
MANI'S TRICYCLE STORY

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10:22

PILGRIM 1: How long were you waiting for the tricycle Mani?

MANI: Not very long. But I never had it. But.

PILGRIM 1: You never thought you'd give up?

MANI: You don't know? You want that story?

PILGRIM 1: Yes, sure but.

MANI: How many of you? How many of you want that? [inaudible]? When I was.

PILGRIM 2: Keep in mind Mani you're likely to get 16 tricycles sent to yo.

MANI: When I was not yet four years old, is one of my, my first memory as far as I remember, remembering anything from my childhood, my first memory is of course a Baba memory because for me [inaudible] Baba. Even as a child.

So I remember Baba was in Manzil-e-Meem in Bombay. Baba had not started observing silence, it was 1922. Three years before Baba observed silence. And my mother took me along to Manzil-e-Meem in Bombay because she was, I was a good excuse for her to be more and more with her son. She couldn't stay away from the son that she loved most.

So anyway, mother and I went to Manzil-e-Meem. Now you see, you are a woman, even at 3 years old. And I had opened, I knew Baba had once sent toys for my younger brother, I mean Baba's youngest brother Adi and myself with Jal. Jal was in the Manzil-e-Meem with Baba. We were children in Poona and Baba had once sent some toys with Jal so I knew, I knew that.

Anyways, when I went to Baba in Manzil-e-Meem, I even remember the facade of Manzil-e-Meem, and as usual I went straight running to Baba and as usual I got a lot of hugging and loving and teasing and Baba put me on His lap and so there I sat on Baba's lap and I was already prepared, you know.

And I said, "It's my birthday." [Mani mimics speaking like a small child] Next month or whatever the month was.

"Oh!" said Baba, "Your birthday? What is it that you want?"

Now what had happened was, you know, in our alley there was one little boy who had the first tricycle we had ever seen and he would, you know, cycle along in that long lane and you know we would follow him, mouths watering, eyes wide and he would never allow of us to sit even for a moment.

"Please, please can we sit? Can we sit?"

"No, No!"

So I thought how wonderful it would be to have a tricycle of your own, so I remembered that. So Baba said in Manzil-e-Meem when I was seated on His lap.

“What you said? Your birthday? What is it you want? What can I send you?”

And I said, “ A tricycle.”

And He said, “Done! It’s already done!”

Now, you know, I wasn’t going to let it go so lightly, you know. I have always with Baba, I have tried to, seal it and make it really watertight and airtight so there is no way of ever getting out of that promise.

And one of the things in our household and in the Zoroastrian Iranis as a rule was when you really want to prove that you are absolutely sincere about something you say, you say, “I swear that I will do it.” And you catch the tip of your skin, you catch with the tip of your fingers you catch the skin of your throat and pull it slightly and at that time you say, “I swear by,” whatever is precious to you. You swear by your beard, in the old days beards were very respectable, very important. You swear by your children, you swear by anything that is very precious to you.

Anyway, whatever it is, I wasn’t going to let go so easily by Baba saying it’s done. And I said, “No, you will forget, you will forget!” [Mani mimics speaking like a small child]

And Baba says, “Forget? How can I forget? When you love somebody, do you ever forget? How can I forget?”

Then I say, oh, so Baba says He loves me and therefore He couldn’t forget, that is,

my birthday, He couldn’t forget my birthday.

But still, there wasn’t enough, I wanted to double twist, you know, I really want to tight it. So I said, “No, I’m sure you will forget [inaudible].” [Mani mimics speaking like a small child]

And Baba said, “I won’t forget. I swear I won’t forget.” He put up His hand, caught the skin of His neck, pulled it out and said, “I swear by a hen!”

Whatever it is, it completely satisfied me. Baba has now really promised, this is now absolutely airtight, everything is fine.

Next thing I remember is, when I am home, and every time somebody knocks on the front door or every time mother goes to the front door to admit anybody, I run behind her and sure it’s the tricycle. No, it’s not the tricycle, it’s not even a message from Baba, it’s nothing.

Now what’s happening with me is, I am no longer concerned about the tricycle, but I am concerned by the fact that Baba doesn’t love me. He has forgotten my birthday. He said if you love, you don’t forget. He said He loves me and He won’t forget but He’s forgotten.

Then I remember the most miserable birthday I’ve had all my life which means four years. And all I remember was that I kept looking, where is the tricycle coming, is anybody coming? They made quite a fuss over us, our birthdays, Zoroastrians, up to the age of seven. After that they used to be no more. I mean now we have the English habit and custom of doing things but not.

So there was a lot of fuss made over me, this beautiful dress I had, all the Zoroastrian things but I couldn't enjoy anything. "Baba doesn't love, Baba doesn't love me, He forgot, He forgot my birthday because He doesn't love me."

And the next thing I know is we are in Meherabad and mother has brought me over to Meherabad, that's where Baba was. And usually I would, as I have told you, as soon as I got down, race to wherever Baba was and just cling to His legs, you know and He'd pick me up but I wasn't doing that, right?

I just got down and came along with mother. And si Baba came to me this time, came to me, [inaudible], you know, hugged me, picked me up. Stiff as a ramrod. And Baba tried to shake me and you know they put that soft [inaudible] put me on His lap, He's making faces to make me laugh, He's tickling me to make me smile. Nothing of this sort. No, we are not amused! [pilgrims laugh] [inaudible] Anyway, then Baba says, "What is it?"

I said, "Nothing."

"But it must be something. I mean how can you? What has happened?"

"Nothing."

"Ah, did so and so do that?"

"No."

"Did such and such happen?"

"No."

"I know [inaudible]."

"No."

"I know," said Baba, "Mother, mother must have scolded you and I'm going to her."

"No, it's not mother!"

"Then who?"

I turned around on His lap and jabbed a finger at Him and say, "You!"

And He says, "Me?"

He looked so innocent. "What have I done?"

"I have [Inaudible]. You don't love me, you don't love me. You promised me that if you love, you don't forget. You forgot my birthday!"

And poor Baba was looking, you know, a bit taken aback. And didn't quite know what I was talking about, at least that's how it appeared.

And then I said that, "And the tricycle never came! You promised you'd send me and you don't love me." And then I said, "You even swore by a hen, you even swore by hen!"

And Baba said, "Yeah." Suddenly as if you know the whole thing had brightened up and cleared up. Baba said, "I know, I know, I did. I did promise and I did swear by a hen. You are right. But what can I do, you know what had happened?" [sound of clock chiming]

"No, what happened?"

He said, "What can I do, wasn't my fault. I did swear by a hen but the hen died. So what could I do?" [pilgrims laugh]

Oh! What a mountain rolled off from my chest. It wasn't Baba's fault. Baba loves me, He didn't forget. That wretched hen, went up and died so what could Baba do?

And I, everything was changed and all was well with my world, God was in His heaven and everything was shining and everything was fine, you know, and just as my usual self I was.

But ten years later, I remembered I never did get that tricycle and I never really wanted it, I never even thought about the tricycle. You know, the tricycle was not important but He proved to me by saying that He hadn't forgotten me. So for me it was very important and precious to be told by Baba that He hadn't forgotten, He did love me. You know, it's just the hen, not even the chicken, not even the egg, the hen.