

Swami Chaitanyo Amantus

J. NEVILLE THOMPSON

ENGINEERING CONSULTANT

RESEARCH - DESIGN - DEVELOPMENT AND MANUFACTURE

SPECIAL PURPOSE MACHINERY
AUTOMATIC PRODUCTION, CONTROL & INSPECTION
FACTORY LAYOUT & PLANNING

~~xxxxxxxxxx~~

D 5 Köln 60

Am Botanischen Garten 6

☎ (0221) 76 11 22

To whom it may concern.

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Ref.: - Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh

Because of the countless publications about Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh and his communes of disciples in Rajneeshpuram, Oregon, U.S.A., and all over the world, which appeared so far in national and international newspapers, periodicals and on television-screens respectively, because of all the injustice, hatred and even slander born out of sheer ignorance and being poured forth from nearly all of these publications, I feel compelled to try and relate in simple words how I came to be one of Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh's disciples and "what" he and his teachings mean to me now. -

Merely for the purpose of proving that I am not as onesided-orientated as the authors of these publications appear to be, that I am competent to voice an opinion on the subject, that I am not some brainwashed simpleton or ignorant youth misled by some power-hungry guru or self-appointed spiritual leader claiming to be God's very and only representative on earth and selling pills guarantying a survival in case of a possible atomic war, I mention some details about myself, information I would normally and for the purpose of self-recommendation hesitate to relate. -

First of all, I am more than sixty years of age, During the whole of my life so far and as long as I can remember, I have been what is called "a doubting Thomas"; I never took anyone's word regardless of the subject, I always had to find out and prove things for myself. This ability to "reduce things down to brass-tacks" (as they call it in Yorkshire, my home-country), this highly critical approach concerning everything proved to be a main-asset in my profession as an engineer and designer of special purpose machinery which - with the exception of minor adjustments - had to work as they came from the drawing-board. - Needless to say, this critical approach I applied as well in matters of religious nature. The latter, may be, I inherited from my ancestors who were hard-working, honest and very religiously minded people. -

Concerning the religious aspect, shortly after I was born in November 1922 I was christend according to Roman catholicism. When I was 10 years of age I went to receive first communion and - three months later - was confirmed whilst being in a Roman catholic boarding-school. Two years later I was taken to a protestant boarding-school. After another two years I was made to attend Christian Science Sunday-school and - every Wednesday - testimonial meetings.

EXHIBIT "A-1394" to be continued

Continuation 1

In due course I became a member of the First Church of Christ Scientists, Boston, Mass. During a short spell of time and when I was approximately 31 years old I attended Theosophic meetings and lectures. Like-wise I attended Spiritualist meetings. Then I was introduced to The Rosicrucian Order, A.M.O.R.C., San Jose, California, of which I was an active member for 7 years and advanced to the 11th Temple Degree. From then on and for another 7 years (after I had experienced an infarct of the heart and accordingly sold my design-office) I have been engaged with the study of Alchemy as well as practical laborantc experimentation for the purpose of investigating the preparation of alchemistical remedies. Then I realised once more that I was "barking up the wrong tree", that the very aims of practical laborantc alchemy, i.e. the preparation of the Red Lion, the Philosophers Stone which promises eternal youth and the prolongation of earthly life for centuries, were nothing but a dead-end road not worthy to follow. From then on and after a few months of studying the teachings of Anthroposophy according to R. Steiner, I became a student of ZEN, the buddhist mystic as taught and practiced in Japan. The latter I have been for three years now. Approximately one year ago and for want of spiritual fellow-travellers I toyed with the idea of establishing a ZEN-ashram; the ZEN taught in some Roman-catholic monasteries here in Germany I did not approve of. I even intended to begin with the translation of literature on ZEN and written by authors like Christmas Humphreys, Allen Watts and D.T.Suzuki. - By sheer - so called - coincidence I was introduced to the local sannyas ashram and Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh's books on the subject of ZEN. The latter I found to contain "pure ZEN" and accordingly I took sannyas on November 27th last years, accepting Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh as my spiritual master. Now I know that Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh and his teachings represent the very end and fulfilment of my spiritual and religious search. -

Among students of ZEN and according to Bhagwan's teachings it is considered a common-place that religious matters cannot be discussed or explained with intellectual concepts and words; language is actually suitable for utility-matters, for every day usage only; and even then it may easily cause trouble through misunderstanding because of different meanings attached to expressions. Knowing this a ZEN master never uses everyday language; if he does so, he talks in paradoxes, in riddles as it appears to the ignorant. To one and the same question asked by two different persons, he may give two different answers apparently contradicting each other to those who do not comprehend. The language Bhagwan uses is that of a ZEN master; that is the reason why comparatively very few understand him. Bhagwan differentiates between "clever people" who know all the tricks of the trade more or less because these were taught to them, and intelligent people whose eyes are wide open to reality as it surrounds them, who make up their own mind instead of relying on the opinion of others. And - as he says himself - one has to be very intelligent in order to understand him, not clever and mere accumulators of information acquired from parents, teachers, professors and - if it comes to the very point - not even from Bhagwan himself. - According to ZEN life, existence itself is a play and as such - so Bhagwan teaches his disciples - everything concerned with it has to be treated; nothing is to be taken seri-

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Continuation 2

ously, nothing, not ourselves, not even Bhagwan and his teachings. When asked by one of his disciples: what, if anything at all, he would take seriously, Bhagwan answered: "Not even myself". - The very core of what ZEN, and so Bhagwan, teaches is "the unteachable", is that which cannot be given from one to another like money or facts and figures, is that which can only be experienced individually, is that which cannot be related at all, is that which is experienced in ecstasy of any kind, is that which children unknowingly experience when lost in play, is the very divine. - As is said in ZEN, and this applies to Bhagwan and his teachings likewise: All a master can do is to use language as a finger pointing to the moon; those who get hold of the finger trying to analyse it intellectually and logically, who are hypnotically fixed to words and keep on arguing "till the cows come home", just miss the very point. - Of course, one could say that Bhagwan teaches his disciples means and ways to cross the abyss dividing self-consciousness from cosmic-consciousness. - But these are words again. They are like labels concerning which everybody is free and entitled to stick them to any intellectual concept that pleases. -

To me and because of my personal leaning toward ZEN, Bhagwan represents a ZEN-master. But that does not mean that he is only a ZEN-master. To others religiously favouring directions differing from my own as for example the Sufi-teachings, he is a master of their own religious leaning. - In reality - so one could say - he represents a "Universal-master" combining the very cores of all forms of religion which are one in reality. This very essence of religion itself and regardless of prefixes like Christian, Buddhist, Jewish, Mohamedan etc., is what he teaches while using different words, different languages so to speak, or different examples at various occasions and times, whilst - in reality - he always means the same. Of course, to those dwelling on the uttermost fringes of religion, to those clinging to words, to creeds and dogmas laid down by the - claimed - authority of a church for example, to those who cannot make up their minds themselves, who need to be told what to think and do (by the 10 commandments for example) because they are still programmed and under the hypnotic influence of dead religious rites and traditions, whatever Bhagwan says is nothing but a big load of rubbish. And they are perfectly right - when judged from their own point of view - and entitled to their opinion whatever it is and as long as they think and act sufficiently democratic and - at least - respect Bhagwan's and his disciples's opinions as well which - apparantly - the vast majority is incapable and, therefore, not willing to do. -

Whatever Bhagwan taught during the lectures he gave, whatever methods and ways, the numerous kinds of meditation he taught his disciples, it all serves but one purpose only, to wake up and abandon their personal views and individual worlds superimposed onto the real world they live in, to exist unburdened by a no more existing past and a not yet existing future in the "here and now", the only existence that is real, that is not bound by the limitations of time, that is eternal and divine, and in which to be is utter joy. -

Thanks to ZEN and Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh's interpretations of it, did I have the privilege and good fortune to realise at last what really matters in my life, the most precious jewel I shall be eternally grateful for. -

Amantus
Swami Chaitanyo Amantus

J.M. Thayer