
Meeting Meher Baba (2 of 2)

Ann Conlon

Meher Spiritual Center, Myrtle Beach, SC, USA

May 24, 1981

21:56

ANN CONLON: (cont.)

...that it took my breath away and I stopped. Besides my knees were shaking. And Baba looked at me and smiled and He held out arms like this, "Come on" and I went running into His arms and burst into tears and realized for the first time in my life that I was home, that I had never had one and I had just found it. I had never felt so completely loved and completely accepted and completely safe.

At that point, my mind went into neutral, it just came to a grinding halt. It was like being a kindergarten kid again, right? When I stepped back from Baba, He was crying, there was tears running down His cheeks. I stood there and looked at Him and He looked at me and He just nodded.

Then He started calling Mehera and Mani and some of the women. There was a room on the left, that was Mehera's room and it had louvered doors. So, they had watched my meeting with Baba. I wasn't aware there was anybody else in the room, Baba was the only thing I saw. But, Dr. Goher was there and Eruch of course who was interpreting for Baba and Meherjee had come in behind me.

Then He called the women and as an afterthought He said to myself, "Do you have any questions? "No Baba." Because I thought if there was anything He wanted me to know He'd tell me. If I asked Him anything, I might get an answer I didn't want. Better to leave it alone.

When the introduction had been completed and He let me sit at His feet and He said, "Did you read the Family Letter? I thought, Uh-oh! He's going to throw me out, I shouldn't have come, and I didn't care. I'd seen Him, I'd seen His eyes, that was all I wanted, it was enough. If He threw me out it was fine.

But He said, "What did the Family Letter say?" I said, Baba you said that people shouldn't come a great distance or at great expense. He said, "You came anyway?" I said, "Yes, Baba." He said, "It's all right, I'm glad you came in spite of the letter." He said, "What are you going to do when you leave here?" I said, "Well, I was going to go back tonight but Air India says there isn't another flight for five days and there is no way I can make the flight back tonight, it's impossible." There were no flights from Pune to Bombay then. I said, "But Baba, if you want me to, I'll try." He said, "No no you can't" He said, "Then what will you do?" I said, "Well, I guess I'll just go sit in the hotel and wait for the plane to leave." He said, "No sightseeing?" I said, "No Baba." He said, "Well, you won't go and sit in the hotel for five days. You come here every day for five days and sit with Me until the plane goes."

[Laughter]

Then He said, "What will your office think of that?" I said, "Well, Baba they told me they couldn't understand why I was coming just for the weekend and if I wanted to stay, I should cable them." He

said, "Make sure you do." I had the feeling that if they hadn't said that He would have gotten me back to the plane and back to the United States.

I have lost a lot; I don't remember what happened in that hour because I had completely just so fallen head over heels in love at that moment that I wasn't aware of a lot of stuff that Baba said to me. But think it was simple things like: "Have you slept? Are you comfortable at the hotel?"

About 4:30 Baba said to me, "Now, you sit closer to My feet or you'll get crushed." They were going to open the doors and let the people who had come for their one hour come in. So I did, I scooted closer and I was looking over my shoulder at the doors when they opened them and this thundering herd came through the doors some of whom dove through the windows. They started running toward Baba to see. They wanted to get as close as they could and Baba loved it. He sat up there and He slapped His knee and He enjoyed it tremendously. No decorum whatsoever. I saw out of the corner of my eye this woman bearing down on me, rather heavy-set. She got to me and she planted one hand on top of my head and used me as a pivot and she swung herself over me and scooted around behind Baba's chair and said down so she could be right behind Him and up against the chair.

[Laughter]

I remember being passed some child who had gotten separated from his parents. We were just passing him through the crowd. Baba loved it, that kind of enthusiasm for Him. When we were all settled down, Baba at one point, He asked me if I knew why Saint Francis loved Jesus more than Peter had. He said it was because Francis had never met Jesus that his love was that

much stronger, deeper which meant a great deal to me having waited those five years to meet Baba and having been so jealous of everybody who had. Then he asked a girl from Bombay if she would sing a song for me about Saint Mira and He asked if I knew who Mira was, and I didn't. He said that she was a Hindu Saint, she had lived hundreds of years after Krishna but had been very devoted to Him. She had given up everything, left her kingdom, her husband, her entire family to spend her life wandering, telling people about her Lord Krishna.

Then He got very serious. It was the only serious time in the five days that I was with Baba that I remember. He looked at me and He said, "Mira never put anyone or anything between herself and Krishna" and He repeated it. I understood that He was saying, "I am your Krishna, never put anyone or anything between Myself and you." I took that very literally for some time you know. It took me a while to realize that He wasn't saying, "Don't love" He was saying, "Just don't get so carried away that you let someone or something take you from Me."

Along about that point we had been sitting on the floor, several thousand people, like Rick is sitting and that was not easy for me and I was getting obviously very uncomfortable. Baba said, "That's not comfortable for you, there is no reason for you to do it, you weren't born to it as we were." He had a chair brought and put against the wall and He asked Rano Gayley to come out and sit with me so that if Eruch was translating His gestures into Marathi or Telegu, Rano could translate for me immediately and I wouldn't have to wait for the translation. I ended up sitting, if this was the wall, then Baba would have been sitting against where the door is back

there so I had that $\frac{3}{4}$ look at His face, with Rano sitting on my left. The one thing that Liz had told me, "The only important thing to remember when you are with Baba was never take your eyes off Him because the moment you did would be the time when He'd turn and look at you and you'd miss it." I sat there the whole afternoon just staring at Him. Every once in a while, He'd flip around, He was so fast, He'd turn and go eyebrows up "Are you happy? Are you happy?" Rano would give me a dig in the ribs, "Answer Him, answer." I'd say, "Yes, Baba." Every time He asked me, I was ecstatically happy. He'd do that over and over and over through the next five days. "Are you happy? Are you happy?" Baba's hour turned into, I think He was there three hours that first day.

The second morning I was at the hotel and I heard this commotion downstairs about noon and feet pounding up the stairs, I was on the second floor. There was Fred Winterfeldt. I knew that Fred had been coming but there had been some little technicality with his passport, so he came a day after I did. We grabbed each other and did this polka around the balcony at the hotel. I was yelling, "I saw Him! I saw Him!"

That afternoon Fred got to see Baba alone for a little while. Now, Baba had not asked me how I had gotten to India but He asked Fred, "How did Ann get here?" Fred told Him and when he got to the part about Ginny and Liz giving me the money to go, Baba had tears in His eyes. He said, "Baba is touched by such love for Baba and for a friend."

Then later when I saw Baba in the hall, He said, "Fred told me how you got here." He said, "Everyone helped you then." I said, "Yes, Baba." He said, "Everyone helped

you because I helped you, I wanted you to come."

That morning I had tried to send a cable to Ginny and Liz and couldn't find the words. It was a dumb cable. So Baba, at that point after He said that Fred had told Him how I got there, He said, "I have sent a cable to Virginia and Liz and He had Eruch give me a copy of it. Baba said, "Do you think they will like it?" What He'd done, He sent them the cable but He signed my name to it. It said, "Baba says because you have helped me come to Baba you have made Baba come closer to you. Baba sends His love to you both." Signed it Love, Ann.

I remember Kitty when she heard that story said, "They probably have no idea what they've done." She said it was very often that Baba would ask somebody to do something and of course you'd do it but to see an opportunity to do something like that and to seize it was so rare. They had no idea the benefit they brought on themselves. Of course, they weren't thinking of that.

That afternoon there were then two of us sitting against the wall. Baba had said that Fred and I should stay. The five days that I was to stay and when the plane was leaving coincided with the end of the darshan that I would be there until that two weeks was through. Baba said that Fred was to stay too and he was to change his tickets. We were supposed to go back to New York on the same flight. So the two of us were sitting there with Rano and I hear this shout in the back of the room. Arnavaz Dadachanji said, "Harry?" There standing in line was Harry Kenmore. Baba called him and said, "Harry, what are you doing here?" Harry said, "I've come to see my dear Pop." Baba said, "Your dear Pop is very happy to see His dear son." Then

there were three of us sitting against the wall.

Most of that time was spent, there was so much laughter. Baba was, He didn't want anything serious. There was one point at which Doctor Deshmukh wanted to give a speech, he insisted upon it, (Baba kept trying to stop him) saying no, he wanted to give his talk. Finally, Baba said, "Alright, go ahead."

He started to talk and there sat Baba through this entire twenty minutes into it, feet crossed like this and a little three-year-old boy sitting in front of Him. Baba spent the whole twenty minutes wiggling his toes at that little boy. Of course, the eyes and the tension of everybody in the crowd was on Baba and the little boy. Nobody heard the talk going on.

While Fred and Harry were there in the mornings Baba met with the men Mandali and any men visitors that were there. During that time He'd send me off with Arnavaz Dadachanji to meet other Baba lovers and keep me occupied some other way.

When we were coming up on the last morning He sent word that I should come to Guruprasad with Fred and Harry. We get out there and He called me into Mandali Hall. He was there with Fred and Harry and the men Mandali and seventy-five men from Hamirpur who had just arrived. I went in and Baba said, "You're not supposed to be here; this is a meeting exclusively for the men and there are no women allowed; but you can stay for five minutes and then you'll have to go. I sat down. Harry was telling jokes to Baba and Baba stopped Harry and at one point he said, "Harry, you're sure you want to tell that joke? Ann is here." Harry says, "It's all right Baba, she's over twenty-one."

[Laughter]

It was one of Harry's innocuous little jokes. He went on and Baba said, "Now you have to go, you're not supposed to be here." I got up and I started out again and He called me back, "You come back for another five minutes." So I went back and sat for a while longer and a little later He said, "Now you really have to go, you're not supposed to be here." I started out the door and He called me back again and He said, (He was laughing) He said, "Now, when I come back in seven hundred years you make sure that you come back as a man so you can attend these exclusive meetings."

[Laughter]

He was laughing, everybody laughed and I laughed. I got up out the side of the door and I thought, "Wait a minute." Well later, I found Francis Brabazon whom Baba had more or less put in charge of making sure that Fred and Harry and I got back to the hotel at night and didn't get into any trouble. He followed us around you know, during the day, he and Meherjee. I asked Francis, I said, "You know was Baba kidding when He said that, and if He wasn't kidding how do I make sure?" Francis said, "Well, He's not kidding. He often will tell you something, but in a light way. What He's done is make you a promise and all you have to do is remember it."

After I'd left the room at that point Baba said, "You go to Mehera and Mani now." Arnavaz took me to Mehera's room and there were twenty or twenty-five of the women there. All of the Mandali and a lot of visitors and it was confused and chaotic. I'd spent that week just going along with what anybody said anyway, so

it didn't make any difference to me. I was not operating at full capacity.

Mehera said they had a sari they wanted me to try on. They all had a hand in this, they got me dressed up in this lovely lavender sari with gold flecks and it was a perfect fit. Goher kept saying to me, "Put your hands together and say, Namaste, Baba." I kept trying to do it, she kept making me do it until I got it somewhere near the correct pronunciation; I still don't know what was going on. All of a sudden, they open the doors to the hallway and we all troop out into the hall and we walked across the hall and Goher opened another set of doors, gave me a shove in the back and then slammed the doors behind me. I was back in Mandali Hall with Baba and Fred and Harry and seventy-five men from Hamirpur. I looked at Baba and the only thing I could think of was this sari is not going to stay on.

[Laughter]

Because if you're not used to it, it feels that way. But I remembered what Goher had said and I put my hands together and I said, "Namaste, Baba" Baba looked up and His eyes kept telling me, "It's beautiful." He called me over, gave me an embrace and He said, "Now you go back to the women." I turned around, went out and went back to them and Mehera said that the sari was hers and that Baba had said that she could give it to me as a gift from her and from Baba.

Now what nobody but me knew supposedly was that that morning being the last day I had wanted very much to get dressed up for Baba. It was extremely hot, I had brought all of my own clothes, the only thing I had to get dressed up in was a black summer dress, fine for suburban New York, terrible for India in May. You

know, impossible. I was wearing the same thing I'd worn all week and washed out all night and Baba took care of that wish. He gave me one of Mehera's saris for me to get dressed up in for Him. That entire week He gave me every stupid little thing I wanted. After that I wanted to give something to Mehera but Baba had said, "Don't bring any gifts for Him or the mandali." So I wouldn't even ask. That evening, Dr. Goher came to the hotel and she said, "Baba wants to know if you will get some things for Mehera in New York" I said, "Of course." She said, "Now, I have the money for them." I said, "Do you think it will be all right with Baba if I took care of that, I'd really like to." She laughed and she said, "Baba said you wouldn't take the money."

The last afternoon we were to be there was also the last afternoon of the darshan. A lot of the Indians instead of going right home after they'd had their hour earlier in those two weeks had hung around Pune on the chance that Baba would do exactly as He did do which was send out word that anyone who was still in Pune, whether they had their hour or not, they must come to Guruprasad that afternoon. It was an order; they were to come for prasad. There were somewhere between three and five thousand people trying to jam into that hall in the afternoon. Baba was there, I think, till ten o' clock at night because He saw every single one of them. People were supposed to get their prasad and then leave the hall immediately, go home. I got in line and went up and got my prasad and as I turned around and I was going to leave the hall; that is what He said. I felt this hand on the back of my neck, it was Rano. She said, "Not you dummy, He doesn't mean you go back and sit against the wall."

[Laughter]

Ann: Oh dear, wonderful.

Pilgrim 1: What does namaste mean?

Ann: The God in me greets the God in you. It's the same word in most Indian languages, it cuts across those dialect lines.

The last hour of that last afternoon there also appeared on the scene, Edward and Irwin Luck, who made it within fifteen minutes for the last darshan. They arrived at quarter of four. I think they had come by way of Africa to get there or something, a weird plane flight. It was Edward's first meeting with Baba. Baba let the two of them spend the afternoon seated right at His feet. They held a pillow over Baba's feet to prevent people from bowing down to Him, which He didn't want at that time. Baba also made them change their tickets. He wanted all five of us to go back to New York on the same flight.

We were to leave the next morning with Meherjee to go to Bombay, spend the day in Bombay with Meherjee and get on the flight that night.