

Rajneeshpuram
PO Box 10
Oregon 97741

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir,

My name is Anand Narendra (formerly Ian P Ross). I studied psychology at the University of Sussex in England, under the guidance of Marie Jahoda and Hans Furth, two of the foremost psychologists of our time. Having gained both a Bachelor and a Masters degree in Psychology, I embarked on a career as a child psychologist and later as a psychotherapist specialising in the use of group therapy as a tool for regaining mental health.

For the past ten years I have been a practising therapist working with subnormal children, social deviants, mentally retarded, severely psychotic and schizophrenics, as well as the enormous mass of day to day relationship and family counselling problems.

Early in 1976 I encountered Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh for the first time and it was immediately clear that here was a man of supreme abilities. His vision, as outlined in His books and tapes, and the work of his disciples were of a quality that had previously been unknown to me. Bhagwan had taken most of the basic tenets of contemporary psychology and revolutionised them leaving the modern masters Skinner, Freud and Maslow far behind. Not only had He done this in theoretical terms as we discovered in his discourses; but also in practical terms, for the commune in which He was living was a tangible demonstration of what He was saying.

Bhagwan offered a new vision, new definitions, not only to psychology but also to life itself.

Since 1978 I have visited Rajneesh communities in both Poona and Oregon, being a privileged witness to this wonderful experiment. It is from this close viewpoint that I should like to comment. At the heart of the commune is the Master, Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh. It is His vision and teaching that guides the whole experiment and it is His living presence that makes the "work" so vital and alive.

He has now entered a silent stage in His work. The experiment however, continues to expand. No greater evidence of this is necessary than the recent summer festival which attracted over 15,000 visitors from all over the world.

What is utterly extraordinary especially to me as a psychologist and psychotherapist whose very business is psychological and emotional welfare, is to see the rapid transformation of almost all who come into contact with this man and His work. For me to cite individual examples of 'transformed persons who I have personally witnessed returning to 'well being' and happiness would entail a letter of far greater length. Enough to say

that for any psychotherapist/counsellor/doctor/psychiatrist to witness this process is miraculous. I would like to share some of my observations.

The primary socio-psychological problems in present day society are those of 'alienation and 'anomie' (Durkheim) or rather a man's separation from his own society, his loss of identity and with it his sense of purpose. The consequence of these states of being we can witness on virtually every street corner, in every city in the western world; confusion, frustration, aggression, depression and ultimately mental breakdown.

In 1983 the state of mental health in our society is at an all time low. Suicide rates, crime figures, admissions to mental institutions are showing dramatic increases. War and the threat of further global violence is now worldwide. Man is on the verge of global insanity.

In this city of Rajneeshpuram, remarkably, these problems do not exist. The whole milieu of a 'buddhafield' immediately creates a completely different 'gestalt' in anyone who joins the community. The roots of this society are in communication, support, openness, personal responsibility, awareness in one's daily life and most especially, love - not the love of 'sentimentality' but the love which comes from the recognition of life in all of its many many colours, an almost extinct realisation in modern day society.

The concept of 'alienation' simply looks absurd in this city - of nowhere else in the entire western world could that statement be made. It also follows as a consequence that the anger, frustration, violence and purposelessness that exist in the main sectors of society also do not exist here. Rajneeshpuram is a blueprint for a 'new society', a society that emphasises the individual and his own discoveries, a society that emphasises psychological and emotional maturity, a society that emphasises love and respect for life itself; as Bhagwan says ' a society for the New Man."

Here in this country is a man with the capacity to offer an alternative to save humanity from the psychological and physical suicide to which he is rapidly heading. I feel it is absolutely essential that Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh is supported in every way possible.

Yours sincerely,

Anand Narendra
(Ian P Ross)

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'I.P. Ross', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.