

*testifying to
seven days Encounter grouping)
he looks up
little as a child.*

This will be your new name . . . and the new name is a new birth. It is the beginning of life again on a different plane, in a totally separate reality. Life is multi-dimensional, and we live only on one plane, the mundane. That's why life becomes tedious, a boredom, because sooner or later one finds that it is just all senseless, it makes no sense. Even existence seems to be meaningless, because meaning does not exist on the plane of the mundane; meaning exists on another plane, the sacred.

*He nods,
breathes deep
and loverlike.*

You can call it anything — the holy, the sacred, the divine, the religious. Meaning is a phenomenon of a totally different dimension. You cannot find it in the mundane. It is not in the marketplace: you cannot purchase it, you cannot sell it; it is not a commodity. You cannot create it, because all that you can create will be false.

One has to become receptive. One has to be open in a totally new way from what one has been before. One has to open a window that one has never opened. Maybe one has not even thought that there is a window; one has not become aware of the fact. Sannyas is an effort to open another window.

The ordinary life is always a life of motivation. The life of a sannyasin is a life which is not one of motivation — it is festive. And that is the name of that dimension: the festive dimension. One dances because one enjoys dancing. There is no profit in it, there is no purpose in it, there is no motivation beyond it.

The life of a sannyasin is the life of play — what in the East we



So finally you have arrived! Close your eyes and just listen to the sounds. If something starts happening in the body, allow it. If laughter comes laughter; if crying comes, crying . . . anything.

*Jan, twenty years a
psychiatrist in Holland,
and an author,
dissolves into laughter
that verges on the brink of weeping
but turns about
and becomes silence instead.*

Come . . . come close to me. Drop all fear and come close to me.

*White-haired
(his stubbled face*

HALLELUJAH!

call 'leela' — not of work. In the ordinary life even play becomes work. To the sannyasin the work becomes play. He simply plays with so many things. He is a child on the seabeach running hither and thither, collecting seashells and coloured stones, as if he has found a treasure. He is utterly lost in the moment. He has forgotten the whole world.

The sannyasin lives in a life of play — all is play for him. He is not serious; sincere, certainly, but not serious. He is festive. He enjoys each opportunity that comes his way, lives it in its totality . . . not thinking of any profit, not thinking of gaining anything out of it. Not that he does not gain — only *he* gains, but he is not concerned with that. His gain is great, but that is a natural by-product; it happens of its own accord.

So from this moment think of life as a play and then it will have meaning.

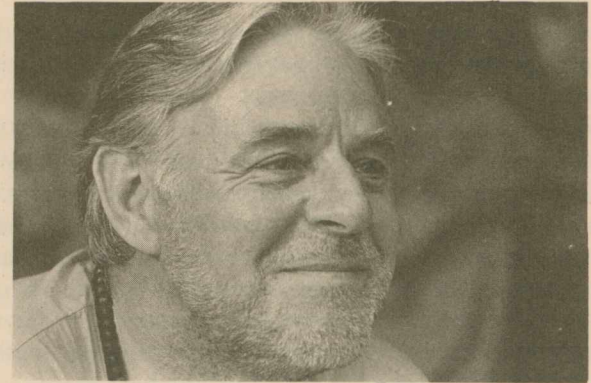
*He's beaming broadly
as if he's going
to burst with joy.*

Think of life as a holiday, a rest, a play, a drama, but don't think in terms of profit, motive, gaining, reaching somewhere, finding something. There is nothing to be found, there is nothing that can be reached — we are already there. From the very beginning we are that which we are going to become, so there is no need to worry about it. Relax and enjoy.

This will be your new name: Swami Deva Amrito.

Deva means divine, amrito means immortality: the source of immortality, the juice of immortality, nectar, elixir. The secret is in being festive . . . and suddenly nectar starts showering on you, it pours down in torrents. Life becomes a multi-splendoured phenomenon. Just forget the ideas that have been given from the world and become a child again.

Jesus says 'Unless you are a child, you will not enter into my kingdom of god.' And to be a child is to be a sannyasin — to be a



child again so that you can destroy all that has been forced upon you by the society. Your freedom has been crippled, you have been surrounded by walls upon walls from everywhere. Destroy all those walls, jump out of them, be a child again and start playing with life. And to be playful is to be prayerful. Prayer is the highest form of play, and if you understand it, immediately a new meaning to prayer arises. It is the highest form of play — playing with existence. Somebody is praying, talking to the sky. Mm? Just listen to Jesus calling god 'Abba.' There is no god like a person there, but see the immense play of Jesus calling existence 'Abba', relating to it, communicating with it.

To an outsider it is nonsense, it is neurotic. Psychologists say that, that Jesus is neurotic, because with whom is he talking? This is a monologue and he thinks this is a dialogue. There is nobody there! Jesus also knows that there is nobody there but the sheer joy of calling 'Abba' to existence . . .

*Amrito's hands clap
together once
and silently.
He nods his head
hanging, drunk,
on every word.*

. . . the sheer joy of relating to our own original source. It is a playful activity.

Jesus is not worried about whether god is there or not. God is not the point — he is enjoying *praying*. There is no other motive in it. The motivated person will think 'If there is somebody, then there is meaning in praying. If there is nobody, why are you praying? For what purpose?' He cannot understand that prayer can be its own purpose. See the tears flowing from Jesus' eyes and the joy that's there on his face, and the aura of delight. You are thinking of god and you are not seeing the joy. That is the reality, and it is created by the prayer. God is not the point at all. The point is to be prayerful, to be playful.

So think in terms of play, prayer, and don't think in terms of getting anywhere, reaching anywhere, attaining something. All that is nonsense. We are already there. We have never for a single moment been anywhere else, so that is not the point. *We are* in paradise. Adam has never been expelled; he has just fallen asleep because he has eaten from the tree of knowledge. Knowledge makes people serious. He is no more a child — that is the whole meaning of the parable — he has become mature, adult.

We say to people 'Don't be childish'; in fact we should be saying 'Don't be adultish.' Adam has become an adult and lost the joy of a child, the innocence of a child. Now he is hiding his nakedness; he has become cunning and clever and calculating. He has not been expelled. God cannot expel you, because there is nowhere else to expel you to. It is all his existence, it is *all* paradise. But if you become too cunning you have expelled yourself; you live in it and yet you have forgotten where you are. Become a child and suddenly one remembers; suddenly eyes open and the wonder, all the wonder is there, and paradise is there.

So let sannyas be the beginning of a new dimension, a rebirth.
How long will you be here?

AMRITO: As long as you wish.

Good. Be here.

AMRITO: I wrote a little note about the complexity of my situation. My luggage is in London and I have not said goodbye to anyone in Holland — my mother and everybody. But I would like to stay here, forever.

It's all very complex now.

HALLELUJAH!

We will make it simple. Nothing is complex. If you want to stay, it will happen. Nothing is a problem!





Amrito, our Dutch psychiatrist who took sannyas tonight, was the subject of an interview with Savita: Swami Deva Amrito used to be Jan Foudraine, author of a highly successful shrink's eye-view of the inhumanities heaped upon mental patients. Written in the first person, it was an explosive best-seller in the mid-seventies and came to illustrate what Amrito was to discover for himself: much of the 'failure of success' that Bhagwan so often talks about. Writing in the 'I' form was very spontaneous, Amrito told me. . .

AMRITO: It was as if suddenly a door had opened and I didn't have the burden any more of the academic thesis. This suddenly gave me a tremendous liberation, to simply say *I*: I will come into your room and I'll tell you a story, you laymen — because I had hoped to reach a few educated laymen too, apart from the nursing, social-work, psychiatrist kind of field. I thought maybe five thousand copies sold would be very nice. The thing is that by this style of writing I reached practically every educated layman in Holland! Three hundred thousand!

He was born in Amsterdam in 1929 of well-off atheist parents, raised and schooled in an easy rural atmosphere near Haarlem, and at seventeen went to Leiden University to study medicine and begin a life-long side career singing, acting and song-writing.

Two years in the psychiatric department of his army unit and he fell in love with the profession. He specialized at Leiden University Clinic and, since he avoided neurology, found himself concentrating on psychotherapeutic styles of treatment. He plumped for psychoanalysis.

Near Washington DC where he went for training, he found the mecca of psychoanalytic psychiatry, Chestnut Lodge, where Frieda Fromm-Reichmann and others were doing

HALLELUJAH!

innovative work with severely disturbed schizophrenics. But although this work opened out new vistas for psychiatric diagnosis and treatment, the Dutch professionals were determinedly blinkered to the implications of the American venture. Amrito, who returned to bring them the message, became angry at their mulish grip on the status quo.

Not Made Of Wood burst from him in an effort to underline the anti-psychiatric position constructively from within the profession. An intelligent appeal from the heart, it was a 'killing success'.

AMRITO: It was as if I had slapped my fist on the table for the first time and the whole building came tumbling down!

Meanwhile he had become Chief Clinical Director of Veluweland Psychotherapeutic Centre and had a flourishing private practice. But the book had forced him into a 'Lone Luther, here-I-stand - and-I-can't-say-anything-else' sort of position, of its publication and translation. By the time he found Bhagwan he had already lost his interest in psychoanalytic and psychiatric literature.

AMRITO: Actually I had become quite aware that I didn't know what a psychiatrist or a psychoanalyst was any more. And I was at that time already in deep confusion because of personal problems which had partly been mobilized by this killing success. The success and the fear of success was very great. I'd had an anxiety spiral after the first edition of the book — and there were *thirty* editions! So I became more and more anxious. And in a way apologetic. You see, there was a lot of hostility coming back to me from the establishment: jealousy, envy, tremendous rage. There was of course alienation in

terms of publicity: I did many interviews on television, radio and gave lectures in Germany, Belgium, Holland — thousands of people, day after day. I swore never to write again. (emphatically) And I did not.

As recently as a year ago, searching for some literature on TM in an Amsterdam bookstore, he came across Bhagwan.

AMRITO: I simply picked up a book; it was *And the Flowers Showered*. I looked at a passage, I was very struck. I took it home with me. I read it and then ran back the next day to buy two more books. And I think that within a month I had bought twenty-five; I bought every book of his that was in the store, and ordered that every new book that arrived should also be delivered!

Amrito extends his arms to indicate a bookshelf-full and flashes me a triumphant smile.

AMRITO: I started to hoard in a *cra-azy* kind of way! I had to have the whole row in front of me! Of course you need not even read a whole book — you have just to look at one page and that is enough — but I hoarded!

It had never happened to me before. From that moment on I didn't read anything else any more. I lost my interest in television, newspapers and had already lost interest in the psychoanalytic kind of literature. I also bought tape recordings and listened to them in my apartment or when I was riding in the train. I listened continuously. I was really haunted.

He wanted to come to Poona but the pull towards more security in his work, which in the end had a self-defeating effect, was stronger. In trying

to hold onto what he had he became more and more tense and unwell. Isolated in his position as patients' messiah — a sort of Ronald Laing of Holland — he found it almost impossible to seek assistance for himself. Torn between the spiritual path in Poona and the more familiar forms of help, he was eventually persuaded to undergo a course of group psychodrama therapy in Boston, USA.

It was intense work but Amrito remained quite unhappy, and in the midst of it, after only four weeks, without warning he jumped on a plane to Poona. Although nobody knew where he had gone, he had contacted the nearest Rajneesh Centre at Harvard university and the Ma there had promised to take care of his hired car and the psychotherapists concerned. But he was terrified; wherever he moved it seemed like a disaster. He arrived in Poona exhausted, reluctant and ready to run off again.

SAVITA: How did the ashram first strike you? Did you go to a discourse?

AMRITO: Yes, yes, yes. And I went to the singing group. I at least listened to that and was very happy. I thought 'Well, this cannot be a bad place where people sing that beautifully' . . . something like that. But there were also waves of nausea, waves of mistrust. I was very much appalled by the sweet sentimentality, the kind of ethereal hysteria that I felt was floating around at the time. When I saw people prostrate themselves and getting down on their knees there was a furious 'No!' in me about this amount of devotion. So I was about to leave — actually, to admit defeat too, because I also felt quite unworthy.

Even after three weeks he continued to vacillate between feeling negative towards the ashram, hopeless in himself and defeated by the situation.

But he had not yet been to darshan and encountered Bhagwan.

AMRITO: No, I didn't even want to see him. I was frightened to see him and I felt quite unworthy, too, to simply lay my eyes on him. Yes, that was the feeling.

I wrote a short letter to him and got three groups. I went into the Enlightenment Intensive and I left after one sleepless night. I didn't even participate in the group! I felt so sick that I got out of it. I packed my bags again because I thought 'Well, this is it.' And then strangely enough I did ask for darshan and to become a sannyasin — I had brought all kinds of orange clothes!

But to become a sannyasin in terms of a decision that I would make myself was not at all there. It was more that sannyas was taking me somehow. Things happened, really; things which were much more pronounced later.

Beer and cigarettes kept him from passing the darshan-sniffers on two occasions. I got myself out two times! he tells me with a twinkle.

AMRITO: I went to the Centering group and struggled through the whole absurdity of that. There I had a very profound experience, though, looking into the eyes of a woman for an hour. That was really a very profound experience for me — and for her too. A lot of things happened in this looking; I was going through all kinds of festivities and banquets. I looked at *womanhood* in a way; it was almost lit up, X-ray at moments, and the eyes became somehow a totality. This was very important for me. I was deeply shaken after it.

I was on standby for the Encounter group and to my surprise I got a place. And that's where it all . . . (barely facing me, tears in his eyes) it all started happening. First of all I was terrified and I was terrified for quite a long time. At the same time I

was struck from the start by the infinite compassion and love of Teertha (the groupleader). I think he played a very important role. I immediately, instinctively trusted . . . (many tears coming now) And I felt . . . I felt he loved me, yes, very much. There was something going on between us that was of great significance to me; many other group members noticed that too.

During the evening of the first day a very dramatic situation came up. I told him how terrified I was and that I wanted to leave; I announced that to the group too. Not that I actually left, but I said that I felt I had to leave. Teertha then asked me if I would be willing to take a risk, and I agreed. He asked me to lie on the floor and close my eyes. I did that immediately, which really was a sign of this trust, and then he asked people who wanted to be with me in love, whoever loved me at that moment, to sit beside me and show it and caress me. So I was lying there with the whole group around me, loving and caressing.

I opened my eyes and I saw this whole group, brothers, sisters. . . . This was a formidable experience! It was one hundred and eighty degrees from what I had expected, because I had prepared for the worst (imitating now) 'I surrender! Look! Kill me off right now!' Or something like pillows on my face and that sort of thing (he is crying and laughing at once).

This was an important experience, but at the same time it was frightening for me because it was another lasso that Teertha had thrown. I felt irresistibly pulled towards a path. . . .

A lot of things happened in those days, but on the third day, the seventh of August, I had a very profound experience in the garden.

I was prepared after a very deep yes-saying the evening before. I was quite surprised by the depth of my yes; actually I had not expected that as I have always been a wishy-washy yes-sayer. In the morning we had some violence and things going on, and we were then asked that during the lunch break we say yes to everything that happened to us. That was one of the tasks.

I drifted to the garden and suddenly the sun was shining and I sat down and was very happy that I could feel the sun on my face after coming out of the cellar, so to speak. And, well, all of a sudden it changed. Everything, everything was *there*. Everything was connected and everything was love! It was an abundance of love! The animals came to me, the flowers started to call me 'Look, this is it. This is what I've been telling you all your life and you did not see that it was right in front of your nose.' There was a total oneness of everything. Love-hate was one, dark-light was one. . . . It was very simple. It was *it*. And I became frightened, very horrified. I wanted to get back out of that experience, but I let go instead and I became part of that universe too. There was no doubt that love is god, god is love . . . (reluctantly spoken, Amrito sighs . . .) the trees, the sky . . . and I was part of it! I was very frightened by the totality of this experience and . . . (a pause then suddenly he is solemn) I don't think any more details are necessary now.

I continued with the group in that state. And that afternoon there was an explosion of love in the group. Every time somebody — a lost sheep — was found, I felt great bliss. My breathing had changed completely: I was breathing autonomously, and it seemed that my voice was *voicing*; I was not speaking any more.

It was out of this same group that the German actress, Eva Renzi, was to create a sensational story for the German popular press, and Amrito was to be implicated.

From his side, though he had felt much sympathy for her, he found her cold and unhelpful, especially in the task the two of them had been given to share out of group hours. After a 'horrifying kind of evening' which included her telling him her life story, in the group the next morning he went ahead and expressed his hurt and anger.

HALLELUJAH!

AMRITO: I had to face the dilemma of whether to be empathetic, understanding, a therapist — I knew this was a very frightened child — or authentic and follow my feelings. Teertha was of course hammering away at that and I gave in for the first time.

But when the group followed suit, Eva threatened to leave, and Amrito, overcome by sadness, tried to persuade her to stay.

More happened in the group. Tying on a boxing glove, he lost a tooth. What a way to lose your image! He revealed to the group how he felt reluctant to present himself to Bhagwan in anything but the most favourable light. So Teertha suggested he try going to darshan just as he was — with a missing tooth and a seven-day stubble!

SAVITA: *How did it actually feel once you came face to face with Bhagwan?*

AMRITO: I felt as if I was coming home. Yes. It was a very strange feeling. Actually, I became frightened, and I told myself to drop the fear, and I closed my eyes and almost immediately started laughing. There was no problem about this laughter — it was such a laughter of recognition. I was coming home, it was quite clear to me. And I was also crying.

He said many things and I simply acknowledged them out of a yes because I had had an experience which was so profound that I could only say yes. What he said was good advice, but for the rest there was a tremendous yes and a recognition in everything he said.

Some other experience in the Encounter group had suddenly opened Amrito to all kinds of ideas about the possibility of reincarnation. Some wave of that familiarity came over him during the darshan. . .

AMRITO: This is very much the feeling that I had — that something had happened that was really of other lives. It was a deep recognition.

I also had a wave of anxiety during Bhagwan's talking and it was clearly of an intensity in keeping with what happened. I looked into eyes and . . . well, I felt very much like a child and totally open, almost with the feeling 'Yes, I know what you're talking about, yes, of course!'

Before and after the darshan, even now by the way, there are many explosions, of flowers and symphonies and . . . Mmm, god is a wild painter (with a flash of eyes) because I've seen it! He is painting continuously. I don't see it any more, but I have . . . brushing away! I was engrossed in this for many days actually. And I am still talking to trees. But you know (matter-of-factly) I already do it programmed in a way . . . in a way, one wants to reach out again for whatever one has experienced but that is totally impossible. That is not how things happen. They come to you; you cannot go to them.

SAVITA: *Have your feelings about the ashram changed?*

AMRITO: Well, as I said, at first I felt more like a repressed bull in a china shop of hysterical love. . . . Of course that has changed completely. As a matter of fact I was the first to get down on my knees and prostrate myself — so to speak, whatever prostrate is — in front of the photo of Bhagwan in the Encounter group. So there you see the enormous change that happened. The love and the talent of the therapists in these groups . . . I just have to cry (suddenly crying) because I sense the love and the dedication of the therapists.

I find the gardens, the nature here, beautiful in the ashram. The lectures I am of course (pausing for emphasis) *overwhelmed* by really. It is too much at times for me. I sit mostly on the periphery

of the auditorium with the plants, with flowers. That's what I like.

The building of an ashram, making a city, is an unbelievable idea! At the same time it seems quite natural. I'm very frightened by the revolution that's going on. I think this is a revolution — this is far more than an inner revolution — this is *revolution!* I'm frightened by it too because this is a global affair. This is not at all just getting a few sannyasins around here and creating a field, a Buddhafield. It's clear to me that this is a revolution of every importance.

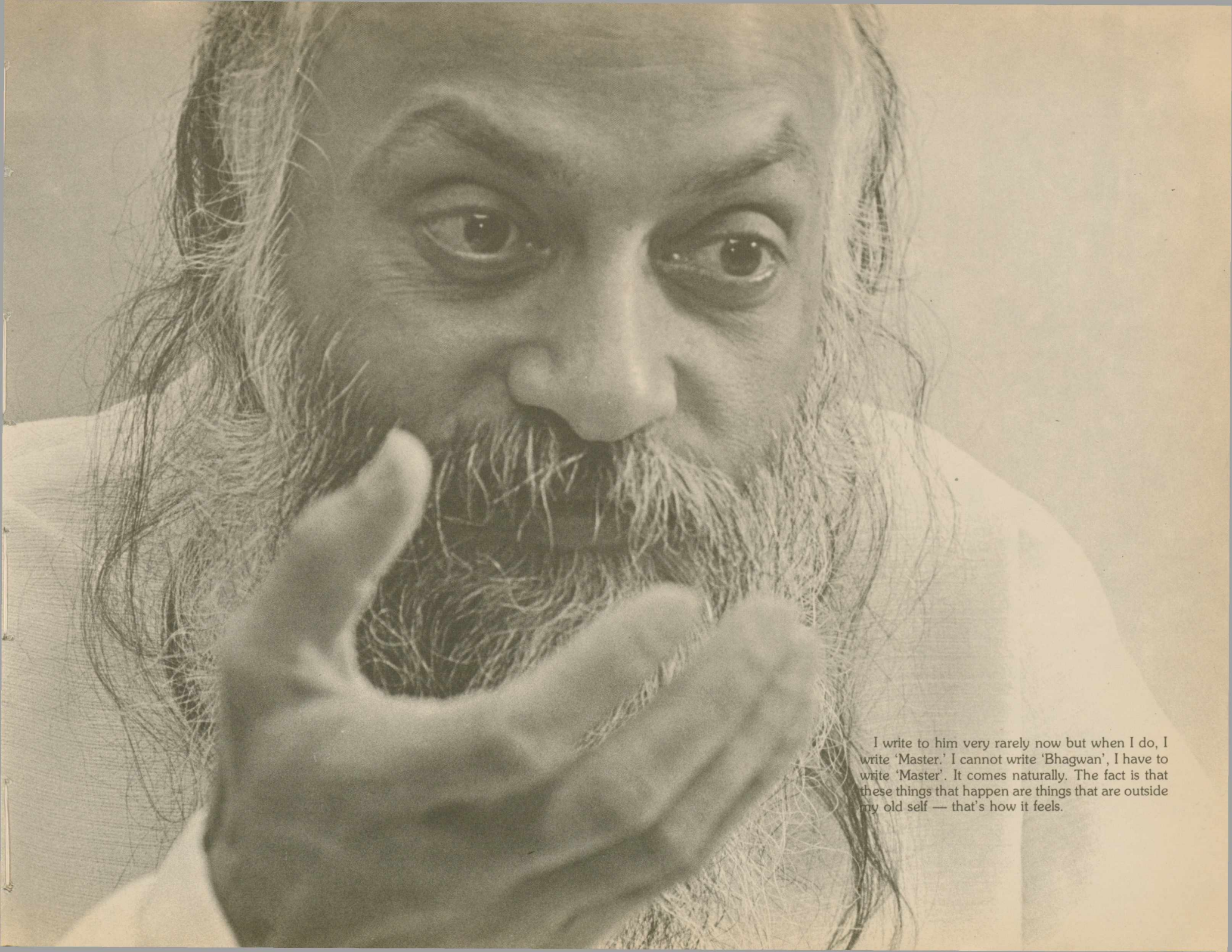
SAVITA: *How do you find that frightening?*

AMRITO: Hell, if a master gives this message and is able to get so many people, amongst the most talented — and many more will come — there must come a moment when the status quo would like to stem the tide. His provocations, the outright attacks on the politicians, priests, the existing situation, are formidable. And though it's right and we *are* rapidly destroying this world, still I'm frightened by the forces of resistance.

Put it this way, yes: I *know* the forces of resistance; I have once, in my small way, written a book simply making an appeal for people to treat other people a bit more humanely, trying to humanize psychiatry. 'If you want to know how things really are, just try to change them!' is a saying of Kurt Lewin.

Well, I guess I am both frightened and thrilled just to see the revolutionary significance of what's going on here. It's true its a *dizzying* transformation (articulating slowly and precisely) . . . a lightning-speed transformation process that I'm involved in now.

When I feel myself sitting on the periphery of the auditorium (at morning discourse) and turning around when Bhagwan's car passes, when our eyes meet, I am *thrilled* like a child, I am just thrilled.



I write to him very rarely now but when I do, I write 'Master.' I cannot write 'Bhagwan', I have to write 'Master'. It comes naturally. The fact is that these things that happen are things that are outside my old self — that's how it feels.