

said "Ram Dass is a great saint," or "Ram Dass— Isha" (Christ), or "I am not your Guru, Ram Dass is your Guru." When most people asserted my specialness I saw it as their lack of perspective. When Maharaj-ji said it, I saw it as his forcing my power trip to the surface so we could see the absurdity of it. But now when all these incredible figures of the past appeared to speak through Joya just to prepare me for higher work, it fit in perfectly with this grandiose model. With my intellect I knew this model was just another "trip", and had said so time and again, for I felt myself more and more each day becoming nobody special. Yet my ego thirst for power, by no means fully eradicated, made me vulnerable to this model that I was somebody special, all the more so in the face of such strong reinforcement. For Joya kept reiterating that she had come to earth only to be an instrument for my preparation to be a world spiritual leader and that ultimately she would sit at my feet. All of the people who were now around her, she said, were being prepared to support me in my later work. I easily let myself be convinced.

Those who are familiar with the life story of Krishnamurti will recall that Annie Besant and C.W. Leadbeater of the Theosophical Society proclaimed the youthful Krishnamurti as the new world leader. He too bought into it for many years before he announced in 1929 the dissolution of the Order of the Star, which had at the time more than 50,000 members. In doing so, he expressed an anti-spiritual materialism line to which he has adhered for the last 45 years:

I do not want followers and I mean this. The moment you follow someone, you cease to follow truth.

...I desire those who seek to understand me to be free, not to follow me, not to make out of me a cage which will become a religion, a sect. . . You think and hope that another can, by his extraordinary powers — a miracle — transport you to this realm of eternal freedom which is happiness . . . You have the idea that only certain people hold the key to the Kingdom of Happiness. No one holds it. No one has the authority to hold that Key.

But Joya said she held the key.

4) There was even a powerful vision I had had a few years earlier

which further played into Joya's reality. In the vision, I was being brought into a large amphitheatre in which many hundreds of beings in white robes were gathered. At the far end, on a dias stood a lone figure, a woman also clad in a white robe. Although I could not see the figure who guided me at my elbow, I felt it was a man who wished to sponsor me for membership into this august body. Then the woman on the dias raised her arm pointing at me, said, "Take him out. He's not yet ready." In the vision I seemed to understand and agree perfectly and left with my sponsor. So now, sitting at the feet of one who professed herself to be the Divine Mother of the Universe, I felt that I was, in fact, finally being made ready for membership.

"I plunged headlong into the tornado, casting caution and doubt to the winds."

5) In the past five or six years I have received literally hundreds of grateful letters from people who report how I came to them in a vision or a dream at a time of need and reassured or guided them. While I personally have rarely experienced such astral comings and goings, I must conclude that either there are a lot of hysterical people creating fantasies about me because I am a public figure, or that I have a secret psychic life and am very active in my subtle or astral body. Joya convinced me that the latter was true, telling me that 80% of my teaching was on other planes.

6) Perhaps what had concerned me most in the period just before I met Joya was that I was not yet free of my attachments to sexuality. After a long and intense bisexual history, I still found that my perceptions were colored by my sexual desires. I could afford to be patient about my own purification from sexual clinging, but in view of my public role, I was uneasy that any sexual preoccupations on my part would subtly contaminate those to whom I lectured or with whom I worked individually and thus reinforce their own attachments and suffering. Despite the fact that Maharaj-ji had said, "I would never let Ram Dass do anything wrong in America." The persistence of these sexual preoccupations led me to doubt

Maharaj-ji, or at least to yearn to clean up my sexual act. In view of how many years I had been trying to get free of these sexual clings, including offering lust into the sacrificial fires of India, I had given up hope of ever knowing freedom in this lifetime. The sexual karma just seemed too heavy.

I had read of the transtic in certain Tibetan sects for just this purpose. The monk would go through a series of ritual openings working with a dakini, or God-woman. Mostly these were young women who had been prepared from childhood to serve in these rituals without any personal involvement or clinging to the sensual aspect of the ritual. In my fantasies I was hoping that at some point I too would be introduced to such teachings, and through such conscious rituals with a disciplined guide, I would once and for all be free.

And now I was presented with a woman teacher who within a few months after the commencement of the training, began to focus on my sexuality. As I opened more and more, assured by her of her total perfect non-attachment to any desire systems, I felt a new hope that my dream for purification was finally manifesting through this teaching. I plunged headlong into the tornado, casting caution and doubt to the winds.

7) Maharaj-ji had again and again said to me, "See the world as the Mother and you will know God." He often was heard to be repeating the word "Ma" over and over again. He had several temples built to Durga, an aspect of the Mother. And all of this Mother devotion made me feel like an outsider, for my own feelings about the Mother were too colored by the relationship with my mother and by my training as a Freudian theorist and therapist. To be in love with a Universal Mother just wasn't happening for me. And yet I knew that the aspect of devotion for the Mother, just as much as devotion to the Monkey-God Hanuman for whom I had overwhelming love, was a part of the lineage of my Guru. Sooner or later I would have to find a way to appreciate a devotional relationship with the Mother. Then I came to New York City and started to study with Joya and enter her matriarchal reality. She professed to be the Divine Mother, and I felt that at last I would open up to this form of devotion.

8) And finally there was the
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