
AMUSING STORIES JAMBU MAMA

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MANI: I remember little things like. Just like all the poetry and stories I remember the funny ones you know. Not some of the profound things but the funny and silly things always remain in your memory at least it does in mine. And one of the things I remember was that Baba and His men had come one day for a visit at His home. Baba house. The house by the well. With the well. And Baba would come to visit mother. To be home. Now with His disciples. And I was very little. I think I was about 4. Before 5 anyway.

So Baba was seated on His gaadi. Mattresses mother had put out on a rug in the floor and they were all seated around. And among them was this man called Jambu mama. He was big, huge man. And he looked huger because he was dressed in black. Big black Parsi coat that came below his knees. [Inaudible] black cap. Just was [inaudible].

Now while they're all seated Baba played checkers, Baba talked and all. Baba was talking then. And one or the other of the men once in a while would leave. Go out to the rooms either for a drink of water or for some little personal thing you see and come back.

And you would think Baba hadn't even noticed. So suddenly Baba says, "It's quite alright for you'll go out anytime you want to go out." Or something. "But remember do one thing. It is very

important." And they all took it very seriously and said, "Yes Baba what is it?" "Don't let Jambu mama get out of the room." They thought there was a big meaning behind it. Baba says, "You know why? Because while he's here all the mosquitoes go to him [pilgrims laughing]. Because he's in black. Once he goes out all the mosquitoes will attack us. So see that he stays in the room while we are here." I thought it was so funny I was telling a joke and laughing louder than anybody.

And then later after playing draughts, Gustadji played draught with me, checkers, draught. Which American or English whatever you'll say. So Gustadji and I were playing checkers and I won. Years later I realised he allowed me to win. I didn't know then. So very sweetly I'd take him around. When I would be walking with Baba or with my father when I was little I always caught the little finger. The little finger of the right hand. So I was leading him along to each one and not being at all modest about having won, "You know Gustadji and I played checkers just now you know? And you know I won." And Gustadji would say, "Yes she won, she won." Then I'd take him to the next person. I would say it in Gujarati, "[foreign] He lost I won." [Mani laughs].