
HISTORY OF POONA CENTRE

Eruch Jessawala

Guruprasad, Poona, India

September 22, 1972

6:31

ERUCH: So after that of course on the 14th there is not the mention about a program from the Los Angeles group here. Yesterday there was a request sent for half an hour of program on the 14th. A day to be given on 14. Give the day 14th. Half an hour when you'll come. If you'll want an hour you can have an hour to entertain Baba. It is not mentioned here because this was typed out before the request. On 14th evening you will be visiting the Poona Centre. Ramakrishnan, Ramakrishna, he's coming. Ramakrishnan, K.K. Ramakrishnan the secretary of Poona Centre, Avatar Meher Baba Poona Centre invites you all to the Centre. Yes, he's coming.

Poona Centre, it's a long, long history. Poona Centre. Here is our K.K. Ramakrishnan. He works for a livelihood. Ramakrishnan someone will want to see you from there. Because [inaudible] [pilgrims greet Ramakrishnan]. He works in his office there all day and then he should take rest and says he does take rest. How? By doing Baba work. So you find Ramakrishnan at the home or in the office of the Centre [inaudible]. After office hours. Rama, we call him, Rama what are you doing now? Well I am resting. Resting in the office? Yes, doing Baba work. So that's his rest.

He was very particular to have a central hall built in Poona, the birthplace of Baba. He approached Baba not once, dozens of times and Baba said, "Wait, wait the time

would come." He was impatient. Those days he heard Baba's bhajans sung or some talks given by Baba in different localities. Digambar here? Come Digambar. Here is the son of a very staunch lover of Baba. Here is Digambar Gadekar. He has paid a visit to the U.S.

PILGRIMS: Jai Baba.

ERUCH: His father, Ramchandra Gadekar. He went from house to house telling people about Baba's love for them. People did not know Baba and says how can one love one who's not known? Baba loves all because Baba in all. Ramchandra Gadekar went from place to place. He had started a small centre in his house. Centre as big as, you may call it just this chair you may call it. And people would herd there and just stand there and hear what Gadekar would say. Gadekar went from house to house putting Baba's pictures and established little centres in different houses.

Ramakrishna one day, somehow or other spotted this love springing up like small patterns of meadows in different localities, desert places. He was attracted by the green-ness there is the desert. He had got an idea to have a central place. If these little groups can be gathered together in a big hall what a joy it will be! What love would flow. So he tried to collect all the people together and make them sit at one place. The place was not sufficient. He went abegging to people whom he knew. One family by name of Murliar, he

donated in a college for temporary use a hall. A hall one third the size and there Baba meetings were held. Ramakrishna took Baba there and there the whole place, the streets, the localities were over crowded to hear and see Baba. Ramakrishna then again approached Baba for a central place. Meherjee was there, Nariman and all the patrons. And then he said that he would go abegging from place to place and collect money to have a building.

Could he send some request to Westerners? He asked Baba. After some thought Baba selected some persons in the West and said, "Yes, you can." And as this Avatar Meher Baba hall is built by the joint efforts of the Easterners and the Westerners, Ramakrishna takes pride in inviting both the Easterners and the Westerners on 14th evening to the hall built by the love of Easterners and Westerners. So please make it a point that all of you be there at the Centre.

The buses will be at your hotels and you all will be taken there to the Centre.

PILGRIM 1: Andhra Wala [inaudible].

ERUCH: Yes. The Easterners and Westerners from South. Easterners not from Poona. From all over the India they contributed. It's a very big hall, a decent hall. And I must not forget Meherjee here at this point. Meherjee, our Meherjee who helps you to come over here. You're travel agent you may call him [general laughter].

He worked hard to get contractors. He had good sessions. Hot discussions with Ramakrishna about the cost and the building and the construction and the design and all that. Somehow or other

Meherjee got the work done and I think now Ramakrishna is satisfied [general laughter].

Ramakrishna will remember that Baba had said that there will be a Centre. People will be visiting the Centre. And I think it will be a day of great pride for Ramakrishna to find you brothers and sisters from the West, right across the oceans visiting the Centre at his work place. So that's the history of Poona Centre in short. Meherjee, Ramakrishna had it in mind to give you this. I'm sorry to have encroached upon it. [crosstalk]

MEHERJEE: I have taken the cup.