

July 27, 1983

To Whom it May Concern :

I am writing this letter in support for Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh to be granted permanent residency in America. The grounds I wish to appeal to are his exceptional ability & the excellence of his contribution to the domains of Arts & Sciences.

My name is Whitlock Lees. I graduated from Duke University in 1975 with a B.S. degree in psychology. After my graduation I continued my studies in the areas of psychology, philosophy & religion independently while traveling across the United States supporting myself with jobs in construction & industry until such a time that a new direction should become clear for me.

In 1978 I secured work at Genisee East Health Center in San Diego, Ca. My work there was to aid in the care & therapy of patients with severe & chronic mental disorders. To be thrown directly in the current of so many who needed help & hope was an intense and challenging experience

for me. I had my learning & book knowledge but no real understanding of how these people could be helped & rehabilitated & not merely recycled in & out the "revolving door" of the Mental Health System. I probed into many theories of mental health & numerous treatment paradigms always looking also for a direction for myself, an allegiance to which I could unflinchingly invest my energies. Mine was not the path of "chemical restraints" & "suppressive treatment", yet I was acting as an agent in this system.

It happened at this time that I came across in my readings a book by Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh. I did not know the man but the book was on Taoist philosophy & it crossed my fields of interest. I was fascinated by the fluency, simplicity & the depth of understanding. I became interested & read as many books by this man as I could find. These books covered most major religions. I began to wonder what nature of man was this who could speak as an insider & with ease on any of these religions & who could also make the connections across disciplines from Religion to Philosophy to Psychology to Art & Science. Who was it that could integrate & interrelate the vast & awesome weight of Western Intellectual Tradition

with the obscure, enigmatic & oftentimes aurd insights of the East. In fact these were not mere books with beautiful theorizing but contained very practical pointers & techniques applicable to my life & useful in all the situations in which I found myself.

Eventually these books pointed me to the man behind them & to the people who were coming from all over the world to be with him & to the work he was doing with these people & to the invitation he was offering to any who wished to discover for himself what his teaching was - existentially, in the raw, outside the books.

This offer I took & it has brought me immense richness. It has given me a thread which now connects the experiences of my life whatever may happen & has given me a vision of where life can lead me & now where I can invest my energy & love.

Now to this letter's intent:

I stopped my readings of Bhagwan after some 30 books or so. My work with him now is my focus.

This work is called "worship" because we do it out of love & for love & self-understanding.

However for anyone who wants, there are some 200

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of his life's extent. I think no other person on the planet today can claim that profundity of output. And each book in my estimation is a work of art - the poetry of one man's religious experience presented through a multiplicity of cultural frameworks & religious contexts so that from somewhere, almost anywhere, one can find some treasure, be it beauty, insight, humor, compassion, or expansive knowledge.

In the area of the human sciences I have read no man as capable as he to integrate & synthesize the contemporary fields of psychology, philosophy, sociology, anthropology & religion. This is no small feat.

A man of this caliber is an asset to this country. He is an asset to the entire planet.

I will be proud when he can remain here in America. It is a testament to me that even with the scars that America has suffered in its recent past, it can learn, remain open & begin again. I am proud that ours is a country whose constitution & court process guarantees & struggles to protect man's basic search for freedom. I am delighted that Bhagwan wishes now to be here because the possibilities in America, despite its flaws, are the greatest anywhere on earth.

There is an experiment in an alternative lifestyle happening in Rainierpuram, Oregon. So far it has immensely benefited the local economy & sustained many workers on payrolls with its business.

The city-commune project is designed & designated to be a model of how people can live & work together lovingly without competition & monetary incentives & with the benefit of all technical advances & with intelligent care for the natural environment. We are already reclaiming the land against all dire predictions of failure & we are full steam ahead.

And the steam, the inspiration, the love is all around this man Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh.

He can be acclaimed in the Arts or the Sciences or as a man with a cultural alternative which is working.

For these reasons & more I wish him to remain in America, that he may carry out his vision & that America may continue hers.

Sincerely Yours,

Whitlock Lee  
2 Pine Tree Rd.  
Asheville, N.C. 28804