

The idea of a higher power is to blame

After a lot of thinking about my time with Maharaj ji, I had this one basic question 'left over'. I believed his claims about heaven and eternal peace, although everybody that I loved told me they could never be true. Still I believed him and kept doing so for years and years. Why? The same goes for his misbehavior, like spending enormous amounts of money, earned in hard premie-labor, on personal extravagance. That for sure I knew before, it was all over the press in those days. What wasn't then, but later on definitely popped up, where stories about tax fraud in the US, accusations of the Indian government about his role in a car accident, and his (not) dealing with the alleged misbehavior of some of his mahatma's (like raping ashramsisters and beating up people opposing him).

Wether all these stories were true or not, is a major topic of discussion amongst his former followers. But I have a different question: why didn't all this news alarm me? Why accept something from Maharaj ji or his mahatma's, that I would never have accepted from the guy next door? And even more shocking: how come I did listen to Maharaj ji and did not listen to all the very dear friends and family that before I met Maharaj ji where my most reliable source of information about life? For instance: I had a brother that was very close to me. He didn't want to give up on me when I moved into an ashram, so he kept on seeing me, patiently listened to all the satsang I was obliged to give him, even said 'the man might have a point with this meditation thing', but still warning me all the time: you're losing yourself and that can never be good. I didn't listen to him. Instead, I told him that the ashram was a place for satsang and he should leave if he wasn't interested in that. So he left.

Why move everything valuable in my life so far aside and go for the promises of a man that lived the kind of life that I despised? I refused to take driving lessons at the time, longing for a new world where everybody would ride a bike, but devoted everything I had and could to a man that had tons worth of cars and claimed he should in addition have his own airplane as well. Why did I do that?

I can only find one answer that holds up: because I believed in the idea of a higher power, the idea of something way above the laws of human life. Only experiencing that, would make life worth living. That's what I got out of all these stories in church, lit with candles and surrounded by high pitched voices singing 'gloria in excelsis deo'. That's what I got out of reading all these holy books and looking at the pictures of the 'Yogi's from India'. That's what I got out of floating around on mescaline. That was life. Not my brother studying hard to become a doctor. Not my parents doing their best to raise five children. Not my girlfriend wanting to hold and kiss me. Life wasn't about that, life was about something way beyond that.

That idea, that's what made me bring all I had, including myself, to an ashram of Maharaj ji because I honestly thought he was going to put me in touch with that power that was worth so much more than what I saw around me. And if he wouldn't have been around to promise me that, someone else would have.

So my major lesson in life is: I was wrong. In following Maharaj ji, but more basically in believing

there was something like perfection. There isn't. What you see is what you get. This is it, and being happy with that, is the art of living. A fine art though, and one I can use a lot of help with. But not the kind of help Maharaj ji offers. More like the friendship my brother had to offer and the kisses from my girlfriend.

Jos

I think I disagree. The idea of (a) higher power(s) has been with humans since the very beginning apparently. Most people either ignore it or go along with their culture's religion. A small minority use it as a focus of their lives.

It's the next step that got us into trouble. The idea that someone could put you in touch with that HP was the crux for us that caused us to become involved. While nearly everyone who ever lived has accepted the higher powers proposition there has only ever been a very small percentage of people who've accepted the second idea and only a small percentage of them who've given it a try.

Can you blame the major idea for it's tiny bastard offspring?

I wouldn't call millions of people putting their own sound judgment aside for some kind of religious promise a 'tiny bastard offspring'.

My parents didn't use condoms, though they wanted to, because the pope said they were not allowed. They obeyed him, because the pope was their liaison with god. Result: they drifted away from their own (pretty basic!) choices in life plus made the 'tiny bastard offspring' even bigger in the process.

My point is: by dropping the whole 'higher powers' idea, popes, gurus and what have you not lose their power to take over your life. A much more effective way than trying to convert the pope, or Maharaj ji for that matter.

Jos

There is no premeditated rip off

So here's my second conclusion after five years with Maharaj ji: contrary to what a lot of people say about a cult like DLM en its leader, in my opinion there is no scheme, no premeditated rip off, no conspiracy to brainwash people, take their money and run. Maharaj ji and the people around him are convincing, because they believe in what they're saying and doing. Not always, but for these moments there is of course this holy commandment 'don't leave any room for doubt in your mind' to get you back on track.

I cannot judge the present situation, but back then when I was with the Divine Light Mission I'm convinced Maharaj ji truly believed he was the Lord of the Universe and here to bring peace to the world. I truly believed that and so did all these other premies around me. And because we did, we convinced others.

And that's exactly why whatever any non-believer says and proofs to you, it just never hits home. You live under this dome of belief, together with these other believers. If you want to get out, you'll have to make the first little hole all by yourself. And hope people out there don't start arguing about brainwashing and rip offs, once you made it. That's what it might look like from the outside, but it doesn't explain the power of a cult and its leader. Belief does.

Jos

It has become very difficult for me to accept that Prem Rawat sincerely thought he was the Lord of the Universe – compassionate by definition – and wasn't fully culpable and complicit in his own extreme exploitation of his followers in order to satisfy his sick lust for wealth and excessive materialism.

How could any intelligent person who behaves like that honestly and sincerely believe themselves to be the Lord of the Universe? That would be a lord the universe could do without.

My point is: we could and should do without any Lord of the Universe. That's why I don't focus as much as some others do on his misbehavior. Please don't misunderstand: everything immoral and illegal is bad and wrong and should of course always be dealt with in the appropriate way! In discussing Maharaj ji I tend to skip the topic of his misbehavior though, because however he would have behaved, following him would in my opinion still be basically wrong.

There's no such thing for me as the right type of guru. That's what I found out following one and going till the end in devoting my life to him. The idea itself of a higher power, far beyond the human conditions, and a guru to get you in synch with that, is by definition robbing you of a sound basis for your life. That's my conclusion after following the Lord of the Universe. Not that he should get his act together and get sincere, truthful and kind. It's the act itself that stinks. And realizing that, is freedom to me.

Jos