
BEGINNING

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11:51

AGNES: But hindsight you know it's pretty good. And I begin to see for the first time the string that pulled me along with Baba. But I didn't know it. I was very stubborn and I wasn't going to fall for any teachers. And in the start. When we'd started chronologically was in the year, I don't remember the exact year but it must have been before '49. Maybe a year before that. And I had just left the Vedanta Society where I had been for two years. I had renounced the world and I was going to be very spiritual and stuff like that. But things turned out. But I left it. And I was very angry at the spiritual path, teachers. I was finished. I was going to be very cynical and move back to my old life. And I walked up to the mountain in La Crescenta which is near Hollywood. And I went to the other Vedanta Center which was much more, for some reason much more agreeable. And I was trying to find a place to live. I wasn't going to search anymore. And I wanted to do some writing. And they said, "Well you can stay here but you can't use your typewriter because you'll make noise. But there's a funny place along the road. About 2 miles along. They have some teacher from India. We don't know what His name is and well the woman's name is Jean something and the man's name is Alexander something. We don't know who they are. Now they may have some cottages."

That was the New Life Center. When I got there I found out. The very first place that Baba had in the West. Now why did I leave Vedanta in great anger and get recommended to go to this other queer place which is Meher Baba's? Don't ask me. When I got there, I didn't like the people and they said, "Oh, we have a spiritual teacher from India too. And His name is Meher Baba." And I went, "Oh, who cares about your Meher Baba!" And I was very annoyed then. I told, "Look I came here for a cottage. I'm not interested in your teacher."

So, they let me have a cottage and I stayed there for a while and I lived up in the hill. They had a cottage up in the hill. I'd have a basket with food. They'd come down get food and go back. Had no contact with them at all. And every time I'd see Jean Adriel she'd start talking about Baba and I got more and more annoyed. And one day she said, "Oh my dear I'm a writer too, you know. Would you read this script?" And I thought, "Oh, these boring people who are always handing out their, you know something that they've written."

[general laughter]

So, I thought I'll work late and then I'll read it quickly and take it down in the morning. It would happen to be the original text of the Avatar. And the first half of the book was all about Jean Adriel and how the birds fed them and all that sort of nonsense. [general laughter]

Then, the last half I got my attention. I thought this is funny. She's talking about this weird teacher called Meher Baba and all the things that He did. I said this is simply unbelievable, and I got more and more excited. And I read and read and I finished it that night. And I'm like listen but He sounds for real. And I dashed down the hill and... [bell chimes]
[pilgrims laughing]

And Jean was still in bed and I had this in my hand and I was like, "Hey Jean, is this guy for real? This Meher Baba for real? This person who you are talking about, has he done all these things?" And I was really irritated with her. She said, "Yes my dear." I said, "What are you waiting for? Why don't you get it published? What you waiting for?"

Now why did I do that? I still hadn't met Him. And I didn't like her.
[general laughter]

Well I said, "What are you waiting for?" So anyways so she says, "Would you edit it?" And I said, "On one condition. You give me a red pen so I can x out all the terminology, sloppy terminology used." I said, "Nobody will buy it, the first part of it." "Oh yes." So, finally from then on she liked me of course.
[pilgrims laughing]

And then I still wasn't too keen about her but time went on and then Jean said that Meher Baba had written from India, "Find a place at least 2 hours away from a big city." And, so I didn't pay any attention then but she said "We were going out for a drive this afternoon looking for a place, would you like to come?" Well it was a hot day so I thought I would go with them. And they, every time they'd see a lovely place they'd say, "Oh there's Baba's place." Then we drove along all about 2 hours out of Los Angeles along the 150 highway into the [inaudible] And from there down into town to leave a little girl in school. And as we were going along, we looked out and here was this. On the top of this mountain, the very top of the mountain range there was this, like a crown. Trees and light shining through. We said, "There's a place for Baba." Jokingly. So, we went to town then we, on our way back they said, "Let's drive up and see what it's like." It was a very in those days, just for one horse. Just a very narrow wood and road, dirt road. 3 miles up but we crawled along, we thought about 20 miles. Finally there was a road turning to the left. We turned in. And there was a big wooden gate. We said, "Well this is the place," and everybody said well maybe, maybe not. So, we saw what's now the Baba house, the corner of the cottage. Jean said, "No, that's not enough. Baba's going to send 6

Mandali over to live." I don't know if it was true or not but anyway she. "They're going to stay here for a while. We have to have a lot of buildings."

So, I said. Now why did I do that? I went for the ride. I wasn't there just finding for Meher Baba like everybody else. And I jumped the gate. "Hey, hey you can't do that, you're trespassing." I said, "I don't care." And they said, "Well there aren't any buildings, just a waste of time. I said, "No, behind that there'll be another building, behind that there'll be another. There'll be plenty of buildings. Now why did I say that? I'm not psychic, I'm not occult. I just said it jokingly. So I rushed up the hill and I looked into the windows and there was beautifully furnished a two bedroom little house. And I walked around and there was another house. Bigger house and more building. Then I looked around through the windows there and beautifully furnished again. Went around the other one. Another building. And I was more astonished than anyone. So, I went to the top of the road and I said, "Hey, come on everybody there are a lot of buildings here." So, they climbed the fence. They came in and they sat. There was a beautiful orchard in the vineyard. Everything was the landscape.

ERUCH: Whom do you mean by they?

AGNES: The rest of the people that belong. That had been, that remained in the Baba group.

ERUCH: No, but Jean?

AGNES: Jean and Alexander split. He went to New York with a play and she. They were married.

ERUCH: Alexander Markey?

AGNES: Alexander Markey, yeah.

ERUCH: Oh I see.

AGNES: They decided to not carry on with the New Life Center anymore. Or she was going to and he wasn't. I didn't know what the details were and I didn't particularly care. I just went for the ride. So, anyway they were planning to sell the New Life Center and buy another place. And the New Life Center and 500 acres and a very beautiful property. But they said, "This place is so elaborate that we can't afford it." So, went back to L.A., Hollywood. Now why did I make them do it? I said, "Call up the owner." They had the owner's mansion in Bel Air where all the millionaires live. "But we'll never be able to afford it." I said, "It won't cost you anything to get on the phone and find out." Now why was I insisting the whole time?

I was responsible for the whole thing from the very beginning. And so, they called and got the price. Found out that the woman was a millionaire and we talked to her business manager. And the woman said, "Well how did you know that we were planning to sell? We haven't announced it." And Jean got you know. "Oh well you know we were lead to it." [general laughter]

She always had to have something very interesting. So, anyway the woman quoted the price and they thought well I guess we can have a look after they sell the New Life Center. So, once again I didn't plan to go but Jean said, "Oh won't you come with us?" I said, "Why? I'm not committed to your Meher Baba. I'm not going to live your life." "You won't come anyway?" I said, "If I can be the outdoors man, And I don't have to commit myself. I just work when I'm outdoors." I didn't know anything about farming at that time but I said that. She said, "Alright".

MANI: But this beautiful place you saw is what's Meher Mount?

AGNES: That's what is now Meher Mount. And I was the first one to move in. And I lived there while they were moving the stuff out. Well anyway, before the year when I was there. Not being involved in any of the meetings or, I tried to stay away from everything. I was just doing my own work. My own writing and outdoor work. Then Jean one day announces she was going to India. And she was going to stay there forever.

ERUCH: No, but how did you get this from New Life Center ? How did you come to Meher Mount?

AGNES: Well just by.

ERUCH: They parted with the property?

AGNES: No, no. They just made a down payment. They hadn't sold the New Life Center yet. But they transferred the non-profit of New Life Center to Meher Mount incorporated. But they put down a down payment. Around 5,000 or 10,000 whatever it was and they were going to pay so much a month. And then, but they hadn't sold the property so they still were having difficulty. Jean got kind of bored you know with when it comes to anything serious. So, she said, "I've decided that I'm going to give up all of this and I'm going to India. I have a letter from Baba that I can come." And then she started to laugh. She said, "I put one over on Him. I told Him some time ago that I wanted to be coming but He said no. You are not to come." And so she said, "I told Him if you don't let me come I'm going to leave the body." Not that she was going to commit suicide. "So, He finally told me to come". And one of the men who'd been with Baba for some time said, "Oh she's asking for trouble. Oh boy, she's asking for trouble."

Jean was bragging, she'd put something over on Baba and forced Him to consent for her to go. So, she said she was going to go to India and spend the rest of her life there and that she's going to die in India. So, she packed up all of her things and left. And told everybody else to go. And she asked me to stay. I said, "Why me? I don't belong here. Why don't you ask one of the Baba people?" No. I'm absolutely going with you. Stay. So she said, "Until I get to India and find out what Baba wants." I said, "Okay that'll be a month or so." So, I said, "Okay."

And she arrived in India and the next thing I knew, what happened? She was back in the United States. She did not tell us at the time that Baba had told her never to come to Meher Mount again. [cross talk]

It was before Myrtle Beach was started and before Meher Mount. When was it Myrtle Beach was started? '49?

PILGRIM 1: '52. They start in '47 but they opened in '52.

AGNES: Well New Life Center, I don't know when that started but that must have been '47 or '42. I don't know. Do you remember?

PILGRIM 1: No, I was in [inaudible]

PILGRIM 2: I think Jean came the first time to India in '37.

AGNES: Well this must have been later then. She went from Meher Mount. Were you here in '46, '47? Do you remember when Jean came?

PILGRIM 3: Yeah, she came with Delia.

PILGRIM 4: It was '48

AGNES: And she didn't stay very long. How long did she stay?

PILGRIM 4: 2-3 months.

AGNES: 2 months. Yeah. And I didn't know when she was back because she went to Hollywood. And then she suddenly turned up at Meher Mount and the woman was acting a little [inaudible]. Said that Baba told her never to come back to Meher Mount. So, anyway.

PILGRIM 5: Agnes, I was wondering if it was called Meher Mount from when you first bought the property, where the name came from.

AGNES: Oh, we just decided on it when we got it.

PILGRIM 5: When you first bought it.

AGNES: When we first bought it. Yeah.