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Thurs July 23th

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I graduated from the University of Birmingham in June 1974 with a B. Social Science (Hons) 2(i) degree and graduated as a qualified teacher in June 1975 from the University of Manchester with a Postgraduate Certificate in Education (Liberal Studies). Since then I have been a full-time lecturer in Communications, Liberal Studies and Life Skills working at Stockport College of Technology from 1975-78 and at Bournemouth and Poole College of Further Education since 1980. I am presently employed at the latter college.

I first came across Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh while working in Australia (1978/79) as a deputy-manager in a large city bookshop where his religious works were sold. I read some of these and was overwhelmed by their clarity, depth and insight.

Although I was not initiated into Sannyas until February 1982, nine months after Bhagwan's entry into public silence, I visited his Ashram in Poona during February 1980 and listened to his morning discourses. I can remember him saying there that he only used words to take us to a state of consciousness that lay beyond words and he looked forward to the day when he could sit in silent communion with his Sannyasins because all that is significant

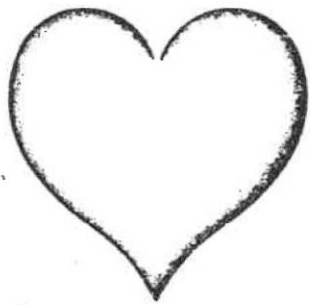
happens in silence. I can particularly relate to this as I have such an inquisitive, calculating mind that it was necessary for me to get an intellectual grasp of his message before I could plunge myself into meditation. His intelligence, integrity and wisdom is so appealing to me, it enabled me to get to the point where, for the first time in my life, I could be silent and meditative. One of the names given to me by Bhagwan on my initiation to Sanyas is 'Vedant' which means 'that which is beyond words'. [In my experience all that is profound that has happened to me - insights into my behaviour and nature, a sense of inter-relatedness and oneness with all life and blissful feelings - have occurred in moments of silence.]

As I have said earlier, it was two years after my first meeting with Bhagwan that I was initiated into Sanyas. My delay was for many reasons - fear for my job, fear of what relatives and friends would think etc. - but slowly, one by one, these fears dropped away and when it came to my religious conversion I realized that Sanyas is not a conclusion of the mind, but a resolution of the heart. In fact, my fears were totally ill-founded. My skills as a teacher have dramatically improved and I am well-respected by my colleagues. My relationships with relatives and friends are more open, honest and loving. During this transitory period for me Bhagwan entered into silence and yet, paradoxically, I felt his presence more strongly.

I have been a visitor at Rajneeshpuram for four weeks now participating in the meditations and recreational activities and it has been the most profound period of my life. In his constant presence my commitment and trust for him has grown. The experience of one week's Satsana, a silent communion between

Bhagwan and his disciples, during the Second Annual World  
celebration (July 2nd - July 9th) was so powerful and  
vigorating, I will carry it in my heart forever. My connection  
to Bhagwan in his silent presence is so strong that, when I  
return to England in two weeks, I will take the joy and  
silence that I have shared with him in this beautiful new  
city with me.

I look forward to returning here to be with him again  
during my summer vacation next year.



Swami Vedant Puratana  
(formerly Steven K. White)