

Brian Cooper BSc. D. Ed

Hekerstr. 12

8005 Zürich

Switzerland

To whom it may concern,

I am qualified as a physicist and am at present working in the field of Semiconductor Physics at the ETH in Zürich, Switzerland. As you will know, this field has had, and will have, an enormous impact on our lives. Developments in the 'silicon chip' are taking place at an astounding rate; so much so that it is becoming increasingly difficult to know with certainty what the consequences of its use in our society will be. The same holds true for many other disciplines of science: in Particle physics, in Astronomy, in Medicine and in Biology, we are being forced to ask questions and face issues which are unique in our history and which demand much consideration and discussion.

I, and many others working in science, are becoming increasingly aware of the need to understand and assess the rôle that we, as scientists, play in society. Of chief concern to me is that science is used in a positive way for the benefit of our civilisation. For this to happen there must exist an open discourse between it and the society of which it is a part. Science should not become a closed book, open only to a small elite, taking decisions without due regard to the people it affects. The alienation of science has two possible effects. The first of these results in people who adopt a blind unquestioning faith in science and its practitioners, who lose their powers of critical judgement and consequently the power to decide their own destiny. The second effect, and I see this happening at the present time, is a reaction against science, a desire to turn back the clock.

Unfortunately, the place of science is taken by a form of pseudo-science - a hotch potch of vague ideas and

superiorities which engenders intolerance and prejudice.

It is against this background and in the hope of some solution to these developments that I write this letter. Some time ago I became acquainted with a follower of the Bhagwan movement. I knew little of this group and am not connected with it. However, I have had many interesting conversations, particularly concerning the attitude of Bhagwan towards science. It was heartening to learn that his attitude reflects the feelings of many people, myself included: science is to be accepted as an integral part of our society, to be used for our benefit. Hostility towards and rejection of science is detrimental as it implies a rejection of our own quest for an understanding of the world we live in. Nor should science take the place of religion, becoming an authority beyond the judgement of ordinary people. It was encouraging to find that my friend, who is not a scientist, has

an open attitude towards scientific developments. This attitude contrasts sharply with that of many non-scientists who dismiss science outright and yet have nothing positive to put in its place. It is important that Bhagwan's teaching should be disseminated as it represents a much needed tempering influence in a world of increasing extremism, and helps people to deal with the many problems brought by ever increasing complexity.

The profitious use of science in our society is no easy matter and I feel the outlook taught by Bhagwan is to be encouraged.

Yours faithfully

Brian Cooper