

# ASHÉ

JOURNAL OF EXPERIMENTAL SPIRITUALITY

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**Cover:**

Osho, aka Rajneesh Acharya; Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh.



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## Neo-Sannyas

Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh, now known as Osho, was a major figure in the Eastern influenced personal transformation and New Age movements of the past 30+ years. During the 1970's thousands flocked to his ashram in Pune, India. For a brief time in the 1980's his name became a notorious house-hold word across the landscape of American pop culture after his followers began building a commune (known variously as Rajneeshpuram, the Ranch and the Big Muddy) in eastern Oregon. The activities of the Bhagwan and his sannyasins became frequent fodder for the Western media machine, both in the U.S. and in Europe. For his fifteen minutes, he was known as the "Rolls Royce Guru." In 1985 Bhagwan left the U.S. eventually to return to India. Shortly there after his commune was sold and his followers dispersed around the globe.

Now almost 20 years after the demise of Rajneeshpuram, most American's outside of Oregon, if they can remember him at all, need a push to dredge up the memory of "that guy with all the cars." The cars were sold off long ago and the commune is now a Christian youth camp. Osho left the earth in 1990. Since then he has slowly re-emerged as an important force in the post-modern spiritual milieu. His books are again sought after by major publishing houses and stocked in large chain stores such as Borders and Barnes & Noble. Through the internet any book or talk is now just a few mouse-clicks away. His Pune ashram is now a thriving "meditation resort" and a beautiful new Galleria has opened in Delhi (see article later in this issue).

Despite the impact Osho had on spiritual exploration during the latter half of the twentieth century (acknowledge and, more often than not, unacknowledged), very little has been written of about the largest scale experiment at building an intentional community the West has seen. There have been a small grouping of personal books written by sannyasins (current and former) who lived through the Ranch. Mainstream editions have tended to favor the scandalous and, if carefully studied, most inaccurate. Notable exceptions are the books by Max Brecher and Lewis Carter.

The remainder of this section holds a collection of remembrances, personal analytics and historical examinations of the neo-sannyas and Rajneeshpuram. Of particular note are the two pieces from kids, Autumn and Rupda, who grew up at the Ranch and within the neo-sannyas movement.



## The World Is Imperfect, and So Are We

*Autumn Sun Pardee*

Going to school on the Ranch was a major relief from the monotony of the Christian mentality of public school. Instead of starting the morning with the pledge of allegiance, “*I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all,*” we were doing yoga and singing songs. Instead of a focus on how to become productive workers for the society, the idea was to create a more balanced being, who could then give back to the community from a healthier place. In place of history lessons, we pulled tarot cards out of the Rajneesh Tarot deck. And at one point, the school replaced the classroom altogether and gave us a “school without walls.”



There were great ideas that, in a utopian environment, should have been a revolution in the way that we raise our young. But somehow we ended up with some kids who, after living in the commune their whole lives, couldn't read or write. The ideas are beautiful: Let the children lead the direction of the class. Give them the freedom to express their own interests. Don't teach them anything; just steward them toward their own learning process. When done right, I think this is the most effective way to raise a healthy, balanced, free-thinking, creative, conscious adult.

So why did the Ranch fail to do that? Unfortunately, we were, at the same time, being brought up to believe that the outside world was of no real importance. The laws that governed “society” didn't apply to us; how could they? We were isolated in the heavenly place where love and freedom were abundant, and we were only able to experience the outside world through the self-centered veil of sannyasin conditioning: “We're better than them.” It wasn't written in the doctrine, but that's what we were learning. What the Ranch failed to create was a balanced, sustainable world for its children to live in.

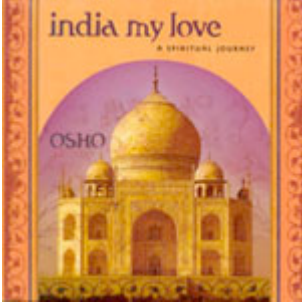
I think we needed more of an understanding that the young kids still needed the love and attention of their parents and that the teenagers, while still having freedom,



needed structure, healthy discipline, and a voice to be heard and welcomed within the community. I've talked to so many kids who felt abandoned, ignored, and in the way at the Ranch. Too many parents were all too eager to throw in the towel of responsibility and overindulge in the act of personal healing.

So, on schooling, the old man's ideas were right on the money. The most beautiful way to raise a child is to let them lead the way, and, if you're lucky, you'll be the one who is doing the learning. What was missing on the Ranch, in my view, was a balanced community to reflect the potential of the children and an awareness of the outside world. Yes, let the child lead the way and give them the freedom to show you where they want to go, but also give them the structure of knowing what tools they will need to deal with the world beyond what they already know. In this case, let them in on the secret: The world is imperfect and so are we. We must all remember that no responsibility to keep our feet on the earth for the well-being of our kids.

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**india my love**  
a spiritual journey

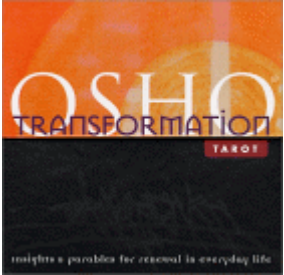
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## Part of This Infinite Love

*Rupda*

I remember being cold, impatient, and very bored as I followed my mum out of the London underground station at Chalk Farm, heading to some alleyway off the main street. She walked ahead of me, beckoning for me to hurry. I believe she was a little nervous and perhaps a little lost. We entered what seemed to be an old abandoned building. My mum took the first step in and brought me straight to the base of an elevator shaft.

I remember asking myself what on earth could be lurking above and why we were even there. We reached the top floor, the doors opened, and I stood shocked as I gazed out of the elevator: people, so many people, roaming around as if they had been living there for years and had made this their world away from the world.

Everyone was dressed in bright orange clothes, some in robes, others had even managed to find orange socks. All we wearing a beaded necklace with a photograph attached to the end of it, which I soon found out was called a mala. I was in awe at how warm and friendly the place felt. As a 9 or 10-year-old girl living in London, I was not used to getting so much warmth from kids or adults. You could see something in their eyes—this certain kind of knowingness and understanding, and a harmony about their presence. You could see something in the way they moved and the way they touched each other.

I was lucky, though, this was not a completely foreign experience for me. I had already spent two or three years going back and forth to Samye Ling, a Tibetan center/commune in Scotland. Samye Ling was a very special place for me; I have so many fond and profound memories kept tucked inside my heart since my experiences there. I remember the place was drenched in as much love, peace, and serenity as one could possibly imagine, and the monks, in all their grace, made it a point to take me, a small child, for walks and showed me a side of human nature that a classroom has never explored.

The year was 1979, and my life was about to change for good. The top floor of the abandoned building was known as Kalptaru, one of many Osho centers around the world. Mum and I would visit the place as much as possible. I even took trips there on my own, so that I could get another taste of that warmth I so loved in myself and in others. I remember we had visited another Osho center in America a year before, but it





just didn't click for us at that time. We ended up staying at a Zen Buddhist center instead. Funny how things go, but who would have known that the path ahead of my was about to transform my world?

It was a Kundalini meditation that made it clear to me that I was in love with the work and with the man responsible for it all: Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh, also known as Osho. I think I was the only kid in that group, but I had completely forgotten that I was any age. I felt so much a part of everyone in that group, that I had lost the boundaries of where I began and other around me ended. That's when I knew I had found my home, and I was going to pursue and protect it at all cost.

I was 9 or 10 when I decided to take sannyas. My mum was in her normal indecisive state, trying to weigh out all the paths of spirituality: Tibetan Buddhism, Zen Buddhism, Krishna, Osho, and many others I never managed to encounter. She was the kind of woman who needed to be sure, whereas I had this overwhelming sensation that I had found my long-lost family. Taking the next step into sannyas raised no question in my mind whatsoever.

My mala came along with my new name, Ma Prem Rupda, which meant Love Beautiful. I can remember how excited I was; my heart was pounding in my chest as I struggled to pronounce my new name correctly. My mum chuckled at the name Rupda and thought it might be best to change it to something more soft. At first, I considered the idea, but as the name grew on me, I accepted it just as I did the family, with a warm embrace. I remember having to remind my mum to call me Rupda and not Limor. "I'm Rupda now, mum, so stop calling me Limi." It took my mum another six months to finally realize that she too wanted to take sannyas.

I think the hardest part for me was wearing the mala out, displayed for the world to see. Wearing all orange clothes was easy, but the mala, well... I just tucked it inside, so I wouldn't have to deal with all those pointless fingers and staring eyes on the tube or at the bus stop. I knew better than to look different when I was in England. If you looked funny, people would just stare at you and giggle, and I couldn't bear people making fun of me, or of my mum, for that matter. School was easy, because we had to wear uniforms, but if any of the kids knew what a nut I was, I would have had to change schools for sure.

At some point after the 1981 March Event—a massive weekend event with sannyas group leaders such as Poonam, Teertha, Veeresh, Sudha, Somendra and Rajen—someone told my mum about an Osho commune in Devon called Prempantha. Apparently the place was loaded with sannyas kids like me. My mum was fine with me going there. She had an English sannyasin lover at the time, who was occupying all her





free time. I was more than excited, because I would no longer have to watch their abusive relationship—this was no place for child rearing. So, when the question arose if I wanted to go, my suitcase was packed and at the door. It was not my first time away from my mum, but it was the first time that it was my choice. I was eager to get there and soon!

I was in for a surprise, as I might have expected. Prempantha was in Exeter, Devon, located in the Southern-most part of England. The commune was this huge mansion with 20 to 30 rooms, set on an enormous property. As a kid with heaps of energy, I was about to enter the biggest playground ever. How good life had become!

The time was summer, and the meeting of all the sannyas kids was a little awkward at first. Although I displayed a lot of audacity and confidence in myself, inside I was shy and scared about whether I would be accepted in the new place. This phase passed very quickly, however, and I soon found myself the tyrant and the jester of the pack. It wasn't hard to take on this role, because I was one of the oldest of 17 kids, who ranged from ages four to ten. My character was still taking shape, and it didn't take long to realize I was a little rebel tomboy with only one mission in life: to have fun.

Part of being in Prempantha was to get an education. At that time, the commune didn't have its own school, so we had to attend school in the local town. This was very hard for me to endure, and the local kids made it even worse. We were called names and laughed at frequently. The funny thing was we never stuck together. We were commune kids by night and behaved as local kids by day, mainly out of fear and the need to feel accepted. I often found myself hiding under the staircase avoiding the school bus as it rolled by our driveway. I would do whatever it took to stay home and escape those morning hymns at those horrible assembly gatherings. This, of course, got me in plenty of trouble. I just didn't fit in at the school, and it really affected me emotionally. It was almost traumatic for me in a silly kind of way, but I would rather have stayed under the staircase in the dark than face another day at that school.

Prempantha became this awesome kingdom in the countryside, and the more people knew about it, the more people came. We had wonderful festivals that covered the fields with orange people wearing wooden malas, dancing back and forth from hug to hug in that very stereotypical sannyas way. The kids put on plays, danced, sang, and ran around until their shoes wore out. The festival days were so magical for me. I felt so free to be a child and so loved by those I'd never even met before. I could truly say I had found my home, and I had no intention of ever going back to live in London again. The space inside of me had never been filled quite as much. I mean, I was living in the center of this land of love, rejoicing in it, and fully in love with that content feeling inside of me.



About a year later, we were all told that we would be relocating to a new place that had no name yet, but was soon to be called Medina. When the white van, carrying four kids, two adults, and my goldfish, turned off its engine in the courtyard of Medina, the place was dark and damp and felt like a ghost town. It didn't take long for us to notice we were the only people there. I don't remember if I felt scared or lonely, but I marveled at my surroundings. How small I must have felt in the cradle of such big hands. Medina, located somewhere in Suffolk, a few hours north of London, was huge and filled with unfamiliar territory. It was tucked away amidst the trees, down a very long and winding driveway. Two, maybe three times as big as Prempantha, Medina was magnificent and grand. I can remember making it a point to jump out of the van first so I could be the first kid to arrive in Medina, and I was.

Sadly, not all my memories are as vivid as the memories of other commune kids, and I often rely on them to tell the tale of my upbringing, but the feeling in whole never escapes me. I do remember some parts of my experience in Medina, such as school, my first sexual encounters, and, of course, getting up to no good. I shall begin with school.

Out school was called Ko Hsuan, and was conveniently located smack in the center of the commune in a very large, elongated building. This was where all the kids lived as well as attended classes. Ko Hsuan had two classrooms, one for the "big kids" and one for the "little kids." Between them was the "middle room," our sort of recreation room, where we would eventually watch movies, roller-skate, have meetings, dance, sing, and pass time. We slept upstairs above the classrooms, where the rooms were also divided into different age groups, from small to big kids, and each room had at least four to six of us snuggled in it. I, and three of the other kids who had arrived earlier, helped to set up the rooms and create a home for many others to come to. The process of making this our beautiful space was very comforting to me. This strong sense of union was so unfamiliar to me, that I almost dismissed it as unreal.

I was one of the big kids, and, for us, school was much like a circus. The ring leader was our teacher, and we, of course, were the clowns. I'm convinced that we all had ADD (attention deficit disorder), because keeping us focused seemed to be the biggest challenge in the world. Imagine 12 to 15 kids, ranging from 9 to 12, with mouths like an 18-year-old punk kid from South London, in your classroom. It will make you crazy just to think of it. The words and attitude that we somehow acquired and our attempts to portray ourselves as cool, tough adults were more damaging to us and our opportunity to learn than we cared to consider. I mean, we did whatever we could to deter the teacher from teaching us Math, English, French, and somehow the teachers had



the patience to follow through each day, regardless of our foul mouths and out attitudes toward one another.

This was my home, Medina was a kid's paradise, and even more so for me, because I was away from London and free from parental guidance. But as wild and free as I may have acted, I took the spiritual side of my life quite seriously. Under a facade of gang leader or one who life to get up to all sorts of mischief, I was very much into the softer side of human beings and wanted to find that place inside myself.

Some of my first sexual experiences began over the next year and a half, and as I look back, I can chuckled at the innocence we all had sharing those moments together. These memories you don't forget, because they continue to have an impact on your life. Besides, the kids who were living in Medina won't let you forget, even if you tried. Ah, what are friends for?

In 1983, the Ranch was happening. By then, I was ready to leave the UK for good, and see what the Ranch had in store for us. So, off we went, 12 suitcases in hand, just me and mum leaving England forever... Yippee!

Many things happened for me on the Ranch, but in a really small nutshell, I had an amazing time. All the celebrations made me so joyous and happy to be alive! The Ranch finally came to an end, something I never foresaw, and by November 1985, at the sweet age of 16, I left the Ranch with \$20 dollars in my pocket. The plan was to go to San Diego to meet up with a bunch of other Ranch kids, and see what happened next. We had this feeling of clinging on to each other, like mice do to keep warm together, but we also had this feeling of taking off, and seeing what the world "outside" is really like. For the next 10 years, I spend most of my time traveling the world, Europe, Asia, America, again, and again, and again, avoiding holding down a job, and simply living life day to day. You know, the sannyas way.

When I was a child, I swore that if Osho should ever leave His body, I would be there! And, when that day came in 1990, I was right there by His side at the burning ghats. I sat there for hours, watching the moment, wondering if and how my life was to change now that He is no longer physically present. Singing to Him with tears rolling down my cheek, that painful letting-go, that gratefulness of being part of this magical experience, how does on ever express in words...?

Since then, I have become closer to those that I love. It seems that as we "kids" get older, we are more appreciative of those in our lives who have shared so much with us in the last 22 years and more! And I have met new friends who have joined this growing family, and have felt so blessed to be a part of this infinite love.

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## The Master's Call

*Ma Yoga Laxmi*

*"When you are able to surrender, the teacher will come... You become vacant, you become empty. Then the spiritual force rushes toward you and fills you...becomes responsible for you. This is what is meant by initiation..." Osho, I Am The Gate, 1972*



"In your late twenties, you will meet someone who will usher light in your life. Your chances of a marriage are bleak," said Laxmi's cousin, a professional astrologer to her during her mid twenties. A few years passed by. Twenty-eight years old, Laxmi was involved with the upbringing and development of the nine young children in the family. These were her brothers' children. Laxmi looked after their schooling and recreation at home.

The children went to a school run by an accomplished English lady. Laxmi was in touch with her many years' later and gifted Osho's books to the school. She recommended these books to the senior students as she appreciated the books.

In addition Laxmi was Secretary of the All India Women's Congress Mahilla Vibhai, Bombay and a Jain women welfare organization. Several members of these groups included wives of members of the Indian parliament and socially progressive and literate women. Many a time dignitaries were guests of these groups. Loved by most co-workers Laxmi was being groomed for a political career.

Social work had become the focus of her life. Laxmi worked with a group of distressed women who prepared food items to make an income. With Laxmi's contribution the organization made profits and the income increased multifold. Wages were doubled in a month. Enthused the workers continued the effort and within twelve months the workshop was renovated. Refrigerators, ovens were added and air conditioners were installed in the workshop. This was a good experience for Laxmi as she realized that currency in circulation further generated income. Production increased and round the clock supervision was needed. Owing to commitments to the family, Laxmi decided to hand over charge to new appointee and render a resignation. Popular



for ushering in multifold growth, Laxmi's resignation was opposed by the workers. They wanted her to stay and threatened to go on strike if Laxmi resigned. However Laxmi convinced them that she had to honor her commitment to the family and handed over charge.

Meanwhile Laxmi's brother dated a young Parse lady and desired to marry her. The family opposed it, as Parses are a different religious group. The Hindus consider Parse a sub culture group as they had origins in Iran. Laxmi was proud and cherished the social status of the family and was opposed to the wedlock and the impending insult. Looking back, Laxmi forgot her own rebelliousness and ensuing resentment towards the elders who opposed her dreams in her life till so far. This led to a controversy of the out of caste marriage.

However a great change was in the offing for Laxmi. A clarion call, loud and clear was round the corner. Laxmi's life was never going to be the same. The Congress Mahila Vibhahi invited Acharya Rajneesh as a guest and lead speaker on the silver jubilee meeting. Laxmi envisioned a bare foot, customarily attired Jain monk with a begging bowl, with a mask on the mouth covered in order to not suck in any tiny living beings, and a broom to clean the place before sitting down. Much to her surprise Acharya Rajneesh wore a white khadi *lungi* (an ankle length cloth tied below torso) and a silk *chaddar*, shawl around his shoulders. He was unlike a Jain monk. He walked in gracefully casting a spell. On his way to the dais he passed by Laxmi. Frozen and in deep silence, Laxmi forgot to welcome the guest. In complete awe Laxmi couldn't take her eyes off him. An extraordinary experience Laxmi sat still listening intently. Deep down there was a strange recognition as though she had known him earlier. There was a familiarity Laxmi could not explain. An inner voice seemed to acknowledge that Laxmi had known him forever. Each cell and pore of the body rang out in agreement with this feeling. He was no stranger. However Laxmi was short of words to express the experience.

As he began to speak Laxmi sensed a deep throbbing at her navel center and was carried away into another realm. His command over Hindi and lucidity was enthralling/enchanting like a song from the spheres was flowing. Eyes closed Laxmi melted with the melody of this divine music. Immobilized with awe, she did not get up to thank him at the end of his speech. Laxmi was mesmerized. The President who noticed this got up and gave the vote of thanks. When the President's sharp vote of thanks fell on Laxmi's ears, her eyes opened.

Later the President expressed disbelief of Laxmi's unusual inertia. Laxmi said, "Love has happened for the first time. It is springtime. There is music all around. It is



difficult to explain the feeling “. Confused she asked, “Love for the *sadhu*?” Laxmi acknowledged love for him and said, “Yes. It is love for him, his eyes, and his purity. Oh God, Acharya Rajneesh, where can one meet him?”

Whacking her on the cheek she said, “ You are hypnotized, he is certainly not a person to be in love with”. “A person. There is no person. It is the sound, the music, and the magic of the human being who was here. He is the man of the earth,” Laxmi’s replied.

Shocked with Laxmi’s overwhelming response the president was worried. She decided to escort Laxmi home. At home she narrated the evening’s events to Mataji. Assured that he was an unbelievable Jain monk, a good orator and no ordinary man, Mataji heard Laxmi’s ecstatic experience. The President did not yield the contact address of Osho to Laxmi. All she said was that he lived in Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh in central India. Laxmi did not know how to reach Acharya Rajneesh.

Osho noticed that Laxmi wore *khadi*, hand woven cotton. He asked her why she wore *khadi*. Laxmi replied proudly. Laxmi said that Gandhi, Father of the nation was loved and respected by the family. Gandhi taught the Indians to weave cloth, and as a Gandhian one should devote one self to the nation. That is why she wore *khadi*. Osho suggested that they discuss Gandhi and the issue of *khadi* during another visit. He then turned to talk to other guests in the room.

Laxmi continued to feel Osho’s touch for long. The fragrance of his presence lingered on for days after Osho departed from Mumbai. It seemed fresh. To Laxmi it seemed her cousin’s forecast was true. The light finally shone in her life.

Two months later it so happened Mataji went to visit a relative. Later in the day she accompanied the relative to hear a Jain monk speak on religion. The monk turned out to be Acharya Rajneesh in later years known as Osho. Mataji was overwhelmed by his presence, sound and expression. “You have a discerning eye. He is indeed a remarkable and pure man. His lecture reaches the heart immediately,” she said to Laxmi foremost on returning home. Excited Laxmi requested her to find out the contact address of Osho. Contact was made. However Osho had departed by train to Jabalpur in the afternoon. Disappointed she could not meet Osho, Laxmi was glad that she could now share Osho with Mataji. For several days Osho was the subject of conversation between the two.

There were a series of surprises for Laxmi. One after the other the Kuruwa family got to meet Osho. Next it was Laxmi’s maternal uncles’ turn to hear Osho. Uncle was a regular and compulsive gambler. Once his friend suggested that he accompany him to a discourse by an unconventional and revolutionary Jain *sadhu*. These discourses would appeal to him as the *sadhu* did not condemn any habits including gambling,



drinking liquor and visiting brothels. Uncle brushed aside this in disbelief. Knowing his weakness for gambling the friend seduced Uncle into accompanying him to the lecture of Acharya Rajneesh despite the initial doubt. Uncle was trapped. He fell for the bait. He was promised ten thousand rupees provided he sat through the entire discourse. If he failed he need only pay one rupee to his friend.

On that day Osho in his lecture spoke on the issue of gambling and the problems related with it. To Uncle it seemed as though Osho was addressing his problem issues. This co-incidence surprised him. At the end he was refreshed and transformed. Uncle thanked his friend and offered twenty thousand rupees as a gift.

Uncle convinced Laxmi's older brother to go for Osho's next talk. On return Laxmi's brother said, "Laxmi, this is the man for you and us. " Ecstatic he wanted to meet him in person. A few days later uncle brought home a proposal to host Osho's visit to Matheran, Maharashtra at the Kuruwa home. He informed the family that the trustees of Jeevan Jagruti Kendra (*Centre of Life Awakening*) were in search of a good accommodation for Osho at Matheran. Soon the family house was offered to put up Osho during his visits to Matheran.

Special arrangements were made for Osho's stay at the house. The cook was given special instructions for Osho's meals which comprised of fruits, cracked wheat, lentils, *dal*, a bean or bean soup dish, boiled vegetables, salad without chilly and spices. Seven members of the family left for Matheran for the meditation camp. They met Osho at Neral, a train station two hours away from Matheran. Accompanied by Osho they proceeded to Matheran for the meditation camp.

During the meditation camp the meditators attended discourses in the morning and sat in silence during evening for five days in Osho's presence. In the afternoon the meditators sat in silence with their eyes closed around Osho. During this hour they were encouraged to express their feelings. While some cried, the others laughed. After this hour was over they sat closer around while Osho touched the third eye center on the forehead of the meditators in turn. Each would then move to accommodate the other.

At the end of the camp Osho told Mataji that he had had good food and a comfortable stay. He added that this was indeed the first time that everything was taken care of so well. Grateful, Mataji invited Osho to stay with the family during his visit to Mumbai. Mataji knew Osho was fond of open spaces therefore she added that there were no fields in Mumbai. Osho confirmed that he would visit the family en route the station in the evening. He added he would stay with them on his next visit.

Laxmi did not go to Matheran and stayed in Mumbai as caretaker of a child who had high fever.





Within a week all the children had recovered and were fine. Laxmi was excited to learn Osho was to be their guest in the evening and would stay for dinner. It was a beautiful day. Laxmi was full of laughter and joy. She spent the day preparing for his arrival. She cooked for him as the cook was still in Matheran.

Osho arrived with the trustees of Jeevan Jagruti Kendra. Laxmi brought a glass of fresh juice for Osho and was introduced to him by Mataji. Osho asked her to sit besides him. He held her hand as he drank the juice. Laxmi took the glass from Osho when he had finished the juice. Seated next to Osho Laxmi's body vibrated as if hit by an electric current. Laxmi sat still. Meanwhile someone took the glass away from Laxmi. Osho thanked her for the juice. "It was sweet and given with a lot of love," he said. Blessing her head he added, "I shall stay here when I am in Mumbai, and you should take care of me".

The above is chapter 4 of Ma Laxmi's biography *Journey of the Heart*.

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## Hellbent for Enlightenment

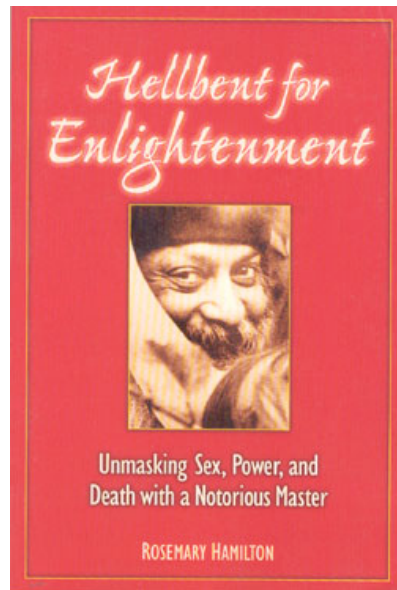
Unmasking Sex, Power and Death with a  
Notorious Master

By Rosemary Hamilton

Hellbent for Enlightenment is Rosemary Hamilton's page-turning account of her life as a follower of the notorious Indian spiritual teacher Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh (now known as Osho).

Rosemary was Rajneesh's personal cook at Rajneeshpuram, the controversial Oregon ashram.

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## Neo-Sannyas

*Selections from Osho's talks on Neo-Sannyas*

I call him a sannyasin who has the courage to live in utter freedom, and who accepts no bondage, no organization, no discipline whatsoever. This freedom, however, does not mean license; it does not mean that a sannyasin becomes licentious. The truth is that it is always a man in bondage, a slave, who turns licentious. One who is independent and free can never be licentious; there is no way for him to be so.

Therefore, sannyas has to be invested with a new meaning, a new concept. Sannyas has to live; it is the most profound, the most precious treasure that mankind has. But how to save it, preserve it, is the question.

It should be our great endeavor to see that no sect is born, because nothing has harmed religion as much as these sects have. Sects have done more harm to religion than irreligion itself. In fact, a genuine coin is always harmed by its counterfeits; nothing else can harm it so much. Similarly, if ever true religion is harmed, it is harmed only by pseudo religions. And a tremendous awareness is needed to avoid this danger.

A sect is not going to emerge in the wake of our efforts, because no one is my disciple and I am no one's guru or Master. And if I am offering to be a witness to some people taking sannyas, it is because, right now, they cannot connect with God directly. And I ask them to be on their own and not to disturb me any longer when they become directly connected with the supreme.

### **The Harms of Religious Organizations...**

The moment a religious person is followed by a group to whom he can tell what to do and how to live, the whole thing becomes not only nonreligious but, ultimately, antireligious. This has always happened. Every religion has done this, but no religious person has ever intended it to happen. It is a necessary evil. Whenever there is someone who has something to say, something to show, this comes to our minds very easily: how people can be benefited by it. And this is good; it is done with compassion. But the very nature of things is such that the moment you begin to organize, it becomes a mission. The thing that you were trying to do dies in the process. But this is the very nature of things. You cannot do anything about it.



As I see it, religious people will be needed in the future, not religious organizations. Unless we discard organizations altogether, the spiritual explosion that you are talking about will never come. It cannot be brought, it can only come by itself. But we can help it to come by not organizing according to ideologies. Every ideology is good when it begins, but by and by it has to compromise. To compromise for the sake of the organization.

**On wearing Red Robes...**

I have given you the red clothes for the simple reason so that I can recognize you; all other excuses are just hogwash.

**On the Mala...**

And when a witness like me gives this mala to an initiate into sannyas, he only tells him through this symbol that while he has explained only one path to the unknown to him, there are really many others, as many as one hundred and seven. So don't be in a hurry to say that people who are on paths other than yours are wrong. And always remember that there are countless paths, all of which lead to the divine.

At the bottom of the mala hangs a large bead which says that whatever path you follow you will reach, because all paths lead to the one, to the ultimate one. So all the beads, including the large one, are symbolic and meaningful

**On the role of the Master...**

Another thing to bear in mind is the role of the Master, the guru, in sannyas. Up to now sannyas has been tethered to a Master who initiates someone into it. But sannyas is not something which anyone can give you as a gift; it has to be received directly from the divine. Who else but God can initiate you into sannyas?



**A Light Unto Oneself:  
Neo-sannyas in the Time of Acharya Rajneesh**

*Swami Prem Arun*

The self is an *enso* circle drawn on the blankness of no-mind. The guru is simply a finger pointing at that calligraphic moon.

In 1964 during an early meditation camp at Mt. Abu, the man who would later be known simply as Osho outlined his vision. “I see man engulfed in deep darkness. He has become like a house whose lamp has been snuffed out on a dark night. Something in him has been extinguished. But a lamp that has been extinguished can be relit. I see as well that man has lost all direction. He has become like a boat that has lost its way on the high seas. He has forgotten where he wants to go and what he wants to be.”

He maintained that there was hope for humanity, however: “Although there is darkness there is no cause for despair. The deeper the darkness, the closer the dawn. In the offing I see a spiritual regeneration for the whole world. A new man is about to be born and we are in the throes of his birth.” This revolution would not come about, Osho stated, unless everyone worked toward it. Sitting back and waiting was not an option. “We cannot afford to be mere spectators. We must all prepare for this rebirth within ourselves. “The approach of that new day, of that dawning, will only happen if we fill ourselves with light. It is up to us to turn that possibility into a reality. We are all bricks of the edifice of tomorrow and we are the rays of light out of which the future sun will be born.” (*The Perfect Way*, 3 June 1964)

Despite objecting over the years to the traditional notions of Indian sannyas and ascetic renunciation, in 1970 Rajneesh gave sannyas for the first time. In the discourse that followed, he announced, “To me, sannyas does not mean renunciation; it means a journey to joy bliss. To me, sannyas is not any kind of negation; it is a positive attainment. But up to now, the world over, sannyas has been seen in a very negative sense, in the sense of giving up, of renouncing. I, for one, see sannyas as something positive and affirmative, something to be achieved, to be treasured.” (*Krishna: The Man and His Philosophy*, 28 September 1970) He gave his sannyasins new names and instructed that they wear the traditional sannyas colors and a rosewood mala with his



picture attached. He infuriated traditional Hindu religious leaders by giving his followers the honorifics “swami” and “ma.”

His initiatory tradition differed dramatically from the sannyas of the past. He stressed that his disciples should embrace the world not reject it:

It is true that when someone carrying base stones as his treasure comes upon a set of precious stones, he immediately drops the baser ones from his hands. He drops the baser stones only to make room for the newfound precious stones. It is not renunciation. It is just as you throw away the sweepings from your house to keep it neat and clean. And you don't call it renunciation, do you? You call it renunciation when you give up something you value, and you maintain an account of your renunciations. So far, sannyas has been seen in terms of such a reckoning of all that you give up -- be it family or money or whatever. (*Krishna*)

He spoke openly about the spiritual nature of sex and spoke out against many of the leading religious leaders of his time. He later coined the phrase “Zorba the Buddha” to describe his vision of the new humanity. He emphasized that his new sannyasins should be both spiritual and worldly.

If sannyas, as I see it, is an acquisition, an achievement, then it cannot mean opposition to life, breaking away from life. In fact, sannyas is an attainment of the highest in life; it is life's finest fulfillment. And if sannyas is a fulfillment, it cannot be sad and somber, it should be a thing of festivity and joy. Then sannyas cannot be a shrinking of life; rather, it should mean a life that is ever expanding and deepening, a life abundant. Up to now we have called him a sannyasin who withdraws from the world, from everything, who breaks away from life and encloses himself in a cocoon. I, however, call him a sannyasin who does not run away from the world, who is not shrunken and enclosed, who relates with everything, who is open and expansive. (*Krishna*)

Over the course of his life, Osho spoke literally millions of words in public and small discourses in both English and Hindi. These have been published as several hundred books and numerous translations. Throughout all these words, common threads run. The nexus of teachings was individuality and personal responsibility. Each person should become their own light, rather than relying on that of another, he taught. Discussing an old Hasidic story he said:



I meet you on the road; I have a lamp. Suddenly, you are no more in the dark. But the lamp is mine. Soon we will depart, because your way is your way and mine is mine. And each individual has an individual way to reach to his destiny. For a while you forget all about darkness. My light functions for me as well as for you. But soon the moment comes when we have to part. I follow my way; you go on your own. Now again you will have to grope in the darkness and the darkness will be darker than before.

So don't depend on another's light. It is even better you grope in darkness -- but let the darkness be yours! Somebody else's light is not good; even one's own darkness is better. (*The True Sage*, 11 October 1975)

Over the course of 30 years, he systematically deconstructed all the forces that act to stifle the individual. During the 70's he gave extensive lectures on just about every religious tradition. He later described this as speaking through others' voices so that he could be heard by people who had grown up within the various world religions. In the early 80's he entered a period of public silence. When he emerged from his silence in 1984, he began speaking out against all religions. His teaching, he said, was in favor of religious without the need to be part of a religion. In his first discourse, he spoke out against belief, saying that belief always carried doubt along with it and neither was necessary for one who had experienced spiritual truth.

He began mercilessly dismantling the world religions. The first to receive his attention was the one that had grown up in his name "Rajneeshism." He publicly repudiated the religion and rejected the notion that he was a guru. Subsequent to this rejection of his own cult, he turned his razor-sharp analysis on the other major religions—including notable attacks on the papacy and the Reagan administration.

The only traditions he spared were the world mystery traditions, Sufism, Hasidism and Buddhism. The he described as the heart or truth of religion, where Islam, Judaism and practiced Buddhism was simply a reflection. Osho displayed a natural affinity to the teachings of the Buddha, and Zen Buddhism in particular. The 16<sup>th</sup> Galaway Karmapa, leader of "Black Hat" school of Tibetan Buddhism, recognized Osho as a living Buddha. Osho spent the last years of his life discoursing almost exclusively on the teachings of a wide and often obscure selection of Zen masters.

During these later years, he repeatedly noted that no one would follow him; that he would leave no successor. He instead maintained that he had prepared his people to



be his successor. He would be dissolved into all of them when he left his body. “Stick me under the bed and forget about me,” he told his handlers.

Osho ended his last public talk given April 1988 with the word sammasati, the final word of the Buddha. Like Shakyamuni Buddha, he reminded all his sannyasins that they were each buddhas.

Osho was the epitome of a “crazy wisdom” master. He taught through provocation and the unexpected pushing of buttons as much as he did through discourse and meditation. When he taught in India, he spoke openly of sex and openly attacked the purity of the the mythic image of Mahatma Gandhi. After he came to America, a land not shocked by the frank discussion of the sexual, he played an amazing joke on American consumerism. The United States as a culture glorifies in the material acquisition of wealth. The conspicuous display of opulence is a de facto presentation of status. Ironically, America holds a completely opposite ideal for its spiritual teachers. Due in no small part to our protestant roots, our religious leaders have to be ascetic to be trusted. Rajneesh entered this mix and immediately attempted to out display the most glittering facets of American consumer culture. He wore diamond encrusted Rolexes and sunglasses and drove a fleet of lavishly painted Rolls Royces. He himself asked the question, why does one man need with a Rolls Royce for every day of the year and all the exact same make and model and with only one road to drive along? At the end of the Oregon commune, his fleet totaled almost 100 cars.

I first experienced the carnival fun park that is Osho’s teachings through the unlikely and unspiritual avenue of ABC’s Nightline. The year was 1984 and I was 14. The ABC National News with Peter Jennings ran a promo for that night’s Nightline. Seemed as if an Indian guru was causing some havoc in Oregon. In speaking of his numerous interviews with the world press, he said he spoke simply because someone might be listening.





## The Rise & Fall of Rajneeshpuram

*Sven Davisson*

### Seeing Red In Cattle Country

The Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh (later known simply as Osho) was born Chandra Mohan in the village of Kuchwada in the Indian state of Madhya Pradesh on 11 December 1931. Due to the grace with which the young boy carried himself, his family began calling him “raja” or “king.” By his own account, he attained the state enlightenment on 21 March 1953, though he kept it a secret for many years after. He taught briefly at a Sanskrit university and began traveling the country teaching. By the early 60’s he was conducting large meditation camps at locations such as Mt. Abu in 1964. In 1970, Rajneesh settled in Bombay where he began to give regular discourses to a growing number. It was in Bombay that Rajneesh initiated his first disciples giving his twist on the ancient India tradition of sannyas.



In 1974, the movement, under the management of Ma Laxmi bought land in the Indian town of Pune, north of Mumbai (Bombay). Laxmi was the first in a line of powerful female “personal secretaries” that would hold despotic control over the management of the business of running the religious movement. Rajneesh and his group of early disciples moved to Pune compound, located in the Koregon park neighborhood, and established the Acharya Rajneesh Ashram.

At the ashram, Rajneesh gave daily morning discourses (alternating Hindi and English) and held evening meetings, darshans, where he initiated new disciples and answered personal questions. Throughout the 70’s, the ashram attracted increasing



numbers of international visitors and became one of the focal points of the spiritual tourism that flourished throughout the decade.

The topics of Rajneeh's talks ran the breadth of the religious spectrum—from Indian teachers, through Jewish mystics to the wisdom of the Zen Masters. He introduced several revolutionary “active” meditation techniques, designed specifically for the western mind combining exorcise and mindfulness. In addition to a wide and varied selection of meditations, a multitude of therapy techniques and workshops arose at the ashram. By the late 70's the “therapists” had become something akin to a priestly class within the movement.

In 1981, another female disciple, Ma Anand Sheela, displaced Laxmi as Bhagwan's secretary. Under Sheela's direction, they began searching for land large enough to establish a commune. Laxmi was effectively banished from the ashram, sent out to search for possible sites in India. Meanwhile, Sheela funneled several million dollars to a small New Jersey meditation center, Chidvilas. Later in that year, Rajneesh flew to the United States on a medical visa granted under the pretext that he was to receive treatment for his back. The group remained in New Jersey for a few months and then moved to Oregon where Sheela had purchased a defunct ranch known locally as “the Big Muddy.” The ranch consisted of 64,000 acres (126 square miles) of Oregon desert land and very few buildings. Though Sheela presented herself a shrewd business person, she paid \$5.75 million for land that was assessed for the previous year's taxes at only \$198,000.

Over the course of the next three years, Rajneesh sannyasins would transform this unpromising parcel into a city that supported at its height 7,000 regular residents with 15,000 annual visitors (mostly concentrated into annual July-August “World Celebrations”). The city, incorporated briefly as Rajneeshpuram, Oregon, had its own post office, school, fire and police departments, downtown malls and restaurants. Its state-of-the-art reservoir even won an award for its innovative ecological design.

Change of this scale, of course, put stresses on the local community. The commune residents, especially the management, were very quickly at odds with the nearby town of Antelope. The Attorney General of Oregon, David Frohnmeyer maintained throughout that the incorporation of Rajneeshpuram violated the constitutional separation of church and state. His action against Rajneeshpuram was still working its way toward the Oregon Supreme Court in 1985. An “environmental” group 1,000 Friends of Oregon also fought the incorporation of Rajneeshpuram from the first public hearing onwards. Due to the questionable standing of Rajneeshpuram and the objections of 1,000 Friends to commercial use of the Ranch, the Oregon Land Use Commission suggested that the



sannyasins locate their publishing and distribution business in the closest town, Antelope. The commune began to purchase real estate in the town and sannyasins registered to vote. Before sannyasins relocated there, the population of Antelope, OR was 40 mostly elderly and retired. Due to the influx of new residents, 3 sannyasins were elected to the 6 person town council. The 3 older councilors refused to sit in the same room with the newly elected sannyasins and effectively resigned their seats. Through default the Rajneesh followers took over the city government. Around this time the 40 original Antelope residents attempted unsuccessfully to disincorporate the town.

A similar chain of events occurred with the town school board. At the resident's request, the sannyasins had agreed to educate their children at Rajneeshpuram and not Antelope schools. The school tax the residents of Rajneeshpuram paid, however, continued to support the Antelope school. Sannyasins were then elected to the Antelope school board. The previous board had gerrymandered the school district in an attempt to keep Rajneeshpuram outside of its boundaries. The county invalidated the election of the non-sannyasin board members, because in the redrawing of the district they had mistakenly drawn their own homes outside the new district. Not residing in the school district they were no longer eligible to be on the board. Again, the sannyasins "took over" by default.

Both of these occurrences and the sannyasin purchase of real estate in Antelope—the mayor herself working as real estate agent for most of the transactions—were used against the Rajneesh sannyasins. Attorney General Frohnmeyer, state congressmen, state senators Hatfield and Packwood as well as the "concerned citizens" of Oregon viewed these actions as a take-over and argued that the aggressive sannyasins would not stop short of attempting to take over the county and then the state. The sannyasin presence was quickly characterized as a threat to the very way of life of eastern Oregon. Sannyasin control of Antelope was seen as a *coup de tat* and not the democratic process at work. By many of the government players, the taking over of the school board was the moment that the tide turned completely against the commune and its residents.

Throughout this period, Rajneesh himself was entirely silent. When he came to America, he had entered a silent period—never speaking publicly, instead, he said, teaching through his presence. As the Oregon battle began to hit the national media, first appearing on an episode of ABC's Nightline in 1983, the U.S. immigration service began arguing the invalidity of Rajneesh's visa. His medical visa had been renewed as a teaching visa and, the authorities argued, one could not be a teacher if one did not teach, i.e. talk publicly. Ironically at the same time Oregon's Attorney General was arguing that



Rajneesh and his followers were a religion and as such were violating the constitutional separation of church and state.

Rajneeshpuram exemplifies both the best and the worst of modern cult phenomenon. The collective activity of the commune residents gave rise to the greatest intentional community experiment the modern age has seen. In an article in *The New Yorker*, journalist Frances Fitzgerald detailed some of the accomplishments the commune had managed by 1983: cleared and planted 3,000 acres of land, built a 350-million-gallon reservoir and 14 irrigation systems, created a truck farm that provided 90% of the vegetables needed to feed that Ranch, a poultry and dairy farm to provide milk and eggs, a 10 megawatt power substation, an 85-bus public transportation system, an urban-use sewer system, a state-of-the-art telephone and computer communications center and 250,000 sq. feet of residential space.

On the other side, the commune was a complex business structure built to centralize absolute power in one person, Ma Anand Sheela. She and her band of loyal supporters ran the commune with an extremely heavy hand and provided a combative public face that was readily and appreciatively displayed by the media. By 1985 there was increased hardship and unrest within the commune itself. Sheela and her coterie of female managers, known collectively as the “Mas,” created what Rajneesh himself would later refer to as “a fascist concentration camp.” Upon entering the U.S., Sheela had established the religion of Rajneeshism, created a bible in the three volume *Book of Rajneeshism* and began to style herself a high priestess. By 1984 she had begun wearing “papal” style robes. Bhagwan’s own silence lent de facto support to Sheela’s transformation of the movement.

It is without question, that power corrupted Sheela. She described herself as Queen (and Rajneesh was her king) and started to speak of sannyasins as “her people.” She relished confrontation and pursued rather than backed down from a fight—whether with the media, local officials, INS inspector or a fellow sannyasin. When she spoke, it was taken as if Rajneesh spoke. She was the metatron speaking for the silent, remote godhead.

During the later period of Rajneeshpuram, a tension arose between Jesus Grove, Sheela’s compound and Lao Tzu House, Rajneesh’s residence. In late 1984 Rajneesh began speaking again to small groups of sannyasins invited into his house. When Rajneesh informed Sheela he would begin speaking, witnesses report, she begged him no to. When he finally did begin talking publicly again, Sheela spent days in her room crying. Rajneesh’s talks were video-taped and later played to the full commune. During the summer of 1984, Sheela attempted to cancel the public display of the talks, claiming



that they were interfering with the work of building the commune. A minor rebellion erupted and she relented, allowing the videos to be shown late at night when few of the exhausted sannyasins could manage to stay awake to view them.

Satya Bharti in her book *Promises of Paradise*, describes one night where the video was not shown. Sheela announced that the tape had been accidentally destroyed. In this talk called simply “number 20,” Bhagwan spoke out against Sheela and her management of the commune, saying that she had transformed paradise into a “fascist concentration camp.” He also outlined his concept of a world filled with autonomous communes where no person would have absolute power.

Ma Nirgun (Rosemary Hamilton), Rajneesh’s cook during the later commune period, relates her experiences of living in Lao Tzu House in *Hellbent for Enlightenment*. Under the pretext of security Sheela ordered the construction of a large fence, complete with guard towers, around Rajneesh’s residence. Guards armed with Uzi’s followed Rajneesh and his entourage everywhere. No one entered or left Lao Tzu without Sheela knowing about it. Nirgun tells of one day walking outside the house and realizing that the fence was not to keep attackers out, but to keep the residents in. “When I got back to LaoTzu, I suddenly saw it with new eyes: a prison. The high link fence, the gates that delivered a powerful shock; the guardhouse towering over us, manned round the cloke by two still figures holding guns—until this moment I had seen them as a deterrent to hostile outsiders. Now they seemed to be directed against us.” She also tells of a conversation she had with one of the sentries, a sannyasin who had previously been a friend of hers. She asked why the sannyasin attitude toward her had grown cold and distant. He replied, “Sheela’s orders.” Nirgun asked if Sheela had explained her order. “She says it isn’t good to get friendly with people you might have to shoot.”

During this time Rajneesh issued lists of “enlightened” sannyasins. These lists were interesting more for the people that they excluded rather than included. Sheela and her group were conspicuously absent. It’s my feeling, that Rajneesh was using these lists as a means of destabilizing Sheela’s power, which rested ultimately on her connection to the guru. Simultaneous with this, Rajneesh orchestrated a relationship between his personal physician Amrito and Ma Prem Hasya. The latter was a member of a wealthy clique of Hollywood-connected sannyasins. In this way, Rajneesh established a connection with an alternative to Sheela’s management team.

In September 1985, Sheela and a small group of core supporters abruptly left the commune for Europe. The day of her departure, Rajneesh held a press conference where he accused Sheela of stealing millions of dollars and attempting to murder him, several sannyasins and local politicians. He publicly repudiated Rajneeshism and his role as



guru. “I don’t give them any commandments,” Rajneesh in a 17 July 1985 interview with *Good Morning America*. “I insistently emphasize that they are not my followers, but only fellow travelers.” He also called on the FBI to conduct an independent investigation. The FBI quickly found an extensive eavesdropping system that was wired throughout the commune residences, public building, offices and even Rajneesh’s own bedroom. Authorities also uncovered a secret lab where, according to later testimony, Ma Puja, the commune nurse referred to by some as “nurse Men gale,” had run a poison lab experimenting with biotoxins—including HIV and salmonella.

It was later revealed in court testimony that Sheela’s group had attempted to poison two local communities by dumping salmonella into salad bars of several local restaurants. According to a report published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, the true cause of the mysterious outbreaks would never have been discovered if it were not for the testimony of conspirators. Salmonella sample disks discovered at Rajneeshpuram were subsequently matched to the strain of bacteria isolated from the salad bars. This episode has the unfortunate distinction of being the first instance of modern bioterrorism in the U.S. Sheela’s group also allegedly fire-bombed a county records office in The Dalles. One of the charges most heavily investigated was the poisoning of Swami Deveraj (later Amrito), Bhagwan’s personal physician. After the July 6 discourse, Ma Shanti Bhadra hugged Deveraj and jabbed him with a needle. The syringe contained a still unidentified poison concocted by Rajneeshpuram nurse Ma Puja. Deveraj became gravely ill and almost died at the Madras hospital.

In October 1985, Rajneesh himself was on a private plane headed secretly out of the country accompanied by his physician Amrito and new secretary Hasya. The plane was seized while refueling in Charlottesville, North Carolina, and all on board were arrested. This began a long process of returning him to Oregon to face immigration charges for allegedly arranging sham marriages. Rather than flying him to Oregon, federal authorities opted for driving him across country. For several days during the journey, even his attorneys did not know where he was.

Within a month, Rajneesh was again on a plane headed out of the country having entered an Alford plea to two counts of immigration fraud. He briefly returned to India and then onto Kathmandu. This began what his followers term his “world tour” which included refusals from more than 17 countries and forcible deportation from two, Greece and Uruguay. He and his followers maintained that the resistance of countries to allow his entrance was due to secret behind-the-scenes pressure from the Reagan administration—a charge not entirely lacking in credibility.



By the end of the Oregon experiment 25 sannyasins were charged with electronic eavesdropping conspiracy, 13 immigration conspiracy, 8 lying to federal officials, 3 harboring a fugitive, 3 criminal conspiracy, 1 burglary, 1 racketeering (RICO), 1 first degree arson, 2 second degree assault, 3 first degree assault and 3 attempted murder. A complex series of plea bargains followed. Sheela was fined \$400,000 and ordered to pay \$69,353 in restitution. She was sentenced to concurrent prison terms of 20 years for the attempted murder of Sw. Deveraj, 20 years for first degree assault in the poisoning of county commissioner William Hulse, 10 years for second degree assault in the poisoning of commissioner Raymond Matthew, 4\_ years for the salmonella poisoning, 4\_ for wiretapping and 5 years probation for immigration fraud. She served only 2\_ years in a federal medium security prison and was released for good behavior in December 1988. Ma Puja also received concurrent sentences: 15 years for the Deveraj murder attempt, 15 for the Hulse poisoning, 7\_ for the Matthew poisoning, 4\_ for her role in salmonella poisonings and 3 years probation for wiretapping conspiracy. Puja also served only 2\_ years of her sentence. Like Sheela, she served her sentence at the federal prison in Pleasanton, CA and was released in December of 1988. Rajneesh was charged with one count of criminal conspiracy (RICO) and 34 counts of making false statements to federal officials (INS officers). He entered his plea on two counts of immigration fraud and agreed to pay \$400,000 fine. He was given a 10 year suspended sentence and ordered to leave the country and not return for a minimum of 5 years. Rajneesh corporations agreed to drop all appeals to the ruling that Rajneeshpuram's incorporation was unconstitutional, abandon all claims to the money and jewels impounded in North Carolina, to pay \$400,000 to the State of Oregon in compensation for investigative costs, \$500,000 to settle the claims of four restaurants who suffered losses due to the poisonings, an additional \$400,000 to the restaurant owners, \$5 million to the Oregon state victim's fund and to sell the ranch. In exchange Dave Frohnmeyer agreed to drop all RICO charges against the corporations. (Carter, pp. 236-238)



Sannyasins in India finally reached a settlement with the Indian government concerning back taxes on the Pune ashram and Rajneesh returned to his homeland. Through the late 1980's, Rajneesh dropped off the spiritual radar. He dropped the title

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Bhagwan and, later, even the name Rajneesh. His followers began calling him simply Osho, a Japanese honorific used when referring to a Zen master.

In 1989 Bhagwan again stopped talking publicly due to his failing health. His final discourse ended with the last word of the Buddha, *samasati*, “remember that you are all Buddhas.” In that year he instructed his followers to build him a new marble bedroom following his detailed design. He spent only a short time in this new space, before saying he preferred his old bedroom. In January 1990, Osho passed from his body instructing his physician to place his favorite socks and hat on him. When asked what they should do with him after he died, he said simply, “Stick me under the bed and forget about me.”

Through the course of the 1990’s, Rajneesh, now packaged as Osho, became again an important figure in the spiritual and New Age landscapes. His ashram in Pune transformed into a meditation resort (complete with an air-conditioned modern hotel and tennis courts) is now, once again, a popular destination for Western seekers. His books are again available in U.S. bookstores. The Indian government, once his adversary, now respects the potential tourist dollars represented by Osho and his resort. The library of the Indian congress has established a separate Osho collection, an honor only held by one other, Mahatma Gandhi. The *Times of India* named Osho one of its 10 most influential Indians of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The events that comprise the rise and fall of Rajneeshpuram raise many more questions than can be answered in a single introductory article such as this. Rajneesh stated that he wanted everything that happens after a religious teacher dies to happen while he was still alive. He often spoke of the mechanism that led from a Buddha to the creation of a religion and how that process destroyed the religiousness of the teaching. I think that the Oregon experiment was an attempt by Rajneesh to facilitate this process through the simulated death of his silence and ceding control to Sheela. In this way he could himself short-circuit the development of a religious orthodoxy and protect his sannyasins, later termed “fellow travelers,” from the deadening of meditative/devotional religiousness.

This obviously leaves many larger questions unaddressed. Most notably among these is the question of the responsibility of a master for his disciples. Rajneesh himself asked pointedly after the departure of Sheela, why the sannyasin residents of Rajneeshpuram had not done anything to stop her.

Perhaps the facts, lies and enigma surrounding Rajneeshpuram will permanently occlude the full appreciation of what attracted thousands of people to him. All else aside, Rajneesh’s teachings represent a post-modern synthesis neither equaled nor paralleled in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The breadth of his knowledge and his deft interpretation of ancient



masters is unique. His influence, mostly unacknowledged, has been wide spread throughout both modern devotional spirituality and the New Age movement. Many a Rajneesh therapist, dehypnoterapist, has become popular guru or teacher. When one reads in a biographical sketch that the teacher spent years in India studying under an unnamed guru, it is more often than not, Rajneesh to whom they refer.

The Pune resort is now run by a group called the Inner Circle, a body designed by Osho prior to his death. A second group of sannyasins have coalesced around the Delhi meditation center, led by Indian disciples Swami Chaitanya Keerti and Ma Yoga Neelam (Hasya's successor as personal secretary and form Inner Council member). A multitude of issues mark the divide between these two groups over the role of the guru, devotion vs. meditation ("path of love" and "path of meditation"), the copyright of his books and art, the access to his teachings, the management of the commune/resort, etc. The articles collected in this issue, reflect voices from across the spectrum of sannyasin experiences centering both on the ranch experience and the time that followed.

### **Better Dead Than Red**

In the course of four years, the followers of the Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh did what no one thought they could. They raised a city from the desert. They established an almost completely self-sustaining community of several thousand on land that was though capable of supporting only nine head of cattle. Now almost 20 years later, it is evident that the episode of Rajneeshpuram stands for other things as well. The events of 1981-1985 expose the pervasiveness of American xenophobia and the potential for the American legislative and judicial systems to be used by a few, with the backing of the masses, to destroy a foreign, unfamiliar, minority.

Even before coming to the United States, Rajneesh was on the radar screens of the U.S. State Department. After the murders and mass-suicide at Jones Town, the U.S. government began to monitor gurus and religious groups that attracted a large American following. In the late 70's, CIA agents were often rumored to be among the visitors at the Rajneesh ashram. At the very least, the American consulate in Bombay sent reports to Washington regarding the activities of Rajneesh and his Pune ashram. Those reports contained specific references to State Department concerns that Rajneesh would try to relocate to the United States.

In 1981 Rajneesh and a small selection of sannyasins rented the entire first class section of a commercial airliner and flew to New Jersey. Notable for her absence was Ma Laxmi who had been left behind in India with a directive to look for land suitable for



building a large commune. At the time that Rajneesh traveled to the U.S., everything points to his visit being temporary and actually related to the medical concerns which had provided the reason for his visa. Ma Anand Sheela appeared to be the only person then working toward making Rajneesh's stay permanent. Soon after the group arrived at the New Jersey meditation center, the recently purchased "castle," Sheela set off to find land for a commune in North America.

From the moment that Rajneesh first stepped foot on American soil, he was a matter of "concern" for the U.S. government. By 1984, 17 different local, state and federal agencies were actively investigating the activities at Rajneeshpuram. White House documents show that Edwin Meese III, the "shadow president" of the Reagan administration, noticed the Rajneesh "situation" as early as 1982. The presence of the Rajneesh commune almost immediately created fear among the local Oregonians—especially the few remaining residents of Antelope. Destruction of the commune became a crusade for Oregon Attorney General David Frohnmeyer and the private activist group 1,000 Friends of Oregon (coincidentally founded by the Attorney General's brother). In a 1984 interview in *The Oregonian*, congressman Bob Smith stated he had begun "pounding" the INS to resolve the Oregon-Rajneesh "issue" in April 1982.

As the old saying does: Just because you are paranoid, does not mean they aren't out to get you.

From very early on, the town of Rajneeshpuram was tied up in a constant barrage of litigation. Numerous lawsuits were filed by 1,000 Friends, the Attorney General's office and private citizens. In April 1983, a horse owned by Harry Hawkins, a former Jefferson county sheriff who had been hired as Rajneeshpuram's first police officer, was killed by buckshot. On 29 July 1983, three bombs exploded at a Rajneesh owned hotel in Portland. Oregonians began wearing T-shirts that had a picture of the Bhagwan driving a Rolls Royce caught in the cross-hairs of a rifle scope while another shirt read "Not Wanted Dead Or Alive." The bumper sticker "Better Dead than Red" became a common sight throughout eastern Oregon. In 1985 several attempts were made to enact legislation that specifically attacked the legitimacy of Rajneeshpuram and sannyasin activity. The Oregon Secretary of State authored a ballot question, wording approved by Attorney General Frohnmeyer, that read "Shall City of Rajneesh (Antelope) charter be repealed, city cease to exist, and Wasco County assume city's assets and liabilities?" (*The Bend Bulletin*, July 3, 1985)

One of the most persistent myths of Rajneeshpuram over the years following it's dissolution is the assumption that the commune blew apart from the inside. This notion,



that the commune simply disintegrated due to internal fractures and tensions, fits snugly within the popular conception of cults, that they are inherently fleeting, frenetic, fluid and unstable. The truth is that the commune suffered an unremitting and coordinated harassment from the local, state and federal government. This coupled with the tide of resentment and distrust in the local communities created a situation of extreme pressure on Rajneeshpuram and its residents. Sheela's tactics and combativeness rose in direct proportion to the pressure exerted on the commune from outside. Her reactions, increasingly ludicrous, were generally the result of new attacks from authorities. Her strangle hold on control of the commune also increased in relation to these external forces. These threats also, ironically, became an element in her power providing the important element of us-against-them paranoia necessary for the success of an absolutist regime. This was only exacerbated when Rajneesh began speaking again in 1984—a fact which immediately began to work against Sheela's power base.

Rumors and myths about the strangers in red began immediately after their arrival at the Big Muddy. The commune was spending tremendous sums of money on development and the creation of city infrastructure. This seeming limitless supply of ready-cash convinced federal law enforcement officials, that the money stemmed from illegal activity such as drug smuggling, gun running or both. In fact the cash was coming from a series of lucrative and highly successful business ventures abroad. Sannyasins operated almost half the vegetarian restaurants in Germany and Rajneesh discotheques were springing up all across Europe. These businesses coupled with the growing number of meditation centers and local communes were sending millions of dollars to support Rajneeshpuram.

Another persistent rumors of illegal activity at Rajneeshpuram remains that the sannyasins were stockpiling weapons. Media reports of the day often focused on images of Uzi toting sannyasins. By 1985 Sheela was always shown wearing a gun on her hip. The reports all failed to mention that the photographed sannyasins were members of the Rajneeshpuram police force—a state recognized law enforcement agency whose members had been trained at the State Police Academy. Sheela and other sannyasin spokespeople, such as mayor Krishna Devi, did nothing to dispel these rumors. Instead through 1984 and into 1985, they stepped up the rhetoric and counter-threats. Newspapers quoted Devi as warning that they would take 15 Oregonian heads for every sannyasin killed. Sheela repeatedly asserted that the residents of Rajneeshpuram were ready to defend themselves—use of the words “war” and “blood” were common. When federal agents searched Rajneeshpuram after the Bhagwan's departure, no stockpile of weapons was discovered. Divers from the Navy Seals were brought in to search the two



lakes at Rajneeshpuram. Media reports of the searches failed to mention that no cache of weapons was present. According to subsequent reports, the Rajneesh sannyasins did not possess any weapons inconsistent with a municipal police force.

In his book *Passage to America*, Max Brecher interviews two soldiers-for-hire who allege that they were offered money for killing Rajneesh. In both instances, the individuals were sure that the CIA was ultimately behind the payment offers. John Wayne Hearn, now serving three life sentences for three gruesome murders for hire, admits to working for the CIA on several covert operations, including running guns to Nicaragua and assisting in a plot to overthrow the government of French Guyana. Hearn claims to have been offered a significant amount of money to blow-up several trailers at Rajneeshpuram in an attempt to scare the sannyasins. The second man Don Stewart recorded his conversations with his contact who went by the name Wolfgang. In these conversations, Wolfgang specifically mentions government agencies targeting Rajneesh. Wolfgang's plan was to assassinate the Bhagwan during one of his daily drives. Once a day Rajneesh would drive his car along a commune road and sannyasins would line up to watch their guru drive by. For Wolfgang, and presumably his backers, the killing of a couple of hundred devotees was more than acceptable if Rajneesh was taken out. It is ironic that in both these instances, the soldiers turned down the offer due to the rumors they had heard about the commune being an armed camp. The prospect of being trapped by a couple of thousand armed zealots proved an unacceptable risk.

Under the guise of fighting terrorism, the President authorized the CIA to investigate foreign entities on U.S. soil, thus sidestepping the congressional mandate against domestic CIA operations. In December 1981, President Reagan signed Executive Order 12333 which authorized federal law enforcement agencies to hire outside people to conduct illegal break-ins for the purposes of obtaining evidence. The executive order specifically allowed that evidence thus collected could be in turn used to obtain a legitimate search warrant.

Beginning in 1983 and increasing through to the dissolution of the commune in 1985, military jets from Whidbey Island Naval Base conducted regular flyovers of Rajneeshpuram. In violation of FAA regulations, the planes routinely flew extremely low over the commune disrupting daily life and, in several instances, jeopardizing civilian air traffic at the Rajneesh airport. These flights were ostensibly routine training missions—at times even using the commune buildings as fake targets for bombing runs. The flights also included reconnaissance and surveillance. Twin-engine Mohawk surveillance planes from the reconnaissance unit in Boise, Idaho also conducted recon over the commune. In the taped conversations with Wolfgang, he also mentions



participating in aerial surveillance. Both the INS and U.S. attorney's office conducted aerial recons over Rajneeshpuram in 1985 as part of their preparation for arresting Rajneesh.

On 13 May 1985, the police of Philadelphia, PA dropped a C-4 bomb onto the headquarters of M.O.V.E., a back-to-Africa movement. The police had attempted to serve warrants on members of the movement and they were allegedly fired upon during the attempt. After a brief siege, Philadelphia Police Commissioner Gregore Sambor ordered the dropping of a bomb onto the headquarters building—one of several row houses in the Philadelphia residential neighborhood. (*The New York Times*, 14 May 1985) The ensuing fire destroyed 61 row houses and left 251 people without a home. (CNN, 24 June 1996) Following the bombing, Commissioner Sambor was reelected and U.S. Attorney General Edwin Meese III applauded the operation as a superb success for American law enforcement. By 1996 the city of Philadelphia had paid out almost \$30 million in lawsuits resulting directly from the M.O.V.E. operation.

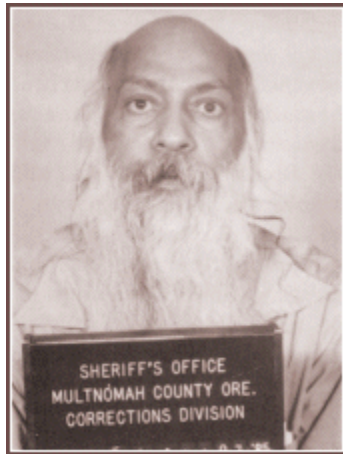
In the summer of 1985, Sheela retained a top immigration lawyer, Peter Schey, to represent Rajneesh in his ongoing battle with INS. Schey immediately began negotiating with U.S. District Attorney Robert Turner, who had already secretly convened a grand jury to investigate alleged immigration fraud at Rajneeshpuram. Schey wanted to insure that if indictments were handed down that the indictees would be allowed to surrender themselves to authorities at a location outside of Rajneeshpuram. Schey was confident that he had an agreement to this affect with Turner and that he, Rajneesh and any others indicted would be notified 24 hours in advance and be allowed to turn themselves in to the court house in Portland. Despite this, according to INS deputy counsel Mike Inman, Turner had no intention of allowing Rajneesh or anyone else to surrender peacefully. Instead, in Inman's words, Turner was set on "storming the Bastille." According to Inman, Turner wanted "to utilize the Oregon National Guard, the FBI and the Immigration Services Border Patrol, and storm the compound with force, and go through the barricades and fences." (Brecher, p. 275) Turner had developed a plan, according to Inman and others involved, of serving the warrants unannounced. INS agent Joe Greene testified under oath that Turner no intention of allowing the Bhagwan to surrender at a neutral location. According to the plan, state and federal law enforcement, including the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, would show up unannounced at Rajneeshpuram and on a bull-horn inform the residents that they were surrounded and that the indictees had 1 minute to surrender. National Guard troops would be concealed in the nearby hills to provide back up if necessary. Given the then generally accepted



rumors that the commune was a “militarized camp,” this plan would seem to have been intended to provoke an armed confrontation.

The government’s plan for Rajneeshpuram eerily foreshadows the later federal assaults on the Branch Davidian compound at Waco, Texas and Randy Weaver’s cabin at Ruby Ridge, Idaho. In these two instances, similar tactics, to those proposed by Turner, were employed with very tragic results. In these cases, the fear that stockpiles of weapons were present was used to justify the excessive force employed. Through the period leading up to the arrest of Rajneesh and again during the siege at the Branch Davidian compound, media pundits repeatedly raised the specter of Jonestown. The deaths of the Davidians is still often represented as mass suicide, rather than the consequence of the government’s assault. It is not difficult to imagine what would have happened, if Robert Turner had been able to proceed with his surprise entrance into Rajneeshpuram. One can also assume who would have been accused of “firing first.”

Turner’s plan was unexpectedly thwarted before it could be implemented, when on the afternoon of Sunday 27 October 1985, two privately chartered planes departed Rajneeshpuram Airport and began to make their way across the continent. Rumors were flying that arrests were imminent. In actuality sealed indictments had been handed to Turner the previous week. Rajneesh’s non-sannyasin attorney Peter Schey twice flew from Los Angeles to Oregon to discuss the rumored warrants and to arrange for the peaceful surrender of Rajneesh. On both occasions Turner denied the existence of warrants for Rajneesh or anyone other sannyasin. Turner claimed that he believed that a peaceful surrender was impossible and that by telling Schey he would be tipping



Rajneesh off and allow him time to flee. Sheela had departed the commune the month before under a cloud of accusation and suspicion—the Bhagwan, himself, her principle accuser. Despite the fact that no indictments had been announced nor warrants served, frantic calls went out to law enforcement agencies across the country to apprehend the “fugitives.” The planes landed at a small airport outside of Charlotte, North Carolina for refueling. Agents were waiting and the Bhagwan and his entourage were arrested without incident. Though they had been warned that the passengers would be heavily armed with automatic weapons and armor-piercing bullets, the agents found only one small handgun on the planes. At Rajneesh’s bail hearing the next day, prosecutors were unable to present an

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arrest warrant from Oregon. Despite this discrepancy, the judge denied Rajneesh's bail. An unsigned, incomplete Oregonian warrant was later presented to the Charlotte court. Court records in Oregon hold a different arrest warrant, however, one that appears to have been forged after the fact and pre-dated.

In a jailhouse TV interview conducted by Ted Koppel and aired live on ABC's Nightline, Rajneesh asserted that he was not leaving the country or fleeing impending arrest. When asked by an incredulous Ted Koppel, if the Bahamas (their flight plans indicated North Carolina, but sannyasins were reported to have been inquiring about



renting a plane capable of over-sea flight) was now part of the United States, Rajneesh claimed to not know where the planes were headed. He said, instead, that he trusted in his friends and all he knew was that they were taking him to some place safe. Given Rajneesh's apparent lack of involvement in his travel decisions during his post U.S. "world tour," it is not out of the question that he did not know where the planes were headed. He would simply go where they were headed like a Zen sage, he was where ever he was. One thing is certain, Rajneesh's departure from Rajneeshpuram stemmed off the government's

plan for a major assault on the commune and, thus, likely spared several hundred lives. By late September 1985, 15 National Guard armored personnel carriers were positioned in the hills surrounding Rajneeshpuram. In addition to the many FBI agents investigating the allegations made by Rajneesh, the state was ready to commit 800 state troopers if conflict erupted and the National Guard had another 600 guardsmen on standby as backup. By September 30, the National Guard had three HUEY helicopters at Redmond airport ready to carry FBI agents and Oregon State Police SWAT teams into Rajneeshpuram. Turner also unsuccessfully requested U.S. Marshal's Service Fugitive



Investigative Search Teams (FIST) and Border Patrol from the U.S.-Mexico border to assist with “mass arrests.”

Even if one rejects his claim that he was not fleeing the country, one question does remain about this mysterious flight: why did they turn east rather than west? If they had chosen to fly out over the Pacific Ocean they would have very quickly been over international waters outside of U.S. jurisdiction. *A Passage to America* author Max Brecher asked this question directly to Rajneesh in 1989, “I left for Charlotte,” Rajneesh answered, “because for six weeks previously the National Guard was on standby around the commune, ready to enter the

commune. Obviously, if they had arrested me there, the 5,000 sannyasins would not have tolerated it. There would have been bloodshed. To avoid this, I went to Charlotte. It was just to avoid bloodshed of the sannyasins. There was no sannyasins in Charlotte to be involved if I was arrested there. And there was a beautiful house in the mountains there for me to stay.” (Brecher, p. 289) When



Weaver was asked about the government’s concern about a bloodbath of innocent sannyasins at Rajneeshpuram, if the commune was stormed by force, he simply stated, “It’s not the government’s job to make those guy’s jobs easier.”

In retrospect, Rajneesh's cross-country flight did not meet the legal definition of fleeing prosecution and he and the other passengers could not rightly be considered fugitives. U.S. District Attorney conceded in the Charlotte court that he lacked the evidence to support his claim that Rajneesh and co. were attempting to evade arrest. Despite Turner's contention to the contrary in court, the pilots filed flight plans that listed Charlotte as their final destination. According to account of the air traffic controller on duty that night, the pilots did not behave in a fashion consistent with someone who was either nervous or paranoid. Above all else, they could not be called fugitives since at the time of their arrests no warrant existed for any of them. The following morning, the federal indictment was unsealed but there is still no evidence that an arrest warrant was issued for Rajneesh or anyone else on the plane. The warrant that is currently on file in



Oregon, though dated Oct. 28, was not clerked into the court house until two weeks after the arrest. The warrant also lists the North Carolina arresting officer, a fact that could not have been known at the time the warrant was supposed to have been issued, since Rajneesh was still in Oregon at that time. Despite these facts, Rajneesh's attorney's conceded that a warrant existed, without having seen it, and the magistrate denied Rajneesh's bail on the grounds that he was a flight risk.

A theory proposed by Max Brecher, and supported by the account of deputy INS council Inman, is that the federal authorities--the INS and the State Dept.--wanted Rajneesh to flee the country. Then they could use the existence of indefinitely active warrants to keep him from ever returning. This plan would have effectively prevented Rajneesh from ever entering the United States again without having to go through the process of lengthy deportation proceedings and the possibility a court could rule in his favor. This would help explain why the INS pulled their support for the U.S. District Attorney's investigation and ordered their field operatives not to assist in the arrest of Rajneesh, despite the fact that all the charges against her were for immigration violations. Turner takes full credit for the arrest. He and a Charlotte INS agent, working against the directives of his superiors, coordinated the bringing in of the U.S. Marshals and the subsequent arrests. It appears that Turner in his zeal to prosecute Rajneesh may have thwarted the governments quiet solution to the Rajneesh problem.

In 13 July 1986 a monument was dedicated outside the Wasco County Court House. Beneath the statue of a stately Antelope read the inscription "Dedicated to all who steadfastly and unwaveringly opposed the attempts of the Rajneesh followers to take political control of Wasco County: 1981-1985." Below this, the plaque carries a quote from Irish politician Edmund Burke "The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing." Above the statue flew a flag that had once flown above the U.S. Capital Building—a gift from Congressman Bob Smith. Were the residents of Rajneeshpuram really "evil" and were the Oregonians really "good"? What is true of erecting monuments is also true of history, they are constructed by the victors. The defeated almost without exception go down as villains within the orthodox historical record. Only two members of the commune could rightfully be described as "evil"—Ma Anand Sheela and Ma Pujā. A few others committed evil acts.

Studies like the Zimbardo experiment have shown that even red-blooded, all American college students can commit the most atrocious acts if given absolute power over another. In the experiment designed by Philip Zimbardo, a group of male college student volunteers were randomly separated into two groups—prisoners and guards. The guards were given uniforms and dark glasses and no one was permitted to address



another by name. A long list of petty prisoner regulations was provided to the guards. The experiment originally designed to last a fortnight had to be ended after only one week, due to an unexpected level of violence and humiliation inflicted on the prisoners by the guards. In his analysis of the experiment, Zygmunt Bauman observes, “clearly and unambiguously, the orgy of cruelty that took Zimbardo and his colleagues by surprise, stemmed from a vicious social arrangement, and not from the viciousness of the participants.” (Bauman, p. 167) In a separate study conducted by Stanley Milgram at Yale University, Milgram demonstrated that most humans possess the capacity of harming another if the instruction to do so comes from one that the subject holds as an authority figure.

Were all sannyasins indeed “evil”? This is certainly the explicit message of the Antelope monument. When the sannyasins first moved to Eastern Oregon, buying land that no one else wanted, they made serious efforts towards creating a positive impression on their neighbors. Sheela regularly held information meetings in 1981, where she presented a pleasant face and attempted to charm the wary Oregonians. The sannyasins went above and beyond in complying with local laws and state land use regulations throughout the creation of their city—a fact that infuriated their opponents in the 1,000 Friends of Oregon and the Oregon Attorney General’s office. Their comprehensive plan was even held up as an example for other municipalities to follow. At its outset the commune developers tried to get along with their neighbors and comply with all U.S. laws. They only moved into the neighboring town of Antelope when pushed by 1,000 Friends lawsuits and at the suggestion of the state Land Use Commission. At the time that the sannyasins began buying property in Antelope, the town was listed prominently on the list of Oregon ghost towns.

Throughout the creation of Rajneeshpuram, Sheela’s arguments and public appearances became increasingly vitriolic and provocative. Also through this time, the commune and its residents were the victims of an escalating bombardment of harassment and threats of harm. The threats and intimidation came from multiple directions and was fully supported by several arms of the federal government. Against this opposition and with the backdrop of the unwelcoming sagebrush desert, it is amazing that the Rajneesh sannyasins accomplished what they did—creating a sustainable, ecologically friendly city capable of supporting thousands of residents.

The history of the United States began with religious dissent—the puritans forging a life in the wilderness of New England to escape persecution. It is also a history of repressing religious difference. The same puritan pilgrims established a cluster of communities ruthlessly intolerant of religious difference—Cotton Mather and



the Salem witch trials being but one example extreme among many. Attorney General Frohnmeyer asserted that a city founded by adherents of one particular religion was unconstitutional. If American history is to suggest anything, the opposite would certainly seem to be the case. Many U.S. cities were established by religious followers in an attempt to establish their own area where they could freely practice their faith. The settling of Utah and the incorporation of Salt Lake City is an obvious example. The anti-cult movement has been an equal and counter-running force within the history of religion in the United States. Just as so-called “new religious movements” have been common since before the revolution, anti-cult movements have been equally ubiquitous. It was this strain of intolerance that necessitated the moves which led to the establishment of new cities based on religious communities. Philip Jenkins argues in his book *Mystics & Messiahs* that anti-cult paranoia has frequently taken hold of the American mass psyche. Phillips notes that the arguments of this reactionary movement were solidly in place by the late 19<sup>th</sup> century—lurid stereotypes, xenophobia, accusations of mind-control and stories of sexual scandal. We can see all these elements displayed in the concerned voices speaking out against Rajneeshpuram. “When a modern critic attacks a deviant religious group as a cult,” Jenkins writes, “the images evoked are ultimately a mélange of rumors and allegations variously made against Catholics, Masons, Mormons, Shakers, radical evangelicals, and others.” (Jenkins, p. 25) He further argues that the concern over cults does not necessarily correlate to actual threats posed by the cult’s activities. Jenkins observes that “the level of public concern about cults at any given time is not necessarily based on a rational or objective assessment of the threat posed by these groups, but rather reflects a diverse range of tensions, prejudices, and fears.” (Jenkins, p. 20)

So, again, one has to ask, were the Rajneesh sannyasins “evil” for attempting to build their City on a Hill? Or were they simply victims of a cyclic resurgence of the pernicious hatred of difference that has run through the darkness of America since it’s earliest days?



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## **Why I Loved the Ranch looking at the Oregon experiment**

*Ma Dharmcharya*

Osho's commune in Oregon was the hardest thing I ever lived through. It took all my courage to stick it out until one day a layer of negativity that I had hugged tightly to myself finally dropped off. Even after that it wasn't all smooth sailing; Osho was trying to wake us up and the world with us, no matter what the cost. I can't really describe this experiment in human consciousness that we called the Ranch. I can only say what it was like for me to live there, and share my gratitude for this unique opportunity to grow.

To celebrate everything is a completely revolutionary concept and one of the cornerstones of Osho's teaching. "I celebrate myself" is an ecstatic line in one of our songs. When I experienced that celebration, it was an entirely new experience, one that I wanted more of, something I was willing to risk a lot for. There were long periods when I did not look or feel ecstatic during Osho's "drive-bys" and was full of jealous and aggressive thoughts against those who seemed to be having such a good time with him. To turn the mirror back onto myself, onto my anger and jealousy was and still can be painful. It took me a long time to even begin to celebrate.

I had had a so-called "normal" life with a normal job working for the province of British Columbia as a Community Health Nurse. I was bored and disgusted with the hypocrisy of my job as a health educator, and miserable because various therapies had not alleviated the flaws in my life. The older women who had risen in the ranks to supervisory positions were truly frightening to behold. The possibility that I could end up at 60 as controlling and bitter or as frightened and obedient as these poor women inspired me to look for something else.

It takes strong measures to revolutionize a life and the Ranch provided these in plenty. That's why I went there; I wanted to transform myself and Osho was giving us keys, hard keys. I worked as a cleaner, 7 to 7 with tea breaks and a long lunch break. I hated it at first. I believed it to be a low-class job. After a while my body got used to the shock of the hours and the physical exercise. I became healthier than I had ever been and began to have plenty of energy. Because it was simple work, I started to be aware of the appalling rubbish that occupied my mind continuously, an important prerequisite of becoming celebrative. I did not think of myself as a slave working for Osho with no pay.



I regarded myself as extremely privileged to be there at all. At first I lived in a tent on the hill. Though sometimes cold and wet, it was incredibly beautiful – the smell of the sage and juniper, the whole vast space of the sky, so silent. At the end of the first summer, I moved into a house. To have a closet and indoor plumbing was a matter for rejoicing but I missed the sky. Though I cleaned and did laundry for others, when I came home at night it was to a spanking clean house with my laundry neatly folded on my bed. We lived in the houses that we built, ate the produce from our farm and gradually saw the mud and mess of a construction camp fade into irrigation and landscaping.

The breadth, complexity and sheer audacity of Osho's experiment with us in Oregon is even now too vast for my comprehension. What I did comprehend was how much I loved being there. It was such a challenge, that first year, to create a festival for 15,000 people in a hot, barren semi-desert that sported only a few dilapidated farm buildings. Our minds screamed "Impossible!" but we did it, as we created housing, sewage facilities, lights and food. When the sannyasins from the rest of the world arrived they were so delighted to be there. We were so proud and grateful to be ready with tents, food, bathrooms and a place where we could all meditate with Osho.

How much yogurt do you order for breakfast for 15,000 people, and will 15,000 attend or 150? We had to start trusting ourselves and each other. We had to start taking chances. One of the hilarious ironies was that if you knew how to pour concrete you would be in the bakery and the baker would be growing peas. There was no chance to get bored. One day you were a crew leader for a job you knew nothing about, struggling to understand and communicate what needed to be done and then you would suddenly discover that unbeknownst to you, one of your crew had 20 years experience at it. If you were lucky and a little loose, this person would support and help you; if not, life could become really difficult. You could either laugh and give up seriousness and control or be angry and humiliated. This sort of thing happened a lot. Of course the reverse would happen: you could be the one with the experience and be on a crew whose leader didn't know which end of the hammer to pick up. Again, this could be funny or pure hell, it depended on you.

This may sound horrible and chaotic and sometimes it was, but in addition to getting the job done it woke us up, made us strong, and shook up our rigidities. Many of us developed the courage to try anything and learned to take ourselves and our work playfully.

We were out in all this space and sky. It was so quiet at night and the stars so bright. You could wander and never even think of being afraid. It was our place; we built every scrap of it ourselves and we could do what we wanted – have loud Dynamic





Meditation, have a bar and a casino with all the loud music our ears could take, build a place to cremate our dead in a glorious celebrating way. We grew and ate wonderful vegetarian food. Our Master drove by every day, came out to sit with us at festivals and the rest of the time we knew he was there in Lao Tzu, the heart and soul of the place.

I wanted to share my love for the Ranch experience, but it is incomplete without addressing the explosion that occurred when Osho exposed the corruption that we had all been living with. Though he had talked about politics and fascism at length it had remained only words for me. When Sheela left, I heard him say that fascist leaders need fascist followers in order to remain in power. After this discourse I began to see parallels between myself and the average German who closed his eyes and ears to the excesses of Hitler and the SS. Though I had disliked and feared many of the Ranch “moms,” it was easier for me to doubt myself and hide my feelings and clap and cheer with the rest than to begin waking up and taking responsibility.

It took the shock of finding out the people I had trusted were truly corrupt, the grief at losing the Ranch and the unspeakable horror of seeing our Master jailed and mistreated to make me begin to realize that he meant *me* when he spoke about sheep, that he meant *me* when he talked of abuse of power, that he meant *my* illusions about religion, government and society. These are difficult issues that we all have to deal with if this world is to survive at all. So in a way the whole dénouement of our beautiful experiment can also be celebrated. It was a complex lesson about the vital issue of power that we are still processing.

After the Ranch closed I mourned it for a long time. It had been such a rich tapestry. As we successfully met the inescapable demands of our physical reality, there was a parallel growth in our inner world, and this growth is a matter truly to be celebrated. I cannot put into words the depth of this experience nor how juicy it was to live there. Nothing has touched it since.

Originally appeared in *Osho Pulse* #1 [<http://www.globalserve.net/~sarlo/>]



## More German than the Germans

by Swami Chaitanya Keerti

I remember my childhood home in the small town of Panipat. We lived on a street where mostly untouchables lived. Mahatma Gandhi has a special name for them—harijans—which means the people of God. Though the other members of my family hated the untouchables and took a bath each time they came in contact with them, I did not follow this ugly system. My best friend Ramesh, a harijan, lived in the same street. I would often go to his house and enjoy meals with him. I sometimes even slept in his house. But each time when I came home, my family would not touch me, because I had been to a harijan house, and they would take a bath if I touched them. I continued with this lifestyle and had fun. This became a solid base for me to be able to live with people of all nations, colors, and races—without ideas of superiority or inferiority.

I also enjoyed the company of Sikhs and Muslims in my small town, ate in their houses, and visited their places of worship. I read the Christian literature that was freely distributed, but could not find any church in our small town. The real revolution and crystallization happened after I found and read some of Osho's books.

I went to Osho at the age of 21 and was initiated into His neo—sannyas. Osho accepted me the very first day—to be precise, the day was September 4, 1971—and with a new name and a new life, I joined His movement. My first multicultural exposure was Osho's Kirtan group, which began traveling to various cities of India the day after my sannyas initiation. There were people from different parts of India—Gujarat, Delhi, Maharashtra, Bengal, and other states—and there were people from the West also. I was equally comfortable with the Western friends, as I was able to communicate with them in English. They also seemed very comfortable.

Then in 1974 Osho established His ashram in Pune, and I was asked to edit the Hindi edition of the *Rajneesh Foundation Newsletter*, starting with the first issue on Osho's birthday, December 11. Swami Anand Teertha, who was British, was the editor for the English edition. Osho would call us together and give instructions about this publication.

My first girlfriend was Australian. Later I had more girlfriends from Germany than from any other country—as there always were more Germans in the ashram.

Even today I have a German wife. I had Canadian, French—Canadian, Dutch,



and Japanese girlfriends. This multicultural love life has enriched me tremendously, and I am at ease with, just natural with, people from various cultural backgrounds. I can call myself a global citizen. My first girlfriend from Australia was very loving, and she expressed that she was surrendered to me. I was too naïve and innocent to realize that I was carrying the conditioning of Indian husband-wife relationships. Coming from that background, I asked her, “Could you give me a glass of water?” This was not in the ashram, but at her room somewhere outside. She gave me a reply that shook my Indian conditioning. She said, “Don't you have hands to get the water for yourself?” I was surprised that a moment before she had been saying that she was surrendered to me and then the next moment she would not serve me a glass of water. But soon I realized that surrender in love did not include serving like an Indian wife—I was expecting to be served like an Indian husband. This was a good lesson for me, and I became more alert to my future love relationships with Western women.

I have lived about five years in the West—mainly the US, the UK, and Europe. I have lived mostly in the communes and centers—Oregon in the US, Medina in England. In between, I've spent about two decades in the Osho Commune International in Pune, where I have been able to interact with people from several countries.

I worked in the Ashram's Press Office for more than a decade, and the Press Office always had people from various countries. It was really fun working with them, as I was always there, while others came and went, floating!

And there were also difficulties and challenges of working with people of other cultures, but they are not greater than the challenges of working with people of the same culture. In the Press Office, we had people from English-speaking countries—America, Canada, Great Britain, Australia, New Zealand, etc.—because we needed proper English for the press releases. I am bad with grammar and word choice in English, as I did not have an education in English. Another Indian, Swami Satya Vedant, was proficient in English and a significant contributor to the Press Office. But we preferred to have Australian Krishna Prem, British Subhuti, and American Veeten write the press releases in British and American English, although we were mostly working in India or from India. And our press releases were often praised and published verbatim, without any editing, in the Indian media. Germans were not good with the English language, but Abhijat and Manasvi, both Germans, always saw to it that the press releases were presented in a neat way, so that they looked good! And the Press Office needed passion, dedication, and devotion, and I think I had those in abundance. (Am I boasting, like Indians do?) I made sure Osho made a splash in the media—this way or that way.



Everybody contributed in his or her own particular way, and the end result was really amazing!

We have not always appreciated the benefits of this cooperation, and stereotypes have come up that divide us. One has been the idea that Indians are dirty and so cannot be responsible for maintaining the ashram, The statement that Indians won't take care of the ashram usually comes up in reference to how the Pune ashram was kept during the Ranch years. But most of the Indians who were in Pune at that time hadn't been with Osho long. Osho wanted the longtime sannyasins with Him in Oregon, It may be true in general terms that many Indians aren't clean by Western standards (though there are many very clean Indians), but Indians living with Osho for such a long time may behave more in the German manner than even the Germans themselves. I know that Vairagya, who was my roommate for a year or so, was very, very particular about cleanliness and aesthetics, while another Indian friend of ours, who had been in the commune for the same amount of time, continued to keep his room untidy. That was the reason none of us wanted to visit his room,

I found it really exciting to work with people of other cultures in my life with Osho, and I am actually more comfortable in a global environment. This has been part of my evolution in the time spent around Osho. I was happy to see some participants from the US and England in a recent camp at Oshodham in New Delhi.

I conclude the story of my multicultural experience with what Osho says about becoming a sannyasin:

“Becoming a sannyasin is a simple gesture that you are ready to become free. Free from nationality: The sannyasin will not think of himself as an Indian or a German or an Italian. Even if he has to carry a passport, he will not think deep down in his consciousness that he is an Italian. He is simply universal. A sannyasin will not think of himself as a Christian or a Hindu or a Mohammedan—although there is no need to go on telling people about it, because I don't want you to create unnecessary troubles for yourselves. As it is, you have enough troubles. But deep down you will know, 'I am now just a human being.' You will transcend all barriers of nation, race, color, religion, And basically, fundamentally, you will drop your upbringing, and you will become innocent again and you will start exploring life,” *Philosophia Perennis*, Vol, 1, Chapter 10.

Originally appeared in *Viha Connection XV(5)* [oshoviha.org]



## Not the Cloud but the Sky

*Ma Prem Neeraj*

I went to India in 1977 because I was in love; out of my mind, inexplicably drawn to Osho, that's all; not a seeker of truth, just in love. My first in-the-flesh encounter with Osho was at a Hindi discourse. I sat sari-veiled as tears streamed down, waterfalls of connection to the source reached in Osho's presence. I had planned to collect lots of useful therapy techniques and be back home in three months; I stayed for almost three years.

The first phase of being with the teacher – insights, understanding and “bliss” – sounded good and easy. The next step included the blissful agony of actual change through daily meditation, the pressure-cooker of intense group therapy work and long meditation retreats. Following this period I lived on a buffalo farm by the river, carrying water to my straw hut from the burning ghat, each day participating in the Ashram meditations; returning to the hut-village, swimming in the swirling river pool under the Tantric Moon... Rajneesh... Lord of the Moon... Osho.

The desire for enlightenment flickered through from time to time in this phase; it is pervasive in an ashram, in the breath of Mother India. The Hindus say “the world” is maya (illusion). I understand that to recognise one's enlightenment is to be out-of-illusion, disillusioned. Luckily, because of the clarity of Osho's teaching, I became “disillusioned with disillusionment” during this time; seeing quickly enough that enlightenment as a state of achievement, as a goal, as an end, is also an illusion. There were so many times that glimpses of what Osho told us were my experience during these years in Poona... standing under an enormous tree weighted with flowers in full bloom; some days one petal falling at a time, other days a shower of flowers: fragrant, silky, caressing, releasing and joining... Osho. I got it: “Carry the water, chop the wood”; “Eat when hungry, sleep when sleepy”; the simple life... “It doesn't matter.”

In the last period of my time in Poona I was deathly ill, shaking and sweating with a very high fever. Arjava, a true friend, arranged for me to be admitted into the Ashram hospital. As I floated above my body two doctors stood on either side of the bed arguing the diagnosis: malaria – typhoid. My connection with Osho strengthened through this life-threatening illness of tropical proportions... the “deep cleaner” Osho called



typhoid fever. After leaving the hospital I remained only another six months in India. I was so weak physically and wondering if I was more ill than I knew.

I had wanted to birth a baby for a long time; it was a lifelong desire. I was in my thirties and for my physical body to heal in India might take too long. In darshan when I had asked Osho a year before if I should have a baby, he had wanted to know my age, shone his light and pronounced: “Soon centering will be happening and then you can decide.” My dream was to give birth surrounded by sannyasins, go to darshan and place the infant at Osho’s feet. Sterile western medicine and modern testing facilities beckoned with reassurance. I had met Arjava when Osho had given each of us the June ’78 Tantra group. Throughout our story with Osho since then we have been celebrating togetherness. We came back to Vancouver in May, 1980. The despair and hopelessness glimpsed from time to time in Poona opened to a dark endless night here in the West, with years of body weakness, pain and “infertility,” family and society ridicule and an occupational desertland.

Why were these events experienced as a dark endless night when I say that I had tasted the ocean of Osho’s Love? How did I forget that I was like a clay pot in the river, the water inside the pot and the water outside of the pot the same? Osho had told me this in darshan, in discourse answers... Neeraj, you are not the cloud but the sky; not the pot but the ocean. And over and over again I forgot and remembered; forget and remember.

When I returned to the West I had lost what is called in Buddhism “beginner’s mind” (knowing that you don’t know); and this is the re-entry to identifying with the pot instead of the ocean, isn’t it? It is all so subtle; when in spiritual ego you don’t realize that that’s where you are. I had an attitude that “Now there is knowing.” From this place of spiritual arrogance I expected life to be easier; paradoxically it became more difficult. When I became pregnant the cloud did lift; and then I found myself expecting a cosmic orgasm birthing experience and joyful effortless mothering. After 48 hours of labour and a Caesarian section, I saw in my heart’s eye that expectations bring frustrations; and Osho whispered loudly in my ear: “LIFE IS NOT HERE TO MEET YOUR EXPECTATIONS; don’t you get it?!” Sometimes the sky was cloudless; I was extremely grateful just to be alive, with Arjava by my side and a healthy baby girl. That ecstatic gratitude was the unexpected cosmic orgasm that both Arjava and I shared. I looked at him when this new life force breathed in and said, to his acknowledging face: “Doesn’t this feel like darshan?!” Osho called this one Shantam Leela (Silent Play).


Whenever I ask: “Why is the universe not meeting my expectations?” I am in the pot again, identified with the cloud that is passing in that moment. I have heard Osho say that “Mothering is the most difficult meditation.” Why? My understanding is that the



difficulty arises when one instinctively identifies with the child as their mother. In parenting, even when you think you can endure no more demands on your energy, your caring pushes you further. I resist this; in this resistance, the night is dark and endless again. There are easier ways to get there, easier meditations, believe me! When I am identified as an Osho devotee, as Leela's mother, as Arjava's mate, as a doctor/psychologist, I am stuck. I am in the pot again. I have forgotten that the water inside the pot and the water outside the pot are the same. This still happens; the difference now is that it really doesn't matter any more if I get stuck sometimes.

It is really a mystery how this change takes place. It seems that it comes by absorbing the Master's ever-present energy; Osho is in the stars, the trees, the flowers, the breeze, the play. It happens by living, celebrating and recognising other seekers of Truth; one finds kindred spirits on the path everywhere. In the community of disciples around a Master there is love, experience and gentle, caring guidance – when I am open and vulnerable, when I ask for it, and when I don't have expectations about how it should manifest itself. I know that the way to remember that I am not the pot, not the cloud, not the form, is to experience myself as formlessness. The best medicine for transformation is meditation. I call Vipassana (insight) meditation “the card in my back pocket.” It is the simplest of methods, consisting of just watching the belly as it is being moved by the breath. Inhaling and exhaling; watching the breath without changing it, and having an attitude of observing while neither expressing nor repressing. Witnessing the body, the senses and the mind, or thoughts. It is known as “the meditation of the marketplace” because it can be done anytime anywhere. When my mind has cornered me with no-way-out now I can pull out this card. Vipassana: the watching meditation which allows the pot to dissolve; the clouds to separate; which allows me to stop trying, stop doing and just be.

Originally appeared in *Osho Pulse* #2 [<http://www.globalserve.net/~sarlo/>]

	<p><b>OSHO: Rebellion, Revolution &amp; Religiousness</b></p> <p><i>I don't preach revolution. I say utterly against revolution. I say unto you that my word for the future, and for those who are intelligent enough in the present, is rebellion. What is the difference?</i></p> <p><i>Rebellion is individual action; it has nothing to do with the crowd. Rebellion has nothing to do with politics, power, violence. Rebellion has something to do with changing your consciousness, your silence, your being. It is a spiritual metamorphosis.</i></p> <p><b>www.MechanicalDiva.com</b></p>
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**Close Encounters of a Mysterious Kind**  
**waiting for the master**

*Ma Chetan Rahasya*

It was seventeen years ago when I first set eyes on an image of my master. Little did I know then that I would grow up and fall in love in the way that I have today. I remember it well, and I have thought back to that time and space persistently until recently, turning the memory around in my mind like a fine loop.

New York at the airport. Stoically, patiently, quietly, my family and I stood in an immigration line-up like good citizens of a foreign country. We had traveled far, leaving England on route to our home in Malaysia. I do not remember any of the people who must have clustered around my little body, any of the sounds or smells, any of the hustling and bustling of that airport ex-perience. All I remember are the people who began to materialize in an orangey red spec-tacle which grew beside me. It all began with the ecstatic, ebullient individuals of radiant array and their swinging beaded necklaces.

I was caught, astonished, transfixed as only an eight-year-old could be and I stared without blinking at this group of people in red and orange; smiling faces, laughing eyes, hugging arms, giggling, bubbling orations. I was dazzled with orange light, delighted as though drinking orange crush or cherry cream soda for the first time, my mouth watering as though I had just inhaled the vapour of a peeled fruit. I stared on, inundating my little self with the happening, all the while fastening my eyes on the image encased in plastic and dancing at the end of the wooden beads. The beads swung wildly with the movements of their wearers, never stopping long enough for me to properly capture the black and white image of the bearded face. I knew the answers to all of my questions would be revealed if only I could figure out who it was. The more I stared the more the picture evaded my gaze. All I was able to capture was a glistening of the face but nothing which satisfied my intense fascination. (This is all I can remember.)

Memory eludes me, it regulates my emotions, it forms and reforms as I do. It is fluid, never static; above all, my memory is selective. I remember nothing else from our voyage except that spectacle at the New York Airport. Over the years, I would remember it and forget it, over and over. I did not realize that at this moment I started a period of waiting which lasted sixteen years. Sixteen years of remembering and forgetting until the significance of the event was revealed.





A year and a half ago I arrived in Vancouver thinking I had come here to study. Oblivious to the other forces that drew me here, I had in fact come to Vancouver to meet my master. I moved into a communal house which became the Osho Samaroha Meditation Centre. I had been participating in group meditations and listening to Osho's discourses for a couple of months before I realized who I was in the presence of. When I came across photo-graphs of a visit Osho made to New York something sparked inside me and there was an instantaneous recognition of my experience as a child at the airport. I had been told of Osho's work, of the devices he uses to break the strong conditionings of his disciples; I had been told of the time when everybody wore orange and the mala; I had even been practicing some of his meditation techniques. All the while something had stirred inside me but no connection had been made. But there was no mistaking it, I had been hit by a thunderbolt. I ran to look more carefully at the picture on a friend's mala. This is it! There was so much laughter and overflowing joy, I couldn't believe what I was seeing, but it was true. Yes! This is the mystery I've been waiting for. This is the face I could never grasp. At that moment I realized Osho was my master. Two months later on the 10th of January, 1998, I became Ma Chetan Rahasya: conscious mystery.

The master uses all sorts of devices. Waiting seems to be a big one for me. For sixteen years I waited for the Master to be revealed to me, even though I did not know it at the time. Sometimes I feel impatient and regretful that I missed Osho in His body, that I had to wait for so long. But in my heart I know there was no other way that this could have happened. I have heard Osho say that with all His devices, it is always too early for someone to take sannyas and always too late, which to me somehow means that it is always the right time.

And why do I need my Master? Because I have forgotten. I have forgotten something vitally important about myself, I have forgotten who I am. The master is a gateway to my own being, to my own self. The master outside is a reflection of the master inside me. At the moment when I recognized my Master the waiting of sixteen years came to an end only to give way to the beginning of another kind of waiting. Perhaps there will be a day when I'll look at the photograph on my mala but instead of seeing Osho's face all I'll see is emptiness. So I will continue waiting until a day when his face disappears, when I remember who I am, when I meet my conscious mystery.

Originally appeared in *Osho Pulse* #4 [<http://www.globalserve.net/~sarlo/>]



## World Teacher

### An interview with the Tibetan Lama, His Holiness Lama Karmapa

*Ma Prem Jeevan*

In 1972, Swami Govind Siddharth visited the Monastery of the Tibetan Lama, His Holiness Lama Karmapa in Darjeeling. When he arrived, accompanied by his wife and two young daughters, the monastery was completely closed. He told, in an interview, of his disappointment at not meeting the Karmapa. Then all of a sudden, one lama came out to tell him that he was immediately wanted inside by His Holiness. He went in and was greeted by him as if he was expected there. His Holiness never even knew anything about him beforehand, as he had never made any appointment... he never knew anything about him except that he was in sannyasin's dress. About His Holiness, he is said to be a



'Divine Incarnation'. In Tibet, they believe that whosoever attains to buddhahood, to enlightenment, if by their own wishes they are born again to help people in the world, then they are divine incarnations — bodhisatvas. His Holiness is said to be the sixteenth incarnation of Dsum Khyenpa, the first Karmapa, who was born about 1110 AD. He is descended from the chain of master going back to Marpa, one of Tibet's great yogis.

When Swami Siddharth first entered, the Karmapa immediately told him that he knew where he was coming from. He said, "I am seeing that you have somewhere some photograph or something which is printed on two sides, of your master." Swami Siddharth answered that he had nothing like that which is printed on two sides. He had completely forgotten about the locket hanging from his mala of Osho's photograph on both sides! There was an English woman who was acting as an interpreter since the Lama Karmapa does not know English. She immediately saw his mala and said, "What is this?"



He then remembered that the locket was printed on two sides and he said, “This is the photograph of my master.” She was curious to see it, so Siddharth took it off and showed it to her. Immediately, His Holiness said, “That is it.”

He took the locket of Osho in his hand and he touched it to his forehead and then said: He is the greatest incarnation since Buddha in India — he is a living Buddha!” His Holiness went on to say, “You may be feeling that he is speaking for you, but it is not only for you that he speaks. Osho speaks for the Akashic records also, the records of events and words recorded on the astral planes. Whatever is spoken is not forgotten. That is why you will find that he goes on repeating things and you will feel that he is doing this for you, but as a matter of fact, he speaks only for a few people. Only a few people realize who Osho is. His words will remain there in Akashic records, so that they will also be helpful to people of the future.”

His Holiness went on to say that Osho was with them in past lives. “If you want to see one of Osho’s previous incarnations — who he was in Tibet — you can go to Tibet and see his golden statue there which is preserved in the Hall of Incarnations.”

He went on to say that about Osho and his work, “My blessings are always there, and I know that whatever we are not going to be able to do to help others, Osho will do.” The main aim of the lamas in coming to India was to preserve their occult sciences. Osho also confirmed this in his Kashmir lectures given in 1969. The Dalai Lama has not escaped only to save himself, but to save the Tibetan religion, the meditation secrets and the occult sciences. “We have gotten these things from India in the past, and now we want to return them back. Now we have come to know that here is an incarnation, Osho, who is doing our job in India and the world and we are very happy about it. The world will know him, but only a few people will realize what he actually is. He will be the only person who can guide properly, who can be a World Teacher in this age, and he had taken birth only for this purpose.”

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The 16<sup>th</sup> Gyalwa Karmapa was the head of the Kagyu or “Black Hat” school of Tibetan Buddhism. For more information on the 16<sup>th</sup> Karmapa, his reincarnation Ogyen Trinley Dorje and the Kagyu Lineage of Tibetan Buddhism visit <http://www.kagyuoffice.org> or the official site of the Dharma Chakra Center of Rumtek Monestary <http://www.rumtek.org/>

This interview excerpted from the book *Allah to Zen* [meditate-celebrate.com]



## **A Rose By Any Other Name...**

*by Anasya Atkins  
(Ma Anand Anasya)*

Can names such as Jesus, Lao Tsu, Buddha, or Osho (the Indian mystic then known as Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh who traveled to Oregon in the early 80's to establish a commune there) be copyrighted by a group of individuals?

Legal precedent is being made by a group called Osho Deepta, a nonprofit organization based in California. Their attempts to thwart the current ownership of registration of trademarks by another group who call themselves Osho International Foundation (OIF) is causing a more than a “brau haha” locally. It is challenging the law on an international level. The topic receiving the most attention is the use of the name “Osho” and do groups have the right to profit from the use of such revered and commonly used names?

Should the name of a mystic, holy personage, or historically regarded “enlightened being” be “fair game” for those interested in financial ventures which would require registration fees or specific permission for the use of that name? This is the heart of what is now a growing battle between the two groups.

Stories of the conflict began appearing in the Indian press back in 1999 when a prominent member of the Commune in India, Ma Yoga Neelam (all names used are sannyasin names and are not legal names) and members of her family and other close associates also influential in the decision making processes within the Commune, were effectively “banned” from the Commune. The barring of Ma Neelam, Swami Chaitanya Keerti, and others by the Commune is allegedly a result of Ma Neelam's speaking out to the Indian media regarding concerns about behaviors and decisions being made by a small group of individuals who constitute OIF whose leader is Canadian born Swami Jayesh. Osho Foundation International which is in Zurich, Switzerland, is comprised of Swami Jayesh (Canadian), Swami Amitro (British), Swami Pramod (German), Swami Sahajanand (German), Swami Mukesh (Indian).

OIF handles publishing and registration issues within the Osho International Foundation group (which has its home offices in New York City) and is falling under increasingly heavy criticism from not only Ma Neelam but a growing number of Osho sannyasins worldwide.



Team management person Swami Satya Vedant has been representing the India Commune and supports the Zurich based foundation, OFI. Swami Satya Vedant has allegedly said the publishing issues are best represented in New York, the heart of the publishing world internationally. Ma Yoga Neelam has further accused all involved in OFI as being 'a dictatorship' who are not representing Osho and his wishes and further alleges the individuals comprising OFI are making decisions based on their own personal projections and personal greed.

Osho, Indian mystic and holy man, was born Rajneesh Chandra Mohan in 1931. (Osho changed his name one year prior to his death to Osho, which is a William James quote meaning “oceanic experience”). He was a university professor at Jabalpur University for 9 years and orator in Bombay where he began capturing attention. Many people throughout the world began traveling to India to sit in “darshan” with the mystic. Darshan is an ancient tradition of a Master sitting with His disciples, speaking to them in an intimate setting of discourse. The people attracted to the words, which are neither teachings nor religious dogmas, Osho called his “neo-sannyasins” (another revival of an ancient Indian tradition which dates back centuries and describes the Master/disciple relationship. In the Western world many misconstrue the meaning to be Master/slave). What is at the core of the sannyasins spiritual quest is an emphasis on meditation, which is an active form of ridding oneself of hostility and other destructive emotions and thoughts. Osho shared with his sannyasins a vision for what he called his “New Man,” a merging of eastern and western worlds, being spiritually “aware” through meditation and eastern influences as well as a growing utilization of western technology and affluence. The changing of one's name is representative of a new chapter in one's life. Osho's vision continues in the form of his sannyasins and the Osho Meditation Centers worldwide and the main Osho Commune in the area of Mumbai (Bombay), India.

It could be said that Osho “wrote the book” on meditation. During his years known as Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh, he wrote many books on varying spiritual and mystical subjects. At one time Osho was the largest privately published author in the world. However, rather than being directly written by Osho the books come from transcriptions of Osho's discourses with his disciples, talks usually lasting up to two hours. Intimate and all too human issues were addressed to Osho in the form of questions from his sannyasins who come from all cultures globally. The witty and often brilliant commentaries by Osho to those seeking “answers” to probing questions continue to attract people to present day in the form of his legacy of works, despite his death over ten years ago. Not only are the sale of books, videos, and tapes profitable, there are Osho Meditation Centers all over the world where sannyasins and others flock to enjoy



spiritual trainings and work/meditations which allow for playtime and relaxation in the workplace.

In the Osho Commune no money is used and neither is there competition for jobs or pressures found in other outside job situations. Consequently, participants in these work/meditations often experience profound and rewarding transformations in their attitudes towards life, partnerships, and cooperation with others in the workplace and social environments. Highly experimental in nature and often involving leading therapists from their own prospective countries, workshops called “Groups” are also available which address a number of human potential and growth issues. “Groups” are also a unique blend of the intellectual and physical energy work supportive of the individual. Also available are Osho Meditations, Work/Residency programs, specific trainings in energy and body work, and celebrations, all with the flavor of Osho and his “New Man” vision.

Osho and his sannyasins left Oregon in 1986 after 5 years in the central Oregon desert where they were building their “New Man” city, Rajneeshpuram (referred to as “The Ranch”), amidst controversies that have not, in most sannyasin's eyes, been addressed adequately by US officials to this day.

Right wing politicians and conservative Oregon media challenged the group from the “get-go.” Local farmers shot at the sannyasins Peace Force officer's horses and incidents occurred where sannyasins were run off the road by self appointed militant hostile neighboring ranchers and several times, the car in which Osho (then calling himself Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh) was driving, was also sideswiped by aggressive look-ee-loos.

The sannyasins responded by effectively establishing their own legal interests in nearby Antelope, which later became known as the town of Rajneesh. This assertiveness by the sannyasins in trying to maintain their legal rights was viewed by locals as a “takeover.” Fearing for the security and safety of their gentle “Master”, the Peace Force at the Ranch armed themselves heavily and this action brought more criticism from the press. A resultant climate of fear and hostility on the part of the neighboring townspeople spread to include surrounding areas all the way into Portland, Oregon and up to Seattle, Washington. Statewide, locally invested media began to use their influence by resorting to buzzwords and other tactics whose purpose plainly was to elicit an emotional response from its readership, not to mention it sold papers. Based on mounting tensions on both sides, internal pressures began “splitting the seams” of the Osho organization. A few “higher ups” in the Osho group during those years cracked, culminating with the arrests and eventual deportation of several of Osho's followers--a small group who Osho loudly



proclaimed as “traitors.” Osho himself expelled them from the Commune and took away their “malas” (wooden beads with his photo symbolizing their sannyasin acceptance and fulfillment of meditation requirements). They were condemned severely by Osho as violators of his peaceful, pro-life Commune, and he further asserted that he was “in silence” and drugged by them throughout much of their goings-on and did not know of some events that his appointed sannyasins had been perpetrating in order to stay in Rajneeshpuram or to protect their endeavors to keep the Commune afloat.

Osho was also then targeted by the US Federal government and he was ultimately charged with marriage fraud and being in the US illegally by the INS, the regulatory group within the US government in charge of immigration violations. This action was due to many marriages by foreign sannyasins to US citizen sannyasins in order for them to remain in America and stay on as active members of the desert Cooperative. While a small percentage of these marriages were questionable as are all marriages to US citizens by foreigners, great pains were taken to make them legitimate bonding of the two people involved and most traveled to the foreign home countries to meet their new family. Osho himself had sought US legal sanctuary due to his love of religious freedom and what he had hoped would be fair and equitable treatment from a government known historically for their “justice.”

Sannyasins found it impossible to obtain building permits and other rights as a result of living in the Commune which was the controversial Oregon Precinct #42. Legal forces at “the Ranch” began to focus on their voting privileges in order to combat these fierce prejudices locally. Sannyasins retaliated also by bussing into “the Ranch” (as they came to call Rajneeshpuram) droves of homeless people and calling all US citizens to the Ranch to lend their support. Always a drug-free environment, the sanctity of Rajneeshpuram was somewhat briefly compromised by these homeless people when sannyasins found they had smuggled drugs in to their Ranch. This foreign element did not integrate as well as the sannyasins had hoped (their entry into Rajneeshpuram, like many of the experimental undertakings at the Ranch, was multi-leveled). Although a few did take sannyas and may still be sannyasins today. This program of bussing in the homeless drained the Ranch's resources which were already feeling the strain from legal entanglements and court battles.

When in the 1984 Reagan Presidential election sannyasins had their vote taken away. Sannyasins actually refused to be interviewed by lawyers HIRED by the county in the Dalles, the Wasco county seat as to the validity of their residency because the county wanted them to travel to the Dalles, using their own resources--busses, etc -- which they refused to do. Another example of an ongoing series of legal maneuverings



by Wasco County officials who were contesting their residency (the law said a 20 day residency requirement and the very legislators who had enacted that law were now the ones contesting it!). Many sannyasins picketed peacefully and the local television stations in the Pacific Northwest covered the events.

Many US sannyasins still recall the year they were NOT ALLOWED TO VOTE in their own country's presidential election (the second Reagan term), their home county's election, some of whom owned property in Oregon).

During his 5 years in Oregon Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh was the number one headliner in the Oregon media, his name and photograph appearing in several rather derogatory pieces on *Saturday Night Live's* news spots on national television. Both sannyasins and local forces were tied in a deadlock for many years which the sannyasins ultimately could not withstand, especially with the Federal government now involved.

Being tipped off of eminent legal charges by his attorneys, Osho and his entourage were detained in North Carolina on a private plane stopover to refuel while still legally en route out of America. Osho was manacled and taken away by US officials for 6 days without benefit of legal counsel (his attorney was in fact traveling with him). Osho later made allegations that he was not only illegally detained for many days, but that his health was compromised in such a way that this contributed to his early death in 1990 where he was back in Pune, India. He repeatedly claimed he was poisoned by a slow acting, nervous system poison which he calimed would kill him in 5 years. (Osho was to die of mysterious symptoms exactly as he predicted and 5 years later)

For a group whose intent was to be as far away from opposing forces and whose choice was a desolate and initially almost uninhabitable 64,000 acre parcel of land far from civilization, it was a devastating relinquishing of work, sacrifice, and dreams. Their much loved homeland, which most resembled a (non Jewish) kibbutz of sorts, was blooming in comeback plantings, flower gardens, a dairy, truck farm, roads, buildings, hotels and an airstrip with several jets, swimming lake, and other facilities, was sold at a loss and now lies abandoned. This amazing experimental city in the desert is once more a desolate, dusty and useless wasteland with little trace of the thriving and affluent community it once was.

This was how America treated a grandiose experiment in alternative lifestyle.

News now comes of a break once again within the Commune's inner ranks.

The original India Commune, lushly set on 35 plus acres has been based in India since Oslo's early years. As a fiery young man with a rare eloquence and insight into sacred teachings of various other "enlightened beings", the young Acharya Rajneesh's





(first “official” name change) group of early sannyasins began the then called “ashram” 30 years ago in Poona (now called Pune), an affluent area called Korregan Park, several hours train ride from Mumbai (formerly Bombay).

Even during the Oregon years, the Indian Commune, although shifting into a background presence, was a functioning realm for its members, especially those of Indian heritage unable to travel to the US to be a part of Rajneeshpuram. The ashram has updated to the new millenium by calling itself a “meditation resort” and can be found online at [www.Osho.com](http://www.Osho.com).

Since the banning of Ma Neelam, Swami Chaitanya Keerti and others, a legal battle began to take shape which is effectively causing a separation of factions within the sannyasin community world wide. Stirring questions are being raised about motives of a small minority within the Commune and for some sannyasins, memories of their Oregon internal problems are resurfacing as “lessons learned” and not to be tolerated a second time.

The Commune in Pune self organizes and is primarily self contained.

In a country often fraught with health risks and unsanitary conditions, the environment is sparkling clean and a vision of grace and design. It has run effectively and generally smoothly since its inception. In matters pertaining to the needs of its sannyasins to undertake meditations and individual spiritual expansion, there has not been many ripples. Most controversy previously has been due to clashes with governmental agencies unhappy to be hosting the colorfully clad, creative, above average educated, and generally forthright and articulate sannyasins.

Speaking out for their rights in various situations seems to be their ongoing legacy and is done in almost every language.

There is an insistence by sannyasins that their movement is unlike that of any other, therefore not able to be compared to what generally comes to most people's minds regarding a group involved in “spiritual quests.” Outsiders constantly equate their group with “cults”, complete with all the negative aspects of “cults.” Unlike other groups, they emphasize that this is NOT a religion, contacts with family is encouraged by the Commune, and there is no exploitation to “give up” worldly goods. In fact success, prosperity, and self-sufficiency are stressed.

Unlike other groups clamoring for members, sannyasins require a period of meditation, sometimes quite lengthy-- if one is accepted AT ALL-- until it is felt (by a constantly changing hierarchy of coordinators) a person is able to function both in unison and in cooperation with the other members and is as a whole free from derogatory and destructive emotions. One is encouraged through daily meditation to leave past hurts



behind and stay “in the moment” while mixing with the people from various cultures and heritages, often these differences being the brunt of joking and many cultural teasings by all, which seems to dissipate any inherent forms of bigotry or racism found elsewhere in the world's climate of unrest. Osho, when he was alive, set the precedent by in his darshans cracking jokes, telling stories, and “making fun of” all cultures.

When at the Commune there is an emphasis on good health and responsible human interactions. The Commune in Oregon was one of the first place to actively practice “safe sex” with videos and other educational material available to all. Venereal diseases were teased for always, from the early days in India.

Another common misconception, probably having its roots in physically conservative and traditional conservative India, is that Osho's sannyasins are sexually “loose” and engage in “free sex.” At Rajneeshpuram and presently in the India ashram there were and are strict rules about open sexuality and nudity and most sannyasins were happily focused on knocking the mud from their boots from a day of work in the hard working Ranch era. For many, sexuality just was not a priority and yet this misconception has stuck in the minds of many outsiders.

While having all the frailties of human weaknesses, the sannyasins insist on their unique place in history as a viable and contributory “Alternative Society.” Osho's “neo-sannyasins” consider themselves a society “evolving” which blends the functions of everyday living and the “taste” of Osho being actively, quietly, and subtly demonstrated in almost every country and culture in the world. The sannyasin leadership in general is hard-pressed to allow any form of oppression, especially among its own. Standards are remarkably high and conduct carefully monitored with attention given to an individual's particular situation, with encouragement to “celebrate the differences” rather than conform to a norm as in some other groups, validating their claims of uniqueness as a group and non-adherence to any set structure.

There is a truthful sense of fun that permeates through the sannyasins, who appear bright eyed and colorful in their cotton robes of (now) burgundy red, silk scarves, and Indian finery. Working and playing together is not just an ideal, but a reality to them and they seem almost oblivious to their local Indian critics, who openly admit they have little grasp of just what is going on within the confines of the Communal gates.

The group Osho Foundation International has been accused by Ma Neelam of allegedly using their power and status as head of the publishing concerns to surreptitiously operate in allegedly illegal profiteering regarding the OFI's claims that



their foundation alone owns the right's to the name Osho and all profits and rights regarding books, artwork, videos, audio tapes, and other Osho items.

Ma Neelam comes from humble origins in India and when Osho was alive was associated with him since 1969. She served as his personal Secretary, (the highest appointed position within the Commune), close confidante, and often cooked meals for her Indian master.

She was one of his earliest sannyasins and contends that her right as an Indian citizen to enter the Commune for spiritual purposes has been violated. Many sannyasins are in agreement so Ma Neelam and her fellow critics may not remain outside of the Commune long. Certainly the legal challenges may affect the future of all those concerned and the base of power may shift yet again.

The spirit of change seems to be an integral part of the heritage Osho has left for his many sannyasins and the mood is indeed a sincere and laborious one to challenge the current situation on many levels, not just in the courts.

Originally one of the "inner circle" of 21 sannyasins appointed by Osho before his death to protect the interests and functioning of the Commune and it's members, both Ma Neelam and Swami Jayesh (also an "inner circle" member) reportedly have had conflicts for many years, culminating in 1999 when Ma Neelam left the "inner circle" stating personal/health reasons. Ma Neelam, while perhaps citing this reason at the time publicly, many believe may have been in her own way shielding the Commune from controversy, hoping problems would not grow worse or could still be solved within Commune internal ranks.

Of the original 21 appointed sannyasins, only 5 are remaining. They are Swami Jayesh and others who compose the OI Foundation. Ma Neelam has stated this fact in itself indicates the other sannyasins have left due to problems within the "inner circle" and that she remained as long as she did in order to serve as best she could through cooperative means, until that was no longer possible. She says in her statements to the Indian press the problem lies with Swami Jayesh and the others are primarily just his 'dupes'. With her self imposed exit and subsequent "banning" by the Commune, the balance of power has been allegedly left to Swami Jayesh and his cohorts contends Ma Neelam, who Ma Neelam and Chaitanya Keerti and many others adamantly claim are misusing the power they were to administer on Osho's behalf. Further, Swami Jayesh and group are being strongly criticized for their actions by sannyasins living and working in their own personal situations throughout the world. A flood of support for Ma Neelam and her constituency of long time Osho intimates has been steadily pouring in to Osho



Deepta in emails and letters. Many are expressing outrage and concern by the treatment on behalf of the Commune of these longtime friends and assistants to Osho.

Ma Neelam contends that her closeness to Osho and that of her associates, friends and family, seems to be the very reason why she and her closest sannyasin friends, also longtime Osho sannyasins in formerly high ranking positions, are not being admitted through the Commune gates. Known by many sannyasins over the years, Ma Neelam was also a greeter herself for others entering those gates and worked as primary editor of the Hindi versions of Osho publications.

Swami Keerti, too, is an upfront and well spoken man of deep faith and convictions, known by many as a gentle and loving personage who never before found cause to publicly challenge the Commune and its affairs. Many sannyasins are viewing the involvement with the media by Swami Keerti and Ma Neelam and Osho Deepta as a “last ditch effort” and a vital one to halt activities of Osho Foundation International and an effort to inform sannyasins everywhere about their concerns.

Many of these issues surround publishing rights and use of Osho's name and other matters of importance were discussed in detail by Osho to his intimates before his impending death. By most accounts the Indian master wanted free use of his name in describing Osho meditation techniques, specific Osho trainings, and Osho Meditation Centers administering these procedures. The sannyasins travel to these Centers as well as to the Commune in Pune in order to be “close” to their Master, an environment they call “the Buddhafield.”

Osho himself had no “say” in this policy because of the formation of the Osho Foundation International which he was not a part of. Therein lies the legal snag remaining to be hashed out in court.

So there are some “bombs” yet to be dismantled which are deeply buried in Osho's “Buddhafield” before the Commune members in general will again feel it the haven they have come to know and treasure as “safe ground.”

Allocations of fraud and further misconduct surround the paintings of Osho and his well documented words. The Deepta camp claims that Rajneespuram valuables, some Osho art items worth a great deal of money have disappeared or have been altered, that his words in his discourses have been changed, causing an outcry of alarm among sannyasins.

Further charges that specific presentations in newspapers and other sources affiliated with Osho Foundation International and the Commune itself are mentioning only Osho quotations favorable to Americans and showing other Osho quotes displaying the Indian people in an unsavory light. Related undercurrents which are circulating claim



these manipulations are part of the baggage of the politics surrounding the alleged power moves of Swami Jayesh and his small entourage.

Deepta people say that the very heart of the Commune which is based in India and properly belongs in India is allegedly being shifted to more Western influences because of the alleged personal interests and exploitation of IOF to be nearer to US concerns out of convenience for their personal situation and not the spiritual reality that the Commune belongs in India, as Osho wanted at the time of his death.

Swami Jayesh has contended Ma Neelam's speaking to the media was inappropriate to the way the Commune conducts its business and that she herself took time away on her own volition from the Commune. In his own news releases, he remains adamant that the Osho Foundation International is functioning in an orderly and appropriate manner. Most of the "noise" is coming from Deepta, as Swami Jayesh has kept a low profile publicly.

The world is beginning to take note of the core issue at stake in the legal battles because at the heart of the crisis lies basic elements of copyright and name registration law never before addressed or challenged.

Computer law is also a new area which is involved. Already, to date, one court case has been decided against Osho Foundation International and a web site was granted full use of the name "Osho."

Gertrude Stein said, 'a rose is a rose is a rose...'

Or is it? Would "a rose called by any other name (or having to channel through a private Foundation at a cost), smell as sweet?"

Sannyasins, Osho lovers, and people around the globe are asking 'what is in a name?' They are paying astute attention as news begins to build around the welfare of their beloved Master's name, works, and legacy.

Once again they are hearing the clarion bells ringing as their assistance is being sought and the word spreads by media throughout the world. Once more Osho is holding the center spotlight and is spreading fascination and renewed interest and Osho's "New Man" is there, this time with computer and court gavel to heed the call.

Many other sannyasins are scattered around the world and know nothing of the rift in their own group. It lies "buried" on GOOGLE's Osho pages, on page 25.

Time will tell just what will be decided as these issues enter into the courts and as these strong "growing pains" are experienced by the sannyasins and those associated with Osho.



Osho's sannyasins are no strangers to controversy, both from within their own ranks and from governments in both the US and India where the two Communes (one former, one present) have tested legal and human rights in attempting to remain autonomous in the face of legalities and cultures they must integrate with, in order to coexist.

Diplomacy and its compromises does not seem to be their goal or even immediate concerns. However, the search for truth and justice does seem to be within their grasp and over time sannyasins have proved dogged to reach those ideals in many places, countries, and over a multitude of issues.

What is to be the next step in the fate of the sannyasins and their love for the man Osho who they call “their Master?”

Will his name be a marketable commodity on the world exchange?

Will a few people benefit from and retain control of the name of “Osho”? Or does the name belong to all, free and clear to use as Osho wanted, in freedom and dignity?

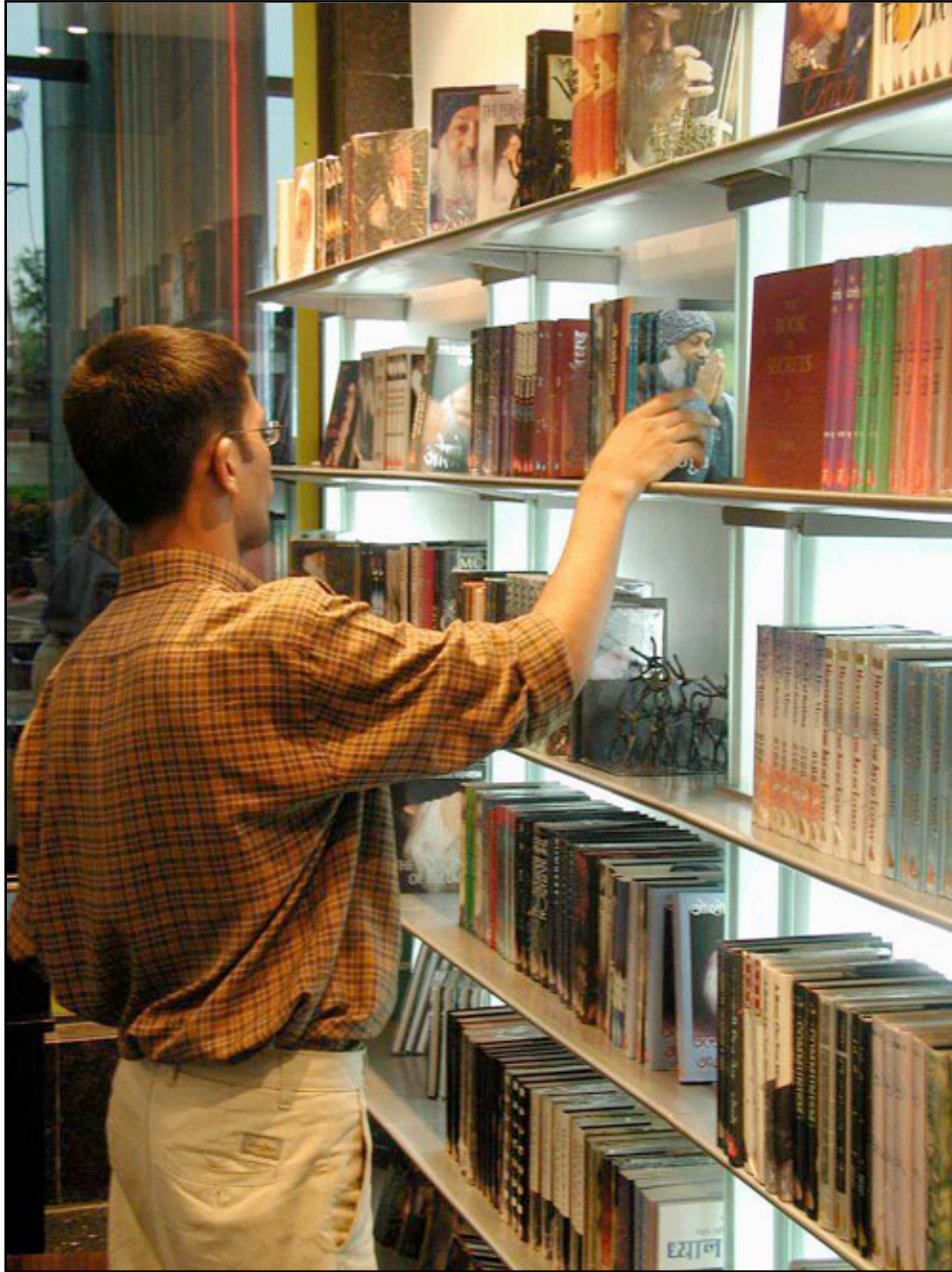
One thing that Osho and his sannyasins came to know is that beyond what can be legislated are the deeper fundamentals of spiritual devotion and the exercise of human searching for truth, freedom, and inner peace which reside and reach full expression well outside of the law and any courtroom.

If history is any indicator of “staying power” regarding other “enlightened beings”, Osho's legacy will be around a very long time.

True to Osho's wit and vast meandering into sacred writings such as koans (an Eastern phrase for an unanswerable question such as the one more familiar to Westerners: 'which came first the chicken or the egg?'), and his sannyasin's festivals of music and gaiety, perhaps somewhere off in the distance there will be heard the “Sound of One Hand Clapping” (a Zen koan) and in his vision of the “New Man” there will be eternal dancing and celebration...

...with a just few “bumps” along the way.





Osho World Galleria, participant Meditation for Victims of 9/11.





### **Osho World Foundation / Osho World Galleria**

Located in the heart of New Delhi, Osho World Galleria is a beautiful and meditative synthesis of spirituality and commerce. More than just a bookseller, the Galleria is both an entrance point for experiencing the wisdom of an enlightened master and a gallery of items to enhance a qualitative life. Everything from books, to CD's, to clothing, to object d'art are all displayed with style and an attentive, almost Zen-like, quality. Headphones are provided for private listening to Osho discourses. A mini-video parlor screens videotaped discourses drawn from his thousands of hours of public talks. An internet center allows for access to Osho on the internet and facilitates connections with Osho centers around the world.

Osho World Galleria holds regular exhibitions of spiritual artwork and organizes numerous public events at the Galleria and other larger venues around New Delhi. These events have included. They have attracted well known Indian politicians and artists including: Indian Vice President Shri Krishna Kant, MP & actor Shri Vinod Khanna, noted poet Shri Surendra Sharma, renowned Kathak dancer Padamshree Shovana Narayan. Events have included dance performances by noted dancers Mallika Sarabhai,





Ileana Citaristi and Sonal Mansingh. Exhibitors have included the photographer Gopi Kannadhasan and painter Goldy Malhotra.

Osho World Foundation publishes *Osho Patrika* a Hindi language magazine dedicated to Osho's vision. The magazine is also available for free through their website. The site also has a smaller English language Osho World newsletter.

Osho World Foundation and Osho World Galleria are the result of the heart work of Swami Chaitanya Keerti involved with Osho since 1971. Keerti has a long history of working with the media and Osho. He spent years working in the media/press sections of Osho's Pune Ashram and served as editor of *The Osho Times International*. In the late nineties, he felt increasingly uncomfortable with the manner in which Osho's vision was being managed by the official management body of the Pune ashram, known as the "Inner Circle."

Concerned over the alleged transference of Osho assets out of India to management corporations in New York and Switzerland, Keerti opened the Galleria and began holding



Vandana Week at Osho World Galleria



high profile Osho-related events in 2000. Through these and the very professional website oshoworld.com, Keerti has done a great service in representing the purity of Osho's vision and providing an un-occluded access to his wisdom.

The Oshoworld.com website is impressive by the sheer volume of material it contains. The library section contains a complete collection of Osho's books, including the now out-of-print Darshan diaries, in both English and Hindi sections. The books are all available in Microsoft reader format for easy online reading. The library also has electronic versions of *One Hundred Tales for Ten Thousand Buddhas* and *Journey of the Heart* the autobiography of Ma Yoga Laxmi. Also available are a photogallery, Osho screensavers and wallpapers, and the complete discourse series on "The Diamond Sutra."

Keerti and a group of prominent Osho devotees, including former Inner Circle member and Osho secretary Ma Yoga Neelam, have been vocal in speaking out against what they perceive as mismanagement of Osho's legacy and the Pune Meditation Resort. The media-savvy Keerti has made headlines both inside and outside India. His accusations about the current Resort management team have made recurrent appearances in *The Times of India*. Keerti and the Delhi Galleria were featured prominently in a December 2002 *New York Times* article.

Osho International (OI) the New York based corporation that manages the publication rights to Osho's books, filed suit against Keerti and Osho World claiming that their use of the domain name oshoworld.com violated OI's service mark. IN the summer of 2001, the National Arbitration Forum, the body that has jurisdiction over settling domain name disputes, ruled that Osho World's use did not represent a violation of trademark and copyright laws. The Forum disallowed the transfer of oshoworld.com to OI.

Keerti said of the decision, "This judgment means that Osho Centre leaders around the world can now carry on without any worry or fear from self-appointed dictators who claim to own everything related to Osho. Osho is free and eternally fresh breeze and we should make sure that this breeze is not poisoned by any toxic elements. Osho's vision cannot be fettered, traded or imprisoned by a few for unaccounted purposes."



## Notes

Images of Swamiji and the Pranavananda Ashram are copyright The Swami Pranavananda Trust, used with permission. [aumnamahshivaya.org]

“The World Is Imperfect, And So Are We” appeared in *Viha Connection XV*(2). [oshoviha.org]

“Part of this Infinite Love” appeared in *Viha Connection XV*(1). [oshoviha.org]

“The Master’s Call” is excerpted from Laxmi’s autobiography *Journey of the Heart*. [oshoworld.com]

“Why I Loved the Ranch” appeared in *Osho Pulse* #1. [http://www.globalserve.net/~sarlo/]

“More German than the Germans” appeared in *Viha Connection XV*(5). [oshoviha.org]

“Not A Cloud But the Sky” appeared in *Osho Pulse* #2. [http://www.globalserve.net/~sarlo/]

“Close Encounter” appeared in *Osho Pulse* #4. [http://www.globalserve.net/~sarlo/]

“Interview with the 16<sup>th</sup> Karmapa” is from the book *Allah to Zen*. [meditate-celebrate.com]

Photographs of Osho World Galleria were kindly provided by Osho World Foundation.

“Babalu” appeared in a slightly different form in *The New Aeon* 2(1).

“The Meaning of Prem” appeared in a slightly different form in *The New Aeon* 2(1), reprinted with permission from OCM [orishareligion.org]

“On the Kriya-Shakti” and “On the Aparasahaja” are teaching texts of The Servants of the Star and the Snake, reprinted with permission.

