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FLOWERS AT OSHO, PUNE - DAY 5 - MULTIVERSITY TIME

September 27th, 2008 by Jim

...Down at the Zorba the Buddha cafe I devoured my papaya, herbal tea and paratha breakfast alone, probably not as zenned up as the others due to me watching 3 Sopranos episodes cooked up in my room the previous night. ...Whatever would Osho say? ...He mentions flowers! Time to get to class - I'd signed up for...

Inner skills for work and life — something I could apply in 'reality' ...This course was the one for me offering understanding, experience and methods to radically enhance my work time and my daily life activities. I am SO there.

...As your centeredness grows, you become more present. This impacts the people around you and the situations you deal with. The ability to observe your emotions and responses enables you to increase the energy available to be creative and resourceful. Work can then become play — a delight and an extension of your creativity. (* This is a corporate programme. Please enquire about rates and details.)

Ah! Happy days — I'm in

...I quickly realised that at a cost of Rs 12,000 in cash (\$250.00) it was an investment of both my time and my money. This could prove difficult as I only had my vouchers and still needed to get around to de-robing and finding some cash at an ATM....

None of the other maroon robbers in the group seemed concerned as the 8 of us introduced ourselves in a cross legged circle to the white belt black robed teacher, a dark haired Indian guy, in his 50s who would pass as Amitabh Bachchan....

"Ah, you're different" he said when it was my turn.

"Right," I replied about to dive into a breakdance to support his point.... "No, I mean you are a short term visitor here, you don't work here, all these guys do." Spot the tourist!

No wonder the others could do the cross legged thing and not have to worry about vouchers and cash. It transpired that they worked here at Osho so the courses were free.... Earning their keep, food and education as it were from, well from tourists.

"I see you've not paid for this class yet?," Bachchan quietly pointed out taking me aside. "No - I'll sort the cash out, de-robe and pop out this afternoon - I need to buy more vouchers and to pay for this course".

"Maybe after your work this afternoon?" He replied....

"What, What....work?" I asked.

"Everyone here applies what they've learnt in this class at the work, that's the idea."

"But I don't work here....I."

"You'll be assigned to work with someone here, that's all — only 2 hours, 2 till 4?"

You have to be kidding me - my zen was suddenly sliding away but I was 100% in this moment. Stopping myself from walking out I instinctively offered to 'work'...

"Alright but please ensure you apply what you've learnt," Amitabh conceded as he pressed play on the CD player announcing to the group "Right, let's dance and then we'll get started"...

OSHO SICK ON DAY 6 & WHAT AN EYE OPENER!

September 28th, 2008 by Jim

...I awoke at 0h! 5.55 am. Ideally, I'd like to write how I sprung out of bed with renewed vigor for another round of dynamic meditation. It wasn't to be, my calves were now very sore from the

the 6am dynamic meditation session 2 days ago plus I'd developed a nasty head cold.... As I hobbled down to reception looking like a 'before' picture on a cough medicine commercial a note was waiting for me in reception. From the Osho multiversity it asked why I hadn't showed for the course or paid for it - so I called them right away as the internal phone was picked up with an Australian 'Huh-low'

"Oh Hi, I croaked, it's Jim here and I do apologise - I've caught some sort of bug and overslept this morning". A couple of white linen wearing newbies arrived... "So, you're not attending the rest of the class?" shrieked the high pitched antipodean accent.

"Well I'm not in a state to, at least today, I feel as rough as...."

"Oh, well. Oh right, well could you come and pay for the 1 day at least?"

"...sure....and no I don't need medical attention and I'm sure I'll recover" I replied sarcastically.

"Ok, so that's Rs 3,800."

"Would you mind sending my apologies to the instructor and the group, I'm really sorry but I'm in no fit state to...."

"I'll do that and we'll see you later" Line went dead. ...As I got into the lift I grunted a 'good morning' to a resident who simply pointed to his badge on his left shoulder that said 'SILENCE' indicating that he was having a period of silence and couldn't speak.

...I realised that as I left my meditation pass was out of date — like a bus pass that permitted you access to the Osho campus but you needed cash to top the credit up which I didn't have so that would have to wait until I had some cash.

Just down from camp Osho... I could spend my spare rupees on whatever I pleased and immediately thought of an experiment to try when I got back inside Osho involving the face menial tasked workers. The cleaners, plate-washers and security guards who were at the receiving end of this cashless culture and with them not wearing the purple robes were largely ignored.

...Back at the Osho Multiplicity as 40 maroon robed folk danced merrily entranced to this sort of techno sun song whilst I resisted temptation to throw my arms in the air and join them I had business to attend to. Heading over to little Miss Sunshine hunched over her keyboard ("Oh well. Oh right, well could you come and pay for the day at least") to pay my Rs 3,800 where smiles were not as obvious: "Do you have the course notes?" I snuffled reminding her that I was ill as I handed over the money. "Well, erm — oh how am I going to enter 1 day into the system, I've never done this...erm, well"

"The course notes?" I stunk of garlic, I must have after the raw cloves on that naan bread. "Well, I could arrange the first day note for you as you've paid for those" She tutted as she struggled to enter my 33.333% contribution to a course into her Osho notes mainframe. "So I can't get today's notes or tomorrow?"

"Sorry, no - you didn't complete the course."

"Look no problem - I'll google them," I snuffled in reply. Maybe I should just hug her and start waving my arms in the air?

...Facilities of swimming, sauna, tennis, massages, beauty parlour, basketball courts to earn your food for the Bistros. So on the premise that a sauna is considered good for the system I indulged but was stopped right in my tracks by the towel attendant....

"Well, yes I've been really down with this cold — maybe this sauna will help?" I snuffled

"A healing crisis — that's common.



WHO DID OWN OSHO INC? I STILL COULDN'T ESTABLISH THIS DESPITE SENDING OSHO INC A POLITE EMAIL UPON MY ARRIVAL

Sure, the sauna. Do you have you maroon shorts?"

"Well, these are a blue / brown so when they're wet I should pass" I said as I lifted up my robe to reveal my surf shorts underneath.

"Sorry, they're two tone and you need these maroon shorts," as he pointed to the rows of maroon shorts behind him. Rs 250 later (cash this time was fine, no vouchers were allowed to buy sporting goods with) I was in the sauna with my maroon shorts with an Osho branded badge on the right.

O-SHOPPING ON DAY 7!

September 29th, 2008 by Jim

...I still had plenty of vouchers left to use up for breakfast and with only 1 day of robe wearing left. ...I tucked into a bowl of cereal with Soy milk, a samosa, a bowl of yellow daal and a slice of delicious fresh papaya.

...What a wonderful merchandising operation it was — Osho books in several language, CDs, robes, massage chairs and copies of *Osho Times* magazine. You could get even get a daily text to your mobile phone detailing what was on offer in this 21st century ashram — one of over 300 Osho Information and meditation centres in over 45 countries around the world. Maybe Osho theme parks, cruises, cola, airlines and a bride service were the next brand extensions being considered by whoever owned Osho Inc.

Who did own Osho inc?

I still couldn't establish this despite sending OSHO inc a polite email upon my arrival.

...Grabbing a simple brochure that listed a basket of courses on offer here at Osho were enough to keep you here for at least a few weeks. Osho allied itself with many therapies that were on offer as paid courses from reiki, constellation training, cranial biodynamic, post reichan therapy, tarot, colour therapy, Japanese facials, Aursoma light-pen, Chakra healing, eye relax-

ation, neck and shoulder back release, tantra (no Indian men are allowed in this class), art with heart and Ayurvedic massage for women.

All of these were available as paid courses within Osho and all purported to help 'clear your mind' and 'help me focus' while I 'spent my vouchers'. I overheard a slight disagreement from a dissatisfied customer who had just returned from what was going to be the start of his course....

"Well, I arrived 3-4 minutes late, just as they were closing the doors."

"Those are the rules Sir, you have to be on time so not to spoil it for others."

Apparently he and the group of other people with him were told they were disrespectors and were instructed to leave immediately. Being branded a "disrespector" could have consequences....

...With minor spillage, tokens stamped and food consumed I accepted that after dinner mints wasn't an option but after dinner hugs were. Well at least on some of the tables as they stood like compassionate statues, locked together as I shuffled tracks on my ipod.... The world did need more of this....

OH-SO LONG, OSHO...

September 30th, 2008 by Jim

Despite making the call for an early last night to de-robe, pack and conclude my stay here, I was distracted during my amble back to my room. I noticed that the dark side of the moon auditorium doors were open which was unusual as after the white robes meeting was concluded they were closed.

All that was missing was the Bond theme tune ...as I tiptoed up up the stairs at the side on the main entrance to find.... a gathering of 70 or so people, in their maroon robes (highly irregular after 5pm in the evening) finishing off dancing to the Osho band. I'd walked in on initiation into Sannyas which is a personal affair and the responsibility for fulfilling what is required as a Sannyasin — in one word: meditation.

It involved changing your name. People danced as others came forward by collecting their name certificates and then moving towards the centre of a circle. I watched from the side door realising pretty quickly that I should leave this peaceful ceremony in case I was up next to change my name to Bond, Jim Bond...

...Only one more breakfast in this maroon robe. I thought as I sprung out of bed and used the last of my vouchers. The same orderly meal was being served and enjoyed as I scanned a copy of the latest *Osho Times* whilst waiting my masala omelette. I had to chuckle at the headlines on the front page and related them to my last 8 days here:

'Relating - Keeping Love Alive': Hey come on people - readers of GO! Smell the flowers thought it was a sex commune when I pitched up last Sunday.

'Wellness - The Target is You': Really? That's not how I felt when I was sick and couldn't attend my Work / life course.

'Working life - getting it all together': Assuming you're fit to attend class, of course.

...It was time for one final experiment. With an hour to kill before my cab to Pune airport I decided to take a trip out of HSBC bank... Flashing my OSHO pass for the final time I left and behold rickshaw Raju was outside. This time, I left my maroon robe on to venture out into reality.

...We headed off amongst the car horns, beggars, dogs and dust and straight over to HSBC as I felt like I was breaking all the Osho rules doing this as we were 'not to wear out robes anywhere else outside Osho'. Well, what would they do with an hour left? Confiscate them? I wanted to see what it felt like.

Standing alongside the suits, frowns and briefcases as HSBC felt strange, like I was playing a role in a sit-com. Sadly alongside the premier, status and normal guys queues there was no Osho account of credit card I'd could have been given the green light for. The rupees came, we left and stopped for fuel on the way back so I took it one stage further, went into the garage and flicked through a magazine while Raju topped the rickshaw up. Again, if felt like I was in fancy dress but my robes in the outside world felt as odd as my civilian clothes did on the Osho campus.

Back at the campus Raju assured me he would get me to the airport on time and didn't mind waiting. So that was one less thing to think about, aside from what my last thought on this whole experience had been.

...As I settled my bill with Mastercard — no vouchers — my week long fancy dress party had come to an end as I dipped in and out of witnessing emotional valium for the internationally depressed. Some addicted, some trapped and some looking for that quick fix which brings them back year on year as the courses continue, badges get worn and names get changed.

I just hope they didn't lose themselves in search of looking for exactly that!

...I had one foot in camp Osho and one out and feel I've everything I could have hoped for from this experience.

As I trundled my suitcase along into Raju's rickshaw I felt a great sense of release leaving the place as ME! My personality, my beliefs and a product of all my experiences to date. Maybe this was the cosmic joke that I was in on and one that Osho was chuckling at from his Roll Royce in the sky?

The author is the founder of <http://gосmelltheflowers.com/> — an alternative community of inspiration, health, media, food, people and places, with 16 writers globally.