

July 23, 1983  
Rajheeshpuram  
OR 97741

To Whom it may concern,

Almost four years have passed since my initiation into sannyas as a disciple of Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh. It is not much time in the totality of my life, but this relatively short span has seen a total transformation in the quality and form of my living.

I have always been involved in the arts, primarily as an artist, designer and photographer, and also as a dance-theatre performer. I attended the Rhode Island School of Design from 1961-1965 majoring in fine arts. I was on the Dean's list for seven semesters and was one of 25 students chosen to participate in the school's "European Honor's Program" spending my senior year of college studying in Rome and Florence, Italy. I graduated with a B.F.A. in 1965 and then studied fine arts for another year on the graduate level at the University of Arizona, Tucson in 1966.

From 1967-1979 I worked professionally in the fields of graphic design and photography in New York City and the Bay Area, California. Work highlights included illustration of the best-selling book "Recipes for a Small Planet" published by Ballantine Books, art direction of two magazines - Ski West and Ramparts and setting up a free-lance graphic design studio in Oakland, California. In 1978 I was given a C.E.T.A. grant by the city of Oakland to provide graphic design and photography services to

local non-profit agencies. From 1974 until 1979 I also performed with and managed publicity and advertising for Action Theatre (a Berkeley, Ca. dance-theatre company), and did free-lance graphics and photography for many Bay Area dance, theatre and filmmaking companies.

My life has always been involved with creativity and the inspiration of the creative act. There is something inside me which wants to express what I experience and feel, and to share it with others. But in the past, there was also a feeling of flatness, of selfishness and self-indulgence, a sense of exclusion and of being an outsider to life. I wanted to communicate something to someone, ~~who~~ but could never realize with satisfaction what or to whom. It was like the irritating grain of sand in the oyster's shell, an inexplicable yearning for something to be made clear and whole. By all standards my life and my work were successful, but the question kept coming up, "Is this all there is? why don't I feel satisfied with my life?"

When I first came upon a book by Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh I stayed up night after night drinking in his words. I was drawn to what he was saying like a thirsty person in the hot sun finding a pool of fresh water. Certain passages on creativity and art, on the poetry and beauty of life that is available to us every moment, opened my artistic vision and gave me new insight with which to see. Bhagwan spoke of the creative act as a reflection and manifestation of the divine. He said that the true artist and the truly creative act comes out of

a receptivity to existence, an emptiness which opens a door to God and allows us to become as a transformer to the energy of the whole of existence.

Most creative artists who are successful in the world learn to work in a very ego-oriented, competitive way. There is a constant striving to be more original, more creative and more exceptional than anyone else. A very delicate balance <sup>is created</sup> of being aggressive and egotistical, but also maintaining a sensitivity to life. This puts the artist in a constant struggle with himself and with society. What Bhagwan was saying, which immediately rang true to me, is that the creative experience comes when we are totally unselfconscious, non-goal oriented and non-competitive. This, for me was a revolutionary and exciting truth. In all of my years in the arts, at schools and in the professional "art world," never had anyone had the courage and insight to say this. I was deeply moved.

I had never thought of myself as a "religious" person and had never practised any religion, but whatever it was inside me that had been questioning all these years was finding answers that spoke to me in the words of Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh. In 1979, I went to Poona, India to find out more.

There were two years during which I sat listening to Bhagwan speak on many subjects. During that time I worked on the design of some of the books and magazines published by Rajneesh Foundation. When Bhagwan stopped speaking, my immediate response was, "how beautiful!" One of the things he repeated over the years was that the



ultimate communion between Master and disciple, the ultimate religious truth, was experienced in silence. Words were necessary in the beginning because we were not yet capable of understanding in silence. For me, this was a gift of trust and an opportunity to be with Bhagwan in a deeper, closer relationship.

And it has proven to be true. Over the last two years, since he has not spoken publicly, I have experienced Bhagwan more deeply and felt my connection with Him to be stronger than ever. The inspiration and guidance He provides does not require words, it functions on another level of being which cannot be explained, but only experienced.

Now Bhagwan is creating a true masterpiece, to be shared and experienced by anyone who is interested. His vision of "a new man" a new consciousness of awareness and love is coming alive at Rajneeshpuram. He has created a "Buddhafield" where His guiding inspiration and light is manifesting in the birth of a visionary city. We, His sannyasins (disciples) are in the process of building His dream, a dream which on the surface looks like constant "hard work." But this "hard work" is transformed to "worship." Every moment and every activity is an opportunity for us to experience and to express God, to be aware and to life live life with love and intelligence. This is how a barren, ruined land is being transformed into a productive and beautiful paradise. We are "working" with love, without competing with one another, towards no intent of gain other than the success of the human race for survival. This success, Bhagwan is teaching us, can come only by dropping the competitive mind and living in harmony with nature.

This idea has been expressed before, but here at Rajneeshpuram, it is being lived by hundreds of people. In my own work, still as a designer, I have experienced an ease and a flow with which my expression happens, the struggle and tension are going, but the creative drive remains. I am working with other people and there is a common expression, an expression of caring and love that runs as a thread through all of our lives.

Bhagwan is giving mankind an opportunity to see that His vision, a vision of love, of peace, of the unity of existence is not just a philosophical, utopian dream, but that it can be a practical, living reality. This must be the most extraordinary and valuable contribution possible today, and the single unique approach which can save humanity from itself.

Obviously, there are many, many thousands of people in the world to whom Bhagwan has become an inspiration. Each year at Rajneeshpuram there are a number of religious festivals attended by thousands of His followers and friends. These people come to sit in silence with Bhagwan and to partake in the unique experiment of this extraordinary city. The experience of being here, even briefly, is inspiring and opens the possibility of a whole new approach to work and to life as an expression of loving creativity.

I write this letter not as an analysis of anything that I have read or as an expression of something that I have hoped for or dreamed of. I write this letter as a person who is feeling an immense gratitude for

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having the opportunity to live with a Master - who has been generous, compassionate and inspired enough to share His vision with the world. I write as a person whose life is being transformed by this experience, a person who is finding meaning, finding answers. Every day I am learning something more of being loving, being peaceful, being fulfilled, being creative. It is Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh who has given this priceless gift to me and who is offering this gift to the world now.

Sincerely yours,  
Ma Anand Zeno  
Diane L. Coleman