

KG-134B

Mani Irani

Francis Brabazon

Mandali Hall, Meherazad, India

March 17, 1980

44:30

Note: Continuation of KG-134A

Content

Starts with music and then Mani speaking.

Mani sometimes stops and pauses at the wonder of the western kids that have come to visit them. Baba ushered in, in his physical presence, about what was to come. Baba had the electrical wiring and bulbs and fixtures installed before there was electricity available to Meherazad.

In January 1969, a girl from Australia named Mary Bennett arrived, a young hippie, who arrived to bring a message from someone in Australia. We now forget the name of the Baba lover in Australia who sent her. She was tall, big, beautiful face, and had a guitar strung over her back, and she was barefooted. She had the strangest clothing on, maybe a Nepali sarong and some other strange clothes. We have seen that again and again in the intervening years, but it was a first then. Goher, on her little bicycle, had never seen anything like Mary, and she went to Mehera to tell her about the strange apparition.

Baba was in his room, and we were in the house, and the men were on their side. After a while Mary was brought over, all her worldly possessions in the little cloth bag she carried with her. Mehera was feeding her, meanwhile, and putting more food into her satchel. Eruch urged Mani to take a picture of Mary.

In the meantime, after she had eaten, she was sitting on the veranda at the bottom of the staircase. She sang a song with the guitar, and Mehera thought Baba ought to see her. Baba, Mary has come from Australia. Baba, she's just like a mastani. "You won't mind her," so although Baba was reluctant He agreed to Mehera's request to see Mary. Baba was reclining, and put out his hand to caress her chin and cheek. Mary went close and stood there, put her head down, and Baba caressed her. "Come in May," Baba said. Meant come for darshan in May with the Australian group. Mehera urged her to sing, and she did sing for Baba.

I feel that this was the point from which this "Westerners singing and playing music at Meherazad" has grown. Mani took a film, put the camera by, and after there was no time, so Mani just put it in the cupboard. Baba provides before the need is there, like "We march to Poona in March."

When Baba dropped His body, that camera was at hand in the cupboard. Eruch tells me to get the camera and take the footage. I thought Eruch had gone mad, but he splashed cold water into my face, as it were, by saying, "Look, now is not the time to start thinking of ourselves. Do you know how many Baba lovers will want a record of this time?"

I took a few feet of film, Don Stevens came over to take over the filming, and I told him to add it to the film he had. That was the end of it, I didn't want to think about it. In 1969 the film was ready, so Don sent it with some professor, and all the lovers gathered at Guruprasad at that time wanted to see the film, but I didn't want to see it. I planned to be there but to close my eyes. The screen came up, the lights went out, and when I looked at the screen there was Mary Bennett! Here was Mary, in May, in Guruprasad, as he had said she should be!

What started all this. Mandolin man? Music man? Why doesn't Francis come? Maybe some additional remembrances will come.

Baba would use his expression and the movement of his body to accompany the ghazals, and Baba alone knew the depth of the words of the ghazals and the qawwali singing. When the Jaipuri Qawwals would come here, paid for by Gajwani of Bombay, they would create the atmosphere of music that would carry us all away. The women would be nearby and could hear the music and see some of the musicians. They would sing Allah Hu, or Baba would ask for various poets' songs, and their faces would light up, because not everywhere would there be someone who would know that much about their music.

In the midst of the qawwali music, Baba would sometimes stop it on a dime with one clap, and explain a word of a phrase, or would change the wording to the correct word.

Mani wants Allah Hu to be sung with harmonium and sitar, but the two instruments are out of tune with each other. With a little retuning they try, and Mani illustrates how the song goes. [It is sung today by Westerners, maybe not as well as the qawwals did it, but with lots of gusto.]

Francis comes, complains that he is half-deaf. Mani tries to give him context to speak about the topic of the singing.

Francis says they would go on for some time...

Francis says Allah Hu is very economical with words...Wonderful sense of humor.

Lost at about minute 30.

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