

FROM THE REVEREND KEN HILLS

Flat 3
Jaffray Court
52 Gravelly Hill North
Erdington
Birmingham B23 6BB

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To Whom It May Concern,

I am a priest of the Church of England, and have served both in parish and specialist capacities in New Zealand and in England. In recent years I have served as an industrial chaplain and as Guild chaplain to students at a university. In the past I have had some responsibility for selection, supervision and training of the clergy in dioceses in which I have served.

I am writing in response to questions raised about the status of Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh as a bona fide spiritual leader.

My own interest is in a number of people whom I know, some very well, who have become followers of Bhagwan. I am not myself in any way involved with this movement but have been in a position to consider at first hand the commitment of these people to the person and teaching of Bhagwan, in the role of "Sanyasin". I have no doubt that their commitment and devotion is spiritual and material in the time-honoured manner of religious orders and sects.

Though I do not agree with all of the content or form of the teaching, I do accept that its demands and appeal are to the spiritual depths of its adherents and that this, in my view, is the same appeal as is recognised as spiritual in most commonly accepted religious institutions today.

In the social and institutional sense in which the term is usually used I think that Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh is leader of this movement and is correctly described, therefore, as a bona fide spiritual leader. Probably, the closest equivalent would be if the same question were raised about the Dalai Lama, the undoubted spiritual leader of Tibetan Buddhists, especially since the teaching of Bhagwan appears to emerge from Eastern spiritual traditions - albeit using familiar modern Western psychological tools in some of its implementation.

I think that Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh can justly be described, in the commonly accepted sense, as a bona fide spiritual leader.

Yours faithfully,

Kent Hills

K. H. HILLS
(Reverend).