

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN :

I have been with Bhagwan since October 1978 and in this period I have gone through an incredible amount of growth, insight into just living, than I would have done if I hadn't met Bhagwan.

Before I met Bhagwan, I was Deborah Stone, living in Sydney, Australia. I finished off my training as a Kindergartden Teacher, felt the urge to travel, worked for 18 months in an insurance brokers firm, got totally bored with it, but got enough money together to leave Australia. Headed off to India and then to Europe, not really knowing what lay ahead for me. Had never heard of a Spiritual Master, or Guru or Teacher, but while travelling felt like there was something missing, not feeling happy in myself, always wanting to go somewhere or do something. Even before I started travelling, I felt the same, always moving from one circle of friends to another, not feeling quite connected to what was going on around me, kinda felt like a rebel, looking for something but not really sure what it was, and then while travelling through India I meet Bhagwan. The first time I saw Bhagwan was in Buddhahall in Poona, he walked onto the Podium and namaste and smiled, at us all, sat down and started to talk to us. I didn't know what had hit me, I just cried. I decided to stay in Poona and just see what was really happening.

I still didn't quite believe what I was seeing or feeling. I decided to do some of the workshops which were being offered, in Poona, the first time I've done any sort of therapy on myself and feeling things I never felt before and feeling something incredible with Bhagwan and before I knew it, I was sitting in front of this man taking Sannyas. Just looking into his eyes and his whole face, his being just smiling at me and giving me my new name, Santoshi, which means contentment. I remember, when he gave it to me he said just flow like a river, and I remember just nodding my head. After many months of being there, doing groups and being exposed more and more to myself, than I ever have and in this exposure, this openness and vulnerability, I felt more and more of Bhagwan and his presence, I remember, how in the beginning I would go and listen to him in lecture and then go again in the afternoon and just write notes and try to take every word he said, and then all of a sudden I started sitting in lecture and began feeling something else with Bhagwan especially when he spoke in Hindi, it was like another meeting with him, not so much on a mental level but more on a communal level, allowing

myself to feel spaces with Bhagwan that I never had felt before, in all aspects. Meeting people on another level, loving people, allowing people to love me, just being open, suddenly seeing and being in a new way of life, everything the same but totally different, living with trust, and a yes, and just living life with celebration. Even death we celebrate in a festival way, singing, dancing, just rejoicing in life and rebirth.

Bhagwan moving into silence, brought us into another meeting place with him, a very beautiful space and communion, one of stillness and deeplove. With the work, you are meeting on a level of support and love and people enjoying themselves, it showed me a new way of being especially in the work, constantly being thrown back on ourselves, but constantly being supported through whatever was going on. Enjoying the intensity of festivals, enjoying the ups and downs of living and when feeling down, realizing that the spaces do not last; and somehow you don't seem to hang onto things.

Bhagwan has brought about many changes in myself, which I'm sure would never have happened if I had not found Bhagwan.

Living on the ranch has been a completely different experience. Bhagwan seems to be more like a friend than my spiritual master, he seems to be more available than in Poona and I love it around festival time because we get to sit with him in the mornings and at darshan in the evening. It's like being on an incredible adventure with Bhagwan, an adventure, which you don't know what is going to happen, but you know deep down that what ever is happening it is perfect.

Love
Santoshi .
Ma Santoshi