

P.O. Box 10  
Rajneeshpuram, OR 97741  
July 19, 1983

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

My experience as an immigrant from China when I was eleven, uprooted from one culture and planted into another, gave me a sense that nobody had a corner on reality, and it was important to approach reality from different perspectives. I have a B.A. in mathematics, with the University Prize in religious studies, from Wesleyan University. I went on to study theology, ethics, and pastoral counselling at evangelical Fuller Theological Seminary and classical Yale Divinity School, with a M.Div. from the latter. I was ordained a United Church of Christ Minister and served as the Minister of Variables at Parkhill Congregational Church in Denver, Colo. from 1965-67. Going back to graduate school, I researched the interaction and mutual influence between the world religions and their social contexts. This happened in a Ph.D. program in "Religion and Society" at the Graduate Theological Union in cooperation with the University of California at Berkeley. I did my dissertation work on "The Religious Dimension of the Chinese Revolution". My basic concern continually has been "How can the world be one, how can religion be one?"

I've taught social ethics at San Francisco Theological Seminary and sociology of religion at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. I've served as core-faculty for the University Without Walls in Berkeley, as well as the educational coordinator for "Alternative Futures in Ministry", an alternate experimental year in theological education for the San Francisco Bay Area seminaries.

The fellowships I have received include a Rockefeller Brothers Theological Fellowship, a Danforth Graduate Fellowship for College Teaching, a Fulbright-Hayes Fellowship, and a Senior Fellowship from the Center for Chinese Studies, University of California at Berkeley.

For the last seven and a half years I've been a disciple of Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh, five of which as the director of the Rajneesh Meditation Center, first in San Francisco, then in Hawaii. During this period, through universities and meditation centers, I taught numerous courses and workshops in the area of meditation and the psychology of transcendence. I've also led an on-going group on meditation and psychotherapy for professionals in the field. In the summer of 1980 I read a paper entitled "The Master Link" at the Conference on Christianity and Buddhism at the University of Hawaii.

From my study of world religions, from my research, and from personal experience, I regard Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh as the most important contemporary teacher of religion. The breadth of his knowledge of all the world's traditions, of the contemporary religions situation, of all the

attempts of personal transformation through western psychotherapy and eastern esoteric techniques, combined with the brilliance and freedom of his intellect, make him the professor of professors of religion. The depth of his being that goes to the source of all the world religions, his courage to move int<sup>er</sup>mediately into any tradition and to move beyond it, and his charismatic ability to teach extemporaneously, with humor and poetry— these point to his authenticity as a spiritual Master of the first order.

When I first visited his ashram in Poona, India, in 1975, Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh was lecturing on Jesus in the Come Follow Me series. Jesus came alive for me in a way that never happened before, at Yale Divinity School, or Fuller Seminary, or when I was a Christian Minister. This was not only because he is an exceptional communicator, but essentially because he is able to tune into the consciousness of a Buddha, a Lao Tzu, or a Jesus with the same quality of consciousness as that of a Buddha, a Lao Tzu, or a Jesus. In his lecturing over the past twenty years, especially in his daily discourses from 1974 to 1981, he taught and exemplified what I would call "the communion of world religions". This to me is the most important, unique, and decisive contribution to the contemporary understanding and appropriation of world religions.

RAjneesh has deeply digested each of the world's religious traditions. In his monthly discourses on a particular tradition, he leads his listeners (or readers; his books now total over 350 titles) deeply into that tradition, brings it alive in a contemporary way, and by going on to another tradition the next month, he leads them beyond that tradition, so that no one is stuck in any tradition, yet is able to drink from its living waters. What results as a whole, is not a dead and limp intellectual synthesis, which always does violence to any tradition, but a vital and living communion that requires the understanding as well as participation of the listener or reader. What's important for the unity of the world and of religion, and thus of mankind, is that traditions are not treated as citadels, thus as prison cells, but as storehouses of riches to be available for all. He has exemplified and taught an intellectual flexibility and capacity necessary for any contemporary student of religion, because in our "global village" it is unthinkable to study religion without taking into account all of the world's religions in themselves and as a whole. And he has embodied and promoted a personal transparency, rather than another rigid religious identity, that can digest the world religions without prejudice, but with freedom and gratitude. The distinctions of the traditions are not obliterated, rather, the student and seeker can for the first time, partake of a living communion with all of them.

No major religious teacher or spiritual master before him has embraced, embodied and demonstrated the "communion of world religions". This is Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh's decisive and unique contribution to our global religions situation.

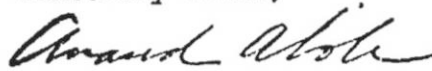
His public silence, for over two years now, attests also to the greatness of Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh as a teacher of religion and spiritual

master. The tendency of the ordinary teacher and master, or of any authority figure, is to dictate and control, and of the ordinary student and disciple, or of any subordinate, is to obey and follow-- in short the phenomenon of "mind control". What Rajneesh has done, in a powerfully democratic way, if you will, is to trust and to get out of the way of the development and maturation of his students and disciples from within themselves. He has always insisted on his students and disciples not be "carbon copies" of anybody, not the least himself, but be "originals", fresh, unique, religious beings exemplified by Jesus, Zarathustra, Buddha, Patanjali, Lao tzu, Socrates, Rajneesh....

His silent presence speaks then, to remind, encourage, and inspire his students and disciples to seek their own unique visions as communicants with the world religions, and to empower them-- through the catalytic transfer of the potency of being, what the Buddhists have called, the "direct transmission outside the Scriptures"-- to be themselves beings of the quality of the Masters, and to be totally response-able to their present world. What results, obvious even to the detached observer, are tremendously creative and productive religious experiments with intellectual, artistic, personal and communal dimensions. Is this energy, enthusiasm and potential for transformation not reminiscent of the contribution many of the original settlers, themselves religious sectarians, brought to the New World?

The presence of Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh in America is obviously of tremendous benefit to the Nation. One may not agree to the details of his presentation, but this communion of world religions as a whole serves as a viable aspect of the vision, a growing, unfolding vision, this nation needs for the increasingly fragmented and alienated American cultures. The greatness of this nation was founded upon a commitment as both a land of liberty for all people and as a virtuous nation promoting the welfare of its citizens. The bigotry against Indians, Blacks, and Orientals (I'm of Chinese origin) has marred the commitment to liberty. And the loss of efficacy, of the Judeo-Christian set of values, which can no longer preside over an uneasy pluralism in a technological society, brings the existence of a virtuous nation into fundamental question. What we need is a growing and maturing vision in the American consciousness that includes both the provinces of the church and state, which will bring both the commitment to a land of liberty and the commitment to a virtuous nation into a deep harmony appropriate to our contemporary context. This vision can no longer be the tacit imposition of any set of beliefs or values, such as the Judeo-Christian tradition, but it must be a vision that appreciates the values of all traditions, gives freedom to the appropriation of all of them, and guarantees the liberty of all people. The RAjneeshian phenomenon of the communion of world religions can serve as one of the much needed models and experimnts in our seeking together and being anew "one Nation under God".

Sincerely Yours,



Swami Anand Alok  
(aka John Kwang-han Hsu)