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To whom it may concern

I am writing on behalf of Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh. I feel that the genesis of my relationship with him may shed light on the question of his role as a religious leader, though he chooses not to speak publicly. But first, let me introduce myself.

In 1970 I graduated from the University of California with a Bachelor's Degree in English Literature. During the subsequent twelve months I trained to become a teacher of Transcendental Meditation (TM) techniques. From 1971 thru 1975 I worked as an instructor of TM. This included oversight of TM centers in four mid-Atlantic States. From 1975 thru 1977 I represented the TM organizations to the federal government in Washington, D.C. In 1978 I accepted a position with the Sub-committee on International Trade and Monetary Affairs of the Banking Committee of the House of Representatives. I continued in their employ until returning to California to pursue a career in real estate. At this writing, I am a licensed Californian real estate broker. My business activities over the last 5 years include the development of 10 separate housing projects in Southern California, totally 1,000 housing units. Acting as principal, my role in the projects included site acquisition, public agency processing, fund-raising, and project design. I also was President of Childbirth Information Services, a non-profit educational organization dedicated to public dissemination of information on natural childbirth.

In 1982, long after Bhagwan stopped speaking publicly, and at the urging of a friend, I attended a week-end seminar in his teachings in Laguna Beach. However, it is inaccurate to say that the seminar explained or elaborated on his 'teachings'. Rather, the week-end was composed of a variety of supervised "experiences", which gave me a direct, non-intellectual taste of his message. Video-tapes of his lectures and readings were included. But one point is indisputable. The value of the time I spent did not derive from some new intellectual viewpoint previously overlooked which had been unveiled by Bhagwan. No. I was changed even in that first taste by the unmistakable yet entirely unexpected experience of falling in love with Bhagwan. His words, though beautiful and entertaining to be sure, were, and continued to be, the least source of the sustenance of my commitment. Moreover, it is this undeniable, inexplicable yet growing aura of love which sustains me.

Now, I live at Rajneeshpuram dedicating my life and whatever I may have to him and his commune. Whether he speaks is not an issue. His presence is a blessing renewed by sight of him daily. I have realized religion through him. There is no other definition of "religious leader".



Swami Sharanananda
aka George L. Helland

EXHIBIT "A-1753"