

19 July 1983

To Whom It May Concern,

As a member of the clergy being an Orthodox rabbi and graduate of the Shor-Yoshuv rabbinical college I write to you at this time as I am aware that Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh's visa status is up for consideration.

It is true that I am not a Hindu and remain deeply rooted to my faith yet I feel that any attack upon one religious leader is an attack on all.

I am well acquainted with the writings of Rajneesh. He has written two books on Judaism which I find most instructive and I have actively participated in his meditative processes. I find his dynamic forms of meditation most helpful in relieving the stresses that attend my calling.

Now I find it quite ironic (and shameful) that we allow all sorts of illegal aliens in our country but yet we can find no room in our land or our hearts for a great religious leader.

As a Jew I am very sensitive to the persecution of religious leaders and rebels. Let me caution you not to make the same mistake we made with Jesus of Nazareth (another great religious rebel).

It is obvious from the religious writings and encyclicals released by Rajneesh:

1. that he is a direct threat to all forms of religious and political hypocrisies;
2. that his only weapon is the truthfulness and authenticity of his statements;
3. that in all probability the political machinery of this country is deliberately moving against him in the same way the high court of the Jewish Sanhedran moved against Jesus; and
4. you will not be able to stop his message from reaching people and his ideas will become the dominating force in religious thought by the close of this century.

Having met and spent time with his disciples it is obvious that they themselves do not grasp the full import of his contributions and that his ideas and technologies of meditation (see Meditation the Art of Ecstasy, Harper & Row) will far out-strip any and every form of sectarian or organizational bounds that his disciples may set up.

I urge you to be prudent in your treatment of this man and not to act rashly. It is obvious that many of my colleagues both in the Rabbinite and the Christian clergy will oppose him.

As I see it (and if you read his books and undergo his meditative processes you will also agree) he is the death knell to what we know as organized religion with its values and hypocrisies.

I do not think that the politicians of this country have the intelligence or basic psychological maturity to deal fairly with Rajneesh but perhaps you will surprise me.

Yours truly,

רבי אליהו קיטנבאום

Rabbi Elihu Kestenbaum