
DEEP NEW LIFE

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Mandal Hall, Meherazad, India

October 3, 1991

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MANI: Another, another courageous man who accepted to come in the New Life, who said, “Yes”, when the conditions were put before each one and say, you know, “Will you, do you accept all the conditions and are you willing to come into the New Life on the strength of these conditions?” And we were very surprised when Dr. Ghani accepted. He put a big yes.

Now Dr. Ghani, he knew that it meant walking, walking, walking miles, this was a wandering life and this guy could not do any physical activity. It was impossible to him. He has been known to go to bed with his shoes on because it would mean exertion to undo [pilgrims laughing] his shoe laces and remove them. He has been known to not have a bath for days on end so they would tease him; they said, “Ghani! What? Fifteen days you haven’t had a bath?” He said “I’m quick, I have a bath every fifteen days, every fifteen days.” [crowd laughing] [inaudible] “Everyday, everyday you’re having a bath.”

Thinks it’s a joke because he had great humor and [children giggling] he would make Baba relax with his humor and Baba used to like that, He used to call him over. So but he couldn’t [children laughing] walk, that Ghani would—has accepted to walk, this wandering life. This walking life, New Life meant walking life. So that first day, first time when we had to walk that long distance of 17 miles and miles and the man wouldn’t even dare say, “Yes”, for seventeen steps. So he walked. One concession was given to him, he could carry a walking stick.

The others, no [pilgrim coughing] only what we had, what we were told. The men folk. But at one point he was so exhausted he just couldn’t go on anymore but he must not say. Baba’s way ahead of him naturally, he’s lagging behind the rest but instead of using the walking stick to press the stick before him and go forward, he would place his stick at the back of him to push himself forward [pilgrims laughing].

He was so, he just couldn’t do it, and Baba suddenly turned around, came back all the way to where Ghani was, silently picked up the end of the stick and started walking with the stick in His hand like that. And Ghani having the other end, just eyes closed, just being pulled, pulled by Baba. Things like that that Baba would do.

PILGRIM 1: Of course, then he went on strike sometime after that.

PILGRIM 2: Yeah!

MANI: No, then Ghani it was—I don't know about the details but I believe that Baba would only make a situation arise because Baba was so compassionate, so Baba said, "Alright you needn't walk. From today night you don't walk but you sit in the tonga". It's a long story about the horse and all that kind of thing. "You go ahead and you wait there and then" -- this is at some part of our journey, walking journey -- "and then you go into the village and get the bhiksha on behalf of us all and be ready there."

So he would do that. Now, he was one who could talk well. He had the rap, he could spin a good rap like Gary [pilgrims laughing]. He was so convincing and he really could talk well and he would write well. It's only the physical exertion that—

So when he would go into the village to get bhiksha, they not only would give him flour and grain and whatever they have to give—food only not money, mind you. That is not in the plan. So he got the bhiksha in these tiny sacks but that was not enough. They even came with him. They wanted to join the New Life. He convinced them so totally that they not only gave their things, they said we will also come. And Baba after, He said, "Don't you dare bring anybody, [Mani and crowd laughing] only the food. Don't you bring anybody else with you." He said, "Baba what can I do, they all want to come." "No," said Baba [Mani laughing]. Such a convincing speaker. And when he's speaking about Baba [long pause].

But this much I remember on the New Year [bell clanging]. It was the New Year, it was first January 1950, and Baba came in from the men's side. It was their [inaudible] the front and we were here. He came with a plate of some sweets on it. I forget whether it was pieces of cake, whether it was an Indian sweetmeat. I don't even know where it came from, but He came and we were just the four of us women, and He told me that every time He gives this I was to say out loud, 'Happy New Year', Happy New Life, not Happy New Year". It was first January 1950 but from Baba the words were as He gave sweets to each of us, 'Happy New Life, Happy New Life, Happy New Life'. Then He says, "Say the same when I'm giving to you". So when I took it I had to say, 'Happy New Life' [Mani laughing].

The New Life had me in tremendous awe. For instance the New Life Song. I couldn't always want to hear it because at one point, at one point you see, the New Life had so much binding. It was a life of total binding and yet at one point I experienced a little breath, just a breath of a freedom that was not because we were not cluttered up with things, not because we were just wandering, but that freedom which Baba refers to. Because I even said to myself, 'My God, if this is the freedom Baba's talking about, why, one would do anything, anything for this.'

Just a breath of it and at another time, you know, I seemed to see the depth of the New Life and the only similarity I can speak of in terms of— Say you were in a boat on very still ocean and it's so beautiful. You're looking everywhere. You can't see the [baby singing] bottom of the ocean, but suddenly it was like, I'd look down and realize, "Oh God, look what our boat is on. Wow, it's so profoundly, tremendously deep". And that awe was something.

That's what the New Life is you know, just an iota of a glimpse or an idea. And that's why then when I heard the New Life Song, in the beginning it was alright, after that, it was too awesome, too deep. The depth was—and I tell you it's very deep. But Baba has walked for all of us. Beyond it Baba just put steps, He has walked it. Baba has walked the New Life.