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C. K. GHOSE (A.K.A. "SRI" [Lord] CHINMOY):
 BELIEVING AND LIVING IN THE DELUSION (Usually)

Mon Sep 4, 2006 5:26 pm

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This essay began as a long-delayed response to Rudra's insightful letter about "giving credit where credit is due" some time ago, as well as ongoing discussions with both Rudra and Tarak. It has taken me awhile to respond, this is my first posting since we left the Centre more than 3 years ago (after 22 years as disciples).

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Personally, I tend to see Mr. Ghose (most of the time) as a narcissistic and charismatic individual - - usually living and believing in the delusion that he is an "avatar" and God-realized Master, rather than a conscious and superlative "conman." To me, this is what allows him to project such a positive and convincing image.

Although it is accurate (at some level) to blame Mr. Ghose for "duping" us and betraying our trust in him, in my case, I am coming to realize that my worst personal suffering comes from two deeper senses of "betrayal." Nevertheless, our suffering did begin with a very concrete threat from Mr. Ghose...

MR GHOSE SAID DIRECTLY TO MY FACE (and to my wife) that " ♦ they [my disciples] want to kill your son ♦ " after which he immediately changed subject, with no other qualifiers, denials or comments. He never retracted his death threat or addressed it again.

This threat came directly from the leader of the N.G.O.: "Sri Chinmoy: the PEACE Meditation at the U.N." According to himself and his Norwegian disciple/press agent, Mr. Ghose is a serious candidate for the Nobel Peace Prize, and has been on "the short list" several times. Every year his most devoted disciples pray that he will get the prize, 5 times a day for at least a month before the decision is announced. (N.B. The truth is that the Nobel Committee posts a list of final candidates - - and Mr. Ghose was NEVER on it, although his disciples don't know this) ♦

I WAS DEEPLY SHOCKED! If I was so thoroughly "conned" by Mr. Ghose in one of the most important and critical choices in my life (choosing my spiritual path), how could I ever trust my own sense of discrimination again ♦?!

I felt like Mr. Ghoses's "alleged" sex partners. My sense of self was deeply shaken. Not trusting in my own judgment led to a kind of paralysis in my life (my sense of agency was greatly damaged). The feeling of "drifting" and "rootlessness" described by those who leave an authoritarian belief system or cult is a reality. I was not who I had thought I was; my overly optimistic picture of my own abilities (especially my ability to discriminate and make "correct" choices) was shattered (eventually this becomes a positive realization).

In hindsight, I can defend myself by pointing out that most of my generation did not have a "safety net," we were the first generation to welcome Eastern teachers en masse. We had rejected much of what we were expected to automatically accept, but were not sure what to replace it with, and whom to trust - - especially outside of conventional Western experience; we had no parameters. We were naive and vulnerable - - and initially deceived about the real background of Mr. Ghose and the way the Sri Chinmoy Centre operated (the old "bait and switch" scam).

Yet we felt invulnerable and fortified. We experienced deep peace

and spiritual insights in our meditations. We (falsely) ascribed this "ambrosia" to the powerful, even occult, influence of our charismatic and autocratic guru/master/teacher.

Many of us now realize that much of what we felt in our meditations was our own Inner Light [or the Inner Christ, the Dharma, the Way, whatever name suits] - - and the shared effort and interconnectedness of our hundreds of fellow seekers. We gained trusted life-time companions and experienced a deep and warm sense of belonging and group solidarity. For many of us, finding out that God actually loved US, and had chosen US for the Divine Mission of his emissary on Earth - - was like the "rush" of our first true love, of returning this love - - blindly, infatuated. We stayed "high" on this Divine Love for several ♦ even many ♦ years. Like new and impassioned lovers, NOTHING could intrude on our conviction and our bliss ♦ Nevertheless, behind all the explanations and excuses: it now seemed as if I had betrayed my own sense of my self ♦

ONE YEAR LATER, during the Annual Christmas Retreat (in Cairns Australia) my wife confronted Mr. Ghose concerning the death threat we had received from him (on the previous Christmas Trip to Phnom Penh Cambodia). He replied, "It's not going to happen." In the beginning of the meeting he had confided in us (believing us to be on his side and still opposed to our son), "Your son is lying to you, he is still on the Internet writing about my sex life ["vital life"]." He made no effort to deny that he indeed did have a sex life, although he demanded that his unmarried disciples be celibate, or the fact that death threats had in fact been made.

Mr. Ghose WAS PREOCCUPIED WITH OUR SON: he had become the NUMBER ONE ENEMY when he created a web-site that gathered together the testimonials of (allegedly) sexually abused and suffering girls (He called us: the "parents of Judas" at the Phnom Penh meeting). Our son had been so moved by their struggle and outraged at their treatment that he started the site, knowing that he himself could become the target of reprisals (which in fact occurred).

Previously, disciples in the Sri Chinmoy Centre had only been vaguely aware of these sex rumors and they had been dismissed out of hand as "fables" made up by bitter and confused apostates who had already been discredited by Mr. Ghose (and later by his lawyer responding to allegations in the NY Post, Sunday, May 23, 2004: "Ex-followers Rip Sleazy" Sri"). Now these "rumors" were a daily internet reality and could be openly read and critically reviewed. Needless to say, Mr. Ghose intensely dislikes the Internet and has forbidden his disciples to read or post on it (unless they do so as his agents).

After THE "STICK" had been applied (the death threat) to our family, now THE CARROT was used. Bribes were offered to us: if our son would shut down the web-site Mr. Ghose would pay for his entire college education, whatever it may cost. We were surprised by this, since previously Mr. Ghose had consistently maintained that college was "bad" for spiritual seekers. We began to realize that nothing else mattered as much as covering up allegations of his sexual relationships. As with Richard Nixon, the attempted cover-up is causing Mr. Ghose's worst nightmares: he just can't hide or get rid of all the accusations.

The DEEPEST SENSE OF BETRAYAL I personally felt, however, was the horrible sense that there is no God [Life Force/Dharma/Way, whatever term suits]. If there is a positive "flow" in the universe, how could it have allowed such a perverted presentation (in my opinion) of the "divine/cosmic" to exist and to be so "real" to me? The old theodicy debate of Christian theologians took on a new and immediate relevancy ("how can a good God allow evil to exist in the world?"). How does the Life Force/God allow those idealistic seekers who sincerely try to better the world, be so abused by a trusted "spiritual teacher"? Why is he so convincing and so successful in the eyes of many sincere seekers ♦? To me, this was my deepest sense of betrayal and abandonment.

AT THIS POINT many of us who left, or where "kicked out" (often with dire warnings such as, "your souls will torture you for Eternity") stopped practicing our disciplines, stopped meditating (what are we meditating on, anyway, or for ♦?), stopped praying (who, or what, are we praying to ♦?). Some ex-disciples found meditation and prayer too painful and confusing: after all the years of meditating and praying solely on Mr. Ghose's picture ("the Transcendental"): the conditioned association made it impossible to stop his image from "popping up" whenever they meditated or prayed. In anguish some threw out everything having any connection with "seeking," or believing, or with spirituality. ("The baby was thrown out with the bathwater.") Others missed the absolute security of having "divine answers" to all of life's troubling questions, and quickly moved to other fundamentalist "solutions."

We are just one family who has experienced Mr. Ghose's "Cover Up" phase. However, since our son was his worst enemy, we had the dubious privilege of receiving the threat from him personally. It was shocking for us to realize that moral-ethical principles meant so little to our beloved "spiritual Master"!

The sense of personal betrayal, abandonment and hurt is extremely deep to many former disciples. One of the "alleged" sex partners of

Mr. Ghose said it became a "spiritual rape" when it became clear to her that he was not the divine incarnation he claimed to be, after being used in "emotionless sex." His Clintonesque defense that it was not really "sex," but a divine "surrender" to her Master (a "purification") rang false to her after her insight that he himself was false, and was not fully "Self-Realized" (whatever that may be). She said she had experienced paralyzing self-doubt after this "spiritual seduction" and exploitation. Although this was a second hand description given to me by her, it does mirror my own personal experience of Mr. Ghose, and I believe her.

Like his "alleged" sex partners, our sense of betrayal was so deep that the suffering is still with us (and our son). Yet in a sense, we are the LUCKY ones: we personally experienced the Dark Side of Mr. Ghose; we saw both Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde with our own eyes. We are not dependant on "rumors" and "second and third hand" descriptions. There is no ambiguity and no doubt about what happened to our family, and we did not misunderstand his threat. It had the intended effect: we were shocked and horrified, and we convinced our son to "give up" his role in the web-site.

BEFORE DELIVERING THE DEATH THREAT to us, Mr. Ghose had given us a long speech based on the Bhagavad Gita stating that:

"♦ in the cosmic battle between Light [his divine mission] and Darkness [all those who oppose him], there is no father, no mother, no son; only those on the side of the Divine or those opposing it..."

This justification, based on Krishna's dialogue with his disciple Arjuna at the bloody Battle of Kurukshetra, coming directly from Mr. Ghose's lips, directed against my own son, has made it impossible for me to read or enjoy the Gita ever since. To Mr. Ghose [the "Avatar of the Era"], in his own words "above ordinary laws," everything can be rationalized and justified for the sake of his "divine mission" on earth.

What is this "cosmic war" about anyway ♦ the battle to cover up his (alleged) sex life? If the allegations are false, why not respond openly ♦?! His unwillingness to openly answer the women who accuse him only makes him appear guilty, and his "dirty tricks" used to cover up the accusations only incriminate him even more deeply.

Mr. Ghose continually "blames his victims" [former disciples] for their own suffering. They have "lost Light," "become hostile forces," "begun to doubt," "stopped meditating" (although in actuality many still continue, in spite of Mr. Ghose, to meditate and do remain spiritual seekers). There is no sense of compassion or regret on his part. No admission whatsoever that his own behavior lies behind their suffering. The last words we heard from Mr. Ghose, delivered by his social secretary to us were: "if you leave the Path, your souls will torture you for Eternity." (For Mr. Ghose, there is no acceptable reason for leaving his Path.) Fortunately, by this point we had already seen the Dark Side of his Path and were no longer shocked by his unethical behavior - - otherwise we could have been plagued by fear and doubt for many, many years.



However, after over three years of seeking answers, I'm beginning to realize that Mr. Ghose is, in fact, NOT succeeding. My deepest despair has lifted. The Way, the Dharma, the Universe did not betray me: it "betrays" no-one. In time, all lives and deeds do reap their own "rewards" ♦

In the long run we have NOT been duped; our limited and false self images must be shaken. The life Force/God does NOT ultimately allow spiritual frauds to succeed. We ourselves, freed ex-disciples, are the proof. The ever weakening and less convincing Mr. Ghose is proof. I find deep solace in one of my favorite verses (#29, Witter Bynner trans., 1962) from Lao Tzu (N.B. he is now incarnated as D ♦, according to Mr. Ghose!):

Those who would take over the earth
And shape it to their will
Never, I notice, succeed.
The earth is like a vessel so sacred
That at the mere approach of the profane
It is marred
And when they reach out their fingers it is gone.
For a time in the world some make a great noise
And some are held silent,
For a time in the world some are puffed fat
And some are kept hungry,
For a time in the world some push aboard
And some are tipped out:
At no time in the world will a man who is sane
Over-reach himself,
Over-spend himself,
Over-rate
himself.
Padamrita

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