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HOLLAND

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

I'm sitting here, looking at the beautiful whiteness of this paper wondering how I can share an ocean in a dewdrop--?

The first thing that comes up is that I feel very grateful to have come in contact with this extraordinary being, Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh, and frustrated sometimes, that I wandered off so long in other directions.

Let me first give you some of my background:

- Born in 1939 - (I feel a solid pre-war product.)
- 1956 - Finished high school.
- 1956-1957 - Switzerland, Montreux, to learn french.
- 1957-1958 - Secretary School in Amsterdam.
- 1958-1959 - 6 months - London, where I did 'proficiency' of University of Cambridge.
- 1959 - 3 months in Munich/Germany for my German.
- 1959-1960 - Obtained the diploma of "Estudios Hispánicos" of the University of Madrid.
- 1960-1961 - University of Louvain, Belgium, where I started sociology studies.
- 1961-1962 - Continued sociology studies at University of Utrecht, Holland.
- 1962-1963 - Started also Spanish Literature and History at the University of Amsterdam.
- 1963-1969 - I received my Masters Degree on this subject.

During University studies I was involved or did the following also:

- 1962-1963 - With the Sociology Department we went to Poland/ Warsaw and Krakow and to London for the subject of 'Down-planning', during 2 consecutive years.
- 1964-1965 - For 2 years I was involved in a project studying the Middle East with a group of politically interested students. This resulted in an invitation of the Egyptian government to visit the country for 6 weeks.

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- 1966 - A survey was written discussing our experiences, a portion which described the position of women in the Egyptian Society at that time.
- 1967 - Followed and obtained Diploma of summer course at the University Of Santiago de Compostella/Spain.
- 1968 - Course of 6 weeks in Linguistics at the University of Malaga/Spain.
- 1969 - Course in Audio-Visual Methods in teaching Languages at the University of Salamanca/Spain.
- 1969-1970 - Taught Dutch of foreigners, (Government job), mostly refugees from Czechoslovakia.
- 1970-1978 - Taught High School in Amsterdam, giving evening classes in Utrecht and Rotterdam at the Institute for Adult Education. Also studied Spanish Literature and attended Librarian School, the Hague, Holland. I also coached students to teach, followed a course for teachers in Barcelona, Spain as refreshment in 1975, and followed evening classes on South-American History and Modern Literature. At that time I also worked for a magazine, "Brazilians in Exile", in cooperation with Amnesty International.

My teaching brought me in contact with so many aspects of myself, and of my pupils. So with the idea to bring my teaching to a higher level, bringing also more awareness, aliveness, in the classes, I started to become interested in humanistic psychology. I read whatever there was on education in this respect, followed all kinds of workshops for personal growth, and confluent education. And having explored all nooks and crannies, I started to become interested in meditation. T.M. at first, passing this, (as it wasn't satisfying), to Zen Meditation and an intensive Yoga Training for 2 years. I started to read Krishnamurti.

I asked the Dutch Government to be on leave for a year and worked at the largest growth center in Holland, in Amsterdam. This to have a break in teaching and trying to find other ways--getting acquainted with different ideas in education.

In the growth center, I came in contact with a few of Bhagwan's followers, which struck me as open-minded, original and as alive beings. That winter during my holiday break I went to Poona, out of curiosity, on my way to the Himalayas. This commune shattered my idea of spirituality, which up until that moment was quite serious. The people I had met so far who were into spiritual life had also given me mostly this impression, and here there was this commune of happy, joyous people, sometimes even a little crazy, but always alive.

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And who was this man called Bhagwan? I would go to lecture, passing the sign, "Leave your shoes and mind behind" and one day he would press all my buttons, another I would feel just like dancing, or sit in the sunrays, feeling totally content, soft, loving, full of gratitude to live that single moment. I took sannyas--realizing that my mind would continue to object, thinking it was outrageous and my heart feeling... just do it...I never regretted this moment. What transpires sitting in front of someone who's so loving, so soft, so understanding, is not possible to put in words, since we've never come across it before in our lives. So everytime I've the need to see him again to experience that it actually exists--that such persons are real.

I found that for the first time there wasn't this discrepancy between theory and practice. That in this place, people lived what was preached. That people were alive--that's Bhagwan's answers were never predictable--were different for each of us.

I went back to my work at the growth center and was faced with prejudice. Judging without knowing. I travelled then for 4 months in India/Nepal and got in touch with a totally different way of loving, thinking. A lot of my so called 'knowing' was challenged in daily practice. I came for the 2nd time at the ashram in Poona and the moment I walked in there was this feeling --this is my family, this is where I would like to live and work.

Here were people who had the courage to put everything at stake to live a human life without fakeness, not being carbon copies, or if they are, taking responsibility for their way of being, not putting it on anything outside themselves. I am creating the wheather of my life!

In September 1977, I was back at my school and my pupils would be telling me, "In a way you're different from other teachers-one can express oneself--you do listen and care for us--instead of becoming older, you're younger every year". Once I decided to leave school. I had the idea that I had gone in my professional life, as far as I could, and yet I didn't find the dimension I wanted in life. If I continued the way I lived, it would become predictable... a house...good job...good relationship.

Listening to Bhagwan either in Poona or on tape at home, I started to feel that there was so much more to life and that this dimension was possible for each one of us.

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His love, his incredible humor, his firmness towards any hypocrisy, slowly would imbibe my being more and more. Living in Poona for 2 years I felt very happy, vibrating, even though my body could not deal with the Indian situation.

It was only being back in the West that I realized how much I had gotten which I had taken for granted...like you realize how much you're attracted to a lover once you're away from him.

When I was healthy again and ready to go back to India, Bhagwan went to the States. How happy we all were when he asked for us, to come and see him.

I went to both the festivals and you will ask, "but this man doesn't speak with you anymore!" Now you've probably know what it's like to be in love--and you just want to be with that person and yet you can hardly explain to anyone else what it means to you. So maybe you can imagine that something must be happening when 15,000 people feel that way and for a moment you don't think about what's going on, you just let yourself experience it. Like imagine that you enter a room filled with 15,000 roses, and some alchemy takes place in your body?!

He verbalized everything there was to be said, and maybe you yourself have experienced moments where words totally spoil that very moment. Existence is so much vaster than words can express. But I don't ask you to believe me. You might have had in your life these moments you would describe as experiencing love. It's like His presence triggers it in us--in you, and me, if you are open to it.

I just went outside, since 4 pages is quite a sit, and I looked at a sky with incredible clouds, on a blue, blue sky with the wind caressing me. How to tell you how it feels to sit next to an utter stranger from Italy and feel he could be an elder brother and you sit close to him because the rest of the bench is wet. Human beings are no strangers any more.

You must think I've gone a bit crazy--maybe that's what it is if you have the guts to start giving up your prejudices, and fears...

Life is incredible, I hope you will experience the same one day. For me, Bhagwan helped me to experience this in myself.

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Thanks to the States, he's healthy!

I hope and trust you will have the open mindedness to give him and his commune the benefit of the doubt if you might have a judgement on it, or just come and look for yourself how people live and work at the ranch.

Bye beautiful human being...

With kindest regards,

Jigyasa Caron

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