

## **The David Lynch Foundation wants a million public school children in its Quiet Time program, despite two court rulings that the practice violates the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment of the Constitution.**

In 1977, a US District Court case challenged TM instruction in public schools in New Jersey, *Malnak v. Yogi* (592 F.2d 1977).

TM lost the case. The New Jersey Court ruled that teaching TM in public schools violated the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment of the U. S. Constitution. TM appealed the decision and lost again. The Hindu ceremony that precedes TM instruction, known as the *puja*, was one of the main reasons the Court cited in its decision:

Although defendants have submitted well over 1500 pages of briefs, affidavits, and deposition testimony in opposing plaintiffs' motion for summary judgment, defendants have failed to raise the slightest doubt as to the facts or as to the religious nature of the teachings of the Science of Creative Intelligence [TM's Hindu underpinnings] and the *puja*. The teaching of the SCI/TM course in New Jersey public high schools violates the establishment clause of the first amendment, and its teaching must be enjoined.<sup>1</sup>

### **A California Case**

Gina Catena, having parents who were TM teachers and growing up in Fairfield, Iowa, home of TM's U.S.-based university, was instrumental in the San Rafael, California school district's rejection of a \$175,000 Quiet Time grant from the David Lynch Foundation. The grant included a provision for a TM club. In a letter to the San Rafael School Board, Catena wrote:

A TM-club could appear to be a positive peer support for those desiring a wholesome lifestyle and to associate with others of common values. For more vulnerable teens, this peer group's idealism and group dynamics may prove seductive. A percentage of them will likely increase their involvement with programs at the local TM center. TM centers offer advanced meditation programs and residence programs to achieve deeper rest and release of stress along with a community of caring supportive other meditators. As one becomes further involved, he or she will learn life style guidelines to enhance their growth of consciousness. Such lifestyle guidelines include the use of unscientific Maharishi Ayurveda medicinal products, Ghandarhva music, Maharishi Jyotish astrology, and architectural guidelines for enlightened household construction called Sthapatyaveda. These advanced programs are optional, but highly lauded and encouraged. Coercive persuasion is subtle and slow.<sup>2</sup>

### **A Great Power in Secrecy**

To get TM into public schools, the organization deliberately withholds information about its secretive practices from parents, teachers and school officials. Supporting this assertion are minutes of an internal discussion of a proposed TM school program in Tampa, Florida or Lexington, Kentucky (the minutes are not clear as to which city is referred to). Raja Rogers Badgett, one of TM's top leaders, conducted the meeting that covered an important point about privacy.

"Keep it private."

*Jane:* We are very excited about the news. Please remember to keep what we have heard private. Protect our schools. We never know what response we may get from the community. Others, who have not had the careful introduction, may not understand the program and cause trouble.

*Jeff:* Even the names of the cities should not be used.

*Raja Rogers:* Maharishi said there is a great power in secrecy.

*Jeff:* One of the principals said it leaked out that she was trying to set aside quiet time. She said she was not being secretive, but strategic. When they found out that quiet time was going to be devoted to the Transcendental Meditation technique they said, "No, no" there are other things they can do during that time. When they realized specifically that it was for the Transcendental Meditation technique, she said I have to go at it differently. The principal reminded me of the importance of being secretive about what steps we have made so far.

*Raja Rogers:* We will get Maharishi's guidance. It may be we move very quickly and do not give the negativity time to build up.<sup>4</sup>

## What Is TM Hiding?

TM programs currently exist in some public schools in San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Chicago because the organization deliberately obfuscates two main components of the practice, the mantra and puja.

## The Mantra

In *Strength in Stillness: The Power of Transcendental Meditation*, Bob Roth, perhaps the best-known TM teacher in the world, describes the TM mantra as a word or sound that has no meaning associated with it.<sup>30</sup>

Roth offers a more detailed explanation in a TM.org video:

I have been asked, "Aren't mantras the names of Buddhist Deities or Hindu gods or whatever?" And the answer is a flat-out no. **There is no meaning associated with the sound. . . They are not the names of some deity. They are not the names of anything. They are just a sound.** [Emphasis A. Siegel.]<sup>5</sup>

## What Did Maharishi Say?

Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, Founder of TM, speaking at a Hindu religious gathering in Kerala, India in 1955 (documented in a booklet titled *The Beacon Light of the Himalayas*), admitted that any word or sound could be used to meditate. Holding a microphone, he said that even the word *mike* could serve as a mantra:

By reducing the sound of the word 'mike' to its subtler and still subtler stages and allowing the mind to go on experiencing all the stages one by one, the mind can be trained to be so sharp as to enter into the subtlest stage of the sound 'mike.'<sup>6</sup>

So, if any word can be used to transcend, why would anyone need to pay a \$1,000 for a TM mantra? The answer, according to Maharishi, is that TM mantras have an important additional benefit: They invoke the influence of Hindu gods. In Maharishi's own words:

But we do not select the sound at random. We do not select any sound like ‘mike,’ flower, table, pen, wail, etc. because such ordinary sounds can do nothing more than merely sharpening the mind . . . **For our practice, we select only the suitable mantras of personal gods. Such mantras fetch to us the grace of personal gods.** [Emphasis A. Siegel.]<sup>7</sup>

## The Puja

As with the mantras, Roth is no doubt familiar with the puja, the Hindu religious ceremony that precedes TM initiation, yet his latest book on TM doesn’t mention of the word *puja*. **Instead, he describes it as "a simple thank-you ceremony . . . a lovely cultural tradition, and not religious in any way."** He also states that students are not asked to participate in the ceremony.

Roth’s definition is at odds, however, with the online *Oxford Dictionary*, which defines *puja* as “the act of worship.”<sup>45</sup> In a casual, conversational manner, Roth mentions that the ceremony includes a few flowers, some fresh fruit, a candle, a stick of incense, and a picture of Maharishi’s teacher, Guru Dev. He doesn’t disclose that the puja is chanted in Sanskrit, or that, even if requested, the student will not receive a translation of the ceremony.

Before instruction, the student is *not* told that the picture of Maharishi’s guru (Guru Dev) occupies the center of an altar, surrounded by brass cups filled with camphor, rice, incense, and other items that are used by the TM instructor to make 17 offerings to Guru Dev during the ceremony. The student is required to bring fresh flowers, fruit, and a white handkerchief to the ceremony, all of which are used in the offerings made by the instructor to Guru Dev. Further, Roth does not mention that the puja concludes with a string of divine epithets applied to Guru Dev. Nor does he say that, at the end of the ceremony, although not mandatory, the student is invited to join the teacher in bowing down before the image of Guru Dev.<sup>9</sup>

Maharishi believed the puja, along with TM mantras, inserted the influence of Hindu deities into the lives of TM initiates. He also believed that the puja created a mystical connection to the guru, as well as deities created during the puja. The mystical power of the puja in enlivening Hindu gods is a highly guarded secret; it was revealed in the minutes of a meeting on February 6, 2007, conducted by Raja Badgett. Speaking to the local TM directors, Badgett begins with a story about Arjuna, a central figure in Hindu scripture:

The great general was teaching Arjuna about all the celestial weapons and how to use them. After the training, Arjuna tried to use them. They wouldn’t work. The great general told him, “There has to be dakshina for them to work.”

Then Badgett continued, Dakshina is a gift, like the fruit, flowers and course fee to learn TM. For our own understanding, the technique isn’t going to work until there is dakshina. **We don’t tell the general public this.** [Emphasis A. Siegel.]<sup>10</sup>

Contrast Roth’s description of the puja with Maharishi’s, which he offered in his “Vedic Day of Awakening of All the Laws of Nature” address on November 20, 2007:

For this, again and again, we offer Puja to Guru Dev . . . We perform the Puja, and all silence at our disposal. This will be the fruit of our Puja. It happened to be a day well marked in the Indian Calendar—the day of awakening of all the gods [Pravo-dhani Ekadshi], the day of awakening of all the silent level of administration of the Constitution of the Universe, the Will of G-d, the Veda . . . With this understanding, that we are so blessed, with this great fulfillment, we are offering ourself (sic) to Guru Dev, our Puja to Guru Dev.<sup>11</sup>

## Learn TM's history to uncover fundamental truths about the TM Organization and its founder, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi.

The TM organization wants government and foundation money, along with donations from wealthy businesspeople and celebrities, to pay for TM instruction. Accordingly, the TM.org website fails to mention key elements that reveal TM is not merely a secular relaxation technique:

### A. Spirituality and Higher Consciousness

Spirituality and higher consciousness were Maharishi's main messages until he realized he could make more money selling health than spirituality to Westerners.<sup>38</sup> When he introduced TM in the United States, his entire focus was higher consciousness or enlightenment. In India, the formula was TM 10 minutes twice a day for 3 to 5 years. In the United States, it was 20 minutes twice a day for 5 to 7 years. After instruction, TM promotes weekend, week-long, and month-long courses that feature more frequent meditations for more extended periods, along with exposure to Maharishi's take on Hinduism. For those wanting a "deeper" experience, there are the TM Sidhis program and even a five-month teacher training program that currently costs \$19,000. (At Aryeh's training course, which lasted six months, participants meditated 8 to 10 times a day for about an hour each session).<sup>12</sup>

- B. **The TM Sidhi Program and Other Enlightenment Accelerants:** Maharishi sold the TM-Sidhi program as a superhighway to enlightenment. My course consisted of learning and repeating nineteen English words or short phrases that were referred to as sutras. This was followed by 10-15 minutes of reading Hindu scriptures, followed by a ten-minute rest. In addition to higher consciousness, a Sidha would develop superpowers, including the ability to levitate, become invisible, and have the strength of an elephant. He also promised omniscience and eternal life. In the late 1970s, TM held press conferences and distributed photographs purporting to show people levitating. The photos were fakes. Now, after four decades, not one person has ever demonstrated levitation, renamed *yogic flying* (or any of the other superpowers Maharishi promised).<sup>13</sup> TM still sells the Sidhi/yogic flying course.<sup>14</sup>

The advertisement is a rectangular poster with a double-line border. In the top left corner is a circular portrait of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi with a white beard and hair, wearing a white robe. Below the portrait, the text reads: "Maharishi Mahesh Yogi / Founder of the TM Program". To the right of the portrait, the words "SUPERNORMAL POWERS" are written in a large, bold, serif font. Below this, in a smaller font, it says: "REGULAR PRACTICE OF THE TM TECHNIQUE DEVELOPS SUPERNORMAL POWERS SUCH AS:". This is followed by a list of powers: "Levitating the body at will", "Supernormal sight and hearing", and "Invisibility". Below the list, the text reads: "Lecture: TM and Supernormal powers / Wed., June 15th — 7:30 P.M. Howard Johnson's Rt. 3 / Use Motor Lodge Entrance". In the bottom left corner, the letters "TM" are written in a large, stylized, blocky font, with the word "Program" underneath it. In the bottom right corner, the text reads: "ADMISSION: ADULTS \$3.00 / STUDENTS \$2.00" and "The Transcendental Meditation Program". At the very bottom, in small print, it says: "© 1978 The TM Society, Inc. All rights reserved. TM is a registered trademark of The TM Society, Inc. TM is a registered trademark of The TM Society, Inc."

Newspaper Ad, Circa 1978

- C. **Medicinals, Herbs, Astrology, Prayers, etc.:** When the Sidhis didn't work, Maharishi pushed Ayurveda medicinal and herbal products, gemstones, Hindu prayer services known as *yagyas* that cost thousands of dollars, Hindu astrology, and a Hindu version of Feng Shui known as *Sthapatya Veda*. Each is a profit center with its own website; none are linked to TM.org. After 50 years and reportedly millions of people learning TM, not one person has been demonstrated to have reached enlightenment. However, the enlightenment accelerators, along with TM's myriad businesses and real estate holdings, made Maharishi a multi-billionaire.
- D. **Rajas:** TM.org does not mention the Rajas, the highest-level administrators in Maharishi's fantasy world, a.k.a. The *Global Country of World Peace*. Rajas are wealthy older men who've attended a three-week "enlightenment course" at a cost one million dollars. They wear long white robes, necklaces with gold medallions, and little gold crowns.<sup>15</sup>

Maharishi referred to his Rajas as the representatives of Divine Intelligence, the shining stars who played a parental role for their people, setting all life in the evolutionary direction. Not only would Raja's rule "Heaven on Earth," they were the "practical channel of the Cosmic Government on Earth . . . the administrators of Heaven on Earth."<sup>16</sup>

## **The Relaxation Response is superior to TM's Quiet Time program in public schools.**

Fortunately, there is an alternative to TM. The relaxation response developed almost 50 years ago by Harvard University research physician Herbert Benson, is superior to TM as a possible treatment option for PTSD. Easily learned, the relaxation response is nonreligious and costs a fraction of TM instruction. Individuals can learn it for free from Dr. Benson, who explains the technique on YouTube.

In 1971, Dr. Herbert Benson, along with Robert Wallace and Archie Wilson, documented a set of unique physiological changes that TM produced in experienced meditators. Various measurements demonstrated that during meditation, study subjects (experienced TMers) were resting more deeply than if in a deep sleep while remaining mentally alert. Benson described these physiological parameters as a "wakeful hypometabolic state."<sup>17</sup>

Benson, a pioneer in the field of mind-body medicine, immediately recognized the potential health benefits of the deep rest one could experience during TM. He hypothesized that the state was not specific to TM and studied different cultures and religions. He found that almost all of them had a tradition or practice that produced a state of relaxation.

A few years later, Benson developed a simple technique that produced an identical physiological profile to TM, which he named the Relaxation Response. Benson's technique had added benefits: One could learn it for free, and it was void of religious undertones. Unlike TM, which has many secretive elements, all aspects of Benson's technique are open to scientific investigation.

First, Benson demonstrated that the relaxation response could be elicited predictably and that its results were measurable and reproducible. He then began testing the relaxation response in the healing process of medical conditions caused or complicated by stress. Researchers at Harvard University, Massachusetts General Hospital, and other esteemed institutions have studied the relaxation response. Well over a hundred scientific papers on the relaxation response have been published in medical journals<sup>18</sup>

TM has never agreed to a head-to-head study comparing its results to the relaxation response, yet it has maligned and misrepresented the relaxation response for over 40 years. The organization has denied that the physiological markers are the same.

The relaxation response so concerned the TM organization that *someone* associated with TM created a phony website which, to this day, appears near the top of a Google search for *the relaxation response*: <http://www.relaxationresponse.org/steps>. The site pretends to belong to Dr. Benson and includes fake research purportedly demonstrating TM's superiority over the relaxation response. In an email to Aryeh Siegel, Dr. Benson's associates confirmed their repeated requests that the website is taken down-were ignored.

## About the Author

Aryeh Siegel, MSSA, MPH, taught TM and Directed of TM's Institute for Social Rehabilitation for five years in the mid-1970s. He did TM four hours a day for ten years and stopped in 1981. Having moved on with his life, Aryeh forgot about TM. Then, four years ago, he noticed several A-list celebrities promoting the benefits of TM. His curiosity aroused, he took a fresh look at TM and the TM organization and first learned about the David Lynch Foundation. He felt compelled to investigate what he knew to be exaggerated claims about TM's benefits. The information he uncovered—abysmal scientific research, public court rulings, published news reports, first-hand accounts, and other public and private information—prompted Aryeh to write the book *Transcendental Deception: Behind the TM curtain-bogus science, hidden agendas, and David Lynch's campaign to push a million public school kids into Transcendental Meditation while falsely claiming it is not a religion*, published in 2018.

## Contact

For more information, please visit [www.TMdeception.com](http://www.TMdeception.com). Aryeh Siegel can be contacted through the website or email him at [aryeh@tmdeception.com](mailto:aryeh@tmdeception.com). Email Aryeh to request a PDF or review copy of *Transcendental Deception: Behind the TM curtain*.

## Notes

[1] Malnak v. Yogi, 440 F. Supp. 1284 (D.N.J. 1977). See <https://law.justia.com/cases/federal/district-courts/FSupp/440/1284/1817490/>

[2] Letter to the San Rafael School Board – or – How TM Lures the Young and Vulnerable. <http://tmfree.blogspot.com/2007/01/letter-to-san-rafael-school-board-or-how.html>

[3] See Transcendental Meditation Domain of Atlanta Directors Meeting Notes, 2005-2007. Available online at [https://wikileaks.org/wiki/Transcendental\\_Meditation\\_Domain\\_of\\_Atlanta\\_Directors\\_Meeting\\_Notes,\\_2005-2007](https://wikileaks.org/wiki/Transcendental_Meditation_Domain_of_Atlanta_Directors_Meeting_Notes,_2005-2007)

[4] Bob Roth, *Strength in Stillness: The Power of Transcendental Meditation* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 2018), p. 53

[5] What Is the Transcendental Meditation Mantra? YouTube video (1:41). Posted by Transcendental Meditation online at [https://youtu.be/\\_0rbfSaRwCU](https://youtu.be/_0rbfSaRwCU)

[6] Maharishi Mahesh Yoga, "Beacon Light of the Himalayas, 3 of 4." Available online at <http://minet.org/www.trancenet.net/secrets/beacon/beacon1.shtml>

[7] Maharishi Mahesh Yoga, "Beacon Light of the Himalayas, 3 of 4." Available online at <http://minet.org/www.trancenet.net/secrets/beacon/beacon1.shtml>

[8] Bob Roth, *Strength in Stillness: The Power of Transcendental Meditation* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 2018), p. 52.

[9] *Malnak v. Yogi*, 440 F. Supp. 1284 (D.N.J. 1977). Retrieved from <https://law.justia.com/cases/federal/district-courts/FSupp/440/1284/1817490/>

[10] See *Transcendental Meditation Domain of Atlanta Directors Meeting Notes, 2005-2007*. Available online at [https://wikileaks.org/wiki/Transcendental\\_Meditation\\_Domain\\_of\\_Atlanta\\_Directors\\_Meeting\\_Notes,\\_2005-2007](https://wikileaks.org/wiki/Transcendental_Meditation_Domain_of_Atlanta_Directors_Meeting_Notes,_2005-2007)

[11] Jamie Benares. 2019, November 19 Status update text [Facebook update]. Retrieved from [https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story\\_fbid=2283037871933004&id=100006804402661](https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=2283037871933004&id=100006804402661)

[12] Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, *Science of Being and Art of Living: Transcendental Meditation* (New York, NY: Plume; 2001).

[13] "The TM and TM-Sidhi Techniques," Meditation Information Network; accessed September 27, 2017, at <http://minet.org/mantras.html>

[14] See <http://www.yogicflying.org/how-to-learn.html>

[15] As depicted in the David Sieveking documentary (*David Wants to Fly*, 2010; Berlin: Neue Visionen) The documentary depicts the rajas in costume and one raja confirms on-screen the million-dollar cost of raja training. The documentary may be streamed at [www.tmdeception.com](http://www.tmdeception.com)

[16] *Governor Recertification Course: Overview of Policies & Procedures*, Wikileaks. See <https://file.wikileaks.org/file/tm-governor-course-2005.pdf>

[17] Wallace, Robert K. & Benson, Herbert & Wilson, Archie. (1971) A wakeful hypometabolic physiologic state [PDF file]. Retrieved from <https://www.physiology.org/doi/abs/10.1152/ajplegacy.1971.221.3.795>

[18] Benson-Henry Institute "Published Research" Retrieved from <https://www.bensonhenryinstitute.org/research-published-research/>