

Rajneeshpuram
Oregon, 97741
July 22, 1983

To whom it may concern:

I hold an M.A. and Ph.D. in English and American literature, and for twenty years I was a member of the English faculty at Rutgers University in New Jersey. During that time I taught courses in 19th and 20th Century literature, the history of poetry, and the modern novel. I am the author of six books, published by such firms as Harcourt, Brace Jovanovich, The Free Press, and Indiana University Press. Among the awards I was granted were a Modern Language Association grant for editing and a Fulbright-Hayes lectureship at the University of Lund, Sweden.

I first learned about Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh from friends in Europe who had traveled to India and become his disciples. They played tapes of his discourses for me and introduced me to his meditations. In 1978, I went myself to India and, while at the ashram in Poona, became a disciple. Two years later I left my post at Rutgers and joined the ashram as an editor of his books and magazines. I currently live at Rajneeshpuram where I work as a writer, editor and photographer.

During the first morning discourse I heard in Poona, Bhagwan began to quote and speak about the American poet, Walt Whitman. His insight into Whitman's work was startling to me, who had studied and taught Whitman's poetry for decades. The following day, he spoke of the novelist Jack Kerouac--in a way which made clear to me, who taught courses in the Beat Generation, that his grasp of the novelist's prose and his ability to pass on his insights were extraordinary. Here was a master teacher, whose knowledge and love of literature were evident to me.

When I returned to Rutgers, I began to incorporate Bhagwan's books and teachings into my own courses. Needless to say, his spiritual and psychological insights were of immense value; but his comments on poetry and literature generally, made him one of the truly original literary critics. Before long, colleagues of mine were reading him and quoting him to their students.

After I retired from Rutgers and began to live and work at the ashram, I started to gather materials for a book on Bhagwan the poet and critic of poetry. The manuscript of this book is still incomplete, but I hope to finish it in the near future. It will, I believe, establish him as a critic of exceptional ability as well as a poet of the first order.

His presence in this country is, in my opinion, a gift to our culture. His words have been powerful and influential--and his silence is proving even more so. We in the West have yet to understand the function of silence as a means towards meditateness and peace of mind. In his silence Bhagwan has become a model to many people--not only his disciples--of a man who can communicate truth without words. This has been experienced by the thousands who have sat with him in silent communion, and as the message spreads, the entire culture can be touched by his lesson. The benefits to our stress-filled society can be transforming.

Bhagwan's talents are multi-faceted and his ability to inspire others towards the realization of their potential is enormous. "Exceptional" is an understatement of his abilities, and I totally support his application for permanent resident status.

Yours sincerely,

Swami Das Anudas

Swami Das Anudas
(David J. Burrows, M.A., Ph.D.
Prof. Ret., Rutgers University)