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APPENDIX A

THE GURU MAHARA JI GROUP: An experiential description: the  
journey to God<sup>1</sup>

Guru Maharaji Ji  
You are my only light  
You gave me direction  
The way is clear and bright  
And I love you, I love you  
I love you, my Lord.  
The Anand Band

They all have that same exact smile. One that literally stretches from ear to ear. And that enlightened twinkle in the eye, that too is rubber stamp identical. One sits at the feet of the "Mahatma" smiling the GMJ(Guru Mahara Ji) smile. Beaming at you, trying to draw you in with that incredible smile which says to you, "if you can see every single one of my teeth, then my love is real."

The West first became aware of GMJ via a small article in Newsweek magazine entitled the "Lord of the Universe". It was an interview with a thirteen year old boy who claimed in response to the question, "are you God?" that: "No, I am not God, I am greater than God. I am the path to God." The path is greater than the goal!

America had already been visited by Indian gurus, but this was the first Guru to utilize the "kid gimmick". We had been presented with a wide selection of wise old men gurus (GMJ inherited the leadership from his father who had a small following in India when he died, in 1966. GMJ took over at the tender age of eight). But now the truth would come out of the "mouths of babes". This was a fascinating technique that had already netted child evangelist, Marjoe Gortner, millions of dollars during his formative years (according to Marjoe, his parents kept it all).

The Newsweek story piqued the curiosity of many. They wanted to see this Guru who claimed to have six million followers world wide. But, it wasn't until GMJ visited Toronto that things started happening in the West. A contingent of middle-class drug using young people made the

<sup>1</sup>This data was gathered in a period ranging from 1973-1975. Some changes in the organization have occurred since then.

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Pilgrimage in the hopes of seeing the Lord. They were very sincere. Innocence and earnest longing were their tunes. Innocent faith in stories they had heard and intense longing for something that they felt they couldn't find in their home towns.

Soon GMJ returned to India leaving behind several hundred new followers and a few of his closest disciples, his Mahatmas. According to the GMJ organization, GMJ had some 2000 Mahatmas who are the only beings (except for GMJ himself and his immediate family) who can transmit the direct experience of God (called Knowledge) which GMJ offers his followers.

It wasn't long before Mahatmas visited the large cities. At the State University of New York at Buffalo, the publicity was professionally done by a few advance men and the largest lecture hall on the University campus was packed. Some 600 people came out of curiosity or in the hope that this was the "real thing". Over there sat the Kundalini yoga people, followers of Yogi Bajan; over there were some transcendental meditators, followers of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi. Over there was a group of...but they were all members of the "counter-culture". Almost all the men had long hair and beards, and there was little makeup on the women. Almost every one in the room had at one time or another listened to Guru Acid, LSD-25.

While the hall was filling up, the disciples set the stage (they were still a bit disorganized). A chair was covered with a white sheet and a small framed eight-by-ten glossy of GMJ was placed on this "throne", which was then placed on top of a table which had also been covered by a sheet of cloth. On either side of the throne were large bouquets of fresh-cut flowers. Off to the side was another chair also covered with cloth but this one was on the floor. In walked a few more

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disciples, and the smiles started pouring out; the session was about to begin. They brought out a guitar and they started singing a song with one verse:

The Lord of the Universe has come to us today.  
He's come to show us love.  
He's come to show us light.  
He's come to show us the way, back to our father.  
Open up your heart to the universe of love  
And He will fill you up.  
(repeat ad infinitum)

The effect was hypnotic. Six hundred people singing in unison the same melodic song over and over again, while before us a half dozen disciples beamed an ocean of instant love over to us...it made you stop and think...the feeling of brotherhood...so strong...so intense...maybe...just maybe ...why it's just like summer camp, every morning after breakfast you would sing songs. But what if you never had the joyful experience of a group sing? Could you attribute the powerful feelings to some mystical prescence?

When the singing is over the satsang starts. Satsang is one of the holiest things you can do. In English Sat means Truth and Sang means Company; so satsang is "company of truth". It is when premies (literally "lovers" of GMJ who have received the knowledge he gives) get together to tell each other or non-premies their innermost thoughts and feelings, completely without guile. A truthful and open relationship of sincere honesty and intimacy in the context of the TRUE knowledge of GOD. In other words, prosyletization. Satsang is one of the requirements of membership in the movement. Although there is no punishment, it is made abundantly clear that one must "give Satsang, do service and meditate", if one is to fulfill his side of the bargain and thus gain "true realization of this knowledge."

The essence of the satsangs heard that night was simply the life stories and the journeys that each "santsinger" had on his way to

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knowledge. They each started with the disclaimer, "I thought that this must be some kind of joke"--or--"I never believed in religion and thought this was just another..." or--"I just went out of curiosity and to keep my friend company, everybody considers me a level headed guy not prone to..." etc. Then they would work around to the incredible experiences they had, especially the enlightening experience of the knowledge, which is "oh, so wonderful that it just can't be described in words to those that haven't experienced it..." At this point all the premies simultaneously laugh hysterically, each laughing the same laugh of genuine 100% enlightenment and love.

Eventually, the Mahatma enters. He is usually an elderly wizened man with a shaved head and flowing pink Indian robes. There is a hush. As he approaches the stage he removes his sandals, proceeds directly to the altar, and prostrates himself on the floor before the picture of his guru. He remains prone for what seems to be a long time (actually about 10 to 15 seconds) and when he stands he humbly gestures for the proceedings to continue as if he hadn't come in at all. He sits in the empty chair/throne off to the side of the altar. The disciple continues, but everybody looks at the Mahatma. What kind of man is he? Is he honest? Is he enlightened? Does he have special powers? Is he sincere?

After another long wait he starts to speak (there is never any rush in the Guru business, if you wish to receive knowledge you must learn the art of patience). The content of his sermon is remarkably similar to what the other premies said. There are fables and analogies sprinkled throughout; in essence it's another testimonial. But, there is a difference. This isn't some kid. He is a wise and aged sage with what seems to be a genuine twinkle in his eye, an air of the superior man who is no longer searching, for he has found complete and total bliss in service at the lotus feet of his guru. (He has no need to

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smile the smile of total and complete bliss; he can frown, get angry at a questioner, pick his nose or even beat someone up! A pie was thrown in GMJ's face by a reporter. The next day the young reporter had his head beaten in with a tire iron. He managed to stay alive after a long hospital stay. The two premises who committed this act of "unselfish love" disappeared. One was reported to be a Mahatma, one of the "holiest of the holy".) He has an air of complete self-confidence born out of the true experience of enlightenment. And his accent! It unmistakably marks him as a man who comes from the mystical land of gurus, fakirs, yogis and assorted other holy men with strange secrets and powers. Either the Mahatma is truly sincere or he is an extraordinary actor with incredible devotion to his art. He eats no meat. He lives alone, traveling from city to city talking and running knowledge sessions (in which the knowledge is transmitted). He receives no salary...or does he?

When his sermon is done he announces that knowledge will be given to those that want it, the next morning at such and such a place.

"Now you see it, now you don't"

The average American is somewhat sophisticated, he's been around; if not in fact then vicariously through television. It would seem strange, indeed, if after hearing a few testimonials he would drop everything and run to sit at the lotus feet of the perfect master. I mean, "What's the angle?"..."When do we get to the pitch for the money?"..."I hear the guru rides a Rolls, and is fast becoming a multi-millionaire", etc. So we have the first basic "fact" which on close analysis may not be very factual after all.

1. The Knowledge is free. One of the constant themes of the satsang is that if GMJ is who he claims to be then money can be of no significance to him. In addition, the Lord has taken on human form in order to disseminate this knowledge, and He therefore asks for no compensation

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for this "gift of gifts". Indeed, there are no outright demands for money, and it is entirely possible for an individual to receive knowledge without paying a single cent. A few have done just this. Yet, the pressure for "donations" or "gifts to our Lord, who has given us the greatest gift of all" starts before the knowledge session and intensifies to such a point that many premies (if not most) give all their worldly possessions to GMJ. Several years ago every premie was sent a pledge that they were supposed to (they didn't have to) fill out, promising to send one dollar a day to GMJ. The pledge was to be filled out in triplicate!!! Mahatmas are known to give harangues which demand greater devotion to the Lord in the form of gifts, service, meditation, and satsang; claiming that those that do not give their all are not fulfilling their part of the bargain, and are therefore, the one to blame for the failure of the knowledge to deliver the promised enlightenment. I have yet to speak to a premie of more than a few weeks who has not given a significant amount of cash or valuable property. Once you're in the organization more pressure is put on. At no time is it explicitly demanded ("for His love is freely given") but it is the rare premie that resists the not-so-subtle coercion. This leads to the second "fact".

2. There is no need for FAITH. Most Westerners are wary of the faith-healers; we have seen the distortions that unbounded conviction can yield. The observer can easily write off the GMJ movement as, "Just another one of those fanatic groups". Once again, as there is no need of your money, "we do not want faith". Try it, you'll like it. You can walk in as skeptical as you wish, and still you must experience enlightenment for this knowledge is incontrovertible. That's an incredible statement. You need pay no money, and you need have no faith and still you can have this experience they're talking about, just

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by walking in and taking it!!! Amazing!

Alas, the mystery dissipates as soon as one actually attempts to receive this knowledge. To enter the knowledge session you must declare your undying faith in one of several different ways. One way is to tell the Mahatma (when he asks, "Who is Guru Maharaj Ji?") that GMJ is the Lord of the Universe. If he believes that your answer was ingenuous, you may receive knowledge. Another way is to claim (when asked, "How many times have you gone to satsang, listened to a Mahatma, or read one of our magazines?") that you are very involved in the movement already. That is: you read all the publications; you attend satsang nightly; you've been doing "service" regularly for two months, etc. If someone at the Ashram in which the knowledge session is being held can verify these commitments then you may receive Knowledge. The third way one can gain entrance to a Knowledge session is to simply be on the verge of hysteria whenever the Mahatma speaks to you. Not only will you get in, you will probably be the first of those present to receive Knowledge. In short, if one cannot demonstrate either faith or a great commitment (and can you imagine someone who has no faith, or belief in the validity of GMJ's divinity making a great commitment?) one cannot receive this Knowledge. One question which had a great deal of popularity was, "Would you cut off your arm for GM?" Of course, an affirmative response was necessary for one to receive Knowledge!!

"BLIND FAITH UNNECESSARY"

This knowledge..."does not involve blind faith in any philosophy or theory. It is a matter of seeing and only then believing" (a recent handbill, emphasis theirs)

3. The intensity of the Experience.

...causes the disciple to feel unmistakably within himself that very fountain of peace of which Christ, Krishna, and Buddha spoke... experience a blinding light...not a mild elevation of mood or clarity but the direct and repeatable experience of divinity, transcending time and space. Page 10 Who is Guru Maharaj Ji (WIGMJ, Cameron, 1973).

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He proves to us that we can experience infinity without bodies. He shows us how the "goal beyond all goals"--realization of God--can be reached by looking within. His Knowledge is the ultimate understanding of the source of all life. Page 17 WIGMJ

Knowledge...is the direct experience of God, or eternal energy, that all religions talk about. It establishes beyond a doubt the intrinsic unity between all living things. Page 18 WIGMJ

The descriptions of this Knowledge go on and on. Satsang often involves seeing who can use the most superlatives in attempting to describe this knowledge which, "can't even begin to be described in words". Over and over the ineffable is painstakingly limned for the seeker in an attempt to whet his appetite for that experience which can, without any faith or commitment, be obtained free of charge. Yet, the experience of Knowledge very, very rarely (and only then in those people who were on the verge of hysterics before they went in) comes close to being even as mundane as "thrilling". After a premie has described the wonders of Knowledge, if one stops to ask the premie to describe his personal experience when he received Knowledge, then one receives answers like: "I was very disappointed" or "It was far out, but nothing very special" or "I saw a very bright light, but I wasn't impressed". The blinding light "brighter than a million suns" turns out to be hardly any better than a flashlight, by the premies own reports! It is then rationalized as follows: "the knowledge is only the seed which GMJ plants. It is up to us, through hard work, satsang, meditation, and service to make this seed grow and bloom". But that's not what you tell the seeker! That's not what you were told when you were a seeker. And a fourth fact.

4. This Knowledge is spreading so rapidly that soon everybody will be a follower of GMJ. One day there are none, and less than a year later there are some 40,000 American disciples of GMJ (their claim for the number who "received knowledge"). If one Mahatma and ten disciples can convert 300 new disciples in one month and then these disciples go out



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and recruit more...why in one year we can have 100 Mahatmas working with 100 disciples each bringing in a quarter of a million a year and then...soon the world. The logic is based upon the fact that the Knowledge is, indeed, all it's described as being and so, all we must do is reach them, show them. How can they resist? But, what about the fact that each disciple is one of less than three people (out of 15) at their knowledge session who "stayed with" the knowledge?

When the new natural breakfast cereals hit the market, in the first week thousands tried them. In the next few weeks, maybe millions joined them, but General Foods is not foolish enough to build a new factory to manufacture and package this product until they see how many regular customers there are. Before the product came out there already existed a market of several million for a "natural breakfast cereal". Their advertising will "convert" a few, but the first wave of customers probably were there to begin with. Just so, before GMJ came to America there was a market for a boy Indian guru, who could give "direct knowledge of God and the intrinsic oneness of the universe". When the publicity reached them they joined, they weren't converted by the intense incontrovertible experience of "this knowledge". When this market is exhausted the hard work of winning converts begins. There are people out there who will join anything, and others who are on the borderline. Once you reach your market membership will stabilize and the disillusionment may even cause it to decrease.

What is the effect (on the seeker) of these four misrepresentations of the truth? First, who is the seeker?

More often than not the seeker is a young person who has used drugs; in particular LSD.

"Before receiving Knowledge, 62% were using hallucinogens at least

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once per month." Page 69 WIGM

This figure is taken from a survey by the GMJ organization. It was a random sample of new premies (who had stayed with the Knowledge). Hallucinogen use of once per month is extraordinarily high. Most people who have used hallucinogens have used them less than five times in their life; the majority only two to four times. Thus, the number of premies who had at one time or another tried the mind blowing chemicals probably passes 90% approaching 100%.

There are many reasons for drug use; escape, kicks, adventure are some of them. Relatively few drug users choose the hallucinogens as their drug of choice for escape or kicks. One possible explanation of this group's both using drugs and joining GMJ, might be that these people were searching for something that they couldn't find elsewhere. They looked into LSD, but found no simple answers there; only confusion mixed with what seemed to be something very important. They read books on Eastern religions, seeing more than a few correlations between their drug experiences and the words of the mystic masters. And then out of the East comes a young boy who claims he can give that experience...no, that he can give an even better experience, one as good as the best "acid trip", and you never have to come down!

If you take this Knowledge, you have no need of drugs. It is internal, very internal, much more beautiful than any outside drugs. Today everyone says, "Sonny, don't take drugs," but see, they have to have an alternative, and the alternative is the Knowledge. So those who have this Knowledge enjoy the normal and natural human experience within them, instead of trying to glean some excitement of happiness from occasional entertainment or pill popping. Taking drugs is not the infinite stage, it's a very finite stage, it has a beginning, it has an end. But this Knowledge does not have an end. What I have is like a built-in LSD which God provided you when you were born. There's no need to come down from it.

Guru Maharaj Ji Page 68 WIGM

So the young drug user, who is searching for something in his life, hears of someone offering instant meaningful bliss. The words click.

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This Knowledge is eternal. "Yeah, it should be if it's the real thing. It shows that we're all really one. Yeah, even the Beatles said that. You're offering me this incredible experience for free. Sure, I'll take it; it sounds like what I've been searching for. But, I'm skeptical... you mean I don't have to believe at all, I can just try it and see for myself? I'm sold."

And so it begins. But, before the young seeker will be allowed to receive Knowledge, he must make a commitment. The longer the journey to the Knowledge session, the more burnt bridges that will be left behind.  
The Pre-Knowledge Session.

The Knowledge session is secret; each would be premie swears a sacred oath to preserve the mystery. It is hard to get a description of the session from an individual who took Knowledge and decided it was bunk, and absolutely impossible to get anything out of a premie. The description which follows comes from careful interviews with disillusioned former premies and other seekers. Interestingly, the descriptions matched detail for detail even though the sessions were held in different cities, with different Mahatmas.

The Knowledge session is scheduled for 8:00 a.m., and one arrives early for you hear that only fifteen people will be chosen to receive Knowledge in this session. It is given on a weekday, which means that almost everyone there has given up something in order to attend: either they're missing school or work; hardly behaviour you would expect of a skeptic. Very quickly the room fills up, and sixty people are tightly packed into a large living room in the house which now serves as their "ashram" (temple in which the most devoted disciples live). It is uncomfortable. A premie starts giving satsang, and everyone waits for the Mahatma to appear. But, he doesn't! By 11:00 you realize that you won't be able to go to work at all today, and you resign yourself to

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spending the day here; after all, you're not going to leave now after waiting so long (in poker this is known as "throwing good money after bad"). By 12:00 you're really hassled and uncomfortable but there's no turning back...you've invested a whole day.

As you wait, you look at your fellow seekers. Most of them appear to be young, bright, and alert. An unusual number of college dropouts. They are not from the ghettos (there are no blacks) of our cities where the ugly decay drives people to escape with drugs. No, they are from the middle and upper middle class suburbs. They are well educated and have never known material need. These are the youngsters who drove their very own cars to high school. They had everything America could offer, and the prospect of being an integral part of its future.

Now they sit, empty, hoping to be chosen as the ones to be filled by something they were unable to find for themselves: a dream; a reason for their life; a purpose for their existence.

At last the Mahatma arrives and you figure that finally the ceremony will begin, but no! He gives another sermon! At 1:30 they pass around three by five cards on which you write your name, age, address, the number of times you have gone to satsang, the number of times you have gone to a program with a Mahatma, the number of GMJ publications you have read, and the number of times you have seen the Guru himself. And then the Mahatma goes around the room, one by one, talking for two minutes to each of sixty people who have filled out cards!

He asks each of the questions over, out loud, testing your sincerity (the premises say he is determining who is and who isn't ready for Knowledge). He says, "are you really hungry for this Knowledge?" And, then you realize that you've got to be very convincing if you want to be one of the chosen. He asks, "Who is Guru Maharaj Ji?" You think that when he comes to you you will say, "I don't know. That's why I'm here to find out. I was told that you don't have to believe in order

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to receive the Knowledge. I'm here to test it, to try it out like I was told I could.' All of a sudden you realize that the seeker the Mahatma is speaking to just gave your response and was told to go listen to more satsang and then come back when He's really ready. The next person has learned the lesson. He claims that GMJ is the Lord; that he goes to satsang daily; that he's read every pamphlet and magazine ever written-- and then he is told to come back the next day if he truly wants Knowledge! The next person claims devotion of the highest order, and in response to the question, "Do you feel you are ready for Knowledge?"

realizing that she might be turned away with the others, she breaks down and between sobs, gasps that, "I can't wait any longer, this is the third time I have come to knowledge session, please don't turn me away." Yes, you will receive Knowledge today. For that electrifying performance in front of so many potential premises the GMJ organization owes you more than Knowledge, yet alas, there is nothing greater than Knowledge. On and on it goes. One young man is recognized by the Mahatma. He's been following him from city to city in an effort to convince Him of his sincerity. "No, not today. Tomorrow, I leave for Cleveland and after that Chicago. I will give you knowledge in Chicago." Again, consider the impact on the other hopefuls.

The fifteen are selected. You are not one of them. It will take many pre-Knowledge sessions and untold hours of satsang before you will be able to receive this Knowledge. If you make that commitment (without any faith or belief whatsoever!) then someday you may be one of the chosen.

#### The Knowledge Session.

After the rest have left, the fifteen are given a short lecture on what they are about to receive. They are told to make their hearts ready. Then they are sent out for lunch and told to come back in an hour with pure hearts, a doubt free mind, and a gift for GMJ. It starts

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already! A gift for the Gurū. What's the Knowledge worth? \$5.00? \$10.00? \$100.00? Remember you said you would cut off your arm if GMJ asked you to. It's true that money wasn't stipulated (some actually do give other things: a pendant, a bar mitzvah ring, or even a flower...the valuables used to be sold in a chain of stores known as Divine Sales. The bulk of the goods sold there came from premies who no longer had any use for their material possessions) but it's also true that most people proceed to give whatever they have in their pockets. The story is told of one woman who was confused as to whether to give her entire joint-account (with her husband who wasn't there) or just the portion of their life-savings that she felt was rightly hers. The Mahatma, calling upon his unlimited store of wisdom, came to her aid. He admonished her for even thinking that she or her husband could make better use of the money than could the Lord of the Universe. Of course, when she looked at it in this light, her bewilderment vanished.

At last lunch is over. Gift in hand, earnest longing and confusion in your soul you enter the Knowledge room. One by one you are instructed to go up to the altar (again the cloth covered throne with the framed picture of the young Indian boy) and place your gift before the portrait of your Lord. Then you must prostrate yourself before Him and proclaim that you love Guru Mahara Ji, the Lord of the Universe. When your turn comes, as you place your gift down, you notice that the altar is literally covered with money, fives, tens and an occasional twenty or a ring<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup>At this point, one might question the integrity of the Mahatmas. Ashrams (in which the Knowledge sessions take place) are run by lowly premies who look for guidance to the Mahatma, High Priest. These holy men are never questioned, for they are the most devoted of His disciples. Supposedly, they turn over these "gifts" to their Lord. However, at approximately one to two hundred dollars per session; four or more sessions per week, these religious men could be doing quite all

You are instructed to do these pranyams (declarations of selfless love while prostrating oneself) several times. If you hesitate, then your readiness for Knowledge is questioned and you may be asked to leave. Finally, after giving gifts, avowing unlimited devotion, and being chastized for the impurity of your love, the curtains are drawn. You are about to receive the technique for the LIGHT.

The Four Secret Techniques of Knowledge.

The first and most impressive is the technique for the LIGHT. Yes, this is the light "brighter than a million (nay, a billion) suns." The shades are drawn and the lights are turned out so that no artificial light could create the flash or illumination. When your turn comes, the Mahatma places his forefinger on the middle of your forehead, instructing you to concentrate on this point, your "third eye". (Yes, the same "third eye" you've heard so many spiritual references to, the "third eye" of spiritual vision. They have even linked the pineal gland, an organ deep within the brain and yet light sensitive, to this mystical undeveloped sense, or so they say.) You close your eyes and try to force your eyes to focus on this holy spot. The Mahatma takes his thumb and second finger and places them on each of your closed eyes, and presses. The pain is excruciating. You are told to concentrate, and after approximately five seconds, the most impressive light show you have ever seen begins. Beautiful patterns of colors appear, forming a funnel of light, at the end of which looms a light of truly unbelievable brightness. This technique, as well as the rest, is not new. I am told it can be found in the Bhagavad Gita (a book which some followers of Hare Krishna have probably tried to sell to you) and other ancient holy books. It has been used as a meditation technique

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right for themselves (and their idea of wealth is based on Indian standards!) This is pure speculation. It would seem in most cases that the Mahatmas are as earnest as the seekers.

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for centuries. Young Americans, however, have rarely experienced what is known to Western science as "Pressure Blindness". It is used in physiological experiments to terminate the passage of information from the retina to the brain. It is an interesting experience and is not dangerous (though it is painful, you need not make it excruciating at all) if one is careful. With the eyes closed and preferably in a dark room you will see an intense display of light as described. With the eyes open, in a lit room, you will have the unpleasant (but reversible) experience of going blind.

You realize that everything they said is true. This is IT. It's the REAL THING. Your heart is filled with gladness, you're home again, after being gone all these years.

Some do have an enlightening cathartic experience such as this. For most, the feeling is one of mixed elation and grave disappointment. "This is Knowledge? Some one putting pressure on my optic nerve?" But, you remain silent. After all these months, all this time. You've been warned not to judge this Knowledge too harshly. You did say you would cut off your arm, and after all when it came down to it, you probably wouldn't. Maybe it's because you weren't ready. They said you might have to meditate on the Knowledge for several weeks before you even begin to realize it. Look at her, She realized it. She's smiling just like the rest of them, and crying tears of joy. "I'm going to give the Knowledge a chance. I won't prejudge it. It's just my mind working."

Your mind, The great enemy of Knowledge. Oh, how often you've heard it. It's one of the traditional themes of satsang. Your mind has gotten you into this mess. Your mind is caught up in worldly things. Your mind can't even begin to comprehend this Knowledge. Your mind is full of doubts. Put your mind into your pocket, and let your true



self realize this experience. Yes, it is difficult. Your mind will fight. It will become full of doubts and questions, it is the essence of confusion. It's your ego. Your ego and your mind. The love affair behind science, technology, and Western dualism. The bedfellows that have produced war, confusion, pollution, over-population, hate, greed, anger, and all the ugliness in the world. "They said my mind would attempt to block this knowledge, and that's exactly what is happening. I'm being filled with doubts just as they said would happen. I will give this Knowledge a chance. Please, let me realize this Knowledge. PLEASE."

Or, you could say that you were wrong. "This is a hoax as I suspected six months ago; before I dropped out of school, sold my stereo (which my folks gave me for graduation), and gave away all that money. I've told everyone about this Knowledge. I told my friends, and folks not only how great it is, but also that they themselves would soon be taking it; that soon everyone on the planet would be at peace in the true Knowledge of God. Well, I guess I could rebuild those bridges (after all I'm young). First, I must face one simple fact: I've made a complete and total fool of myself." For some people, that's not an easy thing to do. And so it goes...

Now you are more determined than ever to be pure, and there are still three techniques to follow. Unfortunately the rest are less impressive. They work for some; not for others. The second technique is the MUSIC. The essence of every sound in the universe. The music which God plays within each and every one of us, all the time. You sit cross-legged and put a stick with a horizontal bar across it, in front of you. You rest your arms on this bar, and take your thumbs and push them deep into your inner ear (premies have very short thumbnails). Place your little finger over each of your eyes and you've got it. Some describe it as a high pitched tone or a steady humming (premies

themselves don't get too excited over this one). Only after many months of meditation do they begin to hear the "Big Band Sound" playing along with the "Celestial Choir" (these descriptive metaphors are theirs).

Your confusion is deep. Next you are shown the technique for the NECTAR; the purifying fluid that flows from the brain to the throat. This is the essence which "advanced sages and yogis can live on" without any other food, indefinitely. Most premies do not get to experience God in this form, during the session. To do so one must be able to curl your tongue back and stick it up your nasal passages in the back of your throat (this can be done, inelegantly, with the aid of one's fingers, the experienced premie can do it with tongue alone). Most premies simply receive the technique, and after several months finally get to taste the "Holy Mucous".

The last technique is the WORD. "In the beginning was the Word. The Word was God. The Word was..." It is the source and foundation of the entire universe. It is the vibration behind all things. To others outside the GMJ movement, it is known as breath meditation. You sit still and meditate on the sound of your breath trying to bring your mind to one pointedness, or simply total concentration. As you're doing this the Mahatma whispers in your ear the sounds "So Hung". "So" is the sound your breath makes on its way out; "Hung" on its way in. Concentration on the sound of your breath, will with the grace of GMJ enable you to realize this eternal vibration which is God itself.

All the techniques are to be done cross-legged under a blanket! It is a strange sight, indeed, to enter an ashram with two dozen premies meditating away like sitting ghosts. The effect is eerie and unsettling as well as ludicrous.

So it ends. You are told to spend two hours in the morning and

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two hours at night meditating on the four techniques. To go to satsang once a day. To do service, satsang, and meditation. As you leave the ashram, friends and premies will ask you what it was like. Once again, you face that same decision. You must decide whether it was real and worth it, or a fake as your parents and friends told you; thus making you a "sucker". On the average, more than twelve out of the fifteen will eventually decide that they made a mistake. For some, this decision will take months (or even years) of living in ashrams and browbeating themselves for not being egoless and divine. For a few the rationalizations will hold, and the unlimited doubts arising from the numerous disconfirmations of faulty predictions and outrageous distortions will be blamed on the mind and the ego.

Living with God.

In spite of all that you and your fellow seekers have been through, if you are one of the few that "stay with the Knowledge", you will probably see few of your fellow session members again. For the small group that makes an earnest attempt to "realize this Knowledge", the weeks and months ahead will be truly difficult. Friends will ask if the knowledge session is all that you said it would be. You will be able to answer in the affirmative thanks to the technique for the light. That first technique, combined with the incredible pitch of anticipation before the session and the actual "laying on of hands" (which is an integral part of this technique the first time it is shown), often produces an incredible emotional catharsis. Even this, however, is not reliable. Probably less than half of the premies--albeit most of the long term ones--will have had this experience.

You know that if you are to "realize this Knowledge" there are certain obligations. The first, is to give satsang and to attend formal satsang nightly. As friends and relatives put doubts into

your mind (that old demon, your nasty mind), it is of utmost importance that you have your belief system reaffirmed regularly. Formal satsangs consist of a dozen or more premies meeting together and prosyletizing to potential seekers. The newcomers are called upon to give a testimonial about their new experience. What a powerful weapon to allay doubts and fears! When one "whistles a happy tune", it actually is hard to be afraid. I am told a story by a former premie (who was the one who gave his Bar Mitzvah ring in addition to over one hundred dollars worth of cash and possessions), about the importance of satsang. He was very confused. He had taken Knowledge, meditated hard, and nothing was happening. He questioned his own sincerity and redoubled his efforts to realize this Knowledge. He had stopped practicing his art, Karate, which was one of the most significant aspects of his life. He was slowly driving his girlfriend away with his religious mania. He recalls one of the many satsangs he gave, this one after going without sleep or food for several days. He had a pounding headache, unbounded confusion, and an empty stomach. From this state of enlightened bliss came the following satsang directed to his girlfriend, Susan:

Susan, I can't even begin to describe this experience. Nobody is asking you to believe this without trying it. Just come to satsang Susan. It's this incredible feeling, Susan...I can't even begin to describe it....Susan I want you to know this feeling of love...the feeling I have right now...I want you to know this feeling.

Luckily, Susan never got to experience the "eternal headache". He looks back on this story with disbelief: "I can't believe I sat there and said those things...I just can't believe it." But you did. You gave a testimonial for excruciating confusion and pain. It wasn't until several months later that you were able to perceive what you were doing. While you were doing it, it "worked".

And so it goes...as long as you are a follower it is your duty to tell everyone about this wonderful experience. No matter how confused,

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no matter how many doubts plague you (mind's up to its tricks again)  
the good devoted premie marches on. And sooner or later you may  
believe it.

Another function of satsang is to provide premies with the opportunity  
to share doubts and confusions, and to help one another eliminate these  
annoyances. It is hard to be the only one in the world who knows the  
Truth. After a while, one begins to believe that maybe it's a  
mistake. Maybe they're right about this. Could I be forcing myself  
to believe because of the tremendous commitment I've made? Or is that  
my mind confusing me again? I don't know. But, that night you will go  
to satsang and once again you will be in a world where everybody believes  
and it's only a matter of days before the few remaining doubting-  
Thomas are blown away by the mind boggling experience of Knowledge.

"Service" to the Guru is the last essential aspect of this Knowledge.  
Service consists of setting up programs to spread the word: working at  
a job and turning the money over to GMJ; working to keep an ashram going  
(cooking, cleaning, etc.); in short performing any action that will  
benefit GMJ or the Divine Light Mission (the official name of the  
movement). Through Satsang, Service, and Meditation one can attain the  
highest most valuable human experience; true realization of this Knowledge.

A few extraordinarily devoted premies manage to live outside an  
ashram and maintain their own individual life without eventually drifting  
out of the Knowledge. In every city large enough to support an ashram,  
the ashram is the center of the movement and most long term premies  
will be found in the ashrams along with many who will eventually leave.

There are no hard and fast rules as to the organization of an  
ashram and there is much variation. Generally one finds several things  
to be true. The leaders (who used to be called "general secretaries")  
of the ashrams are chosen by the higher ups in the organization. They  
are "shipped in" to a city to organize affairs; financial and otherwise.

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Often along with a leader will come a treasurer, a co-secretary, and the like. The ashrams are subordinate to the rest of the organization in the larger cities; New York, Los Angeles, and eventually the main headquarters in Denver.

Theoretically, or in spiritual matters, the Mahatmas are the closest to GMJ. In actuality, they probably share power with the business managers and organizers, who are all premies. All these individuals are subordinate to the topmost Mahatmas and eventually the Holy Family: GMJ's mother (the Holy Mother) and his three brothers, who have been likened to Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva. (I have been threatened that the Shiva brother would strike me with lightning for revealing the techniques of Knowledge!) It is hard to determine who actually holds the reins. Supposedly, GMJ is the ultimate authority. One wonders if his mother would allow her sixteen year old son to run this multi-million dollar business without maintaining some sort of control. The issue was settled several years ago when Guru Mahara Ji got married, apparently against his mother's wishes. Soon after he married a young American girl, his mother, his most influential brothers, and a significant number of his Mahatmas left America returning to India to ply their wares. The break appears to be permanent.

Following this unsettling event many premies could remain loyal no longer. Certainly, the Lord of the Universe, his family, and closest of disciples, his Mahatmas would not behave in this manner. It was just too disturbing to the young premie who had devoutly been proclaiming that the age of brotherhood and love was just over the horizon. There were many desertions.

The rules loosened up for those who remained. There were even stories of considerable sexual promiscuity following GMJ's marriage.

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All in all, ashram life remained basically the same once things settled down. No meat. No sex. Satsang in the evening, followed by Meditation. Service during the day. Group meals. Women do the cooking. Men do the heavy work. Most of the leaders are men. The few women leaders are often "house mothers" who are in charge of things like cooking and shopping.

These who are able to remain, do so for many reasons. For some the burnt bridges are beyond repair. Some have found a dream, a purpose, and with it peace. Others have found a place to live where they are valued, and a family to share life with. A place where, among other things, the people are considerate of one another's feelings. In short they've found a home.

The most important reason people remained seemed to be the special relationship with their guru. They try to focus every waking thought on Him. In their bedrooms they build altars with numerous photos of Him. In the reception area of one ashram was a large (3' by 4' color blow-up of a close-up photo of his feet! It is GMJ they focus all their energy on. Quickly the "Knowledge" gives way to a personal devotion to him. They become premies and the love they feel is genuine. In their unlimited love and devotion to him they find a peace which had eluded them.

#### The Relationship to the Guru:

It is striking how this aspect of the group is hidden from the potential convert yet is everywhere apparent and even seems to be the essence of the group itself. At first this wasn't so. When the GMJ group first appeared they openly declared their love and devotion for "the Lord of the Universe". As this approach clearly turned people away it was rapidly abandoned. References to GMJ as the divinity come slowly now and only as a person gets drawn in further and further. It

is impossible to hide their devotion to him with their countless altars and centerfolds (in their monthly magazine) but it is minimized when the seeker is new. Instead the focus is on "the Knowledge" an actual tangible experience.

However, by the time one has "received Knowledge" it has already become secondary to a personal devotion to the guru. Also, it is only devotion to Him that enables the convert to "realize this Knowledge". Personal devotion to GMJ supercedes all other aspects of the group experience. He is the living God. The meditation techniques of the Knowledge quickly become methods for focusing one's thoughts on Him, loving Him, and basking in His love. This is the reward the follower receives and it is a very potent reward indeed.

Guru Mahara Ji has just arrived in Los Angeles. For the third time, the master soul has walked in America, virtually unknown to the public. He is the greatest event in history and we sleep through it...If we knew who he was, we would crawl across America on our hands and knees to rest our head at his feet...When a devotee makes the outrageous statement that Guru Mahara Ji is the Lord of the Universe, it is cause enough for a chuckle. But it also happens to be true. Guru Mahara Ji is the Lord of the Universe and anyone can find out who sincerely wants to know...(Rennie Davis in Cameron, 1973).

For one month he (Guru Mahara Ji) gave me so much love, and never saw the bad in me, only drew out the good and made me able to see some good again, and laugh and feel his enormous love...Holy Mother and the divine brothers of Guru Mahara Ji gave me so much love that I knew only one thing, that I had found my destination, and that I wanted only to be with them forever. (Joan Apter in Cameron, 1973)

Guru Mahara Ji is pure and perfect. We can experience this purity and perfection only from the divine manifestation of the soul, the Perfect Master. When I understood that knowledge was the way I could be constantly connected to Him, both internally and externally, I begged for knowledge. And He gave that entrance into the kingdom of heaven. (Joan Apter in Cameron, 1973, pg. 114-115)

...It was just that beautiful, beautiful thing: that when we need Guru Mahara Ji's assistance, He's there, willing to give it to us. All we have to do is ask him for it...But mostly He showed me that I am nothing without Guru Mahara Ji and allowed me to devote my whole life to Him. (Randy Lamont in Cameron, 1973 pg. 195-196)



The brilliance of the stars in the sky is due to Shri Guru Mahara Ji alone. There is none other upon the Earth who opens the heavens to man. There is none other enthroned in every heart. There is none other with power and great glory. We speak that which we have seen. Shri Guru Mahara Ji is a tree whose seed is everlasting joyous life...His is the glory of all truth and the liveliness of all life. He is bringing life to dead bodies. He is life...My dear sisters and brothers, I declare that the flower of peace grows at the foot of my Lord, Satguru Maharaj. (Cameron, 1973 pg. 303)

While there are many factors operating in groups such as these which tie the individual to the group, it quickly becomes clear to the careful observer that the predominant dynamic force lies within the relationship of member to the leader. Indeed, it may be that some of the other principles operative in groups (such as the member's influences on each other) are derivatives of this main dynamic principle.

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VITA

Daniel H. Kriegman

PERSONAL DATA: Date of Birth: June 11, 1951  
Place of Birth: New York, New York  
Marital Status: Married, 2 children

EDUCATION:  
1974 B.A. State University of New York at  
Buffalo, Buffalo, NY  
1976 M.A. Department of Psychology, Boston  
University, Boston, MA

EXPERIENCE AND

TRAINING:

1979- Clinical Director, Adolescent Rehabili-  
tation Program, Boston, MA  
1977- Principal Psychologist, Massachusetts  
Treatment Center, Bridgewater, MA  
1979 Instructor, Lesley College, Cambridge,  
MA  
1976-79 Instructor, Boston University, Boston,  
MA  
1977-78 Teaching Fellow, Department of Psychology,  
Boston University, Boston, MA  
1976-77 Clinical Intern, West-Ros-Park Community  
Mental Health Center, Boston, MA  
1977 Instructor, Massasoit College, Brockton,  
MA  
1975-76 Clinical Intern, Tufts University  
Counseling Center, Medford, MA  
1974-75 Teaching Fellow, Department of Psychology,  
Boston University, Boston, MA  
1973-74 Counselor, Buffalo State Mental Hospital,  
Buffalo, NY  
1973-74 Teaching Assistant, Department of  
Psychology, State University of New  
York at Buffalo, Buffalo, NY