



University of Hawaii at Manoa

Department of Religion
Sakamaki Hall • Room A311
2530 Dole Street • Honolulu, Hawaii 96822
Telephone: (808) 948-8299 • Cable Address: UNIHAW

July 16, 1983

To Whom it May Concern:

I am writing to request that Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh be permitted permanent residence in the United States as a bona fide religious leader.

I am myself a Professor of Religion and have my specialty in Japanese religions, particularly Buddhism. I have taught world religions for over twenty years on a broad scale. In addition I maintain a course on the so-called New Religions. In this course I invite local representatives and lead to engage in discussion with our students on the issues, practices and problems raised by the wide variety of contemporary religious movements.

As a result of this class, I have gained some familiarity with Bhagwan's ideas and practices. I have come to know several of his followers. I find that his ideas have contemporary meaning and validity. his understanding of the modern mind and his approach to it shows great insight that is in line with Indian traditional thought, Buddhism, and modern psychology. His relating spiritual experience and psychology is unusual and interesting, though I am not myself a member. The members I have known seem greatly helped by his teaching and are responsible, contributing members of the community.

As with other religious leaders who first met persecution and rejection, it is difficult to see what influence his teaching will have in the future, just as in the first century none would have guessed the influence of Jesus two thousand years later. However, given the level of education of most of his followers and their professions, we could expect that his insights, if they are valid, will flow into the general society.

Unfortunately, differences in religious style East and West makes it difficult for outsiders to understand the religious meaning of Bhagwan's decision to remain silent. Even in Catholic Christianity some monks (Trappists) commit themselves to silence to deepen their religious lives. They believe their silence is instructive. A teacher may very well teach through silence. There are what is known as the "Ten Silences of the Buddha."

Various practices are criticised as violent. Yet the group is not violent. The activity within the group must be viewed in the light of its teachings. In ancient Rome, those who did not know Christianity thought the Mass was cannibalism in eating the body and blood of Jesus.

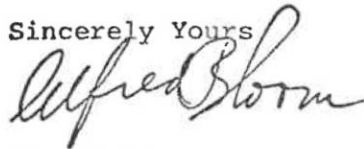
EXHIBIT "A-46"

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

In our tradition of religious freedom, we must give people the freedom to develop their own religious lives in their own way, as we wish to follow our own unmolested. Freedom is indivisible. Therefore, though I do not subscribe personally to Bhagwan's leadership for my life, I would unequivocally demand and support his right to religious and social freedom and for that of his followers. While I am aware of the issue of Rajneeshpuram in Antelope Oregon, I do not believe at all that such questions can be resolved by depriving the group of its leader and negating his human rights as a spiritual leader.

I would therefore request sincerely that you give serious consideration of this matter in view of our great tradition of freedom and in recognition of the great spiritual diversity that marks human history which calls for acceptance and tolerance, aswell as respect.

Sincerely Yours

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Alfred Bloom". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the typed name.

Alfred Bloom
Professor of Religion