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T O W H O M I T M A Y C O N C E R N

I write this to express my concern about the fact that the religious leader Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh - Bhagwan for short - is having difficulties in obtaining permission to prolong his stay in the United States.

It is, of course, well known that for many years many religious leaders or teachers have left their native India for the U.S., where they have found it easier to disseminate their teachings, due to the many restrictions placed upon them by the Indian authorities, and - not least - because in America they have found just that tolerance with respect to unorthodox ways and means, that is in fact one of the reasons for the U.S. being able to play a leading role in the world, not least in the fields of knowledge of the workings of the human psyche.

The great number of discourses that Bhagwan has been giving almost every morning for many years constitute a great source of knowledge and wisdom covering all aspects of human behavior, emotions and spiritual activities, as they have - thanks to modern technology not existing during the lives of earlier masters or prophets - been recorded and edited in a great number of volumes. These discourses have either been in the form of plain one-way lectures, or in the form of "darshans" with answers to questions from the audience and from distant correspondents. One indication of the great value of these works is the increasing number of researchers in the advanced regions of the humanistic sciences that quote Bhagwan as an authority upon one subject or another.

In contrast to many other masters Bhagwan is stressing the importance of "letting go", i.e. of not holding back emotions, whether they be positive or constructive (love, work, art) or negative or destructive (hate, violence, grief), taking care, however, to let the destructive emotions rage in a protected environment, where they can do no harm, and where they can be confronted and de-charged, instead of being suppressed and causing problems in the future, such as psychosomatic disease if not outright insanity. At the same time, Bhagwan also stresses the importance of seeking God, not least by "letting go" in order to cleanse body and soul to make it easier for each person to find God in his/her own way, within or without organized religion.

Many of the practices advocated by Bhagwan are based both on early Eastern wisdom and on modern Western science, but he is - as far as I know - the first to effect a synthesis of this kind in a way to give practical results, i.e. more than the usual pretty, but empty, words about Brotherhood-of-Man etc..

At the present time more than a quarter of a million people (many of them U.S. citizens) around the world have chosen to become Bhagwan's disciples or "sannyasins" and to make a visible manifestation of this by wearing clothing within a certain range of colors and carrying a portrait of Bhagwan in a "mala" (string of beads) around their neck. Many others - I for one - have chosen not to make this manifestation, but nevertheless to make whatever contribution possible, large or small, to spread his practices and teachings.

Personally, I have gained much from practising Bhagwan's so-called Dynamic Meditation, in spite of my already being about 54 years old when I first started. I now no longer have to wear glasses except for reading, I enjoy a better physical balance than ever before, my reflexes are back to normal, "startle reaction" practically absent, temperature regulation better than in most people (I no longer have to wear a warm cap in cool or cold weather except when it is raining or snowing, nor gloves), and I can even stand loud disco music without discomfort at no loss of low-level hearing. On the psychological side, I am now far more relaxed in all kinds of awkward or embarrassing situations than before, and I am no longer afraid of speaking in public, nor of dancing (provided that I like the music).

Whether they are disciples of Bhagwan's or not, most of his followers wish that he should be given the opportunity to stay longer in the U.S. - not least to the benefit of the People of the U.S.. It has been said that his present silence has been construed to indicate or prove that he cannot be a religious leader because he does not speak, but persons making such conclusions are obviously not aware of the possibility of "silent communion" not unknown among religious persons. I am not one to say whether his silence is temporary or not - personally I still have not read the majority of his works - but in the present connection this question is irrelevant, as a religious leader of his capacity can be said to transmit his message by "pure radiation".

I myself have not yet had the opportunity to meet Bhagwan in person, but from numerous accounts from his Danish disciples and also from a few video recordings I am inclined to believe that the best way for a person in authority having been entrusted with the task of deciding whether Bhagwan should be allowed to stay longer in the U.S. or not to find a good basis for his/her decision would be to visit Bhagwan in his present residence in Oregon.

The reader will no doubt by now be wondering who has written the above, and this question can be answered in short thus: A Norwegian, male, born 1923, served in World War II in Europe with the Allied forces, studied Engineering in England 1948-52, worked later as radio engineer etc. in Ghana and Denmark, now a patent attorney. Since adolescence interested in psychotherapy, partly due to paternal influence, partly general interest in human beings. Married, two grown-up children.

Signed this twentieth day of July, 1983,

*T. V. Raknes*

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the above is the true signature of Tor V. Raknes, who is employed as a Patent Attorney in the firm Dansk Patent Kontor, H.C.Oersteds vej 70, Copenhagen, of which firm I am a co-owner.

Copenhagen, July 21st, 1983

Aksel Christensen

