

To whom it may concern:

I am of Irish nationality, a translator by profession, and at present live in Holland. I am forty-six.

I met Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh in 1980, and became a disciple after three weeks in his ashram in Poona. Before that, for three years I had been in psychotherapy, and it was the reputation of the ashram therapy groups that first drew me to Poona. However, I soon found that Bhagwan, while dealing exactly with the preoccupations that had taken me into therapy, spoke only of the mystery behind them, the search for God that is implicit in any attempt to escape from social conditionings. This discovery both enthralled and daunted me. I clung to a sentence pronounced by Bhagwan a few days after I reached Poona: "Make a little effort, and the whole universe will help you."

In May of this year, I felt ready to take the step of joining a commune, Sadhana Rajneesh Sanyas Ashram in Amsterdam.

In July I was in Rajneeshpuram for the first time. It seemed to me a huge adventure, this creation of a town out of some ravaged valleys. I met people I had met in India, now living on the Ranch, and they seemed to have changed: the whole idea of "growth" as an urgent preoccupation governing their way of living and talking and reacting seemed to have been dropped, and they were relaxed, busy, cool and friendly. I had the sense that they had "become themselves".

Living in the Dutch "Buddhafield" is the most arduous

experience of my adult life. I see that the spiritual life is no sinecure, and the degree of honesty it imposes, the awareness it forces on me, are often unbearable. Often I feel too buried in the past ever to be free. But I think that life in a spiritually oriented working community is a beautiful phenomenon, an opportunity for fulfilment that it is tragic not to grasp.

For me, Bhagwan is still the best reminder that truth and beauty and joy and silence do exist, and are available, if I can come with sufficiently innocent hands to take them.

Yours,

Denis Mahaffey

Amsterdam, 4th August 83.