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TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I feel I can add a unique perspective to your investigation into the work of Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh. I have a Bachelor's Degree in Architecture from the University of California at Berkeley, where my major areas of concentration were urban planning and the sociology of environmental design. I joined a large San Francisco architectural firm in order to gain a practical background, and stayed with them for more than a year. I eventually decided to take my interest a step further, and thus embarked on a study tour which included such diverse regions as Europe, the Middle East, India, Southeast Asia, and Japan. In each area I studied the interrelationship of the local culture, societal structure, indigenous architecture and community design.

This was not undertaken as coursework leading to a higher degree, but as a labor of love. Even as a small child growing up in New York City, I had been fascinated by humanity's great potential to live in harmony with the environment and with each other, and at the same time, by our glaring inability to take even the first feeble steps in that direction. As a student I began to study alternative visions and the communities which grew up around them. More and more, I began to see that egocentric human failings were the rootcause of the failure of these communities to grow and prosper.

Then, almost seven years ago, a new perspective was added when I was introduced to meditation at a course given in the architecture department at U.C.L.A. This course was specifically designed to alter the often myopic vision of modern designers and planners. Here, for the first time, the emphasis switched from planning for immediate and material results and gains, to a transformation based on a broader, more encompassing vision.

Although the concept is difficult to grasp, it was the only one which made any sense to me. So again, I began my own research. I visited Tibetan camps and spoke with Japanese monks. I stayed at "new-age" communes in Californian cities and remote hamlets. Yet everywhere I went I was saddened by the incompleteness of their vision. Some communities were so repressive they became deadening. Others were so prejudiced or insular that they cut off the society at large and thus sounded their own death knell.

Just as I began to feel totally discouraged, a friend invited me to visit the Rajneesh community. There, for the first time, I found a living, thriving synthesis of all that I had searched for.

Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh amazed me. His vision was complete, and every word he spoke rang true. This one living man encompassed all of the truths that I had only glimpsed in books, in teachers, in communities.

Yet Bhagwan was not just a man with a vision. This community has grown and grown into a reality that reflects the absolute truth of what he has spoken. For ten years, he spoke every day, elucidating his vision to his disciples (sannyasins). Now, in the State of Oregon, here in America, that vision is becoming a concrete reality and now there is no longer a need for Bhagwan to spell out his vision; it has been transcribed and collected in over three hundred books. He can give spiritual guidance if needed, but the majority of his sannyasins are already living his vision, and the phenomenal growth of the City of Rajneeshpuram is the material proof.

The sannyasin community is unlike any other I have ever visited or studied. In Rajneeshpuram, the usual trade-offs do not exist; ie. between the secular and the spiritual, or between community life and the "outside world". In most alternative communities, the members enter into some kind of self-imposed bondage, be it material, emotional or spiritual, in order to succeed. Joy and harmony are the key words.

During my visit I have witnessed an incredible joyousness which surrounds even the most tedious work, and I have seen a modern city growing in harmony with the land that supports it.

Even the casual visitor will remark on the harmonious way in which the complex system of communal life is handled there. It is not, of course, effortless, but the effort springs from the desire to see Bhagwan's vision take form while he is still alive. His silent presence, alone, brings together all the diverse elements needed to make the dream a reality.

Therefore, it is my opinion, that Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh, and the community growing out of love for him, are a welcome addition to this country, and should be given all possible assistance in realizing their goals.

Sincerely,

Ma Deva Saguna
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