

## **KG-018B**

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**Eruch Jessawala**

Mandali Hall, Meherazad, India

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44:37

Note: Continuation of KG-018B

### **Content**

Mani tells the last part of the story of Eruch pointing out to her the shepherd in the field at night keeping watch over the sheep, continued from 018a. "You're right here and when the dawn comes we'll know that you have been here all along.

Mani tells the story about reading Rex Stout to Baba during a January 1969 afternoon. As she read this story to Baba, He seemed to fall asleep during a passage that she knew he had loved the first time she had read it to Him. The other women mandali were there, and they all agreed via gestures, to suspend the reading because they thought Baba would like to hear the passage. Baba's eyes were closed, and there was a deep breathing, nearer a light snore. But when she stopped, Baba immediately snapped His fingers and told her to continue. Mani teased Baba, "I was a bit naughty. 'What did I read?'" So Baba told her to go on and she did, following His instructions. Again the same thing happened, but in this case Baba was resting so deeply that they all agreed that Mani should stop.

That moment Baba snapped His fingers. Baba said, "Remember, even if you think my eyes are closed, I hear. Ask, talk, speak, I always hear." [This story pair is told many times over the years, but the next part of the tape is just about unique, so it is transcribed nearly verbatim.]

Eruch: What they want, Mani, is some indication of the personal side, so I don't mind giving them this little picture, but the trouble is that the picture I will give you is about having the possession of Baba's body in the hands of men, which is not the same picture as Baba's body being in the possession of the women. We were two different sides, so to say, so all I can narrate to you, or give you a little glimpse of is the time when Baba was, so to say, in our hands.

Mani: But which day would you pick?

Eruch: All days, any day, you may call it. Let us come to brass tacks and finish off with this. I've told this before, but she [some unnamed pilgrim] wants me to tell it again.

Now say, for instance, that Baba is on the side of the [men] mandali, or that we are on a mast tour, or that we are at some place, you see, so that Baba's body is to be seen to by us, the men. How would we start the day?

It's left to the pleasure of the Lord when He wants to leave the bed. He might be in bed lying down, he might be sitting on the bed, he might be getting up. It's now you may say the beginning of His day. The first thing he would do is make the sign to bring a potty. So the potty is brought there, you see, and He sits on the potty chair. This is after the accident, otherwise He would go to the toilet room.

He sits there, and we men are around Him. And then he begins to chat with us. Say sometime in the night we may not have behaved properly or we were negligent, He would bring in the topic. Or He might have told us during the night to remember some points. In the night, He would think of points that we should remember. He might call for a paper and pencil to be brought, so that one of us would jot down the points. He might say, "What points were brought up last night? Read them out."

So while He is on the potty, the day starts, so to say. In any case, He goes on chatting, using His gestures. Whether it's points for us, or idle matters or our failures during the night, it's the same thing.

After a while, He may say that He has passed a good stool. "I feel comfortable," He might say.

Mani: That was one of Baba's miracles. Once I said that to Him, and I don't know if He was pleased or not. We used to say, "But Baba' you eat so little! And yet you seem to take out so much more than you are putting in!" It was so hard to make Baba take anything in [i.e., to eat]. "This is good for you, Baba, " Mehera would say . But it was so hard to get Him to eat more than His small quota of rice and dal.

And yet, He was so happy when He would pass a stool, and if it was a big stool it would really make Him happy.

Eruch: Not only would it make Him happy, but He would see to it that we joined in His happiness, "See how big a stool I have passed!"

Mani: It would be so much more than He had ingested, and we used to say that whenever Baba's life was written, it would be incomplete if this point were not given. If we asked Him where that came from, He would avoid the explanation. Baba had infinite ways to avoid answering a question He didn't want to answer. "Oh my head is aching. But tomorrow, tomorrow I will answer." Baba's best day was tomorrow. "Tomorrow I will explain." Or like cutting the fingernails. Baba would always put us off until tomorrow for a task He didn't like to undergo.

Eruch: So then, when He felt satisfied, we'd pour water, throw out the contents, wash out the pot, and dry it with a napkin. Then we'd give Him toothpaste for His washing His mouth. From the beginning, His brand was Forens toothpaste [no longer exists, spelling uncertain]. He liked it very much. He preferred it; I don't know why. I still remember there were times when Forens was scarce in the market. So we used to go out in search of Forens because Baba would want it.

Just as now, you bring things for Goher to give to the patients or we need in the Trust office, that same concern and outpouring we find continued, and it touches our hearts. So, likewise we used to go out in the markets or our families to find such things. The cream colored, pale green Cuticura toilet soap, we used to get that. And Pear's soap. Those two were there, and Foren's toothpaste.

Mani: Things that Baba liked only went in certain phases. For instance, if He liked a certain vegetable, He had to have it every day, every day, every day and you'd scour the markets trying to get okra, for instance. Well, it was for months but after that, no, no more. But others, who were in Bombay or elsewhere would not know it. There was a time when Baba liked sponge cake. Anybody who came was sure to bring a sponge cake. Baba would like it and we would keep it stored as long as possible so we could give Baba a slice of that. For years, people continued to bring sponge cakes, even when we told them that He no more would touch a sponge cake. After a few months, finish. But the others wouldn't know, years later we'd have a dialog of the form, "I brought Baba a sponge cake." "But He doesn't like it." "Oh yes He does." "Well, He doesn't any more."

Eruch: So then when it was time for toothpaste, Baba would take the tube and squeeze it really hard, getting a big blob of toothpaste on His palm, and He'd put a big blob in His mouth, and keep it in there for some time. In the beginning He had some teeth, and then gradually the front teeth would fall out, the molars were extracted, so that later on just the gums were there. So He would apply the toothpaste to the gums, keep it in for some time and then gargle it out.

I'm sorry. I forgot to say that before we gave Him the Forens, we had to put a bib around Him. Because He was in the habit of splashing water like a baby. A bucket would be needed [Mani interjects "many buckets" and Eruch agrees]. A huge bib with bands around it would be needed and we would dress Him up properly for the toothpaste phase. We would hold a basin for Him to spit out the toothpaste. We didn't have internal plumbing at the time, just basins. The basin would go on one stool and He would sit facing it on another stool. We would pour water, He would roll up the sleeves of his sadhra, and he would gargle and throw the toothpaste out, and then He would start to splash water on His face, take a mug-full of water at a time.

Then He would apply soap, lather and soap, like a child playing with the whole thing, you know. By that time He would be drenched with the water. Then he would want to shave. Formerly, we used a safety razor, and still earlier that cutthroat razor. The best safety razor was the Gillette razor, and we used to go to find it in the market. I still remember when Baba was coming to my home in Nagpur, I went to get a Gillette razor blade set to give to Him. When others came to visit Baba the whole Gillette set would be brought by them to give to Baba.

In later years He would ask us to apply soap and lather and shave Him. The trouble would be while traveling in the train, third class compartment, He'd be sitting there and we'd be standing around Him and shaving Him. "Be careful," He'd say, "Be very, very careful." So we would have to be careful about that.

If the much [mustache] had gone too long, we'd have to remind Him. Sometimes He would permit us, sometimes He wouldn't, putting it off to "the next day," [though that usually meant indefinite postponement].

In the last years, Don Stevens brought the first electric razor. battery operated. He would use that. He would use it so fast that the razor actually couldn't do the cutting. We'd tell him [Mani takes over the narrative] and Baba would say, "Is that so?" [Baba's goal was to get done with it as fast as possible.]

Eruch: When He would shave there would be so many blotches, because everything He wanted to do in no time! That's why we took charge of giving him a good shave and a good bath. Earlier years He would go to the bathroom at Meherazad and give Himself a bath. In later years we would go in there and pour the water to bathe Him. In the last years, bathing was a problem for us, to give Him a bath.

So then what used to happen after that, it would be time to serve Him some breakfast. His likes were good tea, prepared tea, sugar and milk, and He liked cream. Not the cream that you know about. Here in India, we boil the milk, allow it to rest for the whole night, and you get a thick layer on the top and that is the scum of the milk, the cream, and that is what He liked, He had a taste for it. Also when we were on tour He would tell us to eat it too, because, He would say, it has a cooling effect and it's good for your stomachs. Also it had grease in it [Eruch means fat] and we didn't have rich food in those days.

So first thing in the morning for Baba would be this cream, little chapati, and tea. But He wouldn't want to have tea from the cup or anything of that sort. He had a huge saucer, and he would pour the tea into it, allow it to cool, and then drink from the saucer with both hands. He would ask for more if He wanted it.

Ah, I forgot, after washing the face there would be another bib put on, half the size of the washing bib, for His breakfast. Whenever He ate, there would be so many crumbs spread all over.

In later years, we used to find so many excuses so that whatever little food was served to Him should be consumed by Him. He would go on distributing His food to all of us, and there would be no food left for Him. So we used to just give out some excuses so that He couldn't give His food to us. Best excuse of the men was that we would go in with pan in our mouths, "We have taken pan, now Baba, we can't eat it, you take it for yourself." He would make a wry face -- like saying "You don't take when I offer this to you?"

After breakfast, if He was on a tour, He would go out, you see. If not on a tour there would be correspondence, or messages, or He'd come to the mandali hall and be with us all. First of all He would inquire of the mandali how we were, if we slept in the night, maybe someone would come out with a story of having seen a ghost, specially Gustadji would be giving out lots of stories because he was a bit psychic so to say. Maybe someone would describe a dream that he had, or sometimes there would be nothing.

So He would start the day with correspondence, or messages, or some discourse or some informal talk. If there was nothing of the sort, He would needle someone and excite him, a debate might start, and He would enjoy that, you see. Perhaps there would be a heated exchange of words. He'd tease someone, say to him that He had heard that someone else present had been speaking against him, he said this and he said that, and so forth.

After the morning was over, He'd go back to the women's side for lunch, or we would serve Him lunch, and again another bib would be put there. His favorite dish for lunch would be plain rice and dal with spinach. A bit of chutney, that is coriander leaf, garlic, green chilies and salt. That He liked best of all the things, you see. He would eat it all 365 days, and like it. Sometimes He would change the menu, perhaps say He would like bhajias [deep fried vegetable fritters], and we would go in for it. If we were on tour, He might get from a distance the smell of freshly-prepared bhajias.

No rest in the afternoon, mind you.

[Question came about when the night watchman would sleep. Eruch laughs.]

It was just like that in the air. Day and night murder, you may say. When the night watchman would come... Two or three night watchmen might be there. So a person would be called at 6 o'clock. He would keep watch till he was relieved at 9:30 or 10 PM. That man would work until 2 or 3 AM in the early hours of the morning, He comes back and then another one goes, and when he is done there is nothing for him, no more rest.

When we were on tour, it was a continuous thing like that. No fixed time for sleep. The daily routine would be the same thing, but we would prepare the dal and rice ahead of time. Chhagan was an expert in that, and he would come, and if not Chhagan then Kaka, and after Kaka got old I would cook for Him. It would be like that.

Sometimes in the afternoon He would say, "Well, it's time for bogus news." Some paper would be read out to Him, headlines would be read, and if He were interested in some item of news He would clap. When He clapped it meant we were to stop reading [and divert whichever way He directed.] Not one further word; if we were interested in it, we had to change, naturally. We were reading the paper for Baba's sake, not for our sake. Within half an hour, sometimes within 15 minutes the whole paper would be finished.

And then there might be discussions on the political affairs, or on topical news for some time, and then we'd go on to something else. He would elicit opinions from us, and people would freely speak out their opinions, you see. They would give out their opinions about how things should be and He would give out some opinions, and like that.

In the afternoon, there might be the urge to pass another stool, as Mani said. He would say, unsatisfied, "Only one stool I passed this whole day." I don't know what it is. It had

some meaning, and still we can't decipher what was the meaning in this. "It's not a good day," He would say, "when only one stool is passed."

Eventually afternoon tea would be brought, and the same play, and then maybe cards would be played, or more correspondence and messages would be attended to, and it would go on like that.

The day would be over when He decided to retire. This might happen at 4 or 6 or 8 or even 9 PM. There might be time for a bath then, and the night watchmen would do their duties.

Bathing in the later years was a problem. Whenever a day would be fixed for His bath, He would say, "You know, I tell you, tomorrow is my crucifixion." He would say this to tease us, just as He would talk about dark clouds, when He was telling us that we wanted to give Him a bath, but He didn't want one. "You know when that crucifixion is? Bath day tomorrow." We'd laugh and He'd laugh. And then again when the day would come He would put it off. Some excuse would be there, "I have a cold. My nose is running now, would you like me to be sick?" and all that. "Am I not feverish? Just feel." And we'd have to say, "Yes Baba you are feeling feverish." "Then let it be next day."

"But Baba, everything is prepared for you, everything is ready now."

"Never mind, next day. You all use the water." He wouldn't have hot water -- lukewarm. Baba would not be comfortable when there was a lot of wind, or a lot of sun. Not comfortable when there was good ventilation. All our preferences would be wiped off, you see.

Later years, it was quite difficult and we wanted that His body should not stink of sweat, Even if He had no bath for a year, let us say. His body perfume was something quite different from our body perfume. His body- it was not a scent, it was not a perfume, it was the most natural body smell. Even now I feel it was like a baby's body. You know how a baby smells? It gets that smell of milk.

We were nevertheless worried. We were his chelas, He was our guru, and He had taught us how to cajol the masts to take bath, and so from Him we had learned all these things. So in His later years, when He would avoid taking bath and all that, we would try to put into practice these things.

Ah yes, I completely forgot about brushing His hair and braiding and giving good shape. Every day it would be combed and brushed. Later He had His hair in a braid and we used to do that for Him. At night in the later years, He slept with His hair braided. I would insert His braid under His cap or His hat when He wanted not to be recognized.

Back to bathing. Goher would tell us that too many months had passed by and Baba hadn't had His bath, so we should do something. We'd say to the women, "Why don't you all do something!" We wouldn't have the heart to press Him into doing that. So we started

playing the tricks in these later years. When I'd start combing His hair, I'd make a wry face all of a sudden. Baba would say, "What is it?"

"Baba your head is giving a stink!" So He said, "Is that so?" All this in gestures plus His facial expression. He'd put his hand up, run it through His hair, and check for smell, and deny that there was any smell. I'd say, "No, just see, here and here." Baba would parry: "Is there any perfume anywhere?" He had us keep some perfume nearby so we couldn't tell Him that His body smelled bad. "Suppose someone comes here to embrace My body, and you are telling me that My body smells, so keep some perfume nearby and apply a little to the backs of My ears..." Again He would escape from that, you see? We'd tried to play a trick on Him and He played the trick back on us, you see.

"Look, Baba, see how the pores are all blocked, we will just sponge You. Plus the feet should be washed because they come in contact with all dust and like that." So He said, "All right." We prepared warm water, and got a basin, and put it next to His feet, and started sponging. He liked lavender, so we would put some in the water. We'd have many small towels around and before he removed His feet, we'd bring a fresh basin of water, and work our way toward His knees with the sponge..." Then He said, "Oh, you all are playing the same trick I played with the masts." [lots of laughter]

So that's how we'd do that. We never succeeded in a full bath in the later years. As well as I remember there was no bath for a couple of years. Nothing but excuses galore. He'd give such excuses that would appeal to us, so we would keep quiet.

[Questioner asks about Baba's clothes. Did you choose His clothes or did He choose them?]

Mehera and Mani would choose clothes. Lovers would sometimes bring things like pink coats for Him to wear, but the sadhra was pretty much the only clothes He wore. If we went abroad, we'd bring out His wardrobe and He would wear whatever we gave Him. We would dress him up, because if we were to leave Him to His choice He would only want to wear His shorts. [Amidst lots of laughter, someone says that the world wasn't ready for an Avatar in shorts, which provokes lots more laughter. Questioner asks if He would wear a sadhra more than once.]

He wouldn't want any breeze inside His room, so the temperature would often be terribly hot. We are now sitting here with the door open, but that would not be possible if Baba were here, nor the windows. Even if someone were to come through the door, it would be that person's job to again shut the door immediately. If someone stood in the doorway for a brief period, He would say, "Come on, get inside, shut the door." Here the weather is very hot and sadhra being very thin would just stick to His body. Sadhra being so thin, His body would appear, and it was just a whole clean presentation of His body. His skin had a peculiar shade, peculiar skin. There would always be that pink glow.

He wouldn't want to wear new clothes. Something fitted Him and He would continue with that same old thing, I don't know why. Until it was just put out of sight,

you see. Otherwise He would call for the same old thing. Same thing with a chair. He would also have His attachments, you see. Perfect person is an ordinary human being.

Clipping fingernails and toenails -- when they needed trimming, he would also put it off. "Not too deep" He would say. But we had our ways. We could press Him, but we knew the limits. We felt concerned about the body. Body must be looked after.

I still remember the incident at Guruprasad with Amrit's father [Shatrugna Kumar]. Baba had a corner room where He used to rest. One day Baba said, "How nice it would be, how beautiful it would be, if all of you were to do nothing. If one knows how to do nothing, one gets everything." He realizes himself as he really is. Kumar's nature is to speak out, and he said, "I can do that." I still remember, Baba was lying in bed at this time. We had been relaxing and chatting and talking and so forth. Freedom was there. Baba rejoined, "It is very difficult for anyone to do nothing."

Kumar rejoined, "What is there? If I am told to do nothing, I won't do anything."

"All right," Baba says, "Stand up. Keep on standing there, and don't do anything."

He remained standing, and Baba continued chatting and all that, a little conversation continued for ten or fifteen minutes, and then Baba rolled over in bed, and faced the wall. We remained sitting, and no more talk was there. We smiled, teased Kumar, and he did nothing. In no time, he would have everything. An hour passed by like that. Baba rolled back towards us after an hour or an hour and a half. His eyes were shut, but His eyes opened and as if He knew nothing about it, He saw Kumar standing there, and He said, "Why are you standing like that?"

Kumar didn't answer, didn't say anything. Now He asks us, "What is the matter with him? Why is he standing like that? How long has he been standing like that?"

Naturally we had to chirp in a few words, like "Baba he said that it is easy to do nothing, so you told him to continue to stand, so he is standing most probably."

"So, you all were mocking him?"

[tape ends]