

26 Calvert Court  
Piedmont, Ca. 94611  
20 July 1983

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

The presence of Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh in the United States contributes to the vitality of religion in America and adds to the texture of our country's intellectual plurality. I have been familiar with the work of Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh for the past five years and have used his books for discussion groups and workshops in a variety of Jewish and secular settings. In Northern California, Rajneesh is well respected among my colleagues as an articulate spokesman of Eastern religious traditions and philosophies. As a religious philosopher, Rajneesh stands head and shoulders above most of his Asian contemporaries. Out of respect for this man's intellectual accomplishments, prestigious educational institutions like the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley are teaching classes on his thought.

I am aware that Rajneesh has recently drawn a great deal of flack from elements of the Southern California Jewish community who are claiming that Rajneesh is anti-Semitic. From my experience, this is a claim that is being made without basis. The organized Jewish community feels increasingly threatened by the new religions which are attracting Jewish youth to their ranks. Certainly we feel threatened when our youth join other religions; however, the solution to this malaise is not achieved through ad hominem arguments against those individuals or groups to which young Jews are attracted. This represents an internal problem within our own community. Any perusal of Rajneesh's writings on Jewish religious thought would easily dispel these claims.

Rajneesh is a free thinking religious philosopher in our age who has sparked considerable debate over his views. Like Mahatma Gandhi in the previous generation, Rajneesh has provided the impetus for meaningful intellectual and religious debate. Rajneesh's presence in America provides this provocative intellectual with a forum in which his challenges can be addressed. I am appreciative that such an erudite scholar as Rajneesh is in America. I am aware that this scholar's visa is under consideration, and as a member of the American clergy I would hope that the United States will welcome such an exceptional man to our ranks.

Most sincerely,

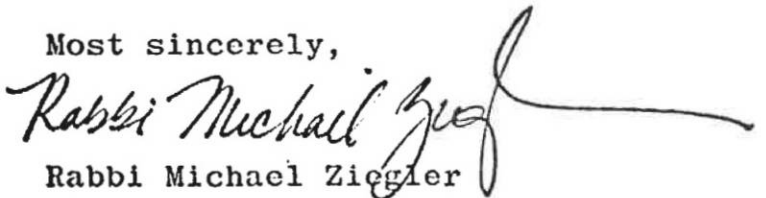
  
Rabbi Michael Ziegler

EXHIBIT "A-9"