

## KG-115A

### Mani Irani

Mandali Hall, Meherazad, India

December 15, 1979

44:30

### Content

"...has to be. There's no such thing as someone left out of the connection. But, it's the measure of connection and the time. Baba would say, 'Her time had not come.' Your connection was already there, but this is the time. Whereas, Stella's time might be in the Next advent when He comes. It's like the ripples when you throw a stone into the lake. There's the first ripple and then the second, and they cover the whole universe. But which are the closer ripples? It's like those who lived in the household with Him, and Baba would include them. He would say, 'I have to see to everything, the tiniest detail of those around me.' Then He would say, 'My lovers everywhere,' then He would say, 'The world' then he would say 'The Universe.' Nothing does not get His attention and His love, but it's in the measure.

Woman pilgrim asks if a Baba-connected person dies and comes back soon, if that person has no connection with Baba in his next life. Mani responds emphatically, "Never" as in "not possible."

"It's one of the things I asked Baba. Suppose there is one who loves you and they die. Then would they have to search for you? And would they perhaps not recognize you? And Baba said, 'In the next lifetime, you take up from the point where you left off. It's never a "going backwards," it's always a "going forward."'

"The 'now' is so important, as the point you're going to leave off from. It's just going to be carried on, never left off. How did I know about Him? I must have loved Him as Jesus I must have loved Him as Muhammad. This applies to each one. That connection keeps rolling forward. Baba said, 'Does a river ever roll backward?'

"Another thing. If one doesn't have a connection, look how compassionate, how complete He is. Through you, those who are connected to you also get that blessing."

Rano speaks up: "Baba told Nonny and Ruano and me that our connection with Him was from the time of Jesus. At that time Ruano was a man, I was his son, and Nonny was his sister.

"When you're connected with the Real, how can there be a break? With the shadow, yes...There are so many who say, 'Yes, but my parents don't love Baba.' Baba says not to worry, that your connection with Him also reaches those who are connected with you.

"Maybe in childhood [a person connected to Baba in the previous lifetime] might not immediately pick up with Baba where that person left off. But consider the authors whose

books have pleased Baba. Baba has spent so much time listening to their writing, but they are not conscious of it."

Male pilgrim says, "Mani, when I was a little boy I and my brothers were very involved with the Catholic church, serving with the mass, and spending time with the priests. Personally I had always felt that I had a special connection with Jesus, but that He was alive, and I remember going to church by myself at night, sneaking in when it was really dark, to look at the statues, to see angels, or Jesus himself. I did believe that He was there. When we heard Baba's name, it's no coincidence that twelve of us went to Baba just on his name. We didn't know anything about Baba's books or His teachings, but we just accepted Him." Mani:

"You see, also, the whole thing is a pattern, a play, and Baba has assigned you to a role. The play is going on, just as you're performing a play for Baba's birthday or for Mehera's birthday. Your part is assigned to you.

"Look at my mother, Baba's mother. Her part included the emotion of loving Him as her son. He was her son. She couldn't understand why all these people were trying to take away her son from her. Here was this old man in Sakori, a Hindu, and this old woman in Pune, a Muslim, and they were both after her son. Surely, India is so over-populated, couldn't they find another boy? [laughter] 'Why my son? That was the role that was given to her, and yet there was a time when she admitted that her son was who He said He was, Zoroaster. She had great reverence for Maharaj, and there was a time when she visited him, and she used to go to sit at Babajan's feet, along with me. How many times did we go to sit with Babajan, afternoons, evenings.

"There was a picture (Rano was there at the time) taken of Baba dressed as Zoroaster. Also, some of his disciples had gone to Mecca many years before, and they had returned with this Arabic dress, and they had requested Baba to put it on so he could be photographed wearing it in the fashion of Muhammad. Elizabeth Patterson said that my mother had requested Baba to dress up as Zoroaster and to have a picture taken of mother side by side with Zoroaster. She wouldn't have asked for that if she hadn't been convinced that Baba had actually been Zoroaster. Some time I'll show you that picture."

"Mother also said to her son Merog (the diminutive, familial, endearment used in all Irani settings for children named Merwan), 'What's all this I hear about Pune and Mumbai, and all being destroyed?' She had probably heard about Baba saying that 3/4 of the world would be destroyed. 'Look, Merwan, if you must do something to Pune, would you please not do it by fire?' Baba, so sweet, remarked, 'Yes, mother, I'll remember.' Who was she saying that to? She wasn't saying it to her son. By that time, she knew, but at first it was very difficult. She had to suffer a lot because her son was who He is. The Zoroastrian community -- the Iranis -- were against Him, and in those days you couldn't pick up and move. You were settled where you were. This was your home, these were your neighbors, this was your community.

"We had a variety of neighbors. There were Christians, Mohammedans, Madrasees, and lots of Iranis and Parsees around our alley, in our neighborhood, and she had to suffer a lot because she was His mother. She used to be invited to all the weddings, social events, but afterwards she was completely ignored. Formal invitations would come, but she knew she was not supposed to accept them. Mother would not take it lying down, though. When she got such an invitation, she would send me instead of her. I've been to so many weddings! Watching the goldfish in the pond, standing next to the band with their red and white uniforms – great fun!

"They would harass her. They once sent a telegramme saying that her son had been arrested. On that occasion mother couldn't even put on a sari her hands were trembling so, and father was there, saying, 'Don't get excited, Shireen, nothing can happen to Him, no one can touch Him.'" But she put on her sari, went to the station, took a train to go to where He was, only to find that He was safe and sound.

"Once, when I was about three years old, mother heard that the community was all getting together to go to Bombay, because the great Pavlova, the dancer, was coming to Bombay to perform.

"Mother was determined that she would go. Just because they weren't inviting her didn't mean that she wasn't going. She went all by herself. She got a ticket at double the price (because the community had already bought out the cheap tickets), she got in her best sari, and she was the first one on the train.

(That training to be there well before the appointed time always helped me with Baba later.) So she was seated in the concert hall quite early when the people from her community came into the hall, and mother said it was worth all that money just to see their faces! Mother said that Pavlova danced so beautifully, specially when she did the Krishna dance, and mother said that she would go again any time.

"Mother would keep all Baba's things, and she must have cried over them a lot of times. My standard routine at lunchtime was that I would come home from school and food for my lunch would be on the table. There would be a warm plate, and everything would be correct and all organized. But once I came home earlier than normal just before lunch time, and mother also didn't hear me coming. I found her seated in front of a chest of drawers, with the trousers of the suit Merwan had worn in college draped over her knee, and her tears were falling on it. Suddenly she became aware of my presence behind her, and she asked why I was home early, if something was wrong, and when I explained that nothing was wrong, the matter was dropped. After some days, I went to peek into the same drawer, and there were no longer any of Baba's clothes in the drawer. It was empty. She had given the clothes away, and I think that the point when I saw her like that was the moment at which she gave Him to the world. I think she gave them to Gulmai or Khorshed, who were always after her to give them something of Baba's.

"My father was so ... I suppose it is right that I should be talking about parents today? What I used to love best about my parents was that both made up a whole, while they were two

halves. Mother was always very practical, and she saw things from the material angle. My father saw everything from the spiritual angle, the overall. The difference in their temperaments, the difference in their age, their way of life -- father had given up a seeker's life because of the Voice. He did his duties, he carried off his responsibilities, he didn't shirk any of these things, but at the same time whenever Baba would say, "To be in the world, but not of it," I really saw Baba's father as that.

I'd be playing along with something, and mother would say, "Sherog, today such and such happened, and he such and such did this or that, and this happened," and all this would come on my ears. Everything was right in what she said. It was all logical, put forth as facts and opinions. But my father would say, "No, Shirin..." and he would say from his angle. Always the angle from which you are looking makes the difference. The thing itself doesn't change, it's the angle, and as my father would say it, I would think, "Yes, he is right." His angle being the right angle always comforted and soothed mother.

Of course mother had to be practical in the business thing, because there was the toddy shop business, and at one time (because I heard mother saying it) there were 42 servants and employees in the toddy business. They would come to take their wages and salaries from mother. Mother wouldn't trust father with the money, because he would just give it away. She trusted him with blankets. Mother would give him a blanket if he had to sleep over some night in the toddy shop. Always, always, he would come back without it. I still remember mother saying, "Sherog?"

"Oh but Shirin, he was so cold. He was so poor."

I don't know how many times this must have happened. Once I remember mother flaring up over it. That gave me the idea that this must have happened many times. She said, "Sherog, if I had kept all those blankets I gave you to go to the shop, I could have opened a blanket shop, done good business and raised my children!"

Baba would be at the back of the store at the cash box. A Parsee taxi driver brought my brother Beheram to Meherazad the other day. He was very little child when he was near the toddy shop. I asked him, "Do you remember?"

He said, "Yes, I remember Merwanjee. I used to stop and look around, because our house was near the shop. "

And I said, "Well, what was He doing? Where was he sitting?"

"Merwanjee was sitting behind the cash box."

"Oh yes?"

"These faqirs [mendicants] would come around in the afternoon, they'd all be there, and Merwanjee would open up the cash box put His whole hand in it, bring out this huge

fistful of silver coins and fling it. And all the faqirs would rush to the spot, and again and gain He would do it."

I heard him and thought, "My poor mother. What with a husband line that and a son like that..."

[Question from a Westerner about how her mother made the transition between believing Baba to be her son to believing Baba was God. What about your father?]

"My father always knew. Even when my mother first had that dream before Baba was born, and when she told the dream to her mother, my grandmother was a very wise, shrewd, clever woman and she said, 'Oh Shirin, this child will be a great, great leader.'

"My father said, 'Shirin, you don't know who is to be born to us.' He knew, he always knew.

[Westerner: Usually when sons are born there is a big celebration. Did your father do anything special at that time?]

"I don't know but my grandmother must have done. [clock chimes and Mani says, "See?"] Because the traditional things that Iranis do... And all these people who were in the opposition group, after mother died, their children, their grandchildren, their nephews, the various in-laws -- all came to Baba.

"I remember, because I wasn't sent home after I came to Baba for years. Except once in a while when Baba would visit mother at home and we would go along with Him. Otherwise I wouldn't, but one day after my mother had died, He sent me home for something, and that's when the contact with my brothers started. I just did whatever Baba said. At home, I went to Baba's room, and I saw this little boy, child, around the well, he could barely talk but he repeated 'Avatar Meher Baba ki jai' several times, and I couldn't believe it. I asked my sister in law whose child it was, and she said it was the grandson of Kharmen, the leader of the opposition. I couldn't believe it. The members of this family won't go to work without visiting Baba's room, or taking His blessings or whenever Mehera is there, those children are foremost in Baba's love. The whole family has accepted, recognized and loved him.

"The contention of the opposition group had been that they had seen Merwan doing ordinary things, like playing marbles, flying kites, going to school, playing ball. They did admit that they thought He was different from others, and he had such a beautiful voice that they used to stop their work just to listen to him sing the Monajat. But, that wasn't enough that he should give himself airs like he was Zoroaster or something. You see?

"Baba's family members had seen the same thing, had even seen Him being spanked. But each one loved Him and knew. Even my father's elder brother Khodadad knew and though he didn't have much money he came to see Baba in Meherabad, and then would

come to Pune to see his brother Sheriar. My mother would reproach him for spending the money, but he would say, 'But Shirin, I've got to see Merog.'

"Another uncle, my mother's brother, was a big strapping fellow, a director in one of the best Indian film companies in Bombay, also the co-owner of a very well-known theater in which he had done some acting. As he lay dying, he said to his wife Piroja, 'Remember, Merwan is God.'

"Piroja responded, 'I know, I know.'

"All who have come and bowed down, even my aunt, my mother's sister Banumasi, as different from mother in looks as you can ever imagine, and her children from Karachi who had barely any connection with Baba, in the 1960s they made a trip and all bowed down."

[In response to a question] "Among those children, the only ones whom I have seen have died, and I don't know if all her children are Baba lovers.

"Of course, another aunt, Dowlamasi, was fortunate to be among the very first women mandali. Mehera talks about her. Naja's mother also was very close to Baba. Pila is Naja's mother's name.

"Being close is no joke. Being Baba's family, or Baba's disciples ... it doesn't mean that one has it all so easy by coming into such proximity with the Avatar. On the contrary, we have seen the break from the material causes a lot of suffering. Look at Mehera's mother Daulatmai, who went through tremendous suffering. Familywise there was that business with Colonel Irani, who had such a high post as an army surgeon. Colonel Irani couldn't understand why these people wanted to go to Baba. Mehera's father had died when she was eight years old, and the mother had suffered quite a lot from the loss. Now, Colonel Irani sees that his sister together with her two daughters has gone to a master, and he can't understand why Zoroastrians could possibly go to a holy man. [That's simply not part of the Zoroastrian tradition. Moreover, it's what the people that they differentiate themselves from do -- Hindus and Muslims do that sort of thing, and Zoroastrians naturally find themselves superior to that.] A common, pervasive assumption is that if one goes to a holy man, it's to ask for material things, but in this case, what was lacking? [Colonel Irani reasoned that,] 'You have money, you have home, you have family, and I'll be looking after you, what is it that makes you go?' Colonel Irani came, even in the car, to Meherabad to persuade them to return to Poona. Daulatmai loved her brother, but she declined to come back. Thus, the closer you are to Baba, the more of these things one has to go through."

[There's the usual back and forth, with someone in the audience recalling that Baba had said, "Colonel Irani also does My work." ]

"Sometimes Baba said, 'In the next life, he will...' You know when you have a bow and arrow, the further back you pull the bow, the further the arrow will fly. After a life like that, in the next life he might be doing a lot of work for Baba. Who knows?"

[Now comes a theoretical question from the audience about whether Shirinmai's sanskaras were such that she couldn't get the conviction immediately about who Baba was. Mani responds that it is all because of His play, or leela:]

"The pattern is all set. As Meher Baba everything is planned, all the film is taken, for His next advent. When He says, 'Love me more and more,' it's confusing if you think that it is He who gives the love. But because He says it anything that comes from the Truth itself is substantial. His saying it is to make it possible. Giving these words \*is\* giving us this love. Because He has given it out. Like, 'Let there be light, and there was light.'

"I won't be like Adi and say, 'Any questions?' [uproarious laughter]

"Adi [S. Irani, whom Mani identifies as her brother Adi] had sent Jim Reeves records from London, and Baba heard them and said that the voice touched His heart in Western music just as Begum Akhtar's voice touches His heart in Indian music. The Indian music had those ghazals and things, but certain of the Jim Reeves songs' words He liked very much, whereas others He liked only for the voice.

"In 1966 the records came, and in 1967 when we went to Guruprasad, Baba sent us out to buy all the records we could find of Jim Reeves. In 1968 these same records served to give relaxation to Baba after the intense seclusion work He did in Guruprasad in 1968. When Baba was having his breakfast, I would sit there with the gramophone, playing the songs one after another. The first recording Baba heard was 'There's a Heartache Following Me' and that was His favorite. He would want that one played first at lunch, breakfast or supper, and then others. At the end [of his stay with us on the women's side] we would play it again, this same song.

"The mandali were on the other side. Always the men divided from the women. So when 'There's a Heartache Following Me' was played for the second time, Eruch could hear it through the transom, so he knew it was time for Baba to come over. We could hear Eruch saying, 'Francis (and so and so else), Baba's coming, be ready.' One day, I played it for the first time, a new record 'Welcome to My World.' Baba liked it very much and Baba said to me, 'Bring it over to the men's side and we'll play it over there.' I said, 'Right.' So after lunch, Baba in His white sadra with His hand resting on Mehera's palm, Goher going ahead to open the dividing door so they could go ahead and shut the door from the men's side, Baba was walking along, and I was following with the gramophone in my hand, when Baba went in and sat in the chair, looking so radiant.

"At that time, the men mandali weren't allowed to come into our area, and also they were not allowed to go out of the bungalow, until Baba's seclusion work was completed. The men looked a bit like hippies, [because they hadn't been able to go to the barber.]

"There were just a few sitting there when I delivered the record and the gramophone -- Francis, Pendu, Eruch, Aloba, and maybe Bal Natu, I don't remember. Anyway, for the few who were there I played the record. Baba said, 'Francis listen carefully to the words.'

Francis acknowledged, and while the song was being played, Baba did the gestures for each word right through."

There is a break in the tape.

---

### **Mehera Irani**

Meherazad Residence

December 18, 1979

#### Content

[Mehera speaking to Dara, as she says, "on Baba's porch in Meherazad."]

Mehera: Dara wants me to tell him how I came to Baba. It's rather a long story but we'll try our best to say it, and I hope it will be interesting. Of course it will be interesting because it is about Baba, and so will be very interesting to all Baba lovers.

I will start in Sakori. My mother, my sister and I were in Sakori. Baba's middle-aged aunt came and had darshan. When we arrived it was maybe 2 or 3 AM and it was very early and we took a tonga from the railway station to the ashram. I was 14 years old, accompanied by my mother and sister, and my mother, through Padri... Padri was Jal's friend, and nobody in the Zoroastrian community was following Baba, and in fact they were all talking against it. Padri was told about Babajan first and Jal told Padri about her. He was convinced and had Babajan's darshan and told his mother about Babajan that she is not an ordinary woman, but a great perfect master. Padri's mother got interested. My aunt Freiny, told my mother about Babajan, and my mother got very interested, and they went to Babajan.

Babajan never wanted people to bow down to her or touch her feet, but just to kiss her hand. Now later on, my mother came to know of Baba, that Babajan had kissed Baba and Baba was enlightened, God-realized, perfect one, but all this my mother hadn't known in the beginning. So she had feeling, you may call it love for Baba. When Baba came to Poona for a day or two, my mother made a point of going for His darshan, with my aunt Freiny.

Now, my mother wanted us girls to be interested. My sister had finished school, my sister had finished her Cambridge exam, had passed, and now she was at home. In those days, women didn't do jobs and careers, so she was at home, while I was going to school each day. My mother didn't know how to approach the subject of Baba with us. Anyhow, she heard about Sakori. At that time Baba wasn't staying in one place, but moved for a few days to Bombay, then a few days in Poona, then maybe back to Sakori. She and my Aunt went to Sakori for a few days to see what it was like to be there, and she liked the atmosphere, all the Brahmin girls singing devotional songs, and it was very lovely, so she made up her mind to bring us to Sakori, thinking we would feel love for this path.

Tape ends here