

Mescaline, Maharajji and Mojave Desert

Abandoned Roads

Jos Lammers

Three years after I floated like a question mark around the Vondelpark in my embroidered Moroccan shirt, I zoomed through The Netherlands in a Van Gils suit and a Triumph 2000 Overdrive, with lease contracts, appointment notes, cashbooks and tax correspondence on the seat next to me. Somewhere along the way, the quest for enlightenment had taken an unexpected turn.

Traveling through the United States, Jos Lammers reminisces in 'Abandoned Roads' his five years of devotion to the 'perfect master' guru Maharaj ji, back in the seventies, and his return to normal life. A story about enlightenment that turns out to be just around the corner, mescaline in the Vondelpark and Dylan in the Mojave Desert. A must for flower children, yogis, macrobiotis, pot heads, poppers, sadhus, ascetics, and those who ever wanted to be like that or appreciate they never did.

Colofon

Text: Jos Lammers.

Reproduction of text or photographs, in any form, only with permission.

Cover illustration: Janny Brasik. Cover design: Hoogteyling BNO, Schiedam.

Published before as part of a bilingual edition *Verlaten wegen* – Abandoned roads in 2007.

© Copyright of this publication Jos Lammers, Delft 2017.

Print and distribution Singel Uitgeverijen – Brave New Books.

Also available as e-book.

ISBN 9789402169973

The cuttings about the Divine Light Mission are a small selection from the 'collection Simon Vinkenoog', box 145 folder 02, available for study at the International Institute for Social History in Amsterdam.

To Janny

Colored and distorted

This story about a trip across the United States, consists for a major part of memories of the Divine Light Mission and guru Maharaj ji in the period 1971 - 1976. I was his follower for five years at that time. The first function I held within his organization, the Divine Light Mission, was 'manager Divine Sales': organizing in the Netherlands the collection of junk and the sale of it in the 'Divine Shops'. Next I became 'general secretary', the director of the Dutch branch of the Divine Light Mission. Finally, I was called to the international headquarters ('IHQ') of the organization in Denver, to work as 'international coordinator' of the national branches in Europe and Australia.

Back then the Divine Light Mission was a big organization, with hundreds of followers in the Netherlands and, outside India, tens of thousands worldwide. Why all these people followed guru Maharaj ji, I obviously can't judge. What set him apart from the many other wise men from the East that received a lot of attention back then, is that he aimed for the highest. He didn't present himself as a teacher of gymnastic exercises from yoga books or diets of soy and seaweed, but as the living 'perfect master'. The one (the only!) that could show the real seeker the way to god. Being his follower meant, especially if you wanted to live in one of his ashrams like I did,

total devotion and abandoning all social ties and earthly pleasures. In that respect too, he aimed for the first prize. And so did I. Until I finally saw what everybody else knew all along, of course.

My memories of this time are undoubtedly colored and distorted. Therefore, I do not pretend in any way to tell the truth. These are just my memories. For that reason I have changed names, wherever I thought that was necessary in order to protect the privacy of the people concerned.

One

My memories of the United States are, to say the least, mixed. The mescaline came from there, pure nature from the Mojave Desert. The woman with the green eyes came from there ('lenses, silly'), the one who rolled the pills in her suitcase to the Vondelpark where I was floating about in my embroidered Moroccan shirt. And the guru came from there, or at least the Divine Light Mission of which he was the financial and spiritual leader. Headquarters: Denver Colorado. The Moroccan shirt had turned into a three piece suit when I was out again on its doorstep after five years of devotion.

Together with Janny I'll have a look around to see what I remember. Finally, after more than thirty years, an attempt to explain why I then abandoned everything, including her. I think, while 'twelve thirty' of the Mamas & Papas is playing in the background. I've never really outgrown that time. And why should I? So in the luggage go The Lovin' Spoonful, The Beatles (sure, Sgt. Pepper's), Dylan (Blond on Blond, obviously!), Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young (Déjà vu, no discussion), Melanie (Born To Be) en Pink Floyd (Atom Heart Mother) for a trip cross country USA.