

Rajneeshpur Dr.

July 1983

To whom it may concern:

I am writing in support of the application by Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh for permanent residency in the United States of America as a person of exceptional ability in the Arts and Sciences.

I am 39 years old and was myself educated in England where I qualified as a teacher of English language and literature in 1965 at the University of London Institute of Education. I subsequently taught English and Drama at the secondary high school level for nine years, including four years as the head of the faculty. During the same period I studied Sociology, Psychology and Education during my spare time and was awarded the degree of Bachelor of Arts by the Council for National Academic Awards in September 1972. From 1974 until 1976 I was lecturer in Drama and Theatre Arts at Fugedown Teacher Training College, London - under the auspices of the University of London Institute of Education.

I first came to hear of Bhagwan in early 1977 when I happened to pick up one of his books in a friend's home. I was astounded and inspired by what I read. In the course of my own work in the field of education I had read much philosophy, psychology and sociology, including books and articles by the emerging 'new wave' theorists of the sixties and seventies. I had selectively used ideas and methods based on this extensive reading as I sought to improve my abilities as a teacher and to expand my life experience as a human being. Upon reading my first book by Bhagwan I immediately realized that here was a man who somehow encompassed the ideas and methods I had been

stumbling towards for many years. I was suddenly humbled in the face of an overwhelming intellect expressing itself through the most beautiful blend of poetry and humour I had ever encountered in any book of philosophy. I felt that here was a man with supreme understanding of the human condition in all its aspects.

During the succeeding three years I paid three visits to India to meet with the man whose written word had impressed me so much. I was not disappointed. Sitting before him and hearing him discourse on all manner of subjects confirmed and enhanced my initial impressions of a brilliant scholar as conversant with the most recent developments of behavioural science as he is with the most ancient of sociological and religious traditions. I once had the privilege of visiting his library and was amazed not only at the number of volumes but at the variety and scope of interests demonstrated in the books he has read.

My last visit to India extended over eighteen months and during that time I worked with the Rajneesh Theatre Group - a company of professional theatre people from many different backgrounds ranging from traditional theatre, through educational drama and psychodrama to the most modern schools of experimental technique. Under the guidance of Bhagwan an incredible synthesis became possible - a true blend of techniques which resulted in the most magical and most impressive moments of theatre I have ever experienced. During those eighteen months my understanding of acting and drama developed more than during the preceding ten years of work in the field. The blending of techniques of which I speak was made possible as a direct result of Bhagwan's ability to synthesise

apparently opposing ideas. Influenced by his teaching, his example and his breadth of vision we were able to create a totally new set of shared skills and reach new depths of creativity and expression.

Bhagwan had always said that truth cannot be taught - it can only be experienced. This key insight has been of the greatest significance since the so-called "silent phase" of his work began. It seems to me that it is at the core of the creation of Rajneeshpuram, which means: Expression of Rajneesh. My own work in education and in the theatre has convinced me that the best teachers are those with enough trust in their pupils to allow them the space to experiment and to create. Such teachers never seek to impose rigid sets of rules or ways of thinking and being; rather - they inspire. Their presence, their way of being, their example is enough. The responsibility for discovery, for experiment and for true learning is handed over to the pupil. I know from experience that this is ultimately the hardest transition for a teacher to make because there is always the tendency to want pupils to follow in ones own footsteps. But it is only through learning to accept responsibility for his own education that the pupil - or the actor - truly learns through his own experience. This is the gift of true discipline.

For me, Bhagwan's silence is his most potent lesson - "It's up to you!" He has stimulated his pupils to the extent that a whole new way of life is being experimentally created not only at Rajneeshpuram, but also at hundreds of communes scattered around the world. There is no doubt in my mind that in his words and in his silence Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh is the greatest teacher I have ever encountered.

Sus Deva Sapodhana .

P.A. WATSON B.A.