

Isabelle and Dominique Lorenzato
ex-members of the Group of Robert Dihn (France)
Their experience

We belonged to a cult for 22 years. At first we were attracted by the guru's teachings of Christianity, the group's contribution in local charitable activities and the family atmosphere. Very quickly, he announced that he had revelations which placed him at the top the divine hierarchy and gave him the power of saving souls.

His teaching related to:

his revelations

the recognition of his authority and power

total self-denial as a proof of faith

acceptance of suffering, surpass one's limits

carry on mystical missions in order to work on the world's evil and to purify its sins

detachment from material goods and property

destruction of the ego

reincarnation and the responsibility of the soul

the law of return (if the followers go against the guru's precepts misfortune will befall them, going as far as the death threat for them, their family and relations)

He lavished his teachings during lengthy and obligatory, daily meetings until late into the night. These meetings and the fact that it was forbidden to rest during the day caused a manifest lack of sleep. One was obliged to take part even when ill.

Fasting, prayers until late at night, daily work in the guru's houses wore out the body.

The followers lived in fear. The guru held them in his power: life and death, marriage and separation. He decided who could give birth, the choice of the children's names, of professions (for "the outside image"), the vehicles, the houses... All was subjected to authorisation even the possibility of seeing one's family insofar as it was not opposed to the group. The outside world being evil, it was not possible to have friends. Only the guru and his teachings incarnated goodness.

The followers had no free will. The meetings were the occasion of severely warning those who had disobeyed his teaching and his will by long public meetings of "verbal abuse", the follower had to admit his errors. The guru encouraged competition within the group so that the followers watched each other and denounced evil doings. Certain mystical missions and revelations were given in an individual capacity and were to remain strictly secret.

The guru did not work. The followers maintained him completely. He needed a 4x4 car, furniture, luxury clothes to work on the money. The followers were to complete this work by giving all they had.

This destruction of the individual by daily body and mental abuse prevented them from realising that they were prisoners of this illusory world. Total submission to the guru was required going as far as accepting sexual relationships as means of purifying faults. To disobey involved death of the soul, madness and misfortune for the children and the family.