

COMMUNE MEETING
OSHO GAUTAMA THE BUDDHA AUDITORIUM
JULY 16, 1996 AT 9 PM

Ma Prem Garimo addresses the meeting:

The unfortunate thing is that I can't see anybody beyond the third row, but hello and welcome, everyone. This is a community meeting and it's an 'in-house,' small one. The last time we had a community meeting in January, we gave a very big update on Osho's work, on the work in the commune and also the work in the world -- Osho's work -- and tonight we're just going to talk about the commune and a few changes that we would like to introduce in the commune. And for all of you who are interested in Osho's international work: there is an evening planned in a few days, in Kabir 1 on Thursday where Neelam, Yogendra and Karuna will be talking about Osho's work in the world. So everyone is very welcome to go there also.

I was a little bit at a loss this evening when I was thinking about addressing you because.... Once upon a time when I was going out speaking for the commune, when I was living in Rajneeshpuram -- in Osho's commune in America -- Osho invited me in His room and gave me a few pointers about how to do this: how to speak to the crowd. This was at a time when I was going to speak to a university in southern Oregon and He said...one of the things that I understood from Him was...'Just make sure that you are speaking in such a way that the people can understand you. And if you are speaking about me and about my work and about the commune, you just pick out one face among the people sitting there, and you make sure that you can feel that this person understands you -- that you are meeting them where they are. You make sure that you take that person with you and then you can take them wherever you want to go.'

Actually it worked really well...but then I was thinking tonight about 'how am I going to do this in Buddha Hall?'...because I know that some of you have been with Osho for many years and we're all friends, we know each other...I was thinking, 'Okay, what am I going to do? I'm going to introduce myself and say, "Hello, everyone. My name is Garimo," ...and I stopped right there, you know, it was like half of you, we all know each other very well. And knowing the arrival statistics in this place, I also know that many of you will have just arrived here maybe one or two weeks ago for the very first time. In fact the last time we had a community meeting and we called it 'a community meeting' and 'everyone is invited for the community meeting,' there were many people who didn't come because they figured they're not part of the community. They didn't know that once you walk into this Gateless Gate, that's it: you're part of the community!

So I had to drop the whole thing and luckily Osho has left me with many other reminders, so the one I chose for tonight is: everybody can just pick up what's right for them and forget about the rest; and let's just trust it lands in the right place!

Okay.

There are three subjects in the commune where we would like to make some changes and I'd like to talk about them so that everybody can understand.

The first one has to do with how we receive everyone that comes, how we welcome everyone that comes and how we try to help everyone along in the process of finding their way into the commune -- whether they are here for the first time or coming back, whatever.

You have all come and registered in the Welcome Center at least once during the last six months, so you know how we do it.

It hasn't always been like that. When I came for the first time there was no Welcome Center; there was the Gateless Gate and you walked in. At some point, at Osho's suggestion, we started doing the AIDS test -- that's when we created the Welcome Center. So how it is now is not set in concrete. We like to keep on changing as the people who are coming change, and when we feel that we need to make an adjustment. Especially in the last year, besides the

people who are coming to stay for a few weeks or a few months, there are many people coming who can only stay for a week for instance, and who want to do as much as they can during a week.

We have had welcome meetings, welcome videos, welcome tours, we introduced Buddha to Buddha (one-on-one talks) two and a half years ago, and they're all beautiful...and it doesn't quite work for the people who are coming for a very short time. And even among the people who go through all of that and are here longer, there are still quite a few people who end up lost. So it feels like it's time for a change.

Those of you who have been around for a long time will remember that two and a half years ago we had a very big mess on our hands where the police, the local politicians, the Delhi politicians, the press, were all very interested in closing this commune down. What gave them a weapon at that time is that there had been a party scene going on that got very closely associated with the commune -- and in fact many people who had heard how much celebration there is at the commune and how nice the sannyasins' parties are, came to register in the commune and then to go to all these parties and there were a lot of drugs around, and all of this became an explosion in the press and in the local politics and served as a wake-up call for all of us.

It was at that time that the commune started putting a tremendous focus on making sure that we could meet everybody who came here, and that we started to ask everyone coming to really have a look at what they were doing here: whether they are here for meditation or not. And of course we all love parties and we love celebration, and: are we also here to meditate, are we first of all here to find ourselves? So there was a whole thing that we did around that.

Some people didn't like it because when we are saying we want to get to know everybody -- that meant we have to put something in place so that we can meet you -- which meant we linked it with the gate pass. Some people didn't like that.

We want to change that now and we want to make the entry into the commune as simple as possible, without anything linked to the gate pass other than registering at the Welcome Center, getting your AIDS test and having a hug, if you like, from the Welcome Team.

We feel that what all of us, as a community, have created in these last couple of years enables us to that. We feel that many many many people have understood the point about participation; about making sure that the commune is legally safe; understanding that when we ask everybody not to take drugs while they are here in Pune -- because here it is against the law and here it is very dangerous for the commune -- that actually, now, people understand the point of that: That it is not about morality and freedom; that it has to do with the fact that that's the way we can keep this place open and safe.

We're always trying to find a middle way and the middle way, as I understand it from Osho...I've heard Him use the analogy of a tightrope. It's not 'as if there is a road and you can say, "Here's the left side of the road and here's the right side of the road and I'm going to walk exactly on this line that's in the middle," but it's like walking on a tightrope: the only way that you can get across is: you lean a little bit to the left, and then you lean a little bit to the right; and then you lean a little bit to the left again and so you keep on moving. So we want to move to the other side again. And we will also create at a central point in the commune, a place where people can go -- instead of asking them to go to a welcome meeting that they have to go to, or to ask them to come to Buddha to Buddha that they have to come to -- instead of that, we would like to create a central place in the commune that everybody knows about, that is open every day in the morning and the afternoon; where there are always people available that can talk to anybody who wants to, from the simplest level of asking for information like 'Where's the bookstore?' or 'Where can I buy Osho's tapes?', 'Where's the closest toilet?', you know that kind of thing; to finding a way into participating -- 'What's the best thing for me to do to start with?'; to having a Buddha to Buddha connection, a heart-to-heart connection, somebody who's ready to just spend some time feeling you, being with you, and where you can share anything that you would like to as you are on your journey in the commune; where you can get

explanations about working meditation, about the Buddha Hall meditations, about the Multiversity.

And we're going to dedicate what is now called the 'Osho Multiversity Plaza' to that, rename it simply 'Osho Plaza', and from this coming Monday, we're going to have people there every day so that anybody who wants to can walk in. We are going to make sure that there are counselors available each day for a particular amount of time, people available that speak different languages including Hindi, Taiwanese, Japanese, Korean, Italian -- whatever, whatever other languages you come up with! -- we'll make sure that the translators are there or that the people are there that can talk to you in your own language if you don't speak English. And we will also make sure that near the front gate in the octagon on this side (*indicates with her hand towards the Visitors' Center side*) there are going to be regular showings throughout the day in different languages, of our welcome video, so that people can choose their own time when they want to see that. And they can see it again if after a few days of jet-lag they want to see it again. The tours of the commune will continue -- and all of it will be optional.

So for the people who are here now and who are old-timers -- which we might as well say is all of you because you're already in -- you can help with this by making sure that you know that anybody who is in any way either lost or who would like some guidance or who needs any kind of information, you can direct them to the plaza.

The Buddha to Buddha, for some of you who have already had the invitation: for the rest of this week we will honor that and be at Lao Tzu as up till now, and after the weekend, from Monday, we will also honor it and we will be in the Osho Plaza to meet you Buddha to Buddha. And if you don't want to come to your Buddha to Buddha appointment now that you know that you don't have to, you can go back to the Welcome Center and simply tell them that you don't like to go and they will extend your pass for the duration of your stay, so that that's not linked any more.

One thing I wanted to address: A few years ago, when we started creating a way that we really could meet everybody and make sure that everybody went to the arrival meetings, there were some people who didn't like it and felt that goes too far into control; so there were objections. Just the same way we know -- and I've already heard it the last few days as we've been talking about this a little bit -- there will be people also now that are concerned that we're moving too far in the other direction, naturally. I've heard particular concerns about the Osho White Robe Brotherhood: how can we make sure if people don't have to go to a welcome meeting, that the silence in the Osho White Robe Brotherhood isn't going to be disturbed?

And the other concern that I've heard is...A few years ago there were quite a lot of people who came here for so-called 'social reasons' rather than for meditation. That whole scene and that whole drug scene and the party scene that was only a party scene without meditation and in-going; these people all have basically come to know now that you cannot come to the commune and do that kind of thing. What if now they hear that all these checks along the way, the hurdles you can say, are not there -- aren't they all going to come back? But our feeling is and our trust is that in walking the tightrope and walking this way and walking that way and walking this way (*indicating the movement from the left to the right to the left to the right again*), it isn't just that you move left-right and you stay in place. We have actually moved, all of us. We are carrying something together that's very different from a few years ago, and our trust is that actually now so many more people are taking responsibility. If there is somebody who's not understanding the silence in Osho White Robe Brotherhood, there are many people in the hall -- and this is in fact what Osho has given us to do: If somebody disturbs the silence, take care of it; if somebody is coughing and is disturbing, you take care of it right there on the spot.

And we also have the feeling actually that our understanding and vibe of meditation in the commune is strong enough and soft enough so that all of us have an understanding that we're not going to let this same scene grow again and maybe, if some of these people do come back, we can help them to meditate. (*applause*)

The welcome meetings will continue this week, and the welcome videos in the new place will start also from Monday.

The second subject has been one of our favorite subjects for this whole last nine months' period: It's called Hepatitis C. We've been through an incredible journey so far, with trying to address a concern in the commune that had never existed before, that we could not ask Osho how to deal with. And we're again right now at a milestone and are going to make a change. For the people who have not been a part of this process I would like to explain a little bit.

First of all what I would like to um...kind of put on the table....I think everybody who's been here longer knows it, but somehow so that we're all in this together with it: One of the things that we are always concerned about in the commune is how to keep the commune a safe place. Just now I was talking about the concern around legal safety -- the issue of drugs and how dangerous that issue can be for the commune's safety. There has also always been a health concern.

When so many people come together...and Osho's invitation to us is to open our hearts, to be dropping all our protection, to dare to be really human with each other -- to laugh together, to cry together, to meditate together which means a lot of sweating and close body contact. When that is so, when such close contact exists, which I don't think exists anywhere else in the world; even in an institution like a school or a prison or a hospital, usually people don't touch each other. Physically, intimately, in meditation -- nobody comes so close together, I think, on the planet as we do here. So we have always been concerned about how to make sure that the place is safe health-wise, that people can relax. And also: so that we protect what we are carrying inside of this healthy body -- which is our growing consciousness. Many of us, with Osho's guidance over the years and with being so close to Him, have seen and felt how much more consciousness we're carrying or let's say, how much more of it is in our daily life, and how much more of it we can share.... How to protect this consciousness embodied? How to make sure that Osho's work which we are part of and which we are carrying also, does not through our stupidity, get destroyed by some epidemic, or by us unconsciously helping each other to die.

So this, through all the years has been a concern. Any of you who have, for instance, had conjunctivitis (eye disease) which is infectious, or acute hepatitis which is infectious, or any other kind of infectious disease, you will have over the years been through the thing of needing to stay out in isolation until it was cured.

Last year...last September, some people started to arrive in the commune who had Hepatitis C and who had come particularly for the purpose of healing. They had heard about the fantastic healers that we have here -- because we do in the Multiversity have many beautiful healers and healing techniques. These people did not come primarily for meditation; they came because they had heard that our healers could cure them. And this, as soon as we heard about it, was a little bit of a wake-up. First of all because this is something Osho makes very clear: this place is not for sick people. This place is for consciousness and meditation, and it is not meant to attract people who are coming here either to get money or to get health or anything like that; it is really for people who want to meditate.

We immediately tried to inform ourselves about this disease, and what we heard right away gave quite a bit of worry, concern. Because last September many governments in the world were viewing Hepatitis C and are viewing Hepatitis C as a growing health concern for all of their communities. There is for instance at the moment a city in Italy delivering pamphlets door-to-door to all of its citizens: 'Please get yourself tested. This is what it is, this is what it does. It's infectious. You have it for your life. If you have it, please go and see a doctor.'

When we found out this much about it, the first decision we took was that for now, we're going to ask all the people who we know have Hepatitis C to not enter this commune, and that's what we did.

After that, the second step was that we wanted to find out as much as we could: One, about the infection itself; two, what does it mean for our commune actually and how dangerous is it for our commune? And in, I can't remember...early this year we started on a research project, with all of our commune workers, testing them, investigating the people who have Hepatitis C, to try and find out: When did they pick it up, how did they pick it up, have they been spreading it, is it widespread in the commune, has anybody in the commune given it to anybody else in the commune, and so on.

Out of that research our health team and our doctors then recommended that, in fact, we could allow people with Hepatitis C into the commune; and that there should be restrictions on their participation. And also that we should make sure that everybody that comes here gets tested and is aware, if they have it, what precautions they need to take to make sure they don't infect other people. So we went with those recommendations.

It took us a while to get it together to start doing this on-going testing for everybody who comes here, and we started that, as probably many of you know, about three weeks ago. So by now we have tested around three thousand people and found out that our percentage of people infected with Hepatitis C matches that of the rest of the world; it's not more, it's not less.

The other thing that we found out -- which was fantastic -- is that as far as we can investigate, nobody has picked it up in this commune and nobody is spreading it in this commune. In fact, one of the big plus points that we have in the commune is awareness. Also the fact that our hygiene standards are very high, and, even more so, that Osho has given us certain techniques -- because of AIDS -- that are also very valuable for this situation. Hepatitis C spreads mostly through blood-to-blood contact. And because many of us have been practicing safe-sex, because many of us know the danger of infection through blood, we have not been infecting each other with Hepatitis C. I'm not saying that's the only reason we haven't, but our hygiene precautions and our safe-sex practices make this place probably more safe than anywhere else in the world as far as Hepatitis C is concerned. As long as we make sure that we keep on using those safety mechanisms: the hygiene standards, the safe-sex, understanding the danger of blood-spills and of spreading our blood around, and so on.

A few days ago in discourse, I heard Osho talk about the phenomenon of 'inner certainty' as opposed to 'facts, historical facts.' In fact, in that particular discourse for those of you who were there and remember this: my recollection is of Him talking in answer to the question about 'the need for spiritual guidance.' There was an anecdote about Osho going to some place where the guide, the tour guide (*Vatayana, places a glass of drinking water on the table beside Garimo*) Thank you...is talking to Him about some facts out of Buddha's life and Osho stops him right there and, as I remember, He says to that man, 'Is this your inner certainty?' And the guide says, 'What do you mean, inner certainty? These are historical facts.' And then Osho talks about inner certainty and what this means.

And why I'm remembering this today is because in this process of our research, investigation, testing, talking with people with Hepatitis C, an inner certainty has now arisen -- out of medical facts, scientific research, testing and so on on the one hand; out of a 'feel,' an understanding on the part of the staff who've been closely involved with that, on the other hand...to the point that our doctors and health team have come with the recommendation that their inner certainty is that we are not at danger in the sense of needing to continue to test people; that we can drop the testing and we can make it back into an individual health concern for each person, as every other health concern that you have for yourself. That we do not need to restrict people's participation, because it is not spreading from inside our commune.

So we're going to stop, as of tomorrow morning, asking people to test for Hepatitis C.
(applause)

I don't know if I need to repeat the strong warning that comes along with that from our health team and doctors: That we know that the disease itself, the virus and the infection itself,

is a dangerous one -- if you have it please take care of your health; and all of us be careful about blood -- make sure that we practice safe-sex and take care of ourselves and each other.

Our health team, of course, is going to keep a very close watch on this disease as the medical community around the world finds out more about it. What we have found out has to do with our commune. We're not so concerned, primarily, about the world at large. We're concerned about Osho's place, Osho's people, and what is right for His commune. And at this point, it feels absolutely right that we can relax about it to this extent that I've just said.

The other, last warning -- I call it 'the ecological balance within the commune' -- is that the picture would change immediately, if this place became a place where people come to get cured rather than to meditate. And any of you -- because I know it does sometimes happen out of misunderstanding -- any of you please understand and spread the word: this is not a place for sick people to come and get cured. It doesn't mean that sick people can't meditate. If they have an acute infection that's dangerous for the community, we'll ask them not to come in. If they can look after themselves and they're not a health risk to the community and they can meditate, of course, everybody is welcome. But we cannot have people coming here when their primary goal is to get cured of a physical disease. So we can all make sure that we take care on that level, because if people did start coming in that way the doctors have told us we would have to start from ABC -- start testing everybody -- and we would have to put restrictions on people's participation.

This has been a great experience, besides and beyond what has just happened with Hepatitis C. It has been an incredible experience for many of us in the commune, in finding a new way. We feel much more confident now that we can actually take care of any of these types of situations that come up. We don't know what's going to come next; there will probably be other diseases. We've never had to deal with anything like this. We had Osho in the body telling us about AIDS.

We feel so much more confident now, that when the next round comes, we know that we know how to take care of the health of this commune and that we'll find the way and we'll find some steps and procedures and find our way through it. And we'll probably build on what we learned this time. And I know also that some people feel that we've made terrible mistakes -- you know, it's this leaning to the left and leaning to the right situation again. There have been people who have been absolutely against what we were doing from the very beginning. And probably there will be people who are going to be shocked at what we're doing now and say 'This goes too far the other way.' What I wanted to say also is that this is very valuable. It's great that there are some people who are absolutely against and it's great that there are some people who are now going to be absolutely against, because actually all of us together -- with all of our opinions and sharing them and then keeping on moving -- that's how this crazy place works. It's exactly right. So that's fine. *(applause)*

Now to conclude this round of the Hepatitis C episode, we would like to thank everybody -- each and every person -- especially the people that have been here throughout this period from September and walked this walk along with all of us. We'd like to thank the health team, Pythagoras, the Welcome Center staff, and especially, on behalf of the commune, I want to single out one person. You may be wondering what this bunch of flowers is doing here, those of you who can see it in the front. I would like Gyanodaya to come here, our specialist *(applause)* at Pythagoras, Gyanodaya. You're going to get a hug in a minute *(as she moves the mike to the side to allow her to stand)*.

Gyanodaya has walked us through this whole process from the point where we started our research in the commune, has come back just now for another month to help us with this phase. And what I want to tell you....show your face to everybody Gyanodaya *(laughter as he shyly faces the audience, followed by appreciative applause)*: I think he is one of these rare beings...when Osho was talking tonight about common sense and about how scientists cannot afford common sense. Here's a medical doctor -- very scientific mind -- and more than that, he

is a meditator and he has a common sense and he has the courage to match his scientific inquiry with insight as a meditator.

I want to present him with a bouquet of flowers and also with one of Osho's books. Actually, the title we would have loved to give you is 'Passion for the Impossible,' but it's out of print. Instead of that we're going to give you 'Don't Just Do Something; Sit there!' (*applause and laughter*)

If you've been counting, that brings us to number three - the last one.

The last issue, you'll maybe be surprised that we want to make a change there. The last issue has to do with the Osho White Robe Brotherhood and particularly with the celebration at the beginning of the Osho White Robe Brotherhood. And in one way, we don't want to make any change there at all and in another way, it feels that there is something that is needed right now.

One of the things that I have heard Osho say on several occasions is:

'Remind my people,' for instance: 'After I'm gone, remind my people about this or about that,' or 'You will have to remind each other,' or 'If you are lucky, existence will give you a reminder,' yeah?

I want to talk a little bit about the celebration -- the beginning part of the Osho White Robe Brotherhood, followed by the ten minutes of silence. Osho's instruction for that meditation which He created during the last six months before leaving the body, is to have ten minutes of HIGH energy music followed by pin-drop silence. I would like to read out some of the messages that He gave to us during that six months' period from around August until just before He left His body. Most of them He gave as messages to His secretary to tell us at the beginning of the evening meeting before He came.

"High energy music where everyone can dance or clap with great totality and with a few shouts of 'Osho'."

Another time:

"The more total we are beforehand, the deeper the silence will go in the meditation."

"Music should allow people to be total in their energy and to reach a peak."

"Be joyous and allow the energy to move in a blissful way."

"The highest peak possible..."

These are all on different occasions....

"...as much energy and delight as possible."

"A wild celebration of energy, then sit in meditation and then three explosive, explosive drumbeats."

And another time:

"We are just at the beginning..."

This was, mind you, I think within a month of Him leaving His body....

"...we are just at the beginning. We have to REALLY reach heights, so put your totality in it. And don't be too serious. It should be a delight."

And then another time:

"It is really going higher. You will start feeling the changes in the commune and seeing them in the faces. And more heights are there."

Also at that same time, He asked us to prepare videos that we could send to all of the centers around the world so that people all over the world could do this meditation in the evening. And with those videos He also gave some instructions and He asked us to let people know -- it got printed on the jacket: "Not to simply look, but to participate; to watch Him directing the energy on the video and to watch how people respond..." -- that's us all in the Osho White Robe Brotherhood -- "...and then do it on your own. It deepens the understanding of the discourse that follows"...(Garimo repeats) "It deepens the understanding of the discourse."

And just a few days before He left His body, the last message about it: "The celebration went really well. The silence is becoming so solid, you can almost touch it. Now your meditation is going to go deeper than ever."

I know I was here for all of that, and when I read it again this afternoon, I knew how much I need this impact again of just hearing Him say that. And I know also, that many many people who have come since that time have not heard Him say that. And we need to infect each other... sometimes that means getting a reminder.

Osho's reminders to us, as I've experienced them, often are very playful. I remember for instance: About our 'scene' here in Buddha Hall...hearing Him talk about people who are snoring and asking them please not to snore during His discourse, and then a pause...and then He says, "Because it will really disturb the people who are sleeping!" (laughter)

I also remember when He started the gibberish and let-go meditation at the end of all the Zen discourses -- some of you may not yet have experienced it. It was shocking at the time, suddenly in Buddha Hall, listening to our Master, in DEEP meditation, to go absolutely crazy and let the whole hall go wild in gibberish and hand movements and so on and then fall over backwards like a corpse. It was quite shocking. And after a few days, Osho gave the message in discourse again, as I recall it, that "Everybody should participate, there cannot be any spectators and if your neighbor...and there are a few people who are sitting like pillars, like rocks...and if your neighbor is like a rock, then you can tickle him so that the rock can melt."

Now we're not going to suggest that anybody tickles anybody...(laughter) -- I don't think that's needed -- but we would like to somehow tickle each other a little bit about the celebration at the beginning of the Osho White Robe Brotherhood so that our silence can go deeper, so that we can listen to Him and so that also, we can understand what it is to celebrate and to let the celebration grow.

So one of the tickles -- you may have already noticed by the way, because we talked with the musicians about it -- since about a week ago you may have noticed that the musicians are definitely tickling us. Their music is going really high energy and encouraging. And that will continue.

And also what we will do is we will bring in some of the music from the audio tapes and if we can manage it, also from the video -- if it's dark enough that we can do it, we're going to do it tomorrow. Otherwise we'll bring audio tapes interspersed with our normal evenings where it is Osho conducting the musicians and conducting all of us in the ten minute, HIGH HIGH HIGH energy celebration at the beginning of the Osho White Robe Brotherhood. So we'll start that from tomorrow. (applause) I have always wondered: when on the celebration days we manage to have such high energy celebration, how do we manage not to do that for the rest of the year?! So let's, let's go for it.

And before we stop the meeting -- and thank you all for coming -- and before handing it over to the musicians and the music group songs, I would like to give Osho the last word....
(Osho's voice on audio tape follows:)

"Just to remind you that whether I am here or not,
the celebration has to continue.
If I am not here, then it has to be more intense
and it has to spread around the world.
Celebration is my religion.
Love is my message.
Silence is my truth."

(Nansen: "The Point of Departure", Chapter 10)

Thank you. (applause)

Music group begins with: 'This life of celebration

All the joys we've come to know

Osho our love for you is overflowing!!!