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England

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1983To Whom It May Concern

I am a full time author and journalist, having written seven books, both novels and non-fiction, and having contributed to many major newspapers around the world. I have also made several documentary television films based on my books in the UK, Australia and the USA. My first book, Jack the Ripper: The Final Solution, was a best seller and was filmed as Murder By Decree with eight international stars including Donald Sutherland, James Mason, John Gielgud and Christopher Plummer. (vide Contemporary Authors, vols 69-72). I have two major books due out this year, one historical, one sociological, and I am currently working on a comprehensive reassessment of British naval intelligence in World War One and am involved in long term research for my book Jesus Christ: The Gospel Truth.

I came into contact with Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh after a long search for help with spiritual growth which had taken me from nominal Anglicanism through Roman Catholicism into the Work of George Gurdjieff. Both Jesus and Gurdjieff had been enlightened Masters, but the Christian churches on the one hand and the groups of Gurdjieff disciples on the other did not slake my religious thirst. I heard of Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh through a friend and visited Medina Rajneesh commune and adult education centre in Suffolk. For the first time in my life I saw both Jesus's and Gurdjieff's teachings being lived from moment to moment. Rajneeshism was a living religion in the true sense, quite beautiful. I read several of Bhagwan's books, and was moved by their simplicity and profoundness. I saw films of Bhagwan's lectures and knew that what I had read once in Vogue magazine was true: "He is now, without question, the most inspired, the most literate and the most profoundly informed speaker I have ever heard anywhere. Everything in his philosophy of life has the unmistakable ring of truth: a new experience."

I also attended sessions at the Healing Centre at Medina, and therapy and meditation groups, which cater for about 50 per cent disciples and 50 per cent non disciples, and these experiences have made me healthier in body, mind and spirit. My relationship with my partner has been strengthened, the bitterness I felt for my ex-wife has melted, my relationship with my daughter is much richer and freer of guilt on both sides. All this, which has come from Bhagwan, nowhere else, has had a tremendous effect on my work and opened up whole new areas of experience and expression for me.

In July this year I travelled to Oregon for the Festival at Rajneeshpuram, about which I have just finished a long feature for The Times and am planning a full length book on the city. I sat in Bhagwan's presence each morning with the other 15,000 festival participants. Bhagwan did not speak a single word, but his very Being taught me more than Christianity has taught me in a lifetime.

Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh is the outstanding religious leader of our time. In seven years, unscripted, he spoke 33 million words, not only explaining his own religion (he is the first enlightened Master ever to establish his own religion rather than leaving it to unenlightened followers who come after), but also other religions, spiritual schools and writings from all ages and cultures. Eventually these discourses will be transcribed into 550 books, 350 of which are already published.

I hope and trust that whoever is to decide on the person most worthy of receiving U.S. citizenship will realise, as do 300,000 disciples and many more "listeners" around the world, that Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh is, at the very least, a remarkable man who has contributed immeasurably to the improvement and enrichment of life for hundreds of thousands of people. He continues to do so. May the US Government do all it can to help this great good.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Stephen Knight". The signature is fluid and somewhat stylized, with the first letters of "Stephen" and "Knight" being larger and more prominent.

Stephen Knight