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## Agnes' Work

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### Agnes Baron

Mandali Hall, Meherazad, India

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16:03

**AGNES:** So anyway, things were comparatively speaking. And then oh yes when Baba left His body, I very seriously asked myself, what would He, "What do you want me to do with Meher Mount?" He would never say. The most important thing that happened in San Francisco was now to decide what to do about Meher Mount legally. John was out of the picture and I wanted to put it in Baba's name. So I thought we could do it in San Francisco. And we called a lawyer and he said Baba can't own. He's an Oriental alien and he can't own property in California. That was stupid but that was their version of it. So when they announced it, we were all standing there and everybody was whoo and Baba [clapped]. He didn't care, He laughed. He said, "Alright then," right away and I was standing at the back. "Put it in Agi's name," I said, "Uh-uh, I don't want any property, I'm finished owning anything. I don't want any" [second clap of Baba] Second time. I said, "No! I don't want it. I don't want it!" And Adi came and said, "Shut up Agnes! [she laughs] It's Baba's orders." [laughter] and so while I was talking to him. He said it for the third time, so it was clinched.

I was very unhappy about it so I went back to Meher Mount and I wrote Him a long letter and a very frank one. I said, Baba, you're universal. Everybody's yours, so it doesn't matter whether they're Baba people or who comes. I said, Baba lovers. There aren't any Baba lovers. You said nobody knows anything about love so I'm not going to limit it to Baba lovers. I don't like ashrams; I've had my share of ashrams. I don't like group work. I've had that. And I

just put it very bluntly. I said, "If you don't like this, you can get somebody else. Pick somebody else out and I'll pick up my cats and dogs and I'll just leave" I get a telegram or letter, I forget which. It said, "Dear beloved watchdog, Whatever you say about Meher Mount is ok with me." And that was all. That was it. No lecture, nothing at all. And I had stipulated very strictly. I said, "Anybody who is in trouble." There's a lot of poverty people and abused people who are also in that part of California; the Mexican people are really sad. And I had worked with them previously and I loved the work. And so they would come up sometimes any hour of the night or day for help.

So I thought, I want to work with people like that. So He gave the okay so then I went into "The War on Poverty." That was a Federal government thing. And then they put me in charge of a whole territory which is very strictly poverty and I helped with the housing situation, had the Federal government come in and knock down the houses. I said, I've been in Baghdad in the leper colony. They live in better housing than these people did. So they came and sent an inspector. And these huge ranches, very wealthy and they oppressed the people terribly. And I worked with the high school kids and got all sorts of organizations going for them and got more legal rights. Then I got tired of the bureaucracy, so I wrote a letter to Washington and told them why I was leaving, and they sent a representative from Washington to talk to me about it. And they offered me the job of Director of the

whole program. I said, "Uh-uh, too much bureaucracy, too much boondoggling."

So I quit that, and what did Baba want me to do? So I decided that He said, "Drugs, get this generation of youngsters off of drugs." So then I went to Los Angeles to study at a program there and I came back and I did that for about three years and it was very effective. And a lot of the Baba people at the University of Santa Barbara heard about Baba. I think Allan Cohen talked and somebody else did. Then they heard about Meher Mount. They used to come every weekend and they were very good. They got off and then when they heard about my program, they would come evenings and help talk to the kids and get them off. So that went until about '73.

And the work was much too tiring so I went back to teaching, substitute teaching, kindergarten through high school. And then without them knowing it, I tried to instill in them the basic, basic things like consideration for other people, loving other people and using their own mind on making a decision and not doing it because everybody else was doing it. Because that's the problem with kids. They do what their peers do you know. And then people come up to Meher Mount. But I don't have any big programs at all and anybody who comes has to work. I said, Baba's place and Baba's work. So that's my stipulation. So that's it and I had a visit from Bill LePage and he insisted on my coming.

**MANI:** Have you seen that others also who would attempt to want to come to be at Meher Mount? You talked about Red Indians.

**AGNES:** About what?

**MANI:** About Indians.

**AGNES:** Oh yes, the Chumash, yeah. There's a very interesting, that whole area is very sacred to the Chumash Indians. And

the grandson of the grandpa Chumash came up. Well as a matter of fact, a few years, six years before that, they were settling in a public park in a Simi Valley which is about fifty miles away and the supervisor there said that they could do it. But then the people around objected. We don't want these Indians settling here, so they took it to the supervisor board and they voted to throw them out.

And when I heard that I was so angry at the injustice. We come there and we take the land away from them, from the American Indians and we make slaves of them, and then they have the nerve to keep treating them that way. And so I was so indignant, I dashed down to the park and I said, "Look if they throw you out and you need a place to go, I've got a hundred acres of wilderness. You come there and settle." And I left word and grandpa wasn't there at the time but I went to the supervisor and I told him the same thing. And he was angry too but he was in the minority. So they didn't turn up but I heard that they had been donated some forty acres further north. So I understood why they didn't. But some years later this young grandson turns up, "Are you the lady who was offering us the land, to the Chumash, way back in (such and such a year)?" I said, Yeah. So He said that his grandpa had a place and he was going to start another one, just a few miles north of me. But he said he wanted to come see me and so forth. Then his cousin, who is also a grandson, came up and he was the medicine man for that whole area.

And he came up several times and I told him the same thing. And he said that he said also, Am I the one who would authorize? I said, Yeah. And I said, "You can settle there but for goodness sake don't put any buildings up because you'll get me in trouble with the bureaucrats." "We don't need any buildings. We don't need any teepees. We only want a place where we can come and pray." And so something

happened to him. I haven't heard from him for some time. And I think he dedicated himself to traveling from Carmel which was way in the South and way up in the North way down to near Los Angeles. Taking care of his people. A very beautiful man and he can't afford to keep his wife and child alive, he doesn't have any money.

So I had the funny feeling that you know that maybe Baba wants Meher Mount somehow connected with the American Indians and awakening them to their old traditions and their religion. Because someone had written a book who knows a lot about the Indians. That they believe that when a great spiritual teacher from the Orient comes out to the West, that's the signal for them to awaken. And strange enough, I've noticed more and more of them are getting their independence and standing up for themselves and coming forward. And it jives with that trip that Baba made across and when He got off the train to contact. Kitty knows about that, where Baba made. There were two

**PILGRIM 2:** Indians.

**AGNES:** There were two Indians and they signaled to each other and He came back on the train. But I have a strange feeling that whole area is a sacred land for the Chumash. They could fight any place else but they couldn't fight there. And then one time, Baba called me into what I called Baba house and only Adi was there. He said, "I want Adi to know that Meher Mount has a, and I'm very happy here and I'm very pleased with it. He said, "I want you to know it has a very spiritual atmosphere." And I said very stupidly, "Well Baba, you know I'm not a saint and I'm not responsible for it." [clap by Baba] "Meher Mount has a very spiritual atmosphere." [laughter] Then I said, "Maybe it's Chumash Indians Baba," I said, "cause this is their area." He didn't say yes, He didn't say no. But He looked you know, kinda wise about it. So I had a funny

feeling, I don't know why, that somehow that would be very instrumental in bringing the American Indians back to their own culture. And their teepees are beautiful you know. They're very much like out of the East. Very much. Someone did, "The American Indians and the East, the Oriental Philosophy."

**PILGRIM 2:** [inaudible]

**AGNES:** They're almost parallel. And I haven't seen it done anywhere else. I know they've been repressed and told to give up their religion cause you know the good old Christians and then missionaries wanting to convert them. And so they have deliberately denied their religion outwardly. They practice it only in great secret. That's right and they give the impression having been stupid and dull and sitting around on street corners but they have some beautiful wise men wandering around under the sky. So wouldn't that be fun if

**MANI:** What about his last trip? [inaudible] Bill LePage came how long ago?

**AGNES:** What?

**ERUCH:** Bill LePage. When did he visit you?

**AGNES:** He was there, when was it? Two months ago? Oh wait a minute. May, June, July. I think it was in July.

**PILGRIM 4:** June, July.

**AGNES:** It must have been in July he came through. He brought son up, William also from, he was living up in Berkeley.

**PILGRIM 4:** Michael

**AGNES:** Michael, yeah. And all I, the first time I met, I may have met him just casually but I didn't really remember him. And he sympathized with all my problems,

he thought he might have some answers to my financial part of it. And the thing that puzzles me is Baba told him what he should do to make money but He never told me. [laughter] Now why is that? [laughter] Discrimination against women. [laughter]

**MANI:** I wasn't excited about the fact that Baba got you there and [inaudible] Cards, [inaudible] and letters. I wanted to see a man. [laughter by Agnes] And embrace you.

**PILGRIM 6:** What happened to John Cook?

**AGNES:** Poor guy. He went from bad to worse. Oh the story I forgot to tell was. I don't remember just exactly Carloti, when it was. But it was before he wanted the money back. Baba said He wanted to meet with me and John to settle the matters. And John didn't come and I guess he was still in Europe. I didn't know where he was. And Baba asked me where he was. I said, "Baba I don't know. He's in your pocket. I don't know where he is." And He said, "John is mad." And I said, "Everyone knows that." I thought He was joking. And then John didn't turn up, so it was either at that same time, yes it was at that same time. It was at Myrtle Beach and Baba kept calling me every day for half an hour. I never saw Him so angry. He said, "I don't want John connected with the name of Meher Baba, with Meher Mount, he doesn't have love." He went on and on. And He said, "Now you must get him out.

Get him out of the picture entirely." And he told me, he talked about it. And then, "Now do you know what to do?" I said, "No Baba, I'm all confused." So I walked out of the room and then the next day, He'd call me in again, another half hour. He'd go through the same thing each time. John was this and John was that and that he was completely dissociated. He must never come to Meher Mount again. And this went

on now for several weeks. And at the final one, He said, "You know what you have to do?" And I said, "I'm still confused Baba, I have no idea of what to do." Because it meant paying John back or giving him the property or something. And then He finally said, "Whatever you do, do not use coercion." And I thought, now what does that mean? If I sued him and if I went to court, I have the legal document where he had said it was a donation. There's no doubt about it. But He said no coercion. So I interpreted coercion to mean no law court. I think now I might have made a mistake. Because John was illegal.

**AGNES:** So I had to pay, I had to pay the whole amount. I had to pay the whole thing again.

**ERUCH:** umm

**AGNES:** Well anyway, John went up north and he started to drink more and take more drugs. And finally, poor guy, He was so bad that the authorities were after him. Cause he was having a lot of young people in and he was corrupting them. He had them on drugs. He had plenty of money you know. He had this big house. He had all the young people twirling around and just handing out what they wanted. So the authorities were after him so he escaped to Mexico. And he died about three or four years ago, I think. In isolation and still crippled.

**PILGRIM 5:** In Mexico? [crosstalk]

**AGNES:** He died in Mexico. And I don't remember how long ago it was. Very sad. And I've always been puzzled why he, cause he was weak obviously and he shouldn't. I knew a lot of people even worse. Baba never got so angry with them. But somebody, I don't know if He did that to John. Maybe He did that to make me take on my financial burden again. I don't know what it was.

**PILGRIM 5:** Maybe He did not want John in association with you.

**AGNES:** Not at all. Not at all.

**PILGRIM 5:** That's His own reason.

**AGNES:** So I don't know

**PILGRIM 5:** Baba's reason.

**AGNES:** You knew him. He was a sweet guy. He was harmless.

**MANI:** I just saw him once. And correspondence.

**AGNES:** He was very weak. And that's part of it.

**MANI:** [inaudible] [crosstalk]

**ERUCH:** Everything is part of it. It's final.

**AGNES:** Because real criminals and crooks Baba forgives very quickly. I know you said He loved saints but He adored sinners. I understand that because one of my jobs was getting jobs for hard core unemployables. You know ex-convicts and ex, dregs of the you know society. And I got jobs for them. I bullied the employers and told them they were discriminating until they all got jobs. And they were beautiful people. They swung off of being you know violent and so forth.

**PILGRIM 6:** Why were you going to do that? [crosstalk]

**AGNES:** And I think that they had energy that you can work with. And they would completely swing around. They were so grateful that someone took an interest in them you know. I mean it was so wicked that they put them on parole, the one guy came in and he said, "You got get me a job in two weeks or I'll have to go back to the clink!" [laughter] I said, "What's the matter? Aren't you free?" "No! I gotta get a job!" "Are they helping you? The parole officer?" "No I gotta get it myself." I said, "How can you get a job when you got a criminal record? A police record?" "I don't know but I gotta get one, and you gotta help me." And they literally do that to these poor people. Isn't that awful? "You sit down. I'm going to get you a job if it's the last thing I do." And I did, I used a little bullying but [laughter] I got him a job and he came into tears saying, "You're the first person who's ever treated me like a human being." When you see a big tough man weeping, it just breaks your heart. And I was ready to weep and said, "Well come on, you are a human being. Put your shoulder back and step down. That's what I'm talking about. You are as good as they are." And he walked out there with his shoulders back and he's going to be a big proud man. And he was so pathetic and everybody treats him like a, you know like a criminal. I don't like that. Our society has no compassion at all. But anyway that's the end of my story. It may not be the end of it yet but anyway. [laughter]