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To whom it may concern

My name is Ma Prem Vasumati and I have been a sannyasin for 7 years.

I have a B.A. Hons. degree in Psychology and Social Anthropology, which I received from the University of Cape Town in South Africa. I also have a post-graduate degree, a higher diploma in librarianship, which spanned the years 1969-72.

After my degrees I decided to continue with Social Anthropology and went to Lesotho (formerly Basutoland) to do fieldwork. My special area of interest was the changing form and focus of primitive ritual and religion due to social change and urbanisation in Africa. The next months in Africa brought me in contact with phenomena which I can only call "spiritual" or "religious". And I observed many things that were simply incomprehensible to the Western analytical mind. The period in Lesotho affected me very deeply and I left there a different person. Abandoning my textbooks at a remote general trading post, I went back to the world in search of a living religion for myself. Ending up in England late in 1973, almost immediately I heard of Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh and started doing the dynamic meditation regularly at the West London Rajneesh Meditation Centre.

The meditation was powerful and emotionally cleansing. Through doing it I was more able to understand the human psyche and observe the complex mechanism of the mind, body and emotions. It was obvious that only a master psychologist could invent that meditation. And invent it especially for the western, repressed man. So quite naturally the meditations led me into therapy. And this in turn led me into training to become a therapist. Studied massage and healing. Took extensive courses in Neo-Reichian therapy. And although my focus remained with the body therapies, I studied gestalt therapy, encounter process, group process and dynamics and regression work at Quaesitor, London's then largest Growth Centre.

In 1976, I went to India to see Bhagwan himself. I had already received initiation in London and had the mala for some months.

The first time I saw him was in the evening gathering called darshan, where for 1½ hours Bhagwan sat in an intimate atmosphere with a few disciples to give initiation and to answer questions. There was no doubt, on seeing his physical presence, that here was truly an enlightened being and the master I had been searching for. The realisation was overwhelming as was the love and gratitude that flowed from that realisation.

When it was my turn to sit before him, he spoke to me about my work:

"Massage is not an ordinary thing. It has tremendous meaning. There are a few people who are born to massage - you are one of them. Your energy can go very very deep. But always remember a few things while massaging. One - the person you are massaging has no body. Conceive of him as bodyless and your massage will go very very deep. First think of him as having no body, then think of yourself as having no body. By body I mean neither he nor you are matter - both are energies.

When two material things come close, they collide. When two energies come close they simply mix and mingle and melt into each other - there is no collision. Two physical bodies are bound to collide. And whenever you touch somebody's body as a body, and he also feels himself as a body, there is a shrinking, a defence. The defence armour starts working.

So the first thing is to feel that the other is just an energy; you are also an energy. And then start playing with the energy as one plays on a guitar. Make it more music than massage. Make it more play than work. Let it be more from the heart than from the mind.

The technique has to be known, but then forgotten. One should know the technique and then one should not bother about it. It remains deep in the unconscious and functions from there but you move by hunches. So you feel the energy of the other person, you present yourself as an energy phenomenon, and then two energies start playing".

In those 15 minutes he gave me all the insight and instruction I was going to need to do this work.

And his words have sustained me for years. In Poona, Bhagwan gave much attention to the various therapies that were coming from the West. The ashram in Poona started to run groups based on the new Humanistic Psychology or Human Potential movement. And he added to this the dimension of meditation. This added dimension attracted many westerners who, going through therapy, had failed to find anything meaningful, and frustrated with therapy turned to meditation.

People were in search of health, of wholeness. They were in search of finding not solutions to problems, but finding themselves, their hearts, their beings. And Bhagwan was offering that. It was obvious, he understood the cause of human suffering. He understood the split in the human psyche between feeling and thinking that made people neurotic.

And what made him so powerful a force to people in the Western countries who were starting to seek was that he had gone to the ultimate place himself. He had travelled the path to enlightenment himself. His exceptional ability stems from his having attained to the ultimate state of consciousness himself.

A therapist could only take you as far as he had gone. And after that, it was obvious that you had to find someone who had gone further. Who themselves had realised - had transcended. Who had gone beyond the mind, beyond the personality, beyond the split.

And when you have found such a man just his presence heals, just his being heals. That is the magic. To those who do not understand the master-disciple relationship it seems as though he does nothing because in his work, no visible form of physical activity is involved. But to those who know, his work is invisible. His energy, his love, his incredible compassion is available to us all the time. It is amazing how much he can do or effect in that fleeting moment as he drives by you in his car. Just a glance from the Master, and your heart is touched, your being reverberates. I have seen people return to work after Bhagwan drives by renewed, filled with love, energy and enthusiasm.

Around Bhagwan there is an energy field, which functions as a magnet, and attracts people:

"Just the very presence of the master becomes a catalytic presence, and the disciple starts changing... All his work consists of one simple thing - that he should be there, just like the sun.

A master simply makes you aware of your potential. If he has achieved, you can achieve. He is just like you - the blood and the bones and the body. He is just like you. If something is possible in his being, if his bud can become a flower, then why can't you become? This very idea sinks deep into the heart, stirs your whole being, and energies start surfacing, your bud starts opening."

This is how a master works. It is what happens in the presence if the disciple is open.

This is why words are not necessary and after a time a real Master works in silence, the true communion only takes place in silence. In July 1982 and 1983, as part of his work with his disciples, we had here in Oregon two world festivals where all Bhagwan's disciples were invited to gather together and participate in a week long festival. Each morning we gathered together to sit with Bhagwan in Satsang. Of this, he has said:

"This is called Satsang in the East... to be in the presence of the Master. And the real disciple is one who has come to know how to be present to the Master".

Just sitting with him for one hour a day, amazing things happen. It is like you start to see the world through different eyes. My work flowed more easily. Everything was effortless, simple, graceful, the therapy sessions had more depth and more love than anything I could ever have imagined. My own perception and capacity to help people through their pain was increased.

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My own caring grew. I felt so whole and complete. And at the same time ordinary and natural.

Just to sit with him, I felt inspired, uplifted. Just to see him is to see that a man can live in deep relaxation, in bliss, in one-ness. And this is inspiring. Through him I can see my own possibilities. And suddenly there is hope, optimism, trust, that you can live this life gracefully, meaningfully and creatively. That you can live in friendship and harmony.

This is reflected again and again in our commune. That man can live in love, friendship and cooperation, both with himself and nature. That Bhagwan's vision can be realised.

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