

The TM Movement Going Forward

January 12, 2015

To my TM movement family:

Every one of you who became an initiator, every one of you who learned TM and enjoyed it for years, every one of you who dedicated your entire life to helping me achieve my goals, and every one of you who just heard me speak once, but smiled inside, is part of my TM movement family. The part you decided to play in our family was your own choice, but that choice was undoubtedly rooted in our previous history together, in the kind of relationship you have developed with me, and in the intensity of your desire for spiritual progress.

As all those who worked closely with me know, there were many decisions I felt I had to make over the decades to protect the integrity of Guru Dev's wisdom, and some of those decisions required that I put the pursuit of the goals of the TM movement ahead of my personal relationships with some of you. My clear realization after my physical death that I had made many such decisions disheartened me. Guru Dev was kind to me, as always, and reminded me that my dismay was similar to Arjuna's dismay in the Bhagavad-Gita when he realized that the battle he was about to fight was against his own relatives.

In that light, Guru Dev and I decided to discuss this issue with our own closest friends — the other members of The Movement we all formed millennia ago with the common goal of increasing the happiness and enlightenment of the human race.

Due to several revelations made during our “comparing notes” meeting, our discussions extended into a lengthy reanalysis of our goals and our methods that proved very fruitful. One of our surprising conclusions was that the inspiring stories we have told you, and other similar attempts we have made to increase your enthusiasm for spiritual progress, have often generated more new fears than dispelled old ones.

One example of the many ideas like this I developed for your benefit should suffice. Buildings made in accordance with Vastu architectural principles have definite advantages. They can be healthier and more beautiful places to work or to live in. But Vastu principles also provide a clear idea of how difficult the remaking of all of human civilization would be. Because as difficult, costly, time-consuming and improbable as remaking all the buildings in the world according to Vastu principles would be, much harder still would it be to remake all human personalities in this world in accordance with nobler principles. And since neither buildings nor personalities are remade quickly, it does not take long before the fears caused by thinking that your spiritual progress will suffer simply because some building entrance is not facing in the right direction, or because some material used in your home is not natural enough, begin to overwhelm all the advantages of these specially designed buildings.

Since all the members of The Movement agree that fear is based on ignorance, and since so much of what we have tried has led to such fears, that made us think. We even thought that perhaps we might have been missing something all along.

All of us in The Movement, for example, found it fascinating and surprising that our experiences of unusual states of consciousness could be reinterpreted coherently with a very different explanation. Due to our own emotional attachment to the previous explanation, it took time for us to realize that the discrepancies between our theory and our experiences were actually of great importance. It will undoubtedly take much more time for us to reevaluate both the meaning and the usefulness of our previous observations on yoga, the process of transcending, samadhi and related subjects. And that is why the members of The Movement have unanimously decided to experiment with a different approach: to use total transparency when presenting our explanations, hoping that will prove even more inspiring in the long run.

It is already clear to us, for example, that our reevaluation will produce a more expanded understanding of enlightenment, because several common understandings imply that a permanent state of enlightenment is essentially an exit strategy from human life — either through divine merger or extinguishing individuality or reaching a permanent plateau in individual consciousness or at least escaping forever from the grip of karma and the illusions of maya. Not one of these various understandings emphasizes character development because each implies individual personality is inherently flawed — something to be escaped. But if our individual minds are themselves eternal, then success in pursuing enlightenment might be more wisely measured by not only the development of one's full potential, but also by its utilization through greater clarity of mind, more intelligent decision-making, more personal integrity, more profound happiness and higher quality emotions. All of us in The Movement find it inspiring that the process of improving those character traits essentially has no limits — and is only subject to each individual's personal vision of what is possible to achieve.

The Movement's decision to no longer impose any behavioral rules was similarly motivated. When comparing their advantages and disadvantages, it is suspected that the rules' disadvantages far outweigh the advantages due to the many fears those rules generate, and due to the enticing power over less courageous minds that rule-generation makes possible. So The Movement has decided to experiment to see whether that proves true.

The Movement has also reached another major conclusion: to replace its use of the master-disciple relationship with friendship. We have often felt, being able to assess other personalities so well, that we could make better decisions for others. But sometimes all that appears to do in the long run is make those people enjoy being subservient. And then they go and make themselves subservient to another mind who enjoys their subservience simply because it allows that subsequent master to feel more powerful than his disciple. And the whole thing quickly becomes a mess. Those disadvantages, which we have been aware of for a long, long time, now totally outweigh what we had always perceived to be its advantage — preparing a mind for ultimate submission. Since we now have serious doubts about that goal, those clear

disadvantages have no corresponding advantage to make them acceptable. So we are also eliminating whatever we think might lead to submissive behavior.

Some of you might find this new approach unsettling or confusing at first. But I hope it will quickly begin to feel better than what came before. I also think that these new explanations will be almost immediately liberating to some, especially those of you who have already reached similar conclusions independently.

Unintentionally, of course, the TM movement is ideally suited to test The Movement's new approach. Its quick slide into fear and restrictions, which began decades ago and which I can now see many of my own decisions are responsible for, distresses me, as I have seen my family do this before. And I want to nip it in the bud this time.

The method I have chosen for that is an experiment designed to discover what protects the purity of the teaching more. I have told you tales of how the Vedic teaching has always been lost. And the members of the Holy Tradition have assumed until now that the protective rules we have always put in place have slowed an inevitable process of loss over time until one of us returns to regenerate the purity and effectiveness of the teaching, as I have done. But we now wonder whether the fear generated by those protective rules has been even more detrimental to the purity of the teaching than having no rules and no fears might have been.

So we are guessing that even an adulterated teaching without fear may be more effective than an unadulterated teaching full of fear due to the teachers' insecurity about violating those protective rules.

I am therefore freeing all my teachers from those protective rules. I am also freeing all the leaders of the TM organization from the impossible tasks I gave you. Every member of the TM movement family has free will. Exercise it. I have confidence that most of you will make responsible decisions about sharing with others the gift of transcending. And I am not concerned that there might be dismal failures involved, that some fools will step forward and say they see the light when they are actually immersed in darkness, and will mislead others until one of the more courageous members of our TM movement family steps forward and gently redirects the misled to effective transcending. I even know this will happen. Often. But this is a long-term experiment whose outcome will take centuries to determine, and given the repeated failures in the past to protect the purity of the teaching, I am willing to give this a try. Because of its priceless value in making life more profoundly fulfilling, everyone in the Holy Tradition wants to eventually find the best way to make effortless transcending a daily experience for billions.

Based on the depth of our experience, but awaiting confirmation from the results of this experiment, I can safely say that the members of the Holy Tradition assume that:

- 1) An unadulterated teaching process for teaching TM, without any fear-inducing rules in the process or in the organization, should prove most effective,

- 2) An adulterated teaching of TM which uses the natural tendency of the mind to turn within, and which is taught without any fear in its process, should also prove effective,
- 3) Any teaching of TM which gets caught up in fear and so loses its effortlessness could soon prove counterproductive, and
- 4) Any teaching of a meditation technique which does not use the natural tendency of the mind to turn within, and which gets caught up in fear and effort, could also prove counterproductive.

Even so, don't waste time condemning other ways to turn within. That's like saying only Shankara has something to say about yoga. No matter how brilliant, no one person is the whole game. The whole game includes all of us, in all our great multiplicity.

Let me emphasize again that, for the purposes of my experiment, you can certainly continue to teach TM just as I taught you to, and the TM movement can continue to operate just as I organized it. Or not. Everyone should feel free to move forward as simply as possible, unburdened by fear of failure or responsibility for some spiritual disaster if two flowers fall to the ground during puja — or if you forget to meditate twice one day. Anything like that. But be courageous. No one is going to punish you if you are courageous — except maybe your former friends — who will be your future friends again once they discover their own courage within. In the meantime, many of you have years of productive teaching still ahead of you.

It is for that reason that I have intervened now, so that you can enjoy those years without fear and then continue on, pleased and happy with your involvement in our TM movement family.

This intervention, dramatic enough in itself, has had its special moments too. One was during my third conversation with George, on January 6th, 2014, the fourth day after his sister Mary Iber died. I showed him scenes from my childhood as John the Baptist, when his sister Mary was Elizabeth, my mother. I showed him these scenes as he was driving his car on a bridge near San Francisco, visually projecting them into his field of vision. I also showed him many other scenes like that as he drove to the San Francisco airport which filled in gaps in our two previous conversations.

During that third conversation I also described the details I wanted included in my former mother Elizabeth's cremation. Following those instructions, we were able to have her body cremated at 10 a.m. on my birthday, January 12, 2014. I am very grateful to those of you in our family who stepped forward to help make this happen for me.

As part of that cremation ceremony, to make it as clear as I could to all of you that the primary value of a meditation technique is to reconnect you with your Self, I asked George to cremate the mantras, along with the body of his sister, in a simple ritual I gave him during that

third conversation. I felt I needed a powerful symbol to convey to each of you that my meditation technique, and any other meditation technique, is dispensable. But your Self is not. Because I sometimes overemphasized the importance of the TM technique itself, at the high cost for many of you of misperceiving its actual degree of importance, I am concerned that, if things continue on their current path, the TM technique will be transformed within a few decades into something resembling a sacrament administered by a priesthood which uses fear to keep others dependent on them. And I do not want my name associated with anything of the kind, as that will undoubtedly ruin most of TM's effectiveness.

You will find that Guru Dev made the same point about the relative value of meditation techniques when contrasted with the ultimate value of your Self.

Of course, even though I have had them symbolically cremated, the mantras will certainly continue to be effective. That was only a ritual to show you that I meant it when I had George explain during the 30th November presentation that I was stripping TM back to its purest form — the simple intent to turn within using the natural tendency of the mind to do just that.

I will of course be keeping track of my experiment, looking in on you from time to time. But the TM movement is also your movement. You can make of it whatever you want. In the meantime, my energy is directed to working with my friends in The Movement on our new plan.

I would also like each of you to know that, whether or not the TM movement leaders consider you part of the TM movement family, I do. And I will for centuries to come. You are my family, my friends, and although I will take a different role in our family in the future, I am sure my closest friends will always recognize me.

I would encourage every current and every future TM movement leader to follow the Holy Tradition's lead, set during our "comparing notes" meeting, in analyzing all TM movement policies and decisions with an eye to discarding anything that causes fear — especially any fear that outweighs anticipated advantages.

But whether we succeed in eliminating fear from our family or not, I am confident that in the centuries to come people will say about each of you that you have a gift. A gift for helping people turn within. A gift given by Guru Dev to me. And a gift given by me to you.

Let your gift spread widely.

Jai Guru Dev

Love,
Maharishi