

P.O. Box 10

City of Rajneeshpuram, Oregon 97741

July 26, 1983

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

My name is Swami Anand Satyarth, aka Joseph T. Richards Jr., and I am writing in support of the effort to keep Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh in America. I attended the University of California at Berkeley and graduated with honors in 1972. Shortly thereafter, I began law school at the University of San Francisco and graduated in 1977. I am carrying on a tradition which has lasted over a century in my family, being the seventh generation lawyer. My grandfather is listed in Who's Who in America and, at one point, was District Attorney in Salt Lake City, Utah, where much of the family still reside. A building on the University of Utah campus bears the family name.

I have been interested in religion my whole life, and have always sought something which could impart a direct experience of religion to me. By the time I heard about Bhagwan, I had been peripherally involved with several various organizations, all of which offered a different way to experience the state of meditation. But Bhagwan offered something extra, a much more total picture of man, his society, his destiny. Even a casual reading of his books reveals that his insight into mankind is extraordinary, and his ability to communicate uncanny.

Moreover, it is precisely this ability to effectively communicate, across barriers of language, race, and age, which makes him such an exemplary spokesperson for the religious experience. Most of the current religions, worldwide, were began centuries ago around the vision and insight of one individual. But what remains, for adherents of those religions, is just a vague idea of the individual himself, and just a remote idea of what the teachings must have been like in their original context.

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EXHIBIT "A-823"

Bhagwan is alive and among us, and has produced hundreds of books, millions of words to help us unravel our complex lives and know again the feelings of wonder and joy which, unfortunately, visit us so rarely. The curious person, the person seeking to know about his motivations, limitations, potential, can find so much of what he seeks in these books. But all these books and words can do is to remind the person, in a thousand different ways, to go inside himself and discover the joy and ecstasy of silence.

Words have meaning, they have a function: to explain, describe, and direct our thought into action. To assert our needs to others, to effectively respond to the needs of another, we use words. But while the religious experience must depend on words initially, it must also transcend them eventually. Every religion has at its heart the experience of silence, be it Christian prayer or Buddhist meditation. Religion by its very meaning implies a collective undertaking by individuals seeking to find some greater truth, some more direct understanding of life. And history has shown us that the ultimate experience of religion, God, Nirvana, reveals itself in Silence.

Millions of Buddhist monks, spanning a period covering thousands of years have spent their lives attempting to find silence within. Buddhist thought hypothecates a busy, confused mind—a mind filled with innumerable desires and ambitions which only harass and punish the individual. So Buddhist practice involves spending long periods in silence, calming these thoughts until the mind itself becomes silent and true religion arises. Similarly, Catholic monasticism as expressed through the Benedictines and the Cistercians strives for the ultimate experience of silence, calling it the "monastic peace". And certain other branches, the Carthusians and Camaldolese, observe years of inner prayer in strict silence, preferring the life of the hermit.

That silence is the ultimate teacher of the religious experience is a message constantly borne out by the record of the history of religion.

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And this, now, is the manner in which Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh is communicating his teachings to his disciples and to the world. By his silence, and his peace, we may learn the art of silence and find inner peace.

I urge you to do everything in your power to accept and support Bhagwan in America, and to insure his continued stay in this country.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Swami Anand Satyārtha". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned to the right of the typed name.

Swami Anand Satyārtha
AKA: Joseph T. Richards, Jr.