

## **G. The arrival of AIDS**

AIDS, an at that time new and difficult to treat disease, gradually became known from 1980 and would result in millions of fatalities. At that time, Osho's large commune, Rajneeshpuram, flourished in Oregon, USA. Osho immediately understood the great danger that threatened his sannyasins. One thing was certain: their free sexuality now had to be rigorously curtailed. A physical obstacle had to be raised, so that sannyasins quickly became aware of the deadly dangers that they faced. In March 1984, Osho is the first person to recommend AIDS precautions: celibacy, monogamy, or using condoms, rubber gloves, washing after sex, no oral or anal sex. He advises testing as well as treatment for those who are HIV positive, and warns about the spread of AIDS worldwide.

### **1. Holy indignation.**

Osho maintains a period of public silence from mid-March 1981 until the end of October 1984 when he at first addresses small groups of sannyasins at his residence. After the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual World Celebration in July 1985 he again starts giving public discourses. In these, in terms clearer and more critical than ever before, Osho holds the organized world religions accountable for the fact that natural human sexual energy had become so disordered, so perverted. He speaks with a kind of 'holy indignation', reminiscent of the Bible story already mentioned in the Introduction to this article, which tells how Jesus drove out the cattle traders and the money changers from the temple in Jerusalem.

Osho lays a verbal whip, as it were, on those who have been disturbing the natural functioning of man for centuries, which has led to such great derailments. This whip applies both to the clergy of all religions and to all politicians. According to Osho, preaching celibacy is the cause of a much broader problem: the outspoken negative attitude of Christianity in particular – and thus of the entire Western culture through the ages – regarding physicality, enjoyment of life and sex. It is this attitude that has led to the segregation of men and women in various segments of every society.

### **2. 'The mafia of the soul.'**

Osho – who thus characterizes priests and politicians as 'the mafia of the soul' – designates the covenant between spirituality and politics as the body responsible for the emergence of such issues as homosexuality, paedophilia, pornography and bestiality. Osho states that 'deviations from the mainstream' arose from the moment that organized religions in particular became socially dominant. They prescribed a certain way of life, without the slightest understanding of human nature, without even the least psychological insight. Once again, as stated earlier, it is hard to resist comparing Osho's behaviour with how Jesus behaved. In 'holy wrath' Jesus likened the men of the law of that time (the Pharisees) to 'whitewashed tombs' and 'a brood of vipers', characterizations that are at least as powerful as Osho's 'mafia of the soul'.

According to Osho, that glorification and imposition of a certain way of life continues up to the present day. He states that organized religions are the biggest disaster that humanity has encountered, a path that leads to planetary suicide. It has created unnatural institutions: celibacy on the one hand, marriage on the other. These religions have praised marriage as the highest good ('made in heaven'), but Osho looks at the sorry state of married couples and the high rate of divorce. He sees them as people living in hell. The situation is really bad, he goes on to say:

if he criticizes marriage, the people who live in that hell get annoyed. They refuse openly to admit it.

Osho insists that the anthropomorphic notion of 'God' is the main cause of all perversions. If perversions are to be banned, then God must first be declared dead. Only with the death of God will the organized (monotheistic) religions disappear and there will come a time when man will live in freedom, in accordance with his nature.

### **3. The medical world.**

Osho says he was the first in the world to point out the danger of AIDS and to make it public. Society, politicians... they all kept it hidden. Medical science, too, which does its best to discover treatment for AIDS with new drugs, does not recognize that celibacy is the root cause of the phenomenon of homosexuality and, in its wake, of AIDS.

Medical science itself has also been programmed: for a long time, doctors linked masturbation with the development of all sorts of diseases, a view that upset many young children as they sought a sexual outlet in masturbation. For that reason, for centuries children lived in fear, while it is clear that masturbation is not something to be prevented. And, says Osho, especially now that the contraceptive pill is available, why not allow sex between growing children? And what is that nonsense to demand that a girl remains a virgin until her marriage? Let boys and girls experiment fully in their puberty, declares Osho. It is a great blessing that 'the pill' was invented. And, he continues, do not be so categorically against drugs like marijuana.

### **4. The emergence of AIDS.**

Osho blames the onset of AIDS on homosexuality, that in turn resulted from ages of conditioning involving social anti-sexual attitudes and religious celibacy. Laws exist in different countries that punish homosexuality. But homosexuality is not the real root cause; that is celibacy. But no one dares to condemn sexual abstinence, nobody wants religions to turn against them. But religions that propagate celibacy should be banned, Osho says.

### **5. A perversion.**

Osho continues to call homosexuality a perversion. It goes against nature. Nature wants to produce and *that* does not accord with homosexuality. At a certain point, this leads to diseases such as AIDS and a loss of resistance to infections. As Osho declares:

*My own explanation is that two men making love means that the two similar energies mixing with each other have no tension. A certain tension is needed for life. Slowly, slowly they lose all the tension needed for life, and death becomes absolutely necessary. That is what AIDS is.*

Osho continues:

*Lesbians are still free... but they should not be happy. It is better, seeing what has happened to homosexuals, that they get out of lesbianism. It may take a few years more for lesbianism to create its own disease – and that disease will be far more dangerous than AIDS, because two negative energies mixing with each other are bound to create a far more deadly disease than two positive energies meeting with each other. Negativity is part of death. Positivity is part of life. A man and a woman making love bring a balance between negativity and positivity,*

*between life and death, so that the contradiction between life and death disappears and they become complementaries. It is healthy.*

## **6. On to Rome.**

*You feel hurt by my words?*

Osho continues in strong terms:

*If you feel hurt, book a ticket to Rome. Hit as hard as you can at the Pope: 'You are not the representative of God, you are the representative of the homosexuals, particularly the people who have reached the point where homosexuality has created AIDS.' The name of the Vatican should be changed: 'AIDS Camp' seems to be perfectly good. And I don't want the Pope to be demoted. He should remain the superintendent of the AIDS Camp.*

## **7. The HIV virus and Osho's measures.**

Osho was the first (without this being recognized by science) who realized that two-thirds of humanity could die from AIDS, and that far-reaching measures were needed. He understood that the emergence of this virus was a deadly threat, especially for his sannyasins. After all, in his communes, particularly in Rajneeshpuram, there was an unprejudiced attitude towards sex, including homosexuality. Sexual attraction between individuals was, with mutual consent, easily expressed physically.

Osho therefore issued extremely strict rules for sexual intercourse. These included a ban on kissing, the strict use of condoms and plastic gloves. Transmission of the virus was possible in many ways, such as through perspiration, saliva, sperm and mother's milk, said Osho. These hygienic measures, which appeared unnecessary and even laughable to the outside world at the time, ensured, however, that the number of HIV infections in the sannyas world remained extremely low. If Osho had not emphasized the adoption of these far-reaching measures to protect his sannyasins, many sannyasins would undoubtedly have contracted AIDS.

An AIDS test was also compulsory in order to live in communes and participate in group activities. When he heard that AIDS patients were admitted 'out of compassion' in some groups in The Netherlands, his reaction was clear:

*And people, even though they are intelligent, behave very unintelligently. One of my sannyasins and therapists, Veeresh, allows people suffering from AIDS into his groups. Just now I have been told that he tells people, 'Shree Rajneesh teaches compassion, so you all be compassionate to this fellow. Hug him, kiss him, love him.' Now, this is a great interpretation of compassion! He should have told the man who is suffering from AIDS, 'Shree Rajneesh teaches compassion. Now, it is your compassion not to touch people. Tell them that you are suffering from AIDS and you don't want to spread it.' Rather than telling him that, he is telling other group participants to hug him, and they are hugging him. That fellow may spread AIDS to the whole group. And because he is respected there, naturally he will feel very good.*

## **8. Segregation of AIDS patients.**

Osho predicts that AIDS will spread around the world like a forest fire. He excludes people with AIDS from Rajneeshpuram. Everyone must undergo an AIDS test. Those with AIDS

should be set apart in their own residential communities, in remote locations, with their own economy, where doctors and nurses are also present, also infected with AIDS. Osho says this out of compassion, because according to him, only in this way will mankind be saved.

In Texas, according to Osho, there is a law against homosexuality that prescribes years of imprisonment. No, he says, it is better to prevent them from spreading all sorts of dangerous viruses after release. Assign them separate locations. There are deserts, uninhabited islands. Divide the world into hetero and homo, without mutual communication. Only in this way can the spread of AIDS be curbed.

And Osho continues by stating that he not only answers the questioner, but addresses the whole world. It is the duty of gays to declare that they want their own communes as homosexuals. If not, then Osho's prophecy indicates that two-thirds of humanity will die of AIDS. How many gays there are, how many AIDS patients, is unknown. Only rich countries have statistics, poor countries do not. And few will admit that they are gay. Maybe politicians can be prevented from using nuclear weapons, but what to do to prevent AIDS?

## **9. Underground.**

The word gay has become infected and homosexuals are going underground. Previously they had their own restaurants, clubs and other institutions. The names have changed, but all kinds of influential people are themselves gay: teachers, board members, professors, priests and politicians, they all have power and access to beautiful boys. If I had the choice, Osho says, I would rather give people poison than such an ugly disease as AIDS. Here in Rajneeshpuram, he says, we are going to create an institution to check AIDS test certificates, whether they are authentic and not falsified. Osho wants his people not only to be protected against nuclear bombs, but also against disasters such as AIDS.

Osho was not alone, however, with his remarks about physical segregation of AIDS patients. In several countries, such as in Cuba and Sweden, opinions were also voiced about the need to isolate AIDS patients in this way.

## **10. Be totally absorbed in being perverted.**

Osho wants a gay person to fully accept his homosexuality, as shown in the relevant passages cited earlier in this article. As also mentioned earlier, Osho explains repeatedly that he uses the word 'perversity' in a neutral sense, as 'deviating from the mainstream', which in nature is focussed on procreation. Against this background, the following observations must be cited:

*And you ask: since being with a man I like and trust, I have felt silence and happiness.*

That's good, says Osho:

*... just go to a homosexual commune, feel happy and feel silence. You say: 'But it is difficult to accept myself totally joyfully.' Why should you not accept? If you sow the seeds, you should accept the flowers, too. If you accept homosexuality joyfully, and you feel happy with men and you trust men and like them, then there is no need to feel any guilt. (...)*

Osho continues by saying that the questioner may only have two years to live:

*But you are not feeling totally joyful – feel totally condemned. I am preaching totality; it does not matter what is total. Feel totally condemned, feel totally corrupted, feel totally perverted and rejoice with all the perverts.*

## **11. The alternative: meditate!**

Osho points out once again the alternative mentioned before:

*Or you change yourself. I know changing is difficult. Once you have become accustomed to a certain sexual behaviour it becomes very difficult to change that behaviour. Ten or twelve years are enough to make it your second nature, unless you are courageous enough, and can discipline yourself and drop that perversion and be natural. It is possible, but you will need guts for it. (...)*

*By the way, you will be surprised to know that the words medicine and meditation both come from the same root, which means that which gives you health. Medicine is the physical way, meditation is the spiritual way. The spiritual is certainly higher, stronger.*

Osho therefore urges his homosexual sannyasins to investigate – through meditation – the heterosexual path more deeply and to work seriously on a meditative attitude to life. Meditation, he says, is not an activity to sit down for an hour regularly, but it is an activity that must be practised constantly, 24 hours a day. It is not a non-committal business. Meditate more, so that the possibility may arise that Enlightenment manifests itself. The way to Enlightenment is simply easiest way through heterosexuality, as described earlier in this article. But it is ultimately about going beyond all sex, transcendence of sex, whether it comes through homosexuality or heterosexuality.