



DICTIONARY OF THE OLDER SCOTTISH TONGUE,
27 GEORGE SQUARE,
EDINBURGH, 8.

TELEPHONE: 031-667 1011
EXT. 6678

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I have been, since 1955, Editor of this large-scale academic dictionary, was Reader in English Language, University of Edinburgh, from 1971 to 1979, hold the degrees of M.A. and D. Litt. of Edinburgh University, and was awarded the biennial Sir Israel Gollancz Prize of the British Academy in 1981; further details of my career appear in a number of biographical reference books, such as Contemporary Authors, International Who's Who, Academics' Who's Who, and Men of Achievement.

My knowledge of Rajneesh comes through my son and my wife, both of whom have been for some years disciples (sannyasins) of Rajneesh. Through them I have met and become friends with large numbers of Rajneesh disciples and have witnessed the remarkable growth of this religion. The vigour and enterprise displayed by the Rajneeshees in their major centres such as the ranch in Oregon or the commune in south-eastern England called Medina have been matched on a smaller scale by numerous smaller communes which include that of Edinburgh. I have been struck by the warmth and cheerfulness of these people and by their energy, and reliability and honesty as work-people in the various capacities in which they work in society.

The essence of Rajneesh's spiritual message seems to focus on responsibility for one's own well-being out of which, he holds, comes caring and consideration for others. Violence and crime seem to be unknown among his followers. Rajneesh also teaches respect for the human body, so that abuses associated with some young people's movements are anathema to

Rajneesh himself is clearly a man of great charisma and withal one who evidently receives much personal satisfaction from his influence over his followers. But he exercises this influence, in my view, with wisdom and responsibility. I find very much to admire in his religion for those willing to submit to its disciplines and its restrictions. (Apart from the red uniform his followers wear, Rajneesh is a-political. He holds that the world can be improved not by political action but by individuals improving themselves. To some this may seem utopian). Clearly this is a religion any humane person can respect.

In my view, The United States will be doing a service to mankind by permitting Rajneesh, the leader and inspiration of this religion, to remain among his followers in the ranch in Oregon which is now the headquarters of his movement.

A. J. Aitken

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