were all tired. We enjoyed the food. I got seven rupees prize for bowling. We were so tired as we returned to our homes. To all of us, Baba directed Eruch to write a letter to ask if we were all right, whether we felt any discomfort or anything [in the aftermath of the match] and all of us were sick. Limbs were aching, some of us had little fever, I had some also. So He inquired, we reported back, and the whole thing was forgotten.

"Now it was a year later. Second December 1956. I had imported a new Chevrolet

car. Baba had used that car going on mast tours and others. At that period, Baba ordered me that whenever I was called to come to Satara from Poona, I was not to take the new car to go see Him, but instead I was to come by bus. This was orders and I was doing that. On that occasion, He asked me to bring some soda, lemonade, orange, four or five crates. I could not carry that much on the bus, so I did take the soda with me in the Chevrolet. As soon as I reached there He said, 'Why did you break my order? Why did you bring the car? Send it back immediately.' I had a driver and I told him to go back to Poona immediately. Little did I know His purpose in not allowing me to bring that car. At that time Baba had at His disposal an old 1951 Chevrolet that belonged to Nariman Dadachanji.

"The next morning was an eclipse day, and I was a little nervous as we set out in the car. Baba had asked us to keep full fast that day, not even to drink water. Baba, myself, Eruch, Pendu and Nilu -- five of us left Satara in that car. Explicit orders were given to us that we should not disclose to anybody where we were going with Baba. Even I had been directed not to tell my wife that I'd be going somewhere with Baba. We came to Poona. First the motorcade of Chou-En Lai crossed our path. We cursed them. Chou-en Lai had been to see the Defense Secretary or someone in Poona, and that held us up. Baba also made a face. Then Baba said that we should go take rest in the Defense Academy grounds, a beautiful place in Poona." [slight break in the tape...]

"Come on, let us go to see some cricket match.' Ordinary matches. There were many schools and colleges. So we went around those playgrounds and there was one match going on. We were just watching for a time.

"At that time there were instructions to all Baba's devotees that no one was to contact Him because He was in seclusion. Even if people see Baba while He is traveling on the roads, they should go away. They should not follow Baba or come near Him. One of Baba's old disciples, Ramchandra Gadekar, a very nice, very simple man also, he saw Baba's car, and he was so emotional he could not resist the temptation to follow Baba. [After telling off Gadekar,] Baba decided to go back to Satara. It was about quarter to four. Vishnu had been away from Baba in Poona for some work. So Baba said 'Let us drop Meherjee at his place in Poona and take Vishnu in his place in the car.' So I was dropped off, Vishnu joined them and they left from my place. The accident occurred at about 5:30 in the afternoon. Where? At the same place where we had played the cricket match. It was a paved road, no obstacles. How did it happen? Eruch was driving but even today Eruch does not know how that accident happened. It just went off the road and Nilu died on the spot. Baba broke His right hip joint, His face was injured, His back was injured. Eruch's ribs were broken. The old car was totally damaged. That is why Baba did not want me to bring my new car. He later said to me that, 'I did not want your new car so that I might have been tempted to go in the new car.' [Questioner asks about changing places with someone just before the accident, and Meherjee acknowledges, but doesn't remember exactly.]

"Nilu was an old disciple of Baba, living with Him as one of the mandali. By the by, 'mandali,' we use it commonly here, means 'companion.' It's a word in Marathi, not even in Hindi. Among the old-fashioned people of Maharashtra, a husband would not call his

wife by name, but he would call her 'mandali.' Even today. Even she is sitting, he might say, 'Mandali, get me a glass of water.' When Baba refers to 'My mandali' it means those who were practically all the time near Him. In general sense, Baba used to say, 'whoever obeys me and loves me is my mandali.'"

[Questioners ask a few questions the answers to which are now commonly known.]

"Whenever I used to go to Bombay, Baba's orders were there that I should go to Poona, bow to Babajan and go for my work to Bombay, and returning I should bow to Babajan on the way back. That way, I must have met Babajan two or three times. On one such occasion, I came from Bombay on the night train, reached Poona in the early morning, and went to see Babajan. She was drinking some tea. It's tea sold in market stalls, and she was a Perfect Master. I was fastidious. I do not take such tea even today. So when Babajan offered it to me, I had to drink it. I know nothing particular about Babajan, save what Baba told us, that she was perfect. We respected her. Each time I met her, I was only with her for a few seconds, go there, bow down and go away."

[Pilgrim asks about the daily schedule of the Prem Ashram]

"Early morning a bell would ring, I think 5:30 or 6, I don't remember. Everyone had to get up, attend to their ablutions and then a bell at 6:30 or 7 for tea, mild tea with a little milk in it, and bread, huge big wheat bread. That was breakfast. After that, school started at about 8 o'clock. Hours of instruction were 8 to 1 or 1:30 in the afternoon, something like that. No school in the afternoon. After instruction, lunch, and after lunch the boys had to study. Games followed with teachers supervising games like cricket. Coming to the evening hours, Baba used to give discourses at about 6 PM. Again dinner. Food was all vegetarian.

"Some of us mandali used to sit near Baba for long hours. Baba was in seclusion at the time, in the same cabin where He is now interred. Also for 30 or 40 days, He was fasting, not taking any food or anything. We used to sit near Baba, press His feet, like that. Baba had no bed as such inside the crypt, only a mattress. Baba used to lie down, and I used to sit near Him sometimes up to 11 or 11:30 at night, midnight even. Then He would ask us to go.

"Pressing His feet gave us the benefit of serving Him. That is what I feel. Whenever He entrusted any work to us, it was His love for us that gave us the opportunity to serve Him.

"I used to teach all classes -- English, Mathematics, Physics. I myself was about 18 or 19, and the eldest of the boys was about 14 or 15 in the higher classes."

[Question about the weeping from another pilgrim:]

"Well some of the boys were so much drawn to Baba, and it may have been Baba's work also. Some boys started sitting in meditation on their own. In spare time some of the boys

would put a handkerchief over their faces and just sit. Some of the very small ones used to slip and fall down also! You know, if one boy starts crying the others may begin following, and soon the whole world, scores of them thinking that someone has died also start. But some of them were genuinely feeling separation from Baba, and they were really crying. It's difficult for me to explain because they were real tears."

[Questioner asks what became of the boys. Meherjee says still they come to Baba. There is some mention of Aloba, whose history is told by him on other of these tapes.]

"They are now all grown-up men. They come to Baba for darshan on occasions."

[Questioner asks about political responsibility. Context is that youth at this time thought that being politically active was a high calling. 'Did Baba say anything about elections and voting, things like that?' Meherjee's immediate denial suggests that voting was not an interest of Baba's, though the outcome of elections was discussed:]

"No, He used to take interest when there were elections going on, for instance we were in the US at the time when Eisenhower stood for the Presidency. At that time He wished that Eisenhower might be elected. Of course spirituality governs the politics also. Everything is included in that, politics, business, commerce, everything. But usually we never discussed politics. Even if it was in the newspaper, morning news. Every day, Baba used to make one of the mandali read the newspaper out, and just casually we used to discuss. Nothing serious. Never did he say, 'This must happen' or 'this must not happen.' For instance during the Vietnam war, during early days, when the question came up about whether the US ought to bomb Haiphong harbor, this topic was being discussed every day in America. Baba also said, 'Why doesn't America drop the bombs?' 'Why don't they bomb China, why not atom bombs even?' What purpose He had for that kind of talk we don't know. What some of us felt, from a practical point of view, that if America had really bombed in the early days and destroyed the harbors and the railway yards, then this war would not have lasted so long. But then world opinion would have gone against America. So Americans were in a fix -- whether to do or not to do."

[Meherjee is asked whether there are Baba groups in Russia, and responds that he doesn't think so, and also says Baba never went to Russia, to Germany or Japan (I think he's wrong about Japan, though Baba never stayed there for more than an airplane or ship stop.). Meherjee points out that there were mystics in Azerbaijan and other central Asian places at the time part of the Soviet Union. Someone in the audience alleges that there was one of Baba's agents in Russia. Meherjee says Baba only passed through China, but actually He stayed there visiting Herbert Davy for some time. ]

"Baba said there was a mast in Algeria, also. Once He said that we would go to inaudible] but we did not go."

[Phyllis Ott retells Mehera's story that when China threatened to attack India in 1962 Baba asked the women what would happen if the ashram was surrounded by the Chinese. After they expressed fear, Baba said, 'But I am in the Chinese.']

"Wars are part of the plan. Krishna's time, war with their own relations, and war with the cousins was part of the divine plan. It was Krishna's weakness that He showed Arjuna His divine form (Virat Swaroop) Baba said, "If I show you that I am God and prove to you, then your obedience means nothing. Without my showing my real Godhood, it is still greater if you follow my orders and stick to me."

[someone asks about physical suffering.]

"Yes, it was terrible. I had seen Him in most of His sufferings in the last 20 years. Or rather 25 years. Formerly before the accidents He was having various illnesses, where pain was terrible. Doctors were called, He would take doctors' treatments, everything, He had trouble in His eyes, some gritty feeling that He encountered, then came the accidents. First accident in the United States, you know everything about that, and some of you may have seen Baba's suffering in those days. His leg was broken from here, His hand was broken [actually His left arm at the shoulder], His whole left side was damaged in the first accident. And in the second accident all His right side was damaged. If you see Baba from the right side after the first accident [inaudible] but if you see Baba from the left side His face was swollen, His tongue was damaged and I remember when Dr. Armsbreker from Oklahoma came to the Prague clinic to set the hand [arm] clinic to set Baba's hand it was to be set, so he pulled and set it, with no anaesthetics, not a sound, not even a grunt Baba made. If even the bone of your little finger is broken and it is pulled, how will you feel? Same way His foot, a weight-bearing bone was broken from here. He suffered a lot, patiently."

[Question: Meherjee, you said earlier that you only saw Baba with tears in His eyes rarely, a few times.]

"He was touched on some occasions, sometimes. Once or twice I have seen with my own eyes. Another Abdulla [Pakwaran] that boy told me. When Abdulla parted from Baba, Baba had tears in His eyes. Some very special reason. I never saw Baba cry tears for the death of some young one, or even the most intimate one, or from the family of someone. He was always happy, but on some such occasions that must have some spiritual bearing on His work, He shed tears."

[Question on birth control. Meherjee gives back the discourse, but then says that it did not necessarily mean that Baba did not tell some persons to use for family reasons.]