

U.S. Department of Agriculture
Food and Nutrition Service
Park Office Center, Room 1009
Alexandria, Virginia 22302
July 18, 1983

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

I am writing this letter, in my personal capacity, upon hearing recently of the current appeal on behalf of Bagwan Shree Rajneesh to the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service. I am an economist by profession, for many years a college professor (Cornell University, University of Colorado) and currently staff economist with the Office of Analysis and Evaluation, Food and Nutrition Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture in Washington, D.C. I have maintained an active and continuing interest in world cultures, religions and philosophy over the past thirty years.

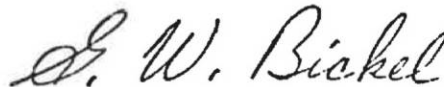
I have followed B. S. Rajneesh's career since his arrival in this country with interest. A distant relative of my family, by marriage, and a good friend of my wife's and mine, has been one of Rajneesh's enthusiastic adherents for a number of years. It is quite clear that the impact of his work and teaching upon this person and her immediate family has been entirely constructive and nothing short of profound.

In observing this positive effect of Rajneesh's work for one individual person, and in reading a number of his published works, I have become convinced that he is an authentic religious leader and teacher of substantial importance and stature.

I believe that it would be a serious error --truly unfounded and inconsistent with the traditional policy and best interests of our country-- to refuse this man continued residence in the United States.

I hope that that action, in my judgement mistaken, unfounded and detrimental to our country, will not be taken by the Immigration and Naturalization Service, and request that my concern and opinion on this matter be registered with the Service before its final decision is rendered.

Sincerely,



Gary W. Bickel, PhD.