

## 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.

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	<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? 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>
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