

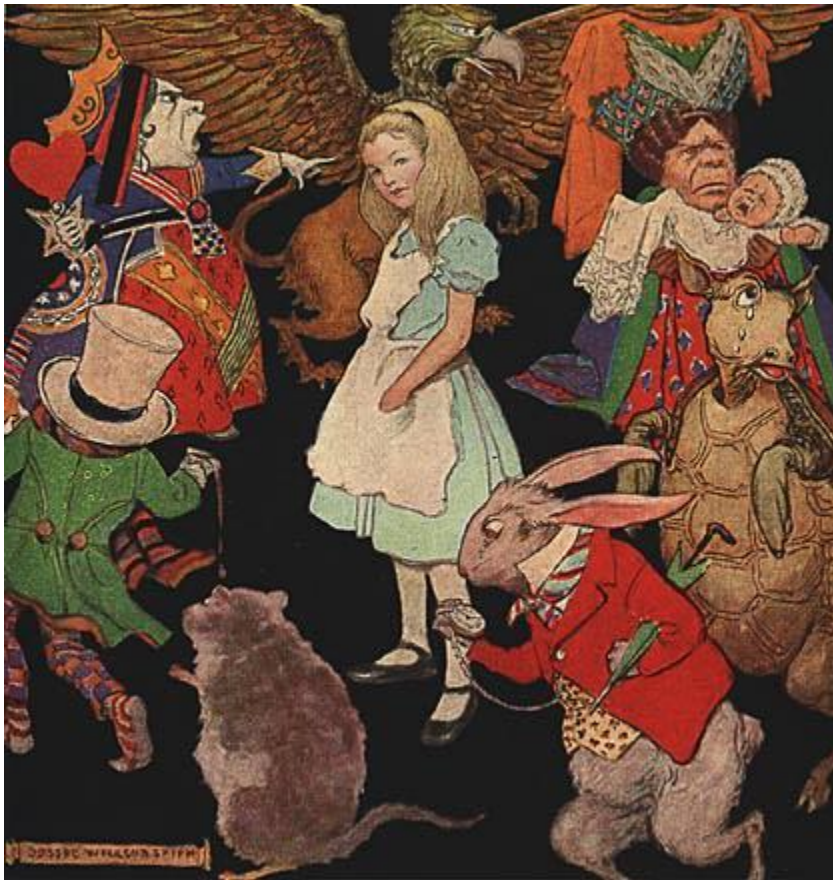
Because intelligence is absolutely no barrier to cult recruitment. This is because a person's intelligence is totally bypassed during the process of cult recruitment. **When reality testing is suspended then one's intelligence is *not applied at all* in order to ascertain the reasonableness of the cult's teachings.**

<http://suggestibility.org/>

"Falling Down the TM Rabbit Hole" How Transcendental Meditation Really Works, a Critical Opinion

(Note: Anyone with more than a casual interest in TM will want to view the new film "David Wants To Fly.")

This site is critical of Transcendental Meditation®



My name is Joe Kellett. **Although I am a former "Transcendental Meditation"® (often just called "TM"®) teacher I no longer in any way represent the late Maharishi Mahesh Yogi or any of his organizations.**

On the contrary, the purpose of this site is to provide information and arguments recommending *against* involvement with any of his organizations.

If you want the official TM position, go to an [official TM organizational source](#). You also can find links to many additional official TM organizational sources at [AllTM.org](#).

[They want to do much more than just teach you how to relax!](#)

However, after researching those sites then come back here. What you will have read is that TM produces very deep relaxation which has been scientifically proven to have both physical and psychological health benefits. (You may have read some outrageous things about ["world peace"](#) too but let's skip over that for now.)

What that scientific research does in fact show is that (a) TM produces deep relaxation in some people, and (b) **deep relaxation can have physical and psychological health benefits. I have no argument with that.** It's true (however do beware though of [egregious spin-doctoring](#) performed in TM propaganda regarding scientific research).

What I *do* have a problem with is that TM teachers use that as a starting point to recruit people into a cult. For one example, *many* people who start off thinking that they will just learn how to relax end up paying several thousand dollars for classes in developing supernatural powers such as levitation. [Here is a video](#) of people who started off just wanting to relax but who now (several thousand *additional* dollars later) are practicing what they sincerely think is actual physical levitation (the music is whimsical but that's actual footage of a "group flying session")!

Those people aren't just "learning" how to levitate. They are also "learning", they sincerely believe, how to become invisible. In fact, they are "learning" quite a *number* of supernatural powers. And [that's just the beginning](#) of what they're getting into. How did those people get from just wanting to relax to finding themselves practicing levitation and invisibility?

First, those people were deceived

TM teachers are trained to deceive you. They are *good people* and they deceive you from *good motives* because they want to hide from you things that "you aren't ready to understand yet." If you heard those things then your misunderstanding might prevent you from learning TM, and that would be a very tragic thing for you.

These well-intentioned TM teachers will deceive you in two ways. The first way is that they freely employ a technique of deception called "[mental reservation](#)." **This form of deception involves *hiding* information from you while letting you *believe* that you have *all* of the information that you need. This was the form of deception employed by Bill Clinton when he said "I did not have sex with that woman."** He wasn't "lying" (at least not according to his private unstated mental definition of "sex") but he was still *deliberately "deceiving."* As he famously said "It depends on what the meaning of the word 'is' is". **TM advocates are pulling identical deceptions on you!**

TMers also quite freely and egregiously employ a form of propaganda called "[spin doctoring](#)." This is a form of deception involving *deliberate distortion of the facts*. In this website I will show you how both techniques of deception are used.

Second, those people's psychological vulnerabilities were taken advantage of

As I will [discuss in detail](#) this is how TM works: (a) first a person is told that by following a certain procedure he will attain deep relaxation, and (b) then he is then shown how to induce a trance state in himself in which that suggestion is acted out. Of course TM is *very* elaborate and effective in how it carries this out and I discuss this in great detail at that link.

And once *some* people are in a trance state they become so "suggestible" that in addition to acting out the suggestion that they should relax deeply, they will swallow doctrinal indoctrination whole without rationally analyzing it. This process of trance induction followed by immediately by doctrinal indoctrination is [how all cults recruit](#). The only difference between the many various cults is *how* they induce the trance state and what the specific doctrine is that is thus inculcated.

Heavy TM involvement can create severe psychological problems

Attorney Anthony DeNaro, former professor of economics and business law at the private TM university [Maharishi University of Management](#), as well as being a former legal counsel to the same institution, described [a very serious and deliberate pattern of fraud](#), and that "outright lies and deception, are used [to cover-up or sanitize the dangerous reality](#) on campus of:

A disturbing denial or avoidance syndrome, and even outright lies and deception, are used to cover-up or sanitize the dangerous reality on campus of very serious **nervous breakdowns, episodes of dangerous and bizarre behavior, suicidal and homicidal ideation, threats and attempts, psychotic episodes, crime, depression and manic behavior** that often accompanied roundings (intensive group meditations with brainwashing techniques). Euphemisms are employed to describe essentially dangerous, unstable and injurious behavior. "Unstressing," for example,

...There were meditators who experienced serious breakdowns during and following meditation. MIU and the counseling staff usually opted for banishment in these cases, although their practices often triggered mental breakdowns. Many students who experienced severe and uncontrollable trauma from meditation came to me for assistance and counseling since Jonathan Shapiro and his staff were punitive and hostile in their "therapeutic" approach.

You can read about this in more detail [here](#).

The weird world of David Lynch

A lot of people are coming to this site curious about David Lynch. **David Lynch is the Tom Cruise of Transcendental Meditation.**

Tom Cruise believes *absolutely* that 75 million years ago the [evil galactic ruler Xenu](#) perpetrated mass atrocities that are causing the population of the entire world to suffer intensely to this day. The reason that humanity is suffering is that our own souls are *encrusted* with "body thetans", migrant souls that were created when Xenu blew up volcanoes containing millions of people who were in suspended animation. Tom Cruise is trying to save the world by telling all of us how to get rid of those body thetans.

Lynch is a *whole* lot nicer, but just as nuts. He believes the following (taken from "[David Lynch: The weird world of David Lynch](#)", "The Independent", 21 July 2005 -- read the whole article!):

Students who meditate, Lynch assured the New York Post yesterday, will: "Start shining like a bright, shiny penny and their anxieties will go away. By diving within, **they will attain a field of pure consciousness, pure bliss, creativity, intelligence, dynamic peace** [emphasis mine]. You enliven the field, and every day it gets better. Negativity recedes."

Ok, that qualifies as "eccentric" but not as "nuts" yet. It gets better:

With [his new outfit](#), Lynch also intends to ease tension for all the rest of us by putting together "**peace-creating super groups of 8,000 meditators**" [emphasis mine] around the world, who will all chant simultaneously for peace and harmony. It is important that each group has 8,000 participants because "it's the size of the square root of one per cent of the world's population."

But it gets *much* better! (taken from the same article):

Lynch has insisted in recent interviews that he still has some way to go with TM before achieving full enlightenment. A few years ago, however, he did achieve the status of "siddha", or yogic flier. In other words, **he is one of those people whose state of meditation becomes so profound that they are meant to [levitate from the ground](#)** [emphasis mine]. (In practice this seems to involve a lot of hopping about one knee, hopefully on a rubber mat.) "I'm not a great flier," he said recently.

Here's that ["levitation" clip](#) again. Seriously, Lynch *really* believes that these people are rising up into the air via supernatural powers! *Now* we've reached the level of "nuts."

He also firmly believes that by continuing to practice this budding skill twice daily **it will only be a matter of time until TMers will be able to hover in place, and that after that they will eventually be able to zoom about at will.** (Go [here](#) and search for "2525" -- perhaps "by the year 2525" they'll be hovering, but it seems like "Stage III" zooming might take awhile.)

And as a trained "yogic flyer" himself Lynch practices this skill *himself*, faithfully, at least twice a day, whenever possible. **Yes! Lynch believes that he can levitate!**

And that's just a start

And, again, that's only the *tip* of the TM doctrinal iceberg. For example, TMers believe that the practice of TM will eventually bring them to a [state of moral perfection](#). And after that they will achieve a state where [they will have a direct perception of God!](#)

So I am comparing myself to Cruise and Lynch? Most emphatically *not* in terms of such things as talent and accomplishment. But all three of us are human beings who put our pants on one leg at a time. All three of us share that we have a human psychology. And most, importantly, **all three of us also share that our paths to our crazy beliefs involved the exploitation of the same extremely common vulnerabilities in human psychology. These are the vulnerabilities that are [exploited by all cults](#).**

How much money do you have? Get more!

Learning the basic TM technique will set you back \$1500 in the US. How much *more* money do you have? However much it is, it's not so much that you can't spend it all on TM. **TMers often end up spending everything they have on [TM-related offerings](#)** . For *example*:

- You will *definitely* want to purchase levitation instruction. The last I heard this is on the order of \$3000.
- You can seek "perfect health" by buying ["Ayurvedic Medicine" consultations](#), and then [buying ayurvedic remedies](#).
- You can seek to put your life in order by buying [astrology](#) horoscopes and readings.
- Based on your chart, the astrologer will recommend that you "eliminate dangers and negative tendencies in your life" by buying some [yagyas](#) (that's the same page as just given for astrology, just go down a few paragraphs). These are prayer ceremonies to Hindu deities. Hey, that's cool if you're Hindu, but it's something that definitely doesn't come up when the David Lynch Foundation [pitches TM to an assembly of school parents](#). **The DLF definitely practices deception by mental reservation at those meetings** Maybe some of the parents don't want their kids exposed to surreptitious religious evangelism that will lead some of the kids to the eventual purchase of yagyas as adults.

- Based on your chart, the astrologer will also recommend [gemstones](#) for you to purchase and wear.
- You can buy what's called an "advanced technique." This involves merely having your mantra adjusted for which you pay over \$1000.
- You can buy a house built according to Mahesh's brand of "[Vedic](#)" [feng shui](#). Specifically, you'll want a "[Fortune Creating Home](#)."

Is TM is a religion? Dig through the mental reservations!

TMers will tell you over and over again that TM is just a "simple, natural relaxation technique" that requires no faith in order for it to work. So what am I talking about? How can a "relaxation technique" be a "cult"?

Here's the first egregious *deception* by "[mental reservation](#)" that you will encounter. When TMers say that TM is "just a relaxation technique" they are employing a deception by [mental reservation](#) because there are *two* meanings to the term "Transcendental Meditation":

- There is, indeed, "TM-the-relaxation-technique."
- But there is also "[TM-the-dogmatic-spiritual-teaching](#) ."

They are deceiving when they tell you that TM is a simple relaxation technique because despite having told you that, they are also going to teach you TM-the-dogmatic-spiritual-teaching as an *integral* part of your instruction in the relaxation technique! And their conscious hope is that you will come to believe in this teaching.

In other words, they are pushing *both* "TMs" at you at once, one overtly and the other *covertly*. I discuss this at length [elsewhere in this site](#) . And some people *will* in fact come to believe in the TM spiritual dogma because of suspension of their psychological "[reality testing](#)" mechanism.

It is TM-the-dogmatic-spiritual-teaching that is a cult. Saying "TM is just a relaxation technique" is much like saying that "Scientology is just a personality test." This is because in both cases the covert goal is that you will come to believe in the spiritual teachings.

Both the TMers and the Scientologists are very good people. (Yes, I include the Scientologists, most people in cults are very good people, Tom Cruise is a very good person who *truly and sincerely* cares *greatly* about you, he's only trying to do the right thing for you and the world; the fact that he does this in an oppressively arrogant and offensive way is a different matter.) These good people *only want the best for you*. **TMers consciously deceive only because they are afraid that if they tell you the *real* plan for you up front that you will run away, to your own very great spiritual detriment.**

(A note: I can't keep saying "TM-the-relaxation-technique" and "TM-the-dogmatic-spiritual-teaching" throughout this web site. You'll have to figure out which one (or maybe the combination) that I mean by the context.)

But, but... [Scientology?](#)

Tom Cruise jumps on couches, gets in Matt Lauer's face, and has crazy-eyes. But David Lynch seems quite normal except for some apparently harmless eccentric views. So how can I compare TM with Scientology?

Because ***TM and Scientology differ in degree but not in kind***. The things that I'll be talking about are much more obvious in Scientology, which makes the comparison an effective way of pointing out the same things in TM.

A quick tour?

In this website I'll go into much more detail. Perhaps more detail than you really want. If you're intimidated by the Table of Contents below then at least take a look at the following to see if you want to read more of the site:

- It might be interesting to just quickly skim the Table of Contents below.
- Perhaps check out this *partial* list of [crazy TM beliefs](#).
- Here's a [one-page description](#) of how the TM technique itself is merely trance and suggestion.
- Here's an explanation of how [TM is a full-blown religion](#).
- **Most importantly, I describe how TM is a [psychologically dangerous cult](#).**
- But it needn't all be gloomy, have a look at ["Fun with TM web links."](#) Also try clicking on some of the trademarks [below](#).

If you're still interested then keep reading. But just one more thing before going into detail. I suggest that you also have a look at the [TM-Free blog](#). You'll find very informed ex-TMers there who know where the bodies are buried. There's lots of good stuff to read, and you can post there with any questions that you may have. Also take a look at [Coming To Life Stories](#). This is Gina Catena's blog. I mention her in my [discussion of David Lynch](#). She literally grew up in the "TM Movement" (as TMers like to call it). She is also a frequent contributor to the TM-Free blog mentioned above.

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Basically, if you assume that any English phrase beginning with the word "Maharishi" is trademarked then you'll be heading in the right direction. There are others too, though. My personal all-time favorites are "Thousand-Headed Mother Divine"®, "Council of Supreme Intelligence"®, and "Thousand-Headed Purusha"®.

You may find it interesting to follow some of the links above.

[\[Search this site\]](#)

(Link button images are courtesy of [aLT-wEB](#))

Who is that man behind the curtain?

Who is "Maharishi Mahesh Yogi"? He is an incredibly brilliant impostor, and very probably much



worse.

"Mahesh" is a personal name. There is nothing spectacular there. However, the "Maharishi" part means (roughly) "**Great Seer of Truth.**" It is absolutely the highest title in Hinduism, which he awarded to *himself*. The "Yogi" part, implying experience and knowledge of yoga disciplines, is also self-awarded. Both titles are *undeserved* based on his actual background.

So I just call him "Mahesh."

If you wish to delve into Mahesh's credentials, I recommend reading the five-part article "[A Visit to the Shankaracharya](#)"

Contrary to Mahesh's claims, TM is *not* a revived ancient wisdom (see same article).

Imagine a Catholic monk who was personal assistant to a Pope. Imagine that the Pope dies. Then a couple of years later this assistant canonizes *himself* a Saint and begins to teach "the revived lost secrets of Catholicism." He declares that "sainthood is easy", and can be attained with 5-8 years of daily "twenty minutes twice a day" practice of a technique involving daily eye-closed mental repetition of the words "Ave Maria."

He claims that he is acting under the inspiration and instructions of the late Pope, who is still actively guiding him. After a few years he realizes that people are "put off" by the spiritual angle, so he begins to market the practice as a "**simple natural relaxation technique**" and membership soars. Some of those who start by learning a "simple natural relaxation technique" end up by becoming celibate monks and nuns devoting their lives to this mere *assistant's* teachings.

Well, that's exactly equivalent to what "Maharishi" Mahesh "Yogi" did.

Furthermore, Mahesh appears completely uncaring, perhaps even conscienceless, about the incidence of [psychological casualties](#) among his followers. He refuses to warn people that such

things may occur. He does not show concern about these human casualties. Based on my own personal experiences, and on the reported experiences of others, **Not only is Mahesh a complete fraud, but that he is intentionally or uncaringly destructive as part of quest for personal power over others.**

Sociopath

He may be a **sociopath**. This is not as radical a concept as it sounds. I was told about this possibility by [Dr. Margaret Singer](#), a Professor of Psychology, and a widely recognized researcher of destructive cults, at the University of California at Berkeley.

According to the [American Psychiatric Association](#) 3% of the males are sociopathic, and 1% of the females. So as you drive to and from work every day 2% of the other drivers that you see are sociopaths!

A sociopath is someone without a *trace of conscience*. We don't notice them because clearly the vast majority of this 2% is not getting their kicks from physical violence. Only a minority turn into serial killers and such. The vast majority get their kicks from *psychological violence*. They satisfy their desires by manipulating and using people, and inflicting grave psychological suffering. And they can be incredibly empathic, in a psychological sense. That is, they can "read" people with frightening accuracy.

They are chameleons in that they can present themselves as whatever sort of person they need to be in order to manipulate and damage the person whom they have targeted. They can be extraordinarily charismatic. *Nobody* suspects them. Nobody knows what they do except for their victims. The victimization is conducted so that nobody else knows about it. And *nobody* will believe the victim, because everyone else "knows" what a wonderful person the *totally unsuspected* sociopath is.

And, since they are totally devoid of conscience, they are absolutely ruthless.
Sociopaths make absolutely *ideal* cult leaders. The world of spirituality is full of them because people don't expect to find predators in that world.

[\[Search this site\]](#)

What is "TM" How does it work? (short version)



In a single phrase, **TM is just trance combined with suggestion.** You are *told* that your mental activity will become reduced and that you will experience deep relaxation. Then the TM teacher induces a trance in you, in which you merely act out those suggestions.

The TM teacher also teaches you how to induce trance in yourself and thus attain trance-induced relaxation on your own. It's nothing that a nightclub hypnotist or a medical therapeutic hypnotist couldn't accomplish (don't fall for [TM research claims to the contrary](#)), although the TM trance induction scripts in fact prove to be very powerful at inducing trance in some people.

How does TM work?

The basic meditation course is a 6-session trance induction exercise combined with many implanted suggestions. TM "works" only if you are susceptible to the particular method of trance induction used by the TM teacher, and if you are also amenable to the suggestions that he will offer to you that are to be enacted in trance. Additionally, if you are one of the people who are also still susceptible to suggestion immediately *after* a trance, you may also fall vulnerable to TM spiritual indoctrination and to recruitment into advanced TM practices. You are first *required* to attend two "introductory lectures." **These lectures serve to implant two important suggestions in the mind of the student:**

- The first suggestion that is implanted is: "my TM teacher is an authority figure." This is very important if the TM teacher is to plant further suggestions and induce trance in you.

- The second suggestion that is implanted is this: "TM will reduce my mental activity, resulting in deep relaxation." This is important because otherwise you wouldn't know what was expected of you upon entering trance.

Then a few days later you have your "personal instruction" in TM. This involves a trance inducing ceremony (called "the [puja](#)" by TM teachers), which is followed immediately by the trance inducing and suggestion rich "[imparting of the mantra procedure](#)." Together these constitute a powerful "[trance induction script](#)" called "[The Steps of Initiation](#)" which the teacher has carefully memorized over a period of months while being trained as a TM teacher. The *precise memorization* of the various trance induction scripts used in "teaching TM" is in fact the major task involved in becoming a TM teacher. (The deliberately mysterious process of "learning how to select a mantra that is life-supporting for each individual" literally takes about 60 seconds.)

Once in trance, the student in fact acts out the suggestion that his mental activity should become reduced and that he should become relaxed. Again, this is nothing that a nightclub hypnotist or a medical therapeutic hypnotist could not accomplish if they found a trance induction method that proved effective on you.

Another effect of the "Steps of Initiation" trance induction script is to teach the student how to place himself in a trance at home, without the aid of the teacher, via the mantra. The same suggestions are still in effect, i.e. that mental activity should be reduced and that the student should become deeply relaxed when in trance.

At each of the [three subsequent group meetings](#) another trance induction script, called the "[group checking procedure](#)", is used to place the students again in trance. **Indoctrination in TM religious dogma immediately follows.** This indoctrination always occurs *immediately* after the students come out of trance, when some of the students in the group are **still in a highly suggestible state with [critical reasoning facilities seriously impaired](#).**

At the last of these meetings, the teacher then plants a new suggestion. This suggestion is that the students can eliminate literally *all* personal suffering by merely practicing TM for "twenty minutes twice a day." **This sets the student up for what I call the "[fall down the TM rabbit hole](#)", in which they are subsequently led to believe that they need ever more TM courses, products, and services.**

Please note that I do *not* mean to imply that TM teachers *know* that they are using trance induction and suggestion on you. They have already fallen far down the rabbit hole themselves. **They actually do believe that they are teaching you a newly revived but truly ancient Hindu spiritual technique. They believe Mahesh.** They do everything the way they do it because they have been told by Mahesh *exactly* how to do it and have been told *never* to deviate from their instructions. *They almost certainly believe everything they have been telling you*, with perhaps some [mental reservations](#). Remember, these techniques were used on them before they learned how to use them on you.

Mahesh's instruction to the TM teachers to never deviate from procedure is rigid enough that the "[Steps of Initiation](#)" [trance induction script](#) is memorized and recited to you by rote. So is the "[group checking procedure](#)" [trance induction script](#) which was used on you at the three group meetings. So is the "[individual checking procedure](#)" [trance induction script](#) that is used if you come back any time after the three days of instruction to have your meditation "checked." That was the "short version" of how TM works. I will next give you a more detailed explanation.

What is TM? How does it work? (long version)

The introductory lectures: setting you up with suggestions prior to trance induction



Suggestions are carefully planted in you at a couple of "introductory lectures", where you are pitched the idea that Mahesh somehow has the inside scoop on some sort of ancient knowledge from India. If you don't buy this "ancient wisdom" pitch then you may buy the concurrently presented "scientifically validated simple relaxation technique" pitch.

By the end of the second lecture, you will have received two very strong suggestions multiple times. These suggestions are: (1) The TM teacher is a highly trained authority figure who is the direct delegate of even stronger authority figures, and (2) The practice of TM will induce a reduction in thought activity and will produce a concurrent deep relaxation.

Your acceptance of the TM teacher as an authority figure is important when trance induction occurs later. This planted suggestion of *what* TM will do to you is also very important later (you must know what to do once you enter trance).

These "introductory lectures" constitute your first indoctrination into the TM doctrinal system. (One of the things you weren't told ahead of time is that TM (as an entire system of teaching) is actually a [highly dogmatic religion](#).)

You have already accepted these suggestions to at least some degree, because in fact you sign up for instruction at the end of the second pre-trance suggestion-planting sessions ("lecture"). You fill out a rather personal [form](#), which the teacher goes over in detail, apparently analyzing it carefully.

You've been carefully planted with the suggestion that the teacher has had esoteric training in "**selecting a mantra that is life supporting for each individual**", so you wonder [what his special training lets him see](#) in your form data, and/or lets him see in you personally, that would

allow him to select your own personal mantra. This lends the teacher more of an air of authority -- which, again, makes it easier for him to induce trance and plant further suggestions later. You have been told that the teacher will perform a "simple ceremony of gratitude" at the time of your "private personal instruction." You are told that it will be the *teacher* doing the ceremony and that you are *not* involved. "You are merely being asked to *watch* because personal instruction will begin as soon as the ceremony is over." This ceremony is [supposedly](#) just a sort of "remembrance" of the "tradition of teachers from whom we have this knowledge", and a strong ethical reminder to the TM teacher that he must "impart the teaching as he was taught to do by Maharishi so that the purity of the teaching can be maintained."

This is all just a rationale for subjecting you to a trance induction procedure called "the puja." (Note: "puja" ceremonies are common Hindu religious practices, and no disrespect is intended toward their use in traditional contexts.)

But, just a small point: you are asked to bring a "few things" for the ceremony: some fruit, a few fresh flowers, and a handkerchief. Huh? But complying is harmless, and you're already a little psychologically invested aren't you, and perhaps a little intrigued?

What you don't know is that **you've just received multiple, and even stronger, new "suggestions"** that the **teacher is an authority figure** (after all, you've been told that the purpose of the ceremony is supposedly to inspire him to exercise his "delegated authority" properly), and you've also received additional suggestions that there is something very special about all of this. You've been brought to the very edge of the TM rabbit hole, and you're looking over that edge. You're ready to be pushed in.

[\[Search this site\]](#)

How does TM work? (long version, cont.)

"Personal instruction": your personal trance induction session



So in a few days you show up for your **"personal instruction"**, sheepishly carrying a grocery bag with fruit, flowers, and handkerchief. There is a tinge of incense in the air. You pay your money (it costs a small fortune these days!). Perhaps there are other people already waiting their turn for instruction with their own "fruit, flowers, and handkerchief."

You are about to undergo a private *trance induction*. The teacher will be using a [trance induction script](#) called "The Steps of Initiation." You can learn all the details by reading [the actual "secret" text that is memorized by TM teachers](#). **The Steps of Initiation consist of two trance induction techniques used back to back: "the puja" and "the imparting of the mantra."** I will describe both.

Someone guides you into a room. It is gently lit, perhaps dimly lit. There is an altar in the room! The altar has many shiny brass things on a white cloth. Slightly elevated at the center of the altar there is a fascinating multi-colored picture of a saffron-robed, very wise-looking man with a luxuriant gray beard, sitting with a peaceful look on his face. A candle burns on one side of the picture. There is a shiny brass tray directly in front of the picture. The teacher places your fruit, flowers, and handkerchief to one side on the altar. The candlelight glints off the brass things: the tray, the candleholder, and several other things you don't recognize. The room smells sweetly of incense and flowers. It is a perfect environment for trance induction.

The first TM trance induction script: "The puja"

Now the "puja" part of the trance induction begins. (You can learn the "[details about the puja](#)", including its true significance according to TM dogma.)

The teacher exchanges a few words with you, glances at your form one more time (he's checking how old you are so he can pick your mantra, which is [something that you can learn how to do yourself](#)) and then asks you to stand and "witness this ceremony." He picks up your flowers and gives you one to hold. He faces the altar and begins to sing, or perhaps to chant, or perhaps to just gently and rhythmically say some words. The words are in an unfamiliar but beautiful and soothing language, with lots of beautifully flowing words, most ending in 'ahhhh' or 'ummm' sounds. He may be drawing these word endings out, beautifully and rhythmically, creating a soothing humming effect. Then he begins to do things with his hands, the flow of rhythmic soothing words unstopped.

He touches a flower into a small brass cup of water and sprinkles water on the tray. He places your handkerchief on the tray. He takes a few grains of rice out of a small shiny brass cup and places it on the tray, with the flow of soothing words still continuing. He places one of your flowers on the tray. He gently moves a shiny brass holder of lit incense in a circle around the picture of the saffron-robed man, and then does the same with the candle in the shiny candlestick. He lights an incense stick and touches the flame to a white ball on one of the brass pieces. The small flame of a camphor ball erupts, adding its own light and nice smell. He circles this new flame gently around the man in the picture while the song or chant changes slightly. He places your fruit on the tray. Each time, your eyes follow the gently circling points of light in the dim room. The soothing and beautiful words never stop. Then, suddenly, he is quiet for the first time. He places the rest of your flowers on the tray and he kneels (yes, kneels) before the picture, motioning to you to do the same. Maybe you kneel to go along, maybe not. It's quiet in the room.

[Here's a video of Mahesh performing an actual puja.](#) This puja is very elaborate and is being performed by TM dignitaries along with Mahesh, but it's otherwise the identical ceremony that the TM teacher will perform. Close your eyes, turn up the volume, and see if you don't space out a bit. Your experience during personal instruction will be even more trance-inducing because your physical environment will, as has been described, have been set to be trance-inducing, and you will be physically present for the puja.

The second TM trance induction script: "the imparting of the mantra"

If you are susceptible then you are probably already in a trance, but now immediately begins the ["imparting of the mantra" trance induction script](#) (if you follow the link, search for the string "at the end of the puja.") Soon you hear him saying something, over and over, but it's so quiet that you can't make it out. He's still repeating something over and over, a little louder every time he says it. Soon it's loud enough for you to hear. It sounds like "aima", perhaps. He motions for you to say it with him. You do. He motions for you to keep saying it. You do, and he stops saying it. He motions for you to sit down and keep repeating. You do. He sits down also. He says, "now close the eyes and continue." You do. He says "more quietly", and you say it more softly. He again says "more quietly", and you say it more softly. He says "now, mentally -- without moving tongue or lips." You do. Suddenly you're gone. You've forgotten yourself, lost track of time for a few seconds.

The teacher says, "open the eyes." You do. He says, "It's easy? Mental repetition is not a clear pronunciation, it's a faint idea. And if at any time you seem to be forgetting the mantra, don't try to hold on. Let it go. Now, close the eyes and continue."

You do. You lose track of time again. It's incredibly relaxing. It's wonderful.

It *sounds* like this was all in fact a "very good thing", that the TM teacher's promises have been realized, that TM is indeed incredibly easy and relaxing. But what *really* has happened to you?

Your every contact with a TM teacher, from the moment you walked into that first introductory lecture, until the end of "personal instruction", was just one long trance induction exercise with a multitude of suggestions.

Trance induction works much better if the subject recognizes the person inducing the trance as an authority figure. Before your "personal instruction" you were bombarded with suggestions, that you never investigated, that your teacher was a duly authorized and highly trained representative of an ancient line of wise teachers, and that he was therefore an authority in some ancient mental science. You made a subtle submission to this authority by filling out the somewhat personal form, by paying money (which has increased to a huge amount in recent years), and by bringing the fruit, flowers, and handkerchief.

You made further submission to his authority by standing at the altar when asked, and by watching the ceremony, and even perhaps by even kneeling to be polite.

You were required (you had [no choice](#) in the matter, you wouldn't have been instructed otherwise) to witness an elaborate and beautiful ritual with in a dimly or softly lit room, with small moving flames and shiny brass things and humming words and beautiful smells. Then you said a soothing word over and over and over, and over and over, soon with eyes closed.

It was all one big "trance induction script"! The ceremony itself was trance inducing, and from the start of the ceremony you indeed started to go into a trance. Repeating the soothing word merely completed the trance induction. And then your thoughts became quiet and you became relaxed because (as it turns out):

- **You are one of those people who are susceptible to trance induction and suggestion,** and in particular you are susceptible to the *particular* pattern of trance induction and suggestion used in TM.
- **You had been previously *told* your thoughts would become quiet and you would become relaxed!**
-

You not only went into a trance, but you also carried out the previously carefully planted suggestion of what should *happen* to you in that trance.

Does the teacher *know* that this is what he is doing to you? No. I didn't think so when I was teaching TM. The teacher believes in what he is doing. He has spent literally months at significant trouble and personal expense learning how to do all this elaborate suggestion and trance induction by rote, exactly as Mahesh wants it to be done. He thinks that the reason he is doing it by rote is that this guarantees that he maintains the "purity of the teaching." He is almost undoubtedly completely sincere. He is just someone who fell into the TM rabbit hole before you did, and who has by now fallen very far.

They aren't done with you yet, though. You're supposed to "meditate for twenty minutes at home, morning and evening" and you're supposed come back on each of the next three evenings. You've already started your fall down the TM rabbit hole, but you are about to get an extra push.

How does TM work? (long version, cont.)

Accelerating your fall down the TM rabbit hole: your three post-trance indoctrination sessions



At the end of the second introductory lecture, when you signed up for instruction, you agreed that after personal instruction you come back for three group meetings, which the teachers know among themselves as the "[The Three Days of Checking After Initiation](#)."

You need to return for two important reasons: (1) to reinforce your new skills in auto-trance-induction and (2) because **Mahesh wants you to be indoctrinated into his highly dogmatic spiritual doctrine.**

But you were told that TM involved *no* spiritual doctrine? Well, former U.S. President Clinton also said "I never had sex with that woman!" Of course Clinton was mentally holding a different definition of "sex" than the public was. This is called a [mental reservation](#).

And it turns out that the TM teacher is holding a mental reservation also; that is, he is *deceiving you!* What *most* members of the public mean by "spiritual doctrine" is *not* what Mahesh and your TM teacher mean by "spiritual doctrine." Just like Clinton, they are secretly

holding a *very limited* meaning of the term. Unlike Clinton, your teacher doesn't think he has anything *bad* to hide, **He is merely protecting you because you aren't ready for the truth.** Without this benign deception you might not have agreed to learn TM, and that would have been truly a tragic thing for your "spiritual evolution." The teacher is just looking out for you.

What happens in these meetings is basically this:

Everyone who learned how to auto-induce trance over the same weekend will meet together in a group, along with the teacher or teachers who conducted their individual trance inductions, usually on each of the following Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday nights.

The meeting starts off with some initial patter, and there is a new form to fill out. These forms ask you about your experiences with "meditation" (i.e., with inducing trance by yourself) at home (you are supposed to have been doing it for 20 minutes twice a day at home).

Soon there is group trance induction, which they will call a "group meditation." You are led into this group trance induction via another rote trance induction script called the "[group checking procedure](#)" (if you follow the link, search for the text string "group meditation procedure").

Oops, it's not *just* a "relaxation technique" after all!

The group is led out of the trance. **Then the whole group starts to receive *spiritual instruction* from the teachers.** What do I mean by "spiritual instruction"? Well, they will with Mahesh's spiritual dogma about "stress release" on the [first night](#). Supposedly, (a) "stress in the nervous system" is the *only* thing that keeps us from "happiness", and (b) this "stress" cannot be entirely released by ordinary rest or sleep, and (c) *only* TM can produce deep enough rest to release all of this "stress", and (d) eventually we can release all of this stress and achieve "happiness."

But this is merely an elaboration of what you started to learn in the introductory lectures. TM always turns up the heat on you [gradually](#) (for example, you won't find out what "stress release" really supposedly does for you until the third night's meeting).

The doctrinal content rapidly becomes more intense over subsequent meetings. Here is the script for spiritual indoctrination on the [second night](#).

This "relaxation technique" results in *moral perfection*!

It becomes so much more intense that **by the end of the [third night](#) you will have been told that by regularly practicing TM for 20 minutes twice a day you will achieve a state called "Cosmic Consciousness" (CC).** CC is a state of complete and *total* happiness. In CC you will experience a state of "bliss consciousness" 24 hours a day, including during sleep. This state is what is generally called "enlightenment."

And in CC *every one* of your thoughts and actions will enjoy "the support of Nature." The concept of "Nature" is not specifically defined. But as you fall down the rabbit hole you will gradually understand that by "Nature" is meant all the positive spiritual forces of Creation. The "support of Nature" means that all of these spiritual forces will ensure that *everything* you do will be successful.

Sounds dangerous, because what if you had negative intentions and these were supported by these powerful Cosmic forces? Not to worry, because another aspect of CC is that *all* or your

thoughts and actions will be *totally* "life supporting" and you will exhibit "spontaneous right action" at all times. **CC is a state of moral perfection!**

Why do people believe this stuff?

All of this from relaxation!? Yet, some of the group will actually fall for this indoctrination. Why? One reason is that an appreciable number of people are not only susceptible to suggestion about what they should experience *in* a trance, they are also **much more likely to uncritically accept and believe what they are told immediately after a trance** such as the "group meditation." In these people, trance greatly enhances suggestibility! Not everyone is susceptible enough to post-trance indoctrination to swallow this dogma whole. But you don't have to swallow it *whole*, you just have to swallow it enough to take the next bite, to swallow enough to start the gentle fall down the TM rabbit hole as I'll discuss next. **And over the decades many people have come to accept this idea of "moral perfection via relaxation and release of stress."**

That's the end of the basic course, but you aren't finished yet. **You've slipped over the edge of the TM rabbit hole and are *just* beginning your fall...**

The "Residence Course": your first experience of headache and lingering dissociation



There is a rather grisly analogy about "how to boil a frog." Supposedly, if you throw a live frog in boiling water, the scalded frog will quickly hop out. If you really want to boil the frog to death, you must put it in cold water and then *gradually* turn up the heat. The frog won't notice that things have gotten too hot until it is too late.

Well, they've been turning up the heat on *you* since you walked into the first introductory lecture. And if you are one of the people who are susceptible to trance induction and post-trance suggestion, the water may have gotten a little warm for you already. But they are going to keep turning up the heat if you let them.

The usual next stop down the TM rabbit hole is to go to a weekend "residence course." You will have been told that at the residence course you will meditate more than twice a day (something that you are instructed *not* to do at home), which supposedly greatly multiplies the benefits.

Welcome to "rounding"

You go off to a retreat facility where, at the first meeting, you learn about "rounding." "Rounding" is a very important practice in TM. "Rounding" involves alternating periods of "meditation" with periods of doing the stretching exercises (called "asanas") that most of us think of as "yoga." For example, in the morning **you may induce trance ("meditate")**, then do some "yoga asanas", and then induce trance again. That would be "two rounds." Then you would go to a lecture which introduces TM dogma that is a bit more advanced than what you have been taught already. Then you go to lunch, and then to another dogma lecture. Then perhaps you do two more "rounds" in the afternoon. Then another lecture, then dinner, then another lecture, and then off to bed.

You're told you aren't competent to make decisions -- and there's a good reason for this!

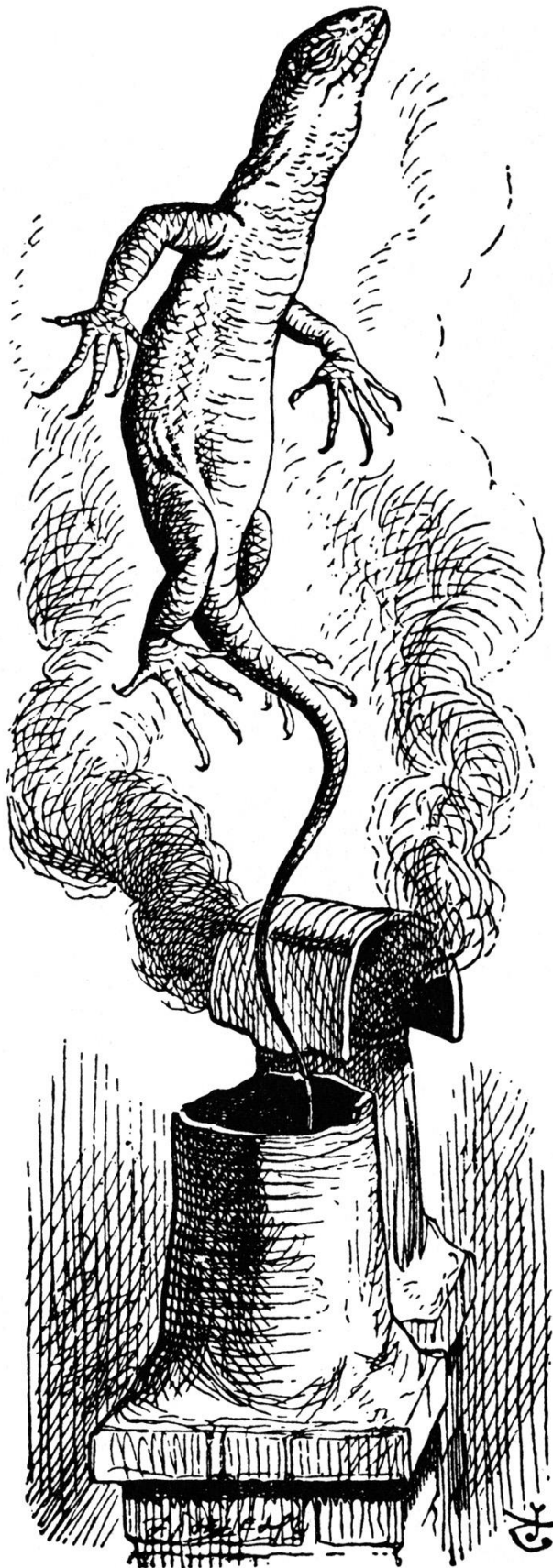
At the first lecture of the residence course where you are taught how to "round", you will also be told rather emphatically that "we don't make important decisions on this course -- we wait until we get home again before making important decisions." This is good advice, and there actually is a very important psychological reason for it: the extra periods of trance, which involve acting out your TM teacher's suggestions about thought reduction and relaxation, on the residence course **can produce a state of continuous dissociation that persists even when not meditating**. Among TMers this state of chronic dissociation is very well known state and is usually called being "spacey" or being "fried."

Turning up the dogmatic heat

But another important thing that is happening to you is that **you are undergoing a period of intense dogmatic indoctrination**. For example, my first residence course was where I learned that regular practice of TM for twenty minutes twice a day would produce states that go far beyond mere CC. These states are called "God Consciousness" and "Unity Consciousness"! "God Consciousness" (called "GC") is the state where you directly perceive the "Personal God"! And Unity Consciousness ("UC") is even better; it is the state where you directly perceive that you are one with all of Creation.

Yes, all from a mere twenty minutes twice a day. (Actually this is another mental reservation. You'll eventually find out that TM dogma teaches that it takes much *much* more than that.) Dogmatic indoctrination is performed at every one of those many lectures that you attend at the residence course, all while you are in a post-trance dissociated state. And since you have already fallen down the TM rabbit hole enough to attend one of these residence courses, then you are indeed one of the people who accepts indoctrination uncritically while in such a state ***After you've been to a few residence courses you're past the point of no return in your fall down the rabbit hole!***

The TM-Sidhi® Program: you become convinced that bumping on your butt is "the first stage of levitation"



At this point you are a pretty thoroughly "cooked" frog. **That is, you have internalized the TM dogmatic worldview.** The TM dogmatic reality has become *your* reality. Regular periods of trance induction and dissociation have become a regular part of your life. Not only that, but you have volunteered for extra post-trance dogmatic indoctrination by attending meetings at the TM center, and you have read TM literature and Mahesh's books at home. You have been to several week-end residence courses, perhaps even to a week-long residence course at MUM. You are fully invested in the principle that deep rest and the resulting release of "deep-rooted stress" are the keys to happiness, and are eventually the keys to the state of perfection that is Cosmic Consciousness. This is true not only for yourself but also for all of mankind. Not only that, but these teachings are the *only* keys to world peace, and **TM is therefore the ultimate and only hope for all mankind!**

You're so well cooked that when you are told that you can be taught to levitate, and to gain other supernormal powers, you believe it! You plop down another several thousand dollars and sign up to learn the "sidhis."

What are the "Sidhis"?

In the nearest Western terminology, the "siddhis" (that's the traditional spelling) are "paranormal powers." The term and the concept is a traditional component of "yoga" (taken in the broad sense rather than just as stretching exercises).

Since "siddhi" is a common term in India it was not eligible for trademark, so Mahesh changed to the spelling to "*sidhi*" and established "TM-Sidhi" ® as one of his many trademarks. His "**TM-Sidhi Program**" consists of techniques that are purportedly for the acquisition of these paranormal powers. **The most famous "sidhi" (I'll use his spelling) is the "flying sidhi", also called "levitation" or "yogic flying."**

The next step in your fall down the rabbit hole beckons

By the time you have fallen this far down the TM rabbit hole you will know that there are some TM teachers and meditators who meet daily in the TM center, as a group, to do their "sidhi program" together. And by now you will have been indoctrinated into Mahesh's dogma that groups of meditators and "sidhas" (meaning "those who practice the sidhis") who perform their techniques together create a more "coherent effect on the environment." Translated from TM-speak, this means that they have a beneficent paranormal influence on everything in the universe, but especially everything in their physical proximity.

So the next stage in your fall down the rabbit hole is to become a "sidha." You sign up for the course. The teachers in your local TM center **decide that you are "stable"** and they endorse the application. ("Stable" means that you are dogmatically pure and that you don't show obvious signs of psychological damage from TM practice.) You hand over several thousand dollars and you're set to go.

Mahesh's course in miracles

The "sidhi course" starts by looking just like your other residence courses. You do extra "rounds" and become continuously dissociated. Then, at one lecture they start your actual "sidhi" instruction by planting a suggestion. The suggestion is that when you gently think a

certain very special thought called a "sutra" that you will have a "flavor of experience." This "flavor of experience" will be in some way associated with the paranormal power that supposedly results from using that sutra. Over a number of sessions you are taught many such "sutras."

For example, when you gently think the words "Strength of an elephant" as instructed while in trance or post-trance state after doing the standard TM technique, then sure enough you have a "flavor of experience" having to do with "strength" just as you were told you would. "It works!" you think. (This sutra is supposed to eventually literally give you the strength of an elephant.)

But all that really happened was that it was *suggested* that you would have such an experience, so you did! You wouldn't be here if you hadn't already demonstrated yourself to be vulnerable to in-trance and post-trance suggestion. And there is so much rounding at a sidhi training course that you are probably never out of a trance state at all!

At this point in your TM fall you will believe anything!

The "flying sutra" is the one you've really been looking forward to. You've been hearing about this, after all, for quite some time, ever since you learned TM! It is the very last sidhi you are taught, and it is a huge event. After learning the sutra your entire class goes off, filled with anticipation, to a large room or hall.

The large room is covered literally wall to wall with foam-rubber mattresses. You all sit cross-legged on them and meditate. At a signal you all stop meditating, and then with eyes closed, and while in an in-trance dissociated state, you all gently think the words of the flying sutra. The words are "Relationship of body and akasha, lightness of cotton fiber."

The suggestion has already been strongly planted in you that the expected thing to do is to hop forward. This is because you've been hearing, perhaps for years now, that this constitutes the "first stage of levitation" and it is therefore what you yourself will experience.

Soon one course member indeed hops forward. Then another. Then the someone hops twice in a row. Yet another person hops forward. Some people don't hop, but most of those will be twitching upward in place as though they are about to take off but aren't quite making it. Then it's like popcorn going off, **with people hopping on their butts up and down the room.** You are experiencing the first stage of levitation! (That video has whimsical music but it's an actual video of TMers thinking that they are levitating!) It's an *incredible* rush. Once again, Mahesh's teachings have been "**validated in your own personal experience.**"

But, of course, you really haven't performed anything of the sort. So what has really happened to you? **All you have done is to practice auto-suggestion during a trance state.** Your leg muscles push you up and forward in that way only in order to fulfill the planted suggestion that the "flying sutra" will produce "the first stage of yogic flying." You're not doing this deliberately, you think that it is happening naturally. The popcorn effect is because once the first person hops the suggestion is even more strongly reinforced in the others that they can hop too. And you have paid a *lot* of money for this. Even worse, you think that you've received *much* more than your money's worth!

You have reached the point where you will believe anything!

But even *now* you haven't reached the bottom of the TM rabbit hole...

And you are still falling!



The next point during your fall down the TM rabbit hole may be "Teacher Training", where *you* learn the highly ritualized and completely rote procedure of planting suggestions and inducing trance in TM students. You also learn how to explain TM dogma of "unstressing" in order to talk people *out* of quitting the practice even when it is hurting them (but you won't see it that way, of course).

Or the next stage may be joining up as an underpaid staff member at [Maharishi University of Management](#) (MUM) in Fairfield, Iowa. Or you may move to Fairfield and run a business there while practicing the sidhis in one of the two [Golden Domes](#) every day.

Different people hit different stages in different orders while falling down the TM rabbit hole. You may become a poorly paid worker at MUM first, become chronically dissociated on the equivalent of frequent "residence courses", until you eventually save up enough work credits to learn the sidhis or go to Teacher Training. Or you may be able to become a students at MUM, earning a degree while staying on what otherwise is much like a 4-year residence course.

It doesn't really matter in what order these things happen to you. **The result is chronic intense dissociation and absolute conviction that Mahesh's teachings are the highest spiritual teachings that have ever existed. You dedicate your entire life to these teachings.**

The basic TM technique and the sidhis are not the only practices and teachings:

- As has been mentioned, you believe that you can [physically levitate](#).
- You believe that by having become a "yogic flyer" you are *literally* at a [higher evolutionary level](#) than the rest of mankind.

- You may become a celibate TM [monk](#) or [celibate TM nun](#).
- You believe that even if only "the square root of 1%" of a population practice the TM and the sidhis, then this "[Maharishi Effect](#)" (ME) will create [powerful positive effects for that entire population](#).
- You believe that when an entire nation reaches the square root of 1% mark, then that entire nation will become "[invincible](#)." (Check out the "Uncle Sam Wants You!" poster [here](#).)
- You believe that as more and more communities, and then nations, achieve this percentage of meditators that this will create World Peace under the guidance of the "[Global Country of World Peace](#)." This Country already exists in order to guide the world to this era of peace, and is governed by [Maharaja Nader Raam](#), Sovereign Ruler of the Country of World Peace.
- You believe that Mahesh's teachings and practices will not only create World Peace, but will eventually create a literal "[Heaven on Earth](#)."
- You believe that the "[puja](#)" that is performed when a person is instructed in the basic technique invokes the *literal* presence of the "Holy Tradition of Masters." This is the lineage of spiritual Masters who have preserved the TM teachings since the first day of Creation. When they are thus invoked it is their presence during instruction that gives the mantra it's spiritual power.
- You believe that, in addition to cosmic beneficent forces such as the Holy Tradition, that demons also *literally* exist. Yes, [demons](#)!!! Not just any type of demon, but specifically Hindu "[rakshasas](#)". And sometimes "rakshasas incarnate." When a multi-millionaire TMer who had donated over a million dollars to TM realized that he had been taken, and then publically denounced Mahesh, Mahesh declared that the man was in fact a rakshasa.
- You will move to Fairfield, Iowa, home of Mahesh's own [private university](#) ("MUM"), in order to become one of the following:
 - If you can swing it you will become a full-time [MUM student](#) (click on "What will I gain from Consciousness-Based education?").
 - Otherwise you might become a lowly paid MUM staffer, slowing earning points towards being eligible for, for example, Teacher Training.
 - Or you might have the means to just become a private citizen of Fairfield.
 - In all cases, one gigantic benefit of being in Fairfield is that you can fly [twice daily](#) in one the "[Golden Domes](#)" (see top picture). Because of the "Maharishi Effect" you will be thereby simply *basking* in positive influences, which will benefit you not only in the present, but which will *greatly* speed up your progress toward CC.
- You spend as much money as you can scrape together on the following (none of which are cheap):
 - You will spend money on Mahesh's trademarked brand of "[Ayurvedic medicine](#)." Not only will you buy expensive periodic consultations with an Ayurvedic

practitioner, but you will also spend lots of money on [Ayurvedic remedies](#), preferably those carrying the "Maharishi" trademark.

- You will spend money on "Maharishi"-branded [astrologers](#). (Hindu astrology is called "jyotish", and Hindu astrologers are called "jyotishi".)
- Your jyotishi will undoubtedly recommend that you buy expensive [gemstones](#) (find "gems").
- And he will recommend that you buy expensive "Maharishi"-branded "[yagyas](#)" (which have to be bought periodically rather than just once) which will create strong positive [effects](#) on your life.
- Once you have moved to Fairfield, you will buy only homes that are built according to the strict requirements of [vastu](#) (a sort of Hindu feng shui).

You are still falling, but is there a bottom to the TM rabbit hole?

Surprise! Unpleasant, even dangerous, things can result from TM practice

They left a few things out of the introductory lectures!



They didn't tell you at the introductory lectures that unpleasant things may result from the practice of TM? This was yet another [mental reservation](#) "for your own good." They didn't want to scare you off which would keep you from gaining the "benefits" of TM. They *meant* well.

But this is the point at which some people do indeed began to experience significant negative effects from the practice of TM. This is because all of this dissociation turns out not to be a normal or "natural" thing at all.

These negative effects can take the form of lingering [dissociation](#) after meditation, or after coming home from a residence course. You may have trouble getting out of that "spacey" condition. In fact, as you increase your TM dosage and frequency you may reach a stage where you *never* get out of the "spacey" state at all, i.e. you may experience *chronic* dissociation. **Chronic dissociation is the most dangerous effect of TM, and can become very very serious.**

TM can also actually significantly *increase* anxiety in some people. This is a well-known phenomenon called "[relaxation induced anxiety](#)."

Another very common negative effect is to have "*headaches in meditation*". This can happen even doing just "twenty minutes twice a day", but it is especially common during and after periods of toxically increased "dissociation dosage" such as at a residence course.

The negative effects can also take the form of unpleasant physical sensations or involuntary twitching of large muscle groups.

The TM dogma on "unstressing"

In the introductory lectures they never mentioned that there could be *any* unpleasantness *whatever* arising from TM practice. They were only thinking of your own good when they withheld the fact that TM *can* have *very* negative effects. If they had told you that then you might not have started TM and that would have been tragic! You just "weren't ready" to properly evaluate such information!

And they only gradually reveal a *tiny* glimpse of this hidden reality to you during the "[Three Nights of Checking](#)". This is because if they revealed the *entire* reality then you might stop TM practice at *that* point, and that would also be tragic.

I recommend reviewing [the TM spiritual dogma on "unstressing"](#) (called "stress release" in that document) as taught in the second group meeting after initiation. **Understanding the basic TM dogma on "unstressing" is vital to understanding TM.**

In summary, TM dogma asserts the following:

- "Stress in the nervous system" is the only thing keeping us from perfect happiness, and from being able to fulfill literally *all* our desires.
- This "stress" can only be "released" by "rest."
- The amount of rest needed depends on the strength of the stress. Superficial stress can be released by superficial rest such as normal sleep. But "deep stress" can only be released by "deep rest." And the really powerful and "deep" stresses, the ones that are really impacting our lives and keeping us from happiness and from success (and from [CC](#)), can only be released by the "deep rest of TM"!
- The stress was unpleasant when we acquired it, so we shouldn't be surprised if it is unpleasant while being "released."
- The deep stresses may be *particularly* unpleasant while being released.

- **Therefore, unpleasantness arising from TM is just a symptom that "something good is happening."** This "something good" is the release of some of the stress that has been causing us *all* of our suffering, and which is the only thing keeping us from CC!

• **What they *don't* tell you about during the "Three Nights of Checking" is something that TMers call "*heavy unstressing*".** It is the suffering, often extreme, which according to TM dogma is caused by the release of the deepest and most powerful stresses. In fact, it is just the TM dogmatic rationalization for the toxic effects of "too much TM." We'll introduce examples of this phenomenon below.

Periodic re-indoctrination: "You should have your meditation checked regularly"

One thing they emphasize during the "Three Days of Checking After Initiation" is that you should "have your meditation checked regularly." **The purpose of "checking" is to reinforce the suggestion that you will become deeply relaxed, and to reinforce the proper technique of auto-trance-induction, including training in how not to fight the dissociation.** This is all accomplished via yet another trance induction script called the [individual checking procedure](#) (see "Section 1", "Section 2", "Section 3", and the "General Points" on that page, all of which together comprise the "individual checking procedure").

As with the trance induction scripts used during "personal instruction" and the "three days of checking after initiation", the "individual checking procedure" must be perfectly memorized and recited precisely. (Demonstrating rote mastery of all of these many trance induction scripts is the hardest requirement of becoming a TM teacher!). It is somewhat similar to the "group checking procedure" used each night during the "three days."

Unlike the other TM trance induction scripts, the "individual checking procedure" can be performed by someone who is *not* a TM teacher. In such a case, the individual is called a "checker." Becoming a "checker" is often the first step toward becoming a TM teacher. While you are *always* encouraged to "have your meditation checked regularly", in all cases of unpleasant results from TM you will be *especially* encouraged to do so.

The objective, in TM-speak, of "checking" is to "guide you in the effortless use of the mantra." However, what they are really doing is to guiding you in how not to fight the increasing dissociation as you descend into trance.

Headaches in meditation: unpleasant, but they are the least of your worries

It is actually true that "checking" can sometimes help with "headaches in meditation. I believe that this is because such headaches can be caused by a tendency to fight the descent into trance, and a tendency to fight the reduction in thought activity. By teaching you once again to yield to such things, and not fight them, "checking" can indeed help prevent headache in meditation.

But headache is the very least dangerous of the problems you can have with TM. Headaches just hurt, but other problems indicate that you are incurring psychological damage.

"Heavy unstressing": TM can be *extremely* psychologically destructive

On a long course, such as a Teacher Training Course (TTC), "heavy unstressing" is a major fact of life for many people. My TTC was the "Mallorca/Fiuggi Fonte Course" in the early 70's. It is infamous for the "heavy unstressing" that went on.

At one point we were "rounding" for 14 hours a day! A "round" is a period of meditation followed by a period of yoga postures or "asanas." Meditation, asanas, meditation, asanas, etc. etc. etc. for 14 hours a day, day after day. At other points in the course we rounded fewer hours a day which gave us time for hours and hours of indoctrination sessions. This went on for a minimum of three months for everyone, but there were people like me there for six months and even longer doing this.

It was *very* common for people to acquire major tics of large muscle groups, most commonly in the form of **very noticeable head jerks**. I'm talking about sudden jerks of the head to right or left of about 45 degrees. In addition there were people with major emotional problems. Mahesh had to establish "heavy unstressing clinics." An attempt was made to help people at these clinics by application of physical therapies including body massage and foot massage.

Several people were not able to become TM teachers at this course because they were not able to free themselves of the major body tics before it was time to "receive their mantras." Mahesh could not send people back to their communities as official "Exponents of Reality" when they had been so conspicuously damaged by the TTC experience.

There was a great deal of psychological suffering. One course participant went home and was hospitalized for mental difficulties by his father, a psychiatrist. Mahesh was quite disturbed by this event (he particularly wanted the endorsement of psychiatrists) and he discussed this negative turn of events in an open meeting. He was angry that such a "weak person" had been allowed to come to the TTC. **He showed no concern about the person involved. At all.**

I stayed on for a month after the official TTC ended to witness the taping of the original "[Science of Creative Intelligence](#)" course by Mahesh. Mahesh was openly unhappy by the amount of "heavy unstressing" that had gone on (again, that's how we heard about the psychiatrist's son). **His position was that the course selection process had let too many people into the course who "weren't ready" for the dramatic evolutionary power unleashed by such prolonged meditation.**

Casualties

And to give you a further of what "heavy unstressing" can lead to I refer you once again to "[Kropinski's List of TM Casualties](#)." Below is an example from his TM victim list. This woman was well known to the TM world, since she was the wife of the president of the [Maharishi University of Management](#) (MUM), (the TM organization's private university (formerly called "Maharishi International University" (MIU)).

[Victim #4], Los Angeles, California: The former wife of Dr. Keith Wallace lived in the TM center in Los Angeles. She was under the personal guidance of Mahesh and was permitted to live in the center with Mahesh's personal permission. In a hallucination while practicing the TM-Sidhi program she felt an older woman was drawing energy from her body preventing her from levitating. She purchased a gun and shot the woman during their practice of TM Sidhis.

And here is another example from Kropinsky's testimony:

There is no question the movement knew of these incidents and numerous others. My own review of files in La Antilla, the results of rounding courses in Mallorca[sic], Spain and Fiuggi, Italy confirmed these same disastrous consequences for many individuals. Additionally administrators of MIU are aware of incidents like the student who jumped through a plate glass window, the staff member who couldn't[sic] be found and was later discovered in a dumpster, the student president who proclaimed he was Arjuna and was sent home, and they are aware of the individuals involuntary [sic] committed to local mental institutions. They have witnessed and experienced for themselves the courses in which everyone was screaming, shaking and convulsing. They have had their own employees administer thorzine[sic] by injection to 'freak outs.' They know and have known of students, former students and course participants who after leaving MIU or other movement facilities later committed suicide.

I suggest you read the rest of [Kropinsky's testimony](#). Similar stories can be found in the ["TranceNet Personal Histories Archive."](#)

"Heavy unstressing" at TM's own private university

To continue on the same theme: on the opening page of this web site I suggested that you take a look at the [sworn affidavit of Attorney Anthony D. DeNaro](#). DeNaro is a former professor of economics and business law at MIU (this was before it was called MUM), as well as former legal counsel to the same institution. This affidavit is a gold mine, and worth a careful read. Right now, though, I'll concentrate on statements he made that cast a light on the toxic psychological effects of TM. In the affidavit, DeNaro says things such as (emphasis added):

- The extent and scope of the deception before, during and after becoming "initiated" (their term) into TM-Sidhi programs is so vast and far-reaching with enormous potential for severe injury, and, even death, that it is impossible, within this necessarily abbreviated brief, to document it all.

At para. 17, President Morris claims "heightened intellectual clarity." As a professor who taught at MIU that claim is false. The effect is the opposite: a spaced-out, unfocused, zombie-like automaton, incapable of critical thinking is the more usual "benefit" of prolonged meditation.

In fact, meditation was used as an excuse (probably valid) by my students for not completing a project much in the way a "virus" or "the flu" debilitates the average college student. The consequences of intensive, or even regular, meditation was so damaging and disruptive to the nervous system, that students could not enroll in, or continue with, regular academic programs.

Many of my students offered as an excuse for not being able to sit for an examination or write a paper, the fact that they had a "bad meditation" or just "got off rounding" (group TM) and haven't gotten "back to earth yet."

- A simple review of internal correspondence reflects the inconsistency between the outward, sanitized, "safe" public image they try to present, and the frequently dangerous reality of TM-Sidhi techniques.

A disturbing denial or avoidance syndrome, and even outright lies and deception, are used to cover-up or sanitize the dangerous reality on campus of very serious nervous breakdowns, episodes of dangerous and bizarre behavior, suicidal and homicidal

ideation, threats and attempts, psychotic episodes, crime, depression and manic behavior that often accompanied roundings (intensive group meditations with brainwashing techniques). Euphemisms are employed to describe essentially dangerous, unstable and injurious behavior. "Unstressing," for example, "Baking" is another.

For example, a memo dated 5/21/75 from Dean Sluyter, a copy of which is annexed (with original markings and notations) to Jon Shapiro, the head of psychological services, acknowledges that rounding results in bizarre behavior. The memo notes that it includes a recommendation from the President's Council [of MIU].

The effectiveness of a course leader depends largely on his ability to maintain and manifest a feet-on-the-ground, non-rounding perspective. Constant immersion in the usually "baked" atmosphere of a long rounding course presents a challenge to that perspective.

Course leaders in Europe have a notorious tendency to get baked.

- Jonathan Shapiro, and other experienced Forest Academy and TTC leaders, in a moment of candor, have personally acknowledged that rounding can result in a nervous breakdown. However, this is not the term they prefer to use.
- There were meditators who experienced serious breakdowns during and following meditation. MIU and the counseling staff usually opted for banishment in these cases, although their practices often triggered mental breakdowns. Many students who experienced severe and uncontrollable trauma from meditation came to me for assistance and counseling since Jonathan Shapiro and his staff were punitive and hostile in their "therapeutic" approach.

Banishing people who have problems not only from the campus, but attempting to keep them out of the state [Iowa] through extortion, threats or intimidation is not unusual. In many cases, the problems are precipitated or worsened by TM-Sidhi practices and/or by activities of the TM hierarchy. Essentially they cause the problem, blame the victim for his or her breakdown, and then threaten them with injury or other means if they don't leave the state permanently.

- ...about three or four in the morning I was awakened by noise and excitement outside of my dorm. A twister (and possibly more than one) was west of the campus in the direction of Ottumwa and clearly visible. The students were outside their frats (dorms) in their nightclothes to test their "supernatural" powers. No one was injured simply because the twister did not hit the campus. Nevertheless, scores of students believed (I questioned them the next day) that somehow the meditation safeguarded them.
- These experiences and myths perpetrated by the TM cult might appear humorous or silly, but in fact I saw many casualties from their irresponsible lies and deceptions. Teaching methodology, for example, is indoctrination or brain washing and one of the very few (perhaps only) classes where genuine learning was attempted was in my classroom.
- I have more than five (5) years family court law guardian experience and work with young drug abuses and addicts. In addition, I was involved in implementing a drug addiction program in Nassau County, New York. My observation and experience of some of the erratic and volatile "unstressing" (actually nervous breakdowns) on campus

was similar to the reactions I've observed from people who had a "bad trip" or "freaked-out" from dangerous hallucinogenic drugs such as LSD.

- In early December 1975, while the Maharishi was on campus, I spent a great deal of time trying to persuade him to adopt a more honest, less commercial, approach to meditation, the Sidhi courses, the curricula, the disguised religious element masquerading as a science, inter alia.

He was aware, apparently for some time, of the problem, suicide attempts, assaults, homicidal ideation, serious psychotic episodes, depressions, inter alia, but his general attitude was to leave it alone or conceal it because the community would lose faith in the TM movement.

- Maharishi had a very cavalier, almost elitist, view about very serious injuries and trauma to meditators. His basic attitude towards the concealment of the religious nature of TM was: "When America is ready for Hinduism I will tell them."
- The claims of flying and levitation in the Sidhi courses are more than just false and dishonest, and an ambitious, cynical money-making scheme by a group of cosmic merchants. They are exceedingly dangerous to a small, but significant, percentage of people who believe this and uncritically accept these outlandish claims.
- Based on specific and personal observations and knowledge, inter alia, there is no question, but that the Maharishi had prior and actual notice and knowledge of the detrimental consequences of some meditative and Sidhi practices. However, he made a conscious decision and choice a long time ago to make money, develop a world-wide network of TM-SCI-Sidhi programs, irrespective of the trauma he caused to many vulnerable and uninformed people who were willing to trust him.

Why "heavy unstressing", why can TM practice be so psychologically toxic?

"Heavy unstressing" and the psychological casualties are a result of **deliberately inducing chronic dissociation** via excessive TM practice, which can also result in an extreme degree of suggestibility. This extreme suggestibility, combined with heavy exposure to advanced TM esoteric indoctrination, **can in turn lead to induced psychosis** as in the example of Mrs. Wallace above.

Dissociative disorders

TM induces dissociation (trance), but trance of itself is neither "good" nor "bad." The ability to enter trance is a natural feature of human psychology. Experts on the subject say that becoming heavily absorbed in TV show, or absorbed in a book, or absorbed in a daydream can be a benign form of trance.

TMers deliberately induce dissociation (trance) every day. Those who have fallen deeply into the rabbit hole may induce dissociation *many* times a day for *months or years*. Too much trance becomes psychologically toxic. What is "too much"? I believe that depends on the individual, but the many hours a day of trance experienced by advanced TM practitioners too much. A steadily more serious case of "chronic dissociation" is the result.

What happens is that [they end up developing dissociative disorders](#), including depersonalization, and derealization:

- Individuals who experience [depersonalization](#) feel divorced from their own personal physicality by sensing their body sensations, feelings, emotions and behaviors as not belonging to the same person or identity.[3] Often a person who has experienced depersonalization claims that life "feels like a movie" or things seem unreal or hazy. Also, a recognition of self breaks down (hence the name). Depersonalization can result in very high anxiety levels, which further increase these perceptions.
- [Derealization](#) (DR) is an alteration in the perception or experience of the external world so that it seems strange or unreal. Other symptoms include feeling as though one's environment is lacking in spontaneity, emotional colouring and depth.[1] It is a dissociative symptom of many conditions...

Induced psychosis

Here's [the story of my own adventures in TM](#). When I described it to a psychiatrist years later he called it "induced psychosis." What happened to me is that in my permanently dissociated state I internalized *all* TM dogma. In particular I internalized the dogma regarding what experiences at "higher levels of consciousness" would be like, and also about [demons](#). I then "had" these "higher" experiences, and also began to experience evil supernatural forces who were opposing the spread of TM. Unfortunately I was able to discuss these and other psychotic ideations with Mahesh, who confirmed them, making things incredibly worse.

Mrs. Wallace's story above is just *one* of many other examples of how TMers experience "induced psychosis." If you read all of the stories of psychological damage that I've mentioned you'll see many many examples of it.

Conclusion

Heavy participation in TM is a formula for psychological destruction.

You get caught in "The TM Catch-22": "Something good is happening!"



But what happens when you come to a TM teacher or to a "checker" with symptoms of "heavy unstressing" (which I believe are really symptoms of chronic dissociation or bizarre induced ideation)? No matter what unpleasant effects you are experiencing from TM, the parroted response of the TM teacher or "checker" will be TM's version of "[Catch-22](#)", which is the phrase "*Something good is happening!*"

The dogma of "unstressing"

This statement is based on TM's dogma of "unstressing" (or "stress release"). Once again, I recommend reviewing [the TM spiritual dogma on "unstressing"](#) (called "stress release in that document") as taught in the second group meeting after initiation.

If whatever distress you are experiencing is extreme, they may recommend that you see a physician. The dogmatic basis of such advice would be to rule out that the possibility that the difficulties are being caused by something other than "unstressing", i.e. by a physical condition.

Let's assume that your doctor says that things are fine, yet you are extremely uncomfortable emotionally, extremely spacey, and perhaps having unpleasant muscular sensations. Now the teachings of TM dogma will be applied to you. The dogma is that

- The deep rest of TM releases "deep rooted stress in the nervous system."
- The experience of incurring this stress was unpleasant for you, so it is not surprising that the experience of releasing the same stress is also unpleasant.
- Therefore, no matter how bad things get as the result of TM practice, "something good is happening"! It is because that you are releasing stress that things are so distressing, and the release of this stress is a good thing! After all, it is the release of all of our stresses that will get us to Cosmic Consciousness.
- You should absolutely continue the practice of TM, because only by the continued deep rest of TM will these stresses finish releasing so that you are totally free of them.
- The absolutely worst thing that you can do is to stop the practice of TM completely. Then these stresses will be left in a "releasing" state, yet never be released, and your difficulties or sufferings will continue indefinitely.

•
You will never, *ever*, be told by a TM representative that TM has any "bad" effects, just temporarily unpleasant "something good is happening" effects.

The TM [Catch-22](#), then, is this: **The worse things get for you, the more psychological suffering you endure, the more you should NOT stop TM!** If you feel good as a result of TM practice then of course that is a good thing. But if you feel distress or even suffering from TM, that is *also* a good thing! They have you both coming and going!

And the Catch-22 works. People go through psychological hell on long rounding courses, such as a Purusha, or as a Mother Divine, or on a Teacher Training course, or from four years as a MUM student, or as a permanent staff member at MUM. And they keep meditating! This is because of their absolute conviction that "something good is happening", and that if they just persevere then they will eventually push on through and the stress will release and they'll be another step closer to CC.

But what is really happening to you? You're becoming increasingly screwed up because all of this trance and dissociation, combined with the bizarre dogmatic ideation, is actually unnatural and unhealthy! TM has proven toxic for you and you should stop TM completely! But some people have to get to long rounding courses to experience heavy unstressing, and let's assume that you haven't experienced it yet. But you still haven't reached the bottom of the TM rabbit hole.

The TM Doctrine of Spiritual Darwinism -- there is something wrong with you!



Some people fall down the TM rabbit hole and end up crashing and burning psychologically. What is the response of Mahesh and his organization to such casualties?

TM is an "esoteric" religious sect

This is the point where I want to emphasize something: **Transcendental Meditation is an esoteric religious sect**. By *esoteric* I mean that the "outer teachings" that are made available to the public are different from the "inner teachings" that are made available to initiates. And there are deeper and deeper levels of "inner teachings" as you "advance."

TM has "basic articles of faith"

Before going on, you should understand that, in the TM dogmatic system, the most basic articles of [faith](#) are these:

- (1) Mahesh is the enlightened representative of the "Holy Tradition", which is the greatest tradition of spiritual teachers that the planet has ever seen.
- (2) Mahesh is teaching the highest spiritual teaching that the planet has ever seen. The Holy Tradition has guarded and preserved the "purity" of this teaching since literally the dawn of Creation. Mahesh received his teachings *directly* from the Holy Tradition.
- (3) The practice of Transcendental Meditation *always* has *only* beneficial effects for *everyone*, without exception.

All other TM doctrine is founded on those articles of faith. Notice that your own indoctrination into these articles of faith began with your very first "introductory lecture" (except for the part about Mahesh's enlightenment, which officially is only implied but which is absorbed through the pores after you've been involved with TM for awhile).

An introduction to the "TM Doctrine of Spiritual Darwinism"

You need to first understand that your TM instruction was rife with [mental reservation](#) from the time you walked into the first introductory lecture until the time you left the "third night of checking" meeting. You had no real idea of what you were *really* getting into. Here is just *some* of the TM esoteric inner doctrine that you don't find out about until later as you continue your descent:

- During the [third group meeting](#) after personal instruction you were told that *all* that you needed to do in order to attain Cosmic Consciousness was to meditate for "twenty minutes twice a day." In fact, you will eventually learn that you must practice TM much *much* more than "20 minutes twice a day" if you are to attain CC. Meditating 20x2 will only release fairly superficial stresses. It will not release the really deep stresses (remember that *all* stress must be released in order to attain CC). In order to release these really deep stresses you need to do "long rounding" where you practice TM and the sidhis several times a day, for months or years. This is why people move to Fairfield in order to fly in the Golden Domes, and why people sign up to become [Purushas](#) or [Mother Divines](#).
- A TM dogmatic principle that won't be explicitly revealed to you until farther down the rabbit hole is that "TM is the highest spiritual teaching on the planet, *much* higher than *any* other spiritual teaching ever taught, and the practice of TM is *always completely and absolutely good for everyone*."
- In the introductory lectures you were *never* told that there could possibly be anything unpleasant about the practice of TM. This was lying by omission. As usual, this was done for your own good. If you had been informed that TM could produce unpleasant experiences, then you might not have started. As usual, that would have been tragic. The true TM dogmatic position is: Spiritual "evolution" is not for the weak. The practice of Transcendental Meditation makes spiritual evolution as easy and fast as possible, of course. However, TM inner doctrine explicitly teaches that releasing those "deep stresses" will *unavoidably* produce intense mental, emotional, and physical discomfort.

The "Doctrine of Spiritual Darwinism", then, is this: **If you ever abandon the practice of TM because things are getting too painful, or because you are so dissociated that you are having trouble functioning in the real world, then it was definitely *not* a problem with TM. Instead, there was something wrong with *you*!** One of the below *must* apply:

- You were not practicing TM as exactly as instructed.
- Something good was happening. You quit TM because you were too weak in character to handle the powerful spiritual evolutionary forces unleashed by TM.
- You had serious pre-existing psychological problems.
- You did not have the right moral intentions to begin with.

You didn't follow instructions!

You might be told that you probably didn't precisely follow the instructions on how to meditate." The "logic" behind this goes something like this:

"Since the practice of TM produces *only* positive effects then you might not have really been actually practicing TM. That is, you were probably either ignoring or misunderstanding some of the instructions given by your TM teachers. This means that you were not practicing TM, but

you were only practicing something somewhat *similar* to TM. And, of course, we don't know what results will arise from anything other than the practice of the authentic TM technique."

Therefore: "That is probably why you had some negative outcome. **You were probably doing it incorrectly. Please come in and have your practice of TM checked.**"

After that you are in a bit of a double-bind. If you *do* go in and have your "practice of TM checked" (i.e., if you come in for re-indoctrination), then you are postponing what you should really do in the face of toxic symptoms, which is to quit. But, if you do *not* go in and have your "practice of TM checked" (i.e. if you do the healthy thing and just drop the practice completely), then TM advocates will feel quite justified in continuing to say that you must have been doing it incorrectly.

Something good was happening so you were wrong to stop!

Recall that no matter *how* uncomfortable you become as a result of TM that "[something good is happening](#)." You should have continued with the practice (perhaps at a reduced number of minutes per day as instructed by your a teacher), and then everything would have eventually worked out when these stresses released.

In short, **if you quit the practice then you were just *too weak* to handle the *beneficial* process of unstressing!**"

As mentioned above, when they gave you the impression in the introductory lectures and basic course that everything about TM was "easy" they were again practicing a mental reservation. And, as always, they were doing it "for you own good." **In fact, when you learn the actual TM doctrine on the subject, you learn that you must be prepared to endure the sometimes *extreme* suffering of "unstressing" in order to release all of those stresses that keep you from happiness and from spiritual advancement.**

So, if you were "too weak" to endure the sufferings that are *required* in order to gain spiritual advancement, then that is your own problem!

You probably had serious psychological problems before starting TM!

Sometimes, you can convince the TM advocate that not only did you practice the technique "correctly", but that you also displayed a heroic ability to endure the sufferings caused by "release of stress."

In that case, the TM advocate has to dig much deeper for a rationalization. But they might refer to the TM dogma that "the practice of TM produces *only* positive effects" and say:

"You *did* follow instructions, and you *did* try to stick it out and let the unstressing complete, but you crashed anyway? In that case, **you must have had serious psychological problems before starting TM.**"

This one is my favorite. Did they warn you in the introductory lectures *not* to start TM if you had pre-existing "serious psychological problems"? Wasn't TM supposed to *help* with *whatever* was keeping you from unlimited happiness? Not when it's time for rationalizations.

You are malicious!

This is the ultimate rationalization. It is a correlate of the basic TM article of faith that TM is the highest spiritual teaching that has ever been taught on the planet. You are really not a seeker after spiritual evolution. Even worse, **you might have been deliberately in league with, or influenced by, [demons](#).**

If you relentlessly criticize and attack TM, therefore, certain conclusions become inescapable. Therefore, if none of the previously mentioned rationalizations suffice, then this one can be used

either alone or in combination with any of the above: **"You are obviously a negative, possibly even malicious, person."**

Clearly, in that case everything you say can be discounted.

The dehumanization of TM casualties

"TM Spiritual Darwinism" leads to a *dehumanizing* attitude among serious TM practitioners towards those who crash and burn as a result of following Mahesh's teachings. **TM advocates usually display a *shockingly callous lack of concern* about those who experience difficulties after beginning TM practice.**

Where do these attitudes arise? From Mahesh himself. The whole attitude of "Spiritual Darwinism", including the common lack of concern and compassion for those who crash and burn, reflects Mahesh's own personal attitude.

One memory that stands out for me is from the taping of the ["Science of Creative Intelligence"](#) (SCI) course. My Teacher Training Course (TTC) (the one I describe in [my story](#)) had recently ended. One day there was a break from the SCI taping, and Mahesh began discussing the problem of one of the TTC course participants going back home and having to be placed in a mental institution by his father, who was a psychiatrist.

The striking thing is that Mahesh conveyed absolutely zero sense of concern about the son. Instead, Mahesh issued a general complaint about the poor state of the TTC qualification procedure that had allowed such a "weak" person into the TTC.

But hasn't TM been "scientifically validated"?



Since you managed to find this site from among the many websites run by the TM organization you must have been doing some diligent research. You will have read many times in those pro-TM sites that that "TM has been scientifically validated."

So has it? Well... yes. **And no!**

Well... yes, it *has* been scientifically validated

There has been some good solid research indicating that TM practice can have some health benefits. TM trumpets this to the world. It is their main PR thrust.

But what does this research indicate? It just means that regular relaxation can have significant health benefits, and that TM does an extremely good job of producing relaxation in some people (i.e., in those who are susceptible to trance and suggestion, and in particular to the [elaborate trance-induction script](#) used during TM instruction). Hey, that's a *good* thing, as far as it goes. **But they are only studying people who limit their involvement to "twenty minutes twice a day"!**

The only problem with these research studies is that [no researchers have made a diligent effort to uncover long term problems](#) resulting from **heavy** TM involvement. This is largely because the TM organization will not fund such research. Also, it would require active participation from the TM organization to obtain a proper sampling of research subjects, and to authorize their cooperation (they wouldn't otherwise).

As a result, the research doesn't reflect the dangers introduced by the fact that the TM technique is being taught by a psychologically dangerous mind-control cult, and that some of the people who learn TM will end up with at least some involvement with the cult, and that whatever benefits TM might have had for them will be severely undone by [the psychological problems that some of those who learn TM will later develop](#).

The research doesn't, for example, reflect that many people who learn TM will end up thinking that [they can physically levitate](#). Personally, I consider that significantly losing one's touch with reality is an *extremely* negative psychological outcome!

Well... NO, it definitely *hasn't* been validated!

The TM propaganda machine goes way beyond what any legitimate researchers have substantiated. The propaganda rides on the coat-tails of the legitimate research to give the impression that every nonsensical TM claim has *also* been "scientifically validated."

For one thing, TMers are the absolute *masters* of spin-doctoring.

As stated by Professor Barry Markovsky (at the time a Professor of Sociology at the University of Iowa, now with the University of South Carolina in his article: ["Problems with TM Research"](#) (emphasis mine):

"The thing is, much of the TM research is very non-controversial, and the much smaller volume of potentially controversial stuff that has been published is tucked away in 3rd-rate journals (or worse). So the TM organization can point to the publications and say "Look, we're published in prestigious, main-stream scientific journals!" Most scientists are not interested in trying to counter such hype in the court of public opinion, and most are not interested in following up the breathless claims of TM research because--quite contrary to the way the TM propaganda machine portrays things-- **the more controversial TM research is widely ignored (even among consciousness researchers who you would expect to be very sympathetic)**, and the bulk of the rest is pretty mundane from the perspective of journal readers."

That whole page just referenced is fascinating if you're interested in the topic of TM "research."

The Maharishi Effect

TM propaganda pushes *lots and lots* of perfectly crazy stuff, dizzyingly wrapped in a combination of a very little science and a *lot* of pseudoscience. And to read the TM propaganda you'd think that *everything* that TM pushes has been scientifically validated!

In fact most of the TM "research" that is touted in TM propaganda is incredibly outrageous pseudoscience.

In order to understand TM "pseudoscience" you have to understand its fundamental "scientific discovery", [The Maharishi Effect](#) (ME). I strongly suggest reading the page at that link if you really want to "understand", but basically, the "Maharishi Effect" is the nonsensical notion that TMers produce such incredibly powerful "good vibrations" (TM calls it "coherence") from their meditation and yogic flying that **literally *all* world problems can be solved by just getting a small percentage of the population to start meditating and flying!** And TM claims that the ME has been scientifically validated!

For example, in 1993 four thousand TMers moved to Washington DC and did their meditating and [butt-hopping](#) (despite the whimsical music that's actual footage) there for two months. [TM propaganda](#) asks us to swallow the idea that it has been "scientifically validated" that this created a "field effect of consciousness" that *directly* caused a 23% reduction in crime!

What TMers hang their claims on in the case is that there was a study in the journal "Social Indicators Research". This was a retrospective study which calculated the odds that (a) Mahesh's prediction that a reduction in crime would occur (b) would in fact *be* followed by a reduction in crime in the D.C. area. And somehow the study concluded that it was extremely *unlikely* that the one event, i.e. the prediction, would in fact be followed by the second event, i.e. the actual reduction that occurred. **This provided fuel for spin-doctoring that TMers have run with for decades.**

The thing to remember is that just because something is published in a scientific journal that doesn't make it true. A well-known example of this is the ["Bible Code."](#) The Bible Code was "verified" by legitimate scientists in a respected peer-reviewed journal, with a mathematical margin-of-doubt of only 0.000016! So is the "Bible Code" "scientifically validated" (to use the TMers' favorite phrase)? Well... no. Keep reading that article, or at least the last paragraph.

Here is a quote from [Professor Markovsky's analysis of similar "research"](#) done when TMers claimed to have brought increased peace to Lebanon:

The "coherence group" included roughly 38,000 non-Sidhi meditators in Israel and 2,000 more in Lebanon. However, the TMO provides "no information about the geographic distribution of these meditators or evidence to support their assumption that they were in the area and meditating during the vacation month of August which comprises half the test period."

Lagged effects were not specified prior to the research. The TMO "researchers then interpret any significant correlation at any non-negative time lag for any indicator as supporting their theory." A number of specific factors were not included in the TMO analysis but readily could have influenced the dependent variables. The TMO "research design also prevents us from knowing how many other factors may have contributed to a spurious correlation."

As stated in summary of the evidence below, "ME predictions cannot be derived from the MT." Also, "The claim that MT provides the only plausible explanation of these data cannot be sustained. **There are alternative explanations that do not depend on esoteric or paranormal influences.** [emphasis mine]

I also recommend reading the section that follows on that same page titled "Evaluating Heterodox Theories." Also [this page on peer reviews of the ME](#).

The ME doesn't even work in the one place in the world where it would be most *likely* to work. That is, it doesn't work in Fairfield Iowa, home of TM's private university. The students, plus the thousands of other TMers who have moved there over the decades, has made Fairfield by far the largest concentration of TMers in the world. [Yet the ME doesn't work there](#).

Be all of this as it may, TMers unabashedly claim that the ME has been "scientifically proven", and that it can give us "[Heaven on Earth](#)."

The Maharishi Caper

Here's another example of why you don't want to believe every claim that you read or hear that TM dogma has been "scientifically verified."

In May 1991 "The Journal of the American Medical Association" (JAMA) published an article named "Maharishi Ayur-Veda: Modern Insights Into Ancient Medicine." The article was supportive of Ayurvedic Medicine. The JAMA editors discovered that they had been deceived by the article's authors and published a retraction in the August 14th issue. An [expose of the deception](#) was published in the October 2nd issue.

The journalist who exposed the incident [describes the whole thing here](#).

The wacky world of Hagelin's Pseudo-Quantum-Physics

By far the greatest contributor to TM pseudoscience is [Dr. John Hagelin](#). Dr. Hagelin is a world-class quantum physicist who, when he focuses on legitimate science, has made significant contributions to "String Theory."

He has also turned his truly incredible (sincerely) genius to churning out *huge* amounts of the most *extraordinary* fantasies. **Hagelin has single-handedly taken TM completely out of the realm of mere pseudoscience and has ushered it into the lofty realms of *pseudo-quantum-physics*!** He has "accomplished" this with his "research" into the "[The Unified Field of Consciousness](#)."

His "discoveries" have become the fundamental pseudoscience underlying all of the rest of TM's "scientifically validated" nonsense, in particular underlying the Maharishi Effect. There's a video primer on UFC [here](#). That fascinating chart is hard to see on the video, but you can go [here](#) and click on the chart to see a larger version. His lecture spans a couple of clips. As a game try to actually pay attention and to *understand* what he is saying through all of them. I'll bet your eyes glaze within the first few minutes.

It may help to make things clearer if you read a [primer in print](#). Now do you understand it?

Here's an opinion from [Dr. Heinz Pagels](#), who was Executive Director of the New York Academy of Sciences when he wrote this:

"My summary opinion, as a theoretical physicist specializing in the area of quantum field theory, is that the views expressed in the literature issued by the Maharishi International University, and appearing in the "World Government News" and other publications associated with the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi that purport to find a connection between the recent ideas of theoretical physics-- unified field theory, the vacuum state and collective phenomena--and states of consciousness attained by transcendental meditation are false and profoundly misleading. **No qualified physicist that I know would claim to find such a connection without knowingly committing fraud.**" [emphasis mine]

"Individuals not trained professionally in modern physics could easily come to believe, on the basis of the presentations in the Maharishi literature, that a large number of qualified scientists agree with the purported connection between modern physics and meditation methods. Nothing could be further from the truth." "What was especially interesting to me, in reviewing this literature, is the claim put forth by the Maharishi and his followers, that transcendental meditation and 'The Science of Creative Intelligence' qualify as a science. Although the word 'science' is much abused, it continues to imply an adherence to logic, the clear presentation of assumptions and deductions, and the experimental method. Most importantly, any science necessarily contains a recipe for its own falsification. None of these central features of the Western concept of science are present in 'The Science of Creative Intelligence.' This is not science."

Hagelin's Unified Field of Consciousness is wonderful example of TM spin-doctoring at work. He takes some actual concepts from physics and spins them into a fantastic (literally) edifice.

It's also a wonderful example of how high intelligence, genius-level intelligence in this case, is no barrier to cult recruitment.

[Invincible Defense Technology](#)

The most prominent practical application of UFC theory is "Invincible Defense Technology", as described [here](#). IDT is a natural outcome of the Maharishi Effect, which of course has its theoretical foundation in UFC theory. From that page:

During the last 25 years, a powerful, innovative approach to peace has been extensively field tested -- in the Middle East and throughout the world. The consistent result has been dramatic reductions in terrorism, war, and other social violence. These findings have been replicated, published in leading academic journals, and endorsed by hundreds of independent scientists and scholars. **The efficacy of this approach is now beyond question.** [emphasis mine]

These studies verify that the scientific knowledge and technologies are now available to end terrorism and conflict, to achieve indomitable national strength and security, and to create permanent world peace. By implementing these technologies, every government can rise to invincibility and secure the peace and safety of its citizens. But the time to act is now.

(By the way, achieving invincibility for Germany via IDT is what the "Raja of Germany" is blathering about [here](#).)

Grand Unified Nonsense Theory

The UFC, and its corollaries and applications such as IDT, may not be completely clear yet. Go [here](#), look for "Dr. Hagelin presents the Invincible Defense Technology", and click on "Watch on Flash Streaming."

There Hagelin explains the whole grand vision with irrefutable scientific proof, including some very cool-looking mathematical formulas.

I'm King of the World!

Dr. Tony Nader is a neurobiologist who [developed a theory](#) "proving" that:

...the forty branches of Veda and the Vedic Literature, which present the mechanics of the creation and evolution of Natural Law, are the fundamental basis and essential ingredient of the human physiology, and that there is a one-to-one correspondence between the structures and functions of the different branches of Vedic Literature and the structures and functions of the human physiology.

Basically, Nader "proved" that human physiology can be described by Unified Field Theory. As a reward for making this "scientific discovery" Mahesh awarded Nader [his weight in gold](#).

Even better, Mahesh made him King of the World!. His coronation ceremony is [here](#).

TMers loudly trumpet Nader's "research" as yet another important "scientific validation" of TM.

Obviously, a person can be a respected scientist and still vigorously shovel out complete nonsense, while believing every word

Continuing our tour of scientists whose intelligence and knowledge have been channeled into the service of nonsense, take a look at "[Ask the Doctors](#)." Some of these experts actually are unbiased. What the unbiased people have to say is, again, that TM can induce deep relaxation in some people, and that relaxation can have significant benefits. These people stick to *science*.

My only problem with the unbiased experts is that they don't realize that the TM technique is being taught by a [psychologically dangerous mind-control cult](#), and that whatever benefits TM might have will be severely undone by the psychological problems that some of those who learn TM will develop.

But there are also some "tame experts" on the site. **You can identify a tame expert by the TM dogma mixed in with the science jargon.** The *unbiased* scientists mentioned in the preceding paragraph don't mix TM mumbo-jumbo into their comments.

See for example this [Question and Answer page](#). Then click on "My husband says reading good books is what develops his untapped potential." [Dr. Rector's](#) reply includes the following:

"The TM technique...allows the mind to consciously rest within itself, turning attention inward to the source of creativity and intelligence at the innermost foundation of the mind..."

That statement is a pure parroting of TM religious dogma! Dr. Rector has gotten himself to the point where he doesn't bother to distinguish science from spiritual doctrine when pitching TM to the public. Or *maybe*, like Hagelin, he *can't* distinguish; it's a tragic possibility.

Of course perhaps I'm wrong. Perhaps Dr. Rector does in fact know of some sort of double-blind university study proving that there is indeed an "innermost foundation of the mind" (perhaps accompanied by charts mapping the various levels of the foundation of the mind, starting from the outermost level to the innermost level) and that this innermost level is indeed a source of creativity and intelligence. Otherwise he is pitching pseudoscience while flashing his credentials.

I'm sure that, like Hagelin, that he's a wonderful person (sincerely). I'm sure that he, like Hagelin, he is brilliant when he sticks to *real* science, it's when he drifts into pseudoscience that there's a problem.

[Here's more pseudoscience](#), this time from a Dr. Belok who has seriously impressive credentials (they're on that page). Click on "I'm constantly under pressure". Here's the good part:

...the mind effortlessly settling down to quieter and quieter levels of the thinking process. Finally, the mind comes to the source of the thinking process, awareness itself. This experience is called restful alertness. In this state, the body is deeply rested and the mind is fully alert. Stress is dissolved by this experience by the quiet and soothing experience of inner being.

This is *also* mindlessly parroted literally word-for-word from TM dogmatic teachings. Or, again, perhaps not. Perhaps Dr. Belok knows of yet another double-blind university study that has discovered "the source of the thinking process." And that has objectively demonstrated the existence of "inner being." And that has proven scientifically that "stress is dissolved" by the experience of this inner being.

Otherwise he's completely lost scientific objectivity when dealing with TM.

Intelligence is no protection from cult recruitment!

The thing to remember here is that **just because someone has impressive scientific credentials it doesn't mean that they have *any* competence *whatever* in their personal lives!** And that includes psychologists and psychiatrists, who are *no better off psychologically than the rest of us*. You may have to sign up for a free subscription to view that article, but here is the part I am referring to:

Blachly et al[3] gathered data on 249 physicians listed in JAMA obituary columns and made extrapolations to determine which specialties had the highest risk. They interpreted their data to show that psychiatrists had the highest suicide rate and pediatricians had the lowest rate. Further support for the notion that psychiatrists might be at higher risk is found in the work of Rich and Pitts,[4] who found that psychiatrists committed suicide at twice the expected rate.

The article goes on to say that maybe psychiatrists only have the *same* suicide rate as other specialties, but I think I've made my point.

One must always keep in mind that **even very high intelligence is no protection against coming under cult influence**. Dr. Hagelin

is the poster child for this, they don't make them much more intelligent than he is. Yet [here he is](#) wearing a [Burger King crown](#) and white sheets because he thinks he's a "Raja" (he actually is "Raja of Invincible America" -- more on Rajas [here](#)).

So don't believe everyone who flashes an MD or a PhD, and maybe some journal citations, and on that basis starts expecting you to believe mumbo-jumbo. They are only human and *are just as likely to get screwed up in their personal lives as anyone else.*

Distortion through omission

The *main* problem with TM research is the research that *hasn't* been done. And what hasn't been done are any studies that track (a) a statistically significant population of people who learn TM, who are (b) chosen without introducing "[selection bias](#)", (c) over significant period of time. If that were done then the percentage of people who end up in the cult would show up. And the [problems of these people](#) would show up too.

But this will never happen. That's because selecting the study population without introducing selection bias will never happen without the active cooperation of the TM organization, and they will never cooperate with something like this.

[As Professor Markovsky puts it](#) (emphasis mine):

"Who sponsors research on TM? Mostly the TM organization. Who conducts research on TM? Almost exclusively researchers having a tremendous vested interest--material, psychological, professional and social--in the outcomes of their research.

"Historically, this has proven to be a recipe for biased results. [Suggested reading: "Betrayers of the Truth" by William Broad and Nicholas Wade--although they over-generalize their observations to all of science.] Bringing us back to the first point, how many TM researchers would you guess have conducted studies making a serious effort to detect and characterize negative effects of TM? How much money would you guess the TM organization has invested in such research? How many grant proposals to external funding sources for carrying out such research would you guess TM researchers have submitted?"

"The best method of testing hypotheses, however, is to try your hardest to disprove them--not merely to verify them. If they survive the most stringent of tests, you can be that much more confident in their validity. So what if TM researchers never seek to disprove their claims but only to verify them?"

Is TM a religion?



First, do I have a hidden agenda?

I'd like to start by saying that I do *not* have a religious agenda. I am not criticizing TM because it contradicts any personal religious conviction that I hold. I don't care that (giving away my conclusions below) TM is a religion. What I object to is that **TMers deceive the public about the religious nature of TM in order to not negatively affect recruitment rates.**

Bringing the Light of God!

To set the scene, here is an excerpt from [the oath](#) that I signed when I became a TM teacher:

It is my fortune, Guru Dev [Mahesh's deceased master], that I have been accepted to serve the Holy Tradition and **spread the Light of God to all those who need it.** It is my joy to undertake the responsibility of representing the Holy Tradition in all its purity as it has been given to me by Maharishi and I promise on your altar, Guru Dev, that with all my heart and mind I will always work within the framework of the Organisations founded by Maharishi. And to you, Maharishi, I promise that as a Meditation Guide I will be faithful in all ways to the trust that you have placed in me.

Every TM teacher signs that! So why do they tell you that "TM is not a religion"?

Once again, you are being deceived for your own good!

So, is TM in fact a religion? First, it depends on what you mean by "TM." There are two uses of the term:

- TM the relaxation technique.
- TM the spiritual teaching.

When TMers say that "TM is not a religion" they are practicing yet *another* deception by [mental reservation](#). They are mentally referring only to "TM the relaxation technique." Yet they know that the TM technique is *never* taught without *accompanying* indoctrination into "TM the spiritual teaching." As usual, they mean well; they are withholding this information "for your own good."

"TM the spiritual teaching" is an esoteric, dogmatic religious sect, controlled absolutely by its living prophet who proclaims doctrine with ex-cathedra infallibility. I'll go through that statement bit by bit...

TM is an "esoteric" teaching

I call it "esoteric" because TM has different sets of teachings depending on what level of "initiation" a person is at. You learned just a little bit of the actual TM doctrine at the introductory lectures. A little bit more was revealed to you during the "Three Days of Checking Following Initiation". You learned yet a little bit more at residence courses, and also at the meetings that you attended at the TM center. It is all trickled out to you in [dribs and drabs](#).

It's only when you become a TM teacher that the entirety of the TM doctrinal system is revealed to you. That's when you learn that you become "[permeated with the essence of divine wisdom](#)" when you perform the [puja](#), for example.

Why do I emphasize the "esoteric" nature of TM? Because it means that you did not fully understand what you were volunteering for when you started the basic TM course. **You were not provided the opportunity to learn what TM really teaches before learning TM.** You were deceived!

TM is a "dogmatic" teaching

TM is "dogmatic" because Mahesh allows *zero* discussion of and *zero* alteration to the doctrines he proclaims.

Anyone who challenges **TM dogma will be subject to the TM version of excommunication.** In the Roman Catholic Church, excommunication means literally that you are not allowed to take communion. You are thereby completely cut off spiritually, with of course the attendant dire spiritual consequences.

TM excommunication also involves being cut off from spiritual resources. You will not be allowed to receive additional teachings, such as "advanced techniques." If you are a sidha, you will no longer be allowed to fly with the other sidhas. You will not be allowed to go to residence courses, which means that you will never release those deep stresses that are keeping you from Cosmic Consciousness. You will get kicked out of MUM. You will not be allowed to become a teacher. Your entire "spiritual evolution" will grind to a halt. **So in the case of TM excommunication, also, there are dire spiritual consequences.**

Be assured that TMers carefully toe the doctrinal line.

Yes, TM is a "religion"!

TM the spiritual teaching is indeed a "[religion](#)" because it is "a set of beliefs concerning the cause, nature, and purpose of the universe, esp. when considered as the creation of a superhuman agency or agencies, usually involving devotional and ritual observances, and often containing a moral code governing the conduct of human affairs."

Yes, it has all of the above attributes. They just don't tell you.

For example, TM will [sell](#) you "[yagyas](#)." And just what is a "yagya"? TM will give you a lot of doubletalk, but a yagya [is a Hindu ceremony of sacrifice to a god or gods](#). How many "non-religions" have something like that? (If you're Hindu I absolutely mean no offense; I have nothing against yagyas being religious, what I object to is TM's deception to the public about its spiritual agenda.)

How many "non-religions" have a "[Holy Tradition](#)"? Be sure to read the part near the bottom under the heading "THE HOLY TRADITION". Note especially this:

Ego, mind, heart, senses, body and atmosphere having thus become permeated with the essence of divine wisdom, the teacher begins to teach." How many teachers of "non-religions" begin their teaching sessions by permeating themselves with the essence of divine wisdom?

You may find the article "[Yes, We Are No Religion!](#)" interesting.

You may wish to read about the lawsuit "[Malnak v. Yogi](#)", in which the New Jersey Supreme Court found that (emphasis mine):

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](#) 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.**" People are told that not only is TM not a religion, but that it is completely *compatible* with all religions. However, one of the secret esoteric teachings, and a core TM article of faith (perhaps the *core* TM article of faith) is that Mahesh teaches the highest spiritual truth that has ever been taught on this planet!

On my TM Teacher Training Course, for example, I heard an audiotape of a lecture given by Mahesh. Mahesh explained that TM was the *highest* spiritual teaching that had ever existed. He said that **all other spiritual teachings and religions were lesser teachings, and that they were analogous to mere branches of spirituality growing from the main trunk of spirituality, which was the newly revived yet timeless knowledge of TM.**

You can hear this expressed by TM's [King of the World](#) in [this video](#). At around 15:35 you'll hear him say this:

The Constitution of the Universe, Natural Law, has been sunk in the melodious mother tongues of all countries, and in the exalted expressions of the sacred literatures of different religions that continue to echo age after age sanctifying our world through the precious knowledge of the divine will of God. To decode this you need to understand that *only* TM teaches the full knowledge of "Natural Law." **Therefore only TM has the full precious knowledge of the divine will of God.**

Sound like a religion yet?

Mahesh as a "living prophet"

I call Mahesh a "prophet" because he is the *only* authority for his doctrine. He claims that he has revived an ancient wisdom, but the doctrine of "enlightenment through relaxation" is found *nowhere* else in Hinduism. He's the only one teaching it. He made it up.

Mahesh is "infallible"

Everything that Mahesh teaches is considered to be infallible truth by TMers. There are no questions about his teachings. None.

But the TM teachers told me that TM doesn't require faith!

TMers will often say that TM is not a religion because it does not demand faith. In fact, "TM the spiritual teaching" **is based completely on *faith* that Mahesh is in fact a teacher of spiritual truth**. Without that article of *faith* (it's faith because there's absolutely no evidence for it), the whole doctrinal system falls apart.

Advanced TM practitioners certainly *display* high levels of faith in many unlikely things, as when they believe that [hopping about on foam mattresses](#) constitutes "the first stages of levitation". Or as when they travel to far off countries to practice "yogic flying" in a group in an attempt to bring peace to a war-torn region. Or as when they move themselves and their families to "sidha communities" in Fairfield, and buy "[vastu](#)" houses there because a vastu house will accelerate their progress toward CC. Or as when they become celibate TM [monks](#) and [nuns](#). Or as when they pay for yagyas to be performed to the gods. And as when they start believing in the literal existence of [demons](#).

But despite these strongly held radical beliefs, TMers honestly believe that they have never made any acts of faith. That was my experience also. In retrospect, I certainly *exhibited* faith but I didn't think that I *had* faith. **This is because the powerful "faith" that is displayed by TMers is *unconsciously* acquired via trance and suggestion.**

Not so innocent!

Another reason that TMers believe that they never take things on faith is that they *think* that they "innocently" and directly and objectively experience the truth of Mahesh's teachings *before* they accept them. For example, they assert that a pre-existing faith is not required in order for TM to lead you to quieter and quieter thoughts, with accompanying deep relaxation. They assert that they *innocently experienced* it in an objective and unbiased manner.

Which sounds good, until you realize that there is no "innocence" *whatever* about your experiences during TM. You were told *before* learning TM exactly *what* your experiences were *supposed to be*! Then, in the three group meetings following personal instruction all of your experiences that conformed to that expectation were reinforced, while all other experiences that did not conform to expectation were discounted and responded to with reindoctrination (via "[checking](#)") into what the proper experience was that you *should* have.

For another example, after you learned the sidhis you think that you have innocently and objectively validated the truth of Mahesh's levitation technique in your own personal experience. That must be true, because you've never held "faith" that it would work. But, again, there was no innocence at all in your experience. **You were [told](#) what your experience should be. So you had it. And if you didn't have that experience, then you were carefully coached until you did!**

No innocence was ever allowed!

Conclusion

Obviously, I think that TM the spiritual teaching is most definitely a full-blown religion. But, of course *you* decide. Does TM sound like a religion to you?

Is TM a cult?

Part 1: A person's reality can be turned unreal



So is TM a cult? Well, first I have to explain what I mean by "cult." And the easiest way to explain that is to put the cart before the horse, by explaining "how cults recruit" without even answering the "what is a cult?" question yet.

(However, the discussion is long and if you want to "skip to the ending" then [here it is](#). Then you may want to come back here so that you can understand my reasoning.)

Dissociation 101

I often use the word "trance" in this web site. And I also use the word "dissociation." For the purposes of this web site they are the same thing, because trance is just a form of dissociation. As described in [this article](#) dissociation is....:

...the disconnection from full awareness of self, time, and/or external circumstances. It is a complex neuropsychological process.

Dissociation exists along a continuum from normal everyday experiences to disorders that interfere with everyday functioning.

Common examples of normal dissociation are highway hypnosis (a trance-like feeling that develops as the miles go by), "getting lost" in a book or a movie so that one loses a sense of passing time and surroundings, and daydreaming.

You almost certainly go into a mild dissociative state many times a day. This is completely normal. For example, when you get lost in a movie you are dissociated. This is because you are experiencing a "disconnection from full awareness of self, time, and/or external circumstances." Every human being has a natural talent for dissociation, i.e. a natural talent for "going into a trance" And for many people, it's a *very* easy thing for them to do.

Reality testing, a vital survival trait

There is another phenomenon of normal human psychology called "reality testing." As an example, I will now recruit you into my own personal cult by telling you this:

Now that you have read this far it is time to reveal to you that I, Joseph Kellett, am The Messiah! I have come to lead the world into its ultimate state of spiritual enlightenment, peace and prosperity. You must accept my teachings and follow me unquestioningly!

Ok... A part of your mind just spontaneously triggered and screamed "Bullshit!" That is your reality tester at work. I think of it as the "bullshit detector." And because you have a healthy bullshit detector you escaped from *my* cult rather quickly! I didn't have a *chance* at recruiting you. And my claims are no crazier than those of Hubbard, or Mahesh, or Moon! (Actually, except for the use of the word "Messiah" my claim is almost perfectly identical to Mahesh's.) *Because your bullshit detector triggered you just escaped from my cult!* That was pretty easy, yes? So why didn't Lynch and I get away from Mahesh's cult? Or Cruise from Hubbard's? Where were *our* bullshit detectors when we needed them?

Boiling the frog

Well, the first part of the answer is that **a good cult leader won't give you the whole pitch up front** as I did with you. A good cult leader will be deceptive and lure you in with some sort of pitch that is less hard to swallow. "We teach a simple and natural relaxation technique" would be good, for example. He won't ask you to swallow the whole belief system at once. You'll get it in spoonfuls.

I describe this elsewhere as [knowing how to boil a frog](#).

But there's an additional reason...

Reality testing can be suppressed

The second part of the answer is that **there are a multitude of methods that can be applied to a person in order to reduce or even suspend that person's level of reality testing!** All these methods have something in common, they all produce a dissociative state in the person. And in a significant percentage of people a dissociative state causes a significant reduction or suspension of reality testing.

Almost everyone is aware of a common example of this: stage hypnosis. I saw a show once where a stage hypnotist stopped at a construction site and got several construction workers to be subjects. The hypnotist quickly had one of the workers, a big man with quite a large belly, thinking that he was a ballerina. The man was doing leaps and pirouettes and graceful poses. It was hilarious. You can probably think of other similar acts that you've seen on television.

Why did that very manly construction worker do all of this in front of all of his friends and co-workers? Because a "hypnotic trance" is just a form of dissociation, and the man suspended reality testing while in this dissociative state. And when the hypnotist told him "you are a ballerina" the worker's bullshit detector did *not* go off, and he found the hypnotist's suggestion to be *quite* reasonable, and he began to act like the ballerina that he quite "reasonably" felt that he was.

He at *no* point saw *anything* crazy or irrational about this! His intellect would have screamed "Bullshit!" if given the chance, but his intellect had been completely bypassed! His reality tester had never been given the opportunity to analyze the "you are a ballerina" statement for reasonableness, so it was accepted as reasonable.

Surreptitious induction methods: The mark doesn't have to know what is really happening

Our construction worker above knew exactly what he was volunteering for. He was volunteering to be hypnotized for the purposes of entertainment. However, it is completely unnecessary for the subject to have knowingly volunteered for trance induction, or to even be aware (either before or after) that it had occurred.

Surreptitiously inducing dissociation via repetitiveness and rhythm

Repetition and rhythm will induce a dissociative state in many people.

TM itself is a "repetition and rhythm" trance induction technique.

You've seen televangelists of course. If you start noticing you'll see that they all use almost the same rhythmic speech and intonation patterns. A great many people will go into a mild dissociative state from just listening to the televangelist over a period of hours, and from listening to the particular type of droning organ music that is played (you also may have noticed that all of these "healers" use the same type of organ music).

Another classic method of inducing dissociation is chanting. For example, [The Church Universal and Triumphant](#) uses chanting heavily, [here's an example chant](#) being lead by the group's leader.

Surreptitious "quick trance induction" methods

There are also the "quick trance induction" methods.

You've probably seen many examples of surreptitious quick trance induction, in particular "shock induction", yourself on television. I'm talking about televangelists doing "healing services."

I've already described how the many people in the audience will already be in a dissociative state because of the preacher's speech pattern and because of the droning repetitive organ music.

Then when a person comes up for healing, the preacher gets right in his face and shouts "HEAL!!!" while simultaneously placing his hand on the person's forehead and pushing his head

back, and all of this being done while also pushing the person's whole body back into the arms of the preacher's assistants. This creates a sudden overload of the person's cognitive facilities and the result is a dissociative (trance) state. And because it has been suggested to the person many times during the course of the service that this will result in a healing he then he indeed experiences himself as having been healed.

There are other forms of quick trance induction. You can see an example in [this video](#). This technique is similar to shock induction, in that here also the cognitive facilities are overloaded causing a sort of shutdown. In this case Derren Brown (more on him below) induces the overload leading into a dissociative state. He uses sudden changing gestures and unexpected touches combined with a constant patter that keeps changing in intellectual direction. This wouldn't work on everyone, so Brown would have tried it on a number of people before finding someone vulnerable to this approach. But cults do the same thing, they try their particular methods on large numbers of people.

Surreptitiously inducing dissociation via disorientation and sustained overload

"Overload" methods need not involve sudden shock as with the "Heal!" method above. For example, [you can entice people to spend a weekend with you](#) that involves spending many hours a day in a closed hotel conference room. This detaches them from their normal world and puts you in control of what they will or will not experience. Then you force them to stay up very late and then make them come in very early in order to deprive them of sleep. You harangue them for many hours on end, degrading them with continuous verbal abuse. You degrade them further by such methods as having them curl up in a fetal position on the floor and cry like babies. You deny them bathroom breaks.

After not so very long they (except the ones who walk out because it isn't working on them) have been totally overloaded and are in a continuous dissociative state. Then after having broken them down, you build them up again by giving them the Secret of Happiness and Success. And because their reality testing has been suppressed (otherwise they would have been one of the people who walked out) they soak it all up, internalizing it as their own personal truth. And by the final moments of the course they are (because it will have been suggested to them) having incredible highs. And in these final moments you will exhort them to go out and share this wonderful experience with others by encouraging everyone they know to sign up for the next course. And they indeed go home and do that!

Surreptitiously inducing dissociation via "love bombing"

"Love bombing" is a common technique for surreptitiously inducing a dissociative state. [This man](#) succumbed to love bombing as he describes in his [book](#).

He was invited, under false pretenses, to spend a weekend with a group of people at a large house a few hours away from his home. Upon arrival he was literally surrounded by people who were so glad to see him, so *excited* to have him there. And who *liked* him. And who wanted to be *friends* with him. There was a constant series of group activities. He wasn't ever left alone, and he was subjected to this experience every waking hour.

And he couldn't easily leave the place (he hadn't been the one to drive), and the every aspect of his experience in the place was completely different from his own normal settings (this is called "milieu control").

Then he was told that there would be a very important lecture and everyone was very excited. He of course joined the others and attended the lecture. By this time he was in a significantly deep dissociative state and his reality testing had been suppressed. He left that lecture believing that Sun Yung Moon was the Messiah.

It's time for a practical demonstration: "Cult Leadership 101"

You can watch a demonstration of the use of surreptitious induction of dissociation, and of exploiting it to recruit people into a cult. Please view this [demonstration of how to be a cult leader](#).

The "cult leader" in that video is [Derren Brown](#). Brown is a master of a classic branch of stage magic called "[Mentalism](#)." You can [find many excerpts](#) from his performances on YouTube. A "mentalist" is a performer who *simulates* having supernatural powers but who is honest that it is all a fake. As described in the "Mentalism" article above, a mentalist uses...

...mental acuity, [cold reading](#) [see a [demo](#)], [warm reading](#), [hot reading](#), [principles of stage magic](#), [hypnosis and/or suggestion](#) to present the illusion of mind reading, psychokinesis, extra-sensory perception, precognition, clairvoyance or mind control.

In other words, **a mentalist uses the exact same techniques that a cult leader uses**. The only difference is that the mentalist is honest about it all being an act.

How did he do it?

What's happening in that video? A *lot* of things. First, by the time we see him with his audience he has planted a *lot* of suggestions about his spiritual ability. **They know before coming in that he claims to be able to impart a spiritual experience with just a touch**. This is a pre-trance suggestion!

Then when he starts speaking his whole manner is calm and soothing and "safe." His voice in particular is calm and soothing and only very subtly modulated at all. He exudes "goodness" and "trustworthiness", which makes it easier for people to relax mentally, *and to trust him*. This is all trance inducing in many people and some of the people go into a light trance (mild dissociative state).

Which sounds pretty weird. He can put people into a "light trance" just by talking soothingly? This sounds a bit hard to accept because we place very strong esoteric connotations on the word "trance." However, recall that **"trance" is just a form of dissociation, and you experience a mild state of dissociation yourself many times a day**. And these dissociative episodes are very easily induced. Just watching TV, for example, will induce a mild dissociative state; you are dissociated (in a trance) whenever you become totally absorbed in the show.

Brown is now observing the audience and he notices that the woman in the front row is beginning to show symptoms of dissociation. He engages her in conversation, and then suddenly darts his hand close to her head. And because she is already well along this creates a cognitive overload and she goes into a trance. Brown has performed a "quick trance induction." She then indeed has a spiritual experience because it has been previously *suggested* to her many times that Brown could give spiritual experiences to people. Also, when Brown asks "As skeptical?" this is a suggestion that she might *not* be. Other people hear her describe this

experience and it reinforces the strength of Brown's carefully planted suggestions that he can give people spiritual experiences.

Then he takes a break and invites people who aren't buying all of this to leave if they want to. All he is doing is getting rid of the people who haven't proven to be susceptible to his methods. He doesn't *want* them around because their lack of acceptance might break the mood that he has carefully been building up.

Then he picks someone else whom he notices has been responding. He gets the man to stand up, face away, and close his eyes. Brown then plants the suggestion that the man will fall backwards. He plants this suggestion by saying "Don't worry about falling back, I'll catch you if that happens." Sure enough the guy falls back and has his own spiritual experience. Which reinforces the suggestion in the rest of the audience that *they* might have a spiritual experience too! After that the thing just snowballs.

Pretty scary?

Brown has just demonstrated how extraordinarily easy it is to induce a spiritual experience in people and to convince them that you have extraordinary spiritual powers. If Brown had wanted to start a cult at that moment then some of those people might have ended up being his nucleus of adherents. Fortunately, Brown is just trying to demonstrate how frighteningly easy this sort of thing is.

But there are many social predators who have also developed such skills to a virtuoso level. These people also are experts at the other skills of mentalism described above.

Did you find it hugely unsettling that Brown had such an easy time "recruiting" these people? Good. You're beginning to get an appreciation of how frighteningly vulnerable *normal* human psychology is.

Is TM a cult? (cont.)

Part 2: How to win friends and influence people



Applying what we have learned

Ok, all this stuff about inducing dissociation and thus suppressing reality testing is all well and good. But where does it get us as budding cult leaders?

But what we're still missing so far is a comprehensive step-by-step approach for using these methods to recruit and *retain* members and build a really well-run and growing cult.

Keeping what we have learned in mind, here is a summary of how cults use suppression of reality testing in order to recruit and retain members:

- First, the cult has to get the targets in the door so that they can hear the initial pitch. TM offers "[introductory lectures](#)" where the initial hook is planted and people are sold on signing up for basic TM instruction. Scientology offers "[free personality tests](#)" which *everyone* fails, thus indicating their need for the "[Communications Course](#)."
- Once they have the targets in an introductory course the cult will then use a surreptitious method to induce a dissociative ("trance") state in them by any of a myriad of methods. Each cult specializes in certain methods. TM's methods are, of course, discussed throughout this site. Scientology's methods are the "[Training Routines](#)" performed in the "Communications Course." It doesn't matter what method is used as long as a dissociative ("trance") state is produced. Some of the targets will then experience reduced or suspended reality testing. Not all of them, but that's ok. Enough of them will.
- Many separate trance states are induced over the run of the course. During each trance, or else immediately after it (since reality testing won't resume immediately), the cult will gradually start introducing its doctrine to the targets. They will start off easy at first because if they load them up all at once then their dormant reality testing might still be triggered. But they will steadily ramp up the doctrinal intensity through the run of the course. (See "[how to boil a frog](#)".)
 - TM starts off by introducing [the doctrine of "stress release"](#). This is the ludicrous notion that "thoughts in meditation are caused by the release of stress deep within the nervous system." By the end of the course the ludicrousness has advanced to the TM the doctrine that [release of all of the "stress in the nervous system" will produce a state of "Cosmic Consciousness", i.e. Enlightenment.](#) Enlightenment through relaxation! And some people will end the course believing this!
 - The Scientology doctrinal ramp-up is [described here](#). By the end of the course some of the targets will believe that if they just try hard enough, they can command an ash tray to rise into the air and it will obey!
- As with Derren Brown's audience, some of the targets will leave after the introductory courses and never be heard from again. These are the people who weren't as susceptible to trance induction and/or suppression of reality testing. But others will have internalized all of the cult doctrine that they have been presented with. At every stage of indoctrination it all seemed very reasonable to them because of their *inability* to effectively reality-test.
- And part of the indoctrination that they have already internalized is *a/ways* that:

- They should perform a cult-recommended dissociative practice every day.
- They should come back for more and more courses and training or whatever. Each time they will go through cycles of trance induction and indoctrination.

With both TM and Scientology, to continue using our examples, they can (and probably will) spend the rest of their lives in the pursuit of [Cosmic Consciousness](#) or trying to reach the most advanced [Operating Thetan](#) level.

Why can't people see how *reasonable* my group's teachings are!

From there on out it's a straight drop for these people. Their reality testing mechanisms have been completely hammered into the ground as far as the cult's doctrine is concerned. These people are now no longer targets, they are cult members.

And their reality testing mechanisms will be hammered over and over again, almost continuously, for the rest of their lives. It will be very *very* difficult for them to *ever* exercise reality testing as regards cult doctrine, despite desperate efforts from their friends and relatives to make them "see reason." **It will be next to impossible to convince them because these new members *know* that they *themselves* are the ones seeing reason!** *You* are the one with a problem.

They may very likely be in the cult for the rest of their lives. We now have a bunch of Cruises. And Lynchs. And Kelletts. Trying, with the noblest intentions, to convince the rest of the world of the Truth which seems so very *reasonable* to them!

Nobody who is in a cult is in a cult

Nobody who is in a cult is in a cult. Just ask them. They are *certain* that they aren't. That's because of the "reasonableness" factor just described. That's because they *know* that the process of arriving at their current set of beliefs was *completely* rational! They have been thinking clearly throughout the whole process. **They have *experienced* it as an objective process of intellectual discovery right along with the spiritual aspect!**

TMers will tell you that "no faith is required." So will a Scientologist!

What's *really* wrong, they know, is that the public *misunderstands* their group's teachings and practices. If the public would only see and experience for themselves, they would understand!

These people can't be very smart!

These people can't be very smart, right?

Well, no matter what you think about Cruise, he doesn't strike me as unintelligent. Nor does Lynch. Nor does the indisputably world-class scientific genius [John Hagelin](#).

Being intelligent and highly creative didn't save Cruise and [Lynch](#). And being a world-famous world-class absolute genius didn't help Hagelin. Why? **Because intelligence is absolutely no barrier to cult recruitment.** This is because a

person's intelligence is totally bypassed during the process of cult recruitment. **When reality testing is suspended then one's intelligence is *not applied at all* in order to ascertain the reasonableness of the cult's teachings.**

In fact, intelligence makes things worse. This is because a person will use his intelligence to produce brilliant rationalizations of cult dogma after he is recruited.

And the more intelligent a person is the more valuable he is to the cult. For years now Hagelin has made use of his reputation as a scientist to be the poster child for almost all of TM's publicity campaigns. (Until Lynch came along; now Lynch is pulling ahead in that role.)

Part 3: A definition of "cult", and finally the answer to the question!



As described in [this article](#) there are a myriad of meanings for the word "cult." That article has a long list but some of the meanings of "cult", with my response to the definitions, are:

- Roman Catholics who are devoted to a saint are said to be members of the "cult" of that saint. The word is completely non-judgmental in this context. Of course, this isn't what I mean when I use "cult" in this web site, but it gives you an idea of the wide uses of the term.
- Some people will label any group that they think has excessively eccentric beliefs a "cult." This is not what I mean either. **Yes, I think that the complete set of TM beliefs is completely nuts, but that's not what my problem is with TM!** If I thought TM was just a group of people with nutty beliefs I wouldn't give it a second thought. For example, I think

that support groups for alien abductees are [reinforcing a delusion](#), but I don't consider them to *necessarily* be "cults."

- And some people will label any group that they think has a negative impact on members a "cult." I don't use the term "cult" to describe groups like this either.

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So I don't mean any of the above when I use the word "cult." But I *do* like this [definition by Stephen Hassan](#) (I highly recommend [his book](#)):

A destructive cult is a pyramid-shaped authoritarian regime with a person or group of people that have dictatorial control. It uses deception in recruiting new members (e.g. people are NOT told up front what the group is, what the group believes and what will be expected of them if they become members). It also uses mind control techniques to keep people dependent and obedient."

An example: Scientology

Let's take Scientology as an example:

- Scientology definitely has a pyramid-shaped dictatorial structure. No one ever argued with L. Ron Hubbard before his death. Everything he said was considered revealed truth. And now no one argues with [David Miscavige](#) today.
- Scientology absolutely uses deception in recruiting. Every word uttered after "Would you like a free personality test?" consists of deceptive maneuvering. No one who walks in to take a personality test knows what they are *really* getting into. They have no idea of what Scientology [really teaches](#). If they knew, they'd never come in the door. This is the reason Scientology *has* to use deception. They can't have the targets balking, so the targets can't know the whole story ahead of time. The targets have to be *gradually* introduced to cult doctrine while in suggestible psychological states.
- And Scientology definitely uses mind control techniques. All of the post-personality-test "Training Routines" induce a dissociative state, as does the main "auditing" technique. Scientology indoctrination is always given while the person is in a vulnerable in-trance or post-trance state.

Ok, now what about TM?

Now let's have a go at TM:

- Nobody ever argued with Mahesh either. *Ever*. Every word that he uttered was considered to be revealed and perfect spiritual truth. The highest spiritual truth, literally, that the world had *ever* seen.
- Nobody who walks into a TM introductory lecture has any idea of what they're *really* getting into either. And for the same reasons as with Scientology. For example, David Lynch would have a very hard time introducing TM into public schools if the school boards knew that their students might end up as TM [monks](#) or [nuns](#). Or that the students might end up believing in [demons](#). Or that the students might start believing that they can learn to [physically levitate](#) (the music is whimsical but that's actual footage of TMers thinking that they are levitating).

- And TM definitely uses mind control techniques, as I've discussed throughout this web site.

But Scientology and TM seem completely different!

If we focus entirely on the *doctrines and practices* that are taught then yes, Scientology and TM are completely different.

Indeed, the two groups' dogmas bear no resemblance at all. And TM is not "[rabid](#)" in the way that Scientology is. For example, TMers don't stand on sidewalks pushing "personality tests." The TM leaders aren't suing me into the ground for having this website. They are not leafletting my neighborhood accusing me of being a child molester as Scientologists often do with critics. In fact, I'm *extremely* happy that I was in TM rather than in Scientology.

But where Scientology and TM are the same, however, is that they deceptively exploit the exact same [vulnerabilities in normal human psychology](#) in order to recruit and retain their members. And their members incur significant psychological injury in both groups.

Ok, so finally, is TM a cult?

TM is what I call a "stealth" cult. The public tends to think of a "cult" as a group with very high-pressure recruiting tactics, or that commits group suicide, or that sells flowers in airports, or that conducts mass marriage ceremonies, or that pursues its opponents with lawsuits, etc. etc. Therefore there are very few people who recognize that TM is a cult. It has successfully marketed itself to the public as a "**scientifically validated, simple, natural relaxation technique.**" Most members of the public are dismissive of TM, but yet they consider it at worst eccentric and harmless.

TM's recruiting is very subtle. **It is based on post-trance indoctrination that begins very subtly during the basic course in TM. TM is happy to let most people fail recruiting and wander off unhindered. It's quite happy settling for the smaller subset of those who learn TM who do end up sinking into the cult.** And once it starts, the descent deeper and deeper into the cult is very gradual. Everything is entirely "voluntary", and even after falling into the cult aspect of TM a person can walk away at any time without being actively blocked from doing so, and without being pursued. There is no real pressure to descend farther into the cult, people are attracted to do so by the prospect of achieving Enlightenment and "bliss", and thereby achieving complete freedom from "suffering." The phobic induction is very subtle; eventually a person will become convinced that there will significant negative karmic consequences, both in this life and the next, of leaving TM, but this also is developed very gradually and is not blatantly instilled. And so on and so forth.

Most people quit practicing TM entirely after awhile, without ever having descended into the cultic aspects of it. Those who do descend into the cult get quite stuck in it, however, and end up wasting their lives in it. They will become active in TM offerings that involve much more than "twenty minutes twice a day" of meditation. TM is just a method of self-inducing a trance state. "Trance" is a form of "dissociation." Self-inducing dissociation for hours a day for months or years at a time, as many of those who descend into the cult do, is extremely psychologically dangerous and many such people develop severe psychological problems.

The official TM dogma regarding such people is that it's their own fault if they can't handle the rapid pace of spiritual "evolution" induced by TM. When their psychological problems manifest in observable dysfunction, these people will be denied access to further "courses", access to "advanced techniques", and access to all other TM offerings that are supposed to greatly accelerate one's "evolution."

Some of these people will crash and burn, severely. Students at "Maharishi University of Management" (the TM private university) who develop debilitating dysfunction have been driven to nearby emergency rooms and dumped there. Those TMers who are working as full-time (and miserably paid) staff at TM facilities will lose their jobs. Those who have become celibate TM monks in the "Thousand-Headed Purusha Program", or celibate TM nuns in the "Mother Divine Program", will be kicked out. A great many of such "kick outs" have been living a life involving many hours of self-induced dissociation a day for many years and are ill-prepared to cope with life on the "outside", this in addition to the dissociative disorders that they have started to develop. Other TMers, as a result of their own dysfunction and also as a result of having been banned from TM's "advanced" offerings, just limp away on their own.

It is extremely rare for any of these people to ever realize that they have been in a cult. This is because the success of TM's "stealth cult" approach has fooled them too, and (unlike Scientology for example) **there is extraordinarily little public discussion about the cultic aspects of TM.** Those who crash and burn and end up outside of TM just nurse their wounds and try to "get a life" again without ever understanding what has actually happened to them. And those that do eventually come to understand that they were in a cult just want to heal and get on with their lives. So there are extremely few former TMers who publically oppose TM. And those that do so are usually dismissed by the public because of the public perception that TM is harmless despite its eccentricities.

TM's "stealth cult" approach has been extraordinarily successful. Maharishi Mahesh Yogi has achieved total psychological dominance of a great many followers who consider him an enlightened man who has revived the highest spiritual teaching that has ever been available on the planet. And he has absolute control of the millions and millions of dollars that the TM organization has garnered over the decades. For awhile it seemed like TM would die out as there were very few new "initiates." However, newly developed propaganda efforts are proving highly successful. For example, the efforts by the famous film director David Lynch to introduce TM into public schools are proving distressingly successful, and his extensive of tour major college campuses giving presentations that include TM propaganda have been well received by student audiences.

For further study on cults

There are several suggestions for further study of cults on the "[Suggestions for further research](#)" page.

Should you trust David Lynch with your children?



This section of the site is addressed to parents of school-age children. My children are out of school but it hasn't been that long. It will *never* be too long for me not to be able to share what you feel towards your children. You love them and want all the best for them. If the David Lynch Foundation is offering to do wonderful things at your child's school then it will be made to sound *extremely* attractive. **However, while it may be attractive on the outside, under the covers a very real risk to your child's psychological health has been raised.**

[David Lynch](#) is a successful and much-admired film and television director. He is also an ardent proponent of Transcendental Meditation. He has established the [David Lynch Foundation For Consciousness-Based Education and World Peace](#). If you read the web site then you'll see that the goals of the foundation are quite noble and quite grand.

As the parent of a school-age child, however, you only need to know three things about him:

- a. He wants your child to learn TM.
- b. He'll pay for it.
- c. He's wants to do this within the authority and moral auspices of your child's school.

The man has *wonderful* intentions. I know this because so did I when I was a TMer. He believes very deeply that TM will do wonderful things for your children.

And he has research to "prove" it. And lots of celebrity endorsements. And endorsements from educators. **The problem is that none of those celebrities and educators know what is *behind***

the facade of the Transcendental Meditation organization. They only know what they've been told.

So when the DLF pitches their proposal to your school's principal, they don't tell the principal *everything*. And when the principal calls a parent's meeting and lets them pitch it directly to the parents, the DLF folks don't tell *you* everything either.

You're the parent, so *you* be the judge: does Lynch have a stable view of reality?

Before continuing, I want to give you an idea of how very very far Lynch has fallen down the TM rabbit hole. First read this "[Time Magazine](#)" article. Then watch [this video](#).

What's happening in the video is that Lynch is lending his prestige to support the "Raja of Germany" at a news conference held to promote the building of a "[Tower of Invincibility](#)" in Germany. The mere building of such a tower will [make Germany literally invincible against its enemies](#)! Lynch believes this! **Furthermore he wants your children to believe it too!** And some of them eventually will!

There's more to the invincibility thing though. In order to achieve invincibility the Tower must be staffed with "yogic flyers"! **David Lynch believes that the people in [this video](#) are literally physically levitating!** (While the music is a bit whimsical that video is not a joke - those guys do think that they are levitating!) Your kids will find out about levitation in the TM Clubs. They won't be *taught* how to "levitate" in the clubs but they will be [indoctrinated via trance and suggestion](#) so that it is something that many of them will end up *strongly* wanting to learn when they get old enough.

Picture your child in that video sometime in the future! It's *highly* possible. Those are *somebody's* children, and I guarantee that these young people didn't learn in grade school like your kids will. They weren't exposed to TM trance and suggestion indoctrination until after age 18, and they still ended up there! *Grade-school* kids don't have much of a chance against the type of powerful indoctrination they'll be exposed to for years in school.

Yes, I said [Raja](#), as in "King." Lynch believes that the guy in the Burger King crown and white sheets really *is* the Raja of Germany! He's "Raja of Germany for the Global Country of World Peace", and is therefore the spiritual leader of all of Germany!

The guy in the Burger King crown in the video is "Raja Emanuel." He is a sort of "assistant" Raja. He's "only" the [Raja of Germany](#) instead of Raja of the entire world, but he's still a "Raja." He went to a real live "Raja Training Course" to attain this height. I'm dead serious, a course that he *paid a million dollars* for in order to train to be a "Raja." If you'll replay the video above you'll hear Lynch mentioning the power of the Raja Training Course to the audience. By the way, I'm sure that Emanuel Schiffgens was a fairly normal guy too before Mahesh broke his mind and turned him into the blathering robot you see in the video.

Are you with me so far? There is a *chief* raja, a *Maharaja*, the "[Maharaja Adhiraj Raja Raam](#)", "Ruler of the Global Country of World Peace"! Here he is as a proto-Raja [receiving his weight in gold](#) from Mahesh. And his coronation ceremony is [here](#).

Poor [Tony Nader](#) was just an ordinary guy (an accomplished scientist but he still put his pants on one leg at a time) until Mahesh broke his mind to the point that Nader *believes* all of that about himself.

Lynch believes that all this stuff about the "Maharaja of the Global Country of World Peace" makes perfect sense and is literally true! He really thinks that Tony Nader is the supreme spiritual figure in the world! **And this is what he wants your children to ultimately come to learn! And some of them *will* end up believing it**

Would it bother you if your children became just as deluded?

Lynch doesn't just believe that these guys are literally spiritual kings. He believes in the entire [TM fantasy universe](#). **Lynch is completely unbelievably nuts!** It takes nothing away from his being a great artist. And it's nothing personal, I was unbelievably nuts too. Lynch is a nice guy, I was a nice guy, it doesn't matter. Lynch is incredibly brilliant and creative, I'm smart but not remotely as creative, it doesn't matter. We both put our pants on one leg at a time, **we both have human psychologies, which *does* matter, and we were both just as helpless.**

Lynch wants to teach your children to achieve the same delusional state he is in! For their own good, of course.

David Lynch *knows* what the total agenda of the TM organization is, but he won't say anything about it at the parent's meeting (which he may very well attend). **He won't tell you that your daughter could quite easily end up as a [celibate TM nun](#), or that your son could quite easily end up as a [celibate TM monk](#).** He won't tell you that they're very likely to end up in [TM crazy-land](#) (of course he doesn't see it as that). He probably doesn't think that [crashing and burning](#) can even happen (he's not a "full-time" TMer and probably hasn't seen it) but it does happen, and it could happen to your child.

These things won't happen to your children while they're minors, of course, but having them go down the TM rabbit hole is very likely after they have been stewed in TM juices (there will definitely be subtle but real TM [religious indoctrination](#) in these school "TM clubs") during their formative years, and they then achieve majority.

And this will happen to some of them (maybe yours) even if they are "intelligent." People think that cults prey on stupid people, but they don't. [Even very high intelligence is no barrier to cult recruitment.](#) Is your child smarter than David Lynch, for example?

[Picture your child ending up with a dissociative disorder and induced psychosis as described here.](#)

Lynch is deceiving you (for your own good of course)!

Why doesn't he want you to know the *whole* story? Because you "aren't ready" for the information. I've already discussed how TMers employ "[mental reservations](#)". They won't tell you everything during the [introductory lectures](#) either. A [mental reservation](#) is a form of *deception*. It is not deception by giving *false* information, it is deception by not giving *all* of the information. **I was explicitly told in my TM "Teacher Training Course" that I should withhold information from the public that they "wouldn't understand". All TM advocates do this with**

the public! In particular, Lynch is doing this! But for beneficent reasons, so that people won't receive information that they "aren't ready" to understand which might cause them to miss out on the "benefits" of TM.

This deception-by-withholding is done for the good of your child! If you knew that your child could *very well* eventually end up as a [TM monk](#) or a [TM nun](#), or if you knew that that your child may very well end up [in a totally delusional state thinking that they are "levitating"](#), or if you know about any of the many other things that the TM organization doesn't think you're ready for, then "you wouldn't understand." And then on the basis of your misunderstanding you might deny your child the benefits of Transcendental Meditation!

And that would be awful. Lynch wants the best for your child. He *really* does.

Just because Lynch is brilliant and creative it doesn't mean that he's not also completely Looney-Tunes!

The thing about David Lynch is that all of his fabulous achievements don't change one particular thing: they don't change the fact that he is a human being with a human psychology. And they don't change the fact that every human psychology comes with a standard set of weaknesses. **This means that David Lynch is as vulnerable as anyone else to falling under the sway of a cult.** Again, even very high intelligence is no barrier to cult recruitment, because the psychology of cult recruitment *bypasses* the intellect. And artistic genius actually makes one *more* vulnerable because of the fantastic imagination that comes with it.

Cults just *love* intelligent and creative people. This is because they are just as easily recruited as anyone else, and once recruited they make fantastic *tools*!

Lynch has completely lost himself, *literally*, in TM. And in his obvious innate love and compassion for his fellow human beings, once he conceived of a TM crusade then he ran brilliantly with it.

But he's only human, folks. Don't trust your child's happiness to his judgment. **He wants your child to end up just like him.**

Some facts

- The DLF tried to get into a school in San Rafael, California. Unfortunately for them one of the school's parents, Gina Catena, was a former fully-involved TMer who knew everything found in this web site and more. Here's her [letter to the School District](#). Even after that the principal and school district wanted to continue with the program! However having gotten wind of this the DLF [withdrew their offer](#). I can only think it's because Gina is very well known in the TMer community and knows where the bodies are buried, and the DLF knew they were in for some bad publicity.
- They will tell you that TM is a "simple natural relaxation technique." That's *all* they say about what your children will learn. This is "mental reservation again", i.e. a *deception*. The TM technique is never taught alone, it is *only* ever taught [combined with instruction in TM-the-religion](#).

- This isn't the first time that TMers have tried to insinuate themselves into public schools. They tried it in the 70's. What Mahesh did was to recast TM religious doctrine in the guise of a "science", which he dubbed the "[Science of Creative Intelligence](#)." All of the dogma was still there, it was just enrobed in [pseudoscientific](#) babble. Since many people seem to think that anything that *sounds* like science *is* science, a lot of people fell for the "SCI" approach. However, the United States District Court for the District of New Jersey found that [SCI is religious doctrine](#). *Your kids will be learning the exact same doctrine*.
- The DLF will have *already* preemptively prepared the principal and the school district with defenses against your objections! The principal knows that you are coming, and has been prepped. You will have already (without knowing exactly who you will turn out to be yet) been cast as "ignorant" of what TM really is. And you will have been cast as a bit of a religious fanatic if you have religious convictions (TMers don't like the First Amendment much). In the art of rhetoric this strategy is called [poisoning the well](#). It will allow the principal and school district to rationalize dismissing you out of hand without really considering the merits of your arguments. Remember, the principal and the school district have already put themselves out on a limb for this and they are very likely to fight you, as was the experience in San Rafael. When the parent meeting was called there the establishment of a "TM Club" in school was presented to the parents as a *fait accompli* which they were being *informed* of, not being *consulted on!* It's only because parents, including Gina, made themselves informed and then stood their ground that it was stopped. Don't be cowed. Even if the program gets ramrodded in you can still fight it.
- You will be told that the DLF is giving a "grant to the school". This sounds great, except that the grant money does *not* go to the school. It goes to the TM organization.
- There have been *no* longitudinal studies on the effect of this dissociative mediation technique on the developing psychologies of children. The few studies that have been done on children and youth consist of study samples too small to be statistically significant.
- If the DLF has your school in their sights, or if they are already there, then *you are not only dealing with a highly respected and admired public figure, you are also dealing with highly polished full-time professional TMers who have dedicated their whole lives to this*. They'll fight you with some very slick "mental reservation", and unless you know what they're hiding it will be hard to counter them. I'd be happy to give you advice on countering their arguments. You can also write to Gina (the San Rafael mom) [here](#). And you can visit her blog "[comingtolifestories.com](#)."

Common objections and frequently asked questions (FAQ)



I have already learned TM and this all sounds pretty scary! Am I in a cult? Should I stop meditating?

Well, it's healthy that **you can entertain doubt**; it's when the capacity to doubt disappears that things get scary.

There are three reasons to stop TM once you have started it:

- (1) Stop if you continue to have any contact *whatsoever* with the TM organization. This includes checking sessions, group meetings, and especially residence courses. The main problem with

TM is that it is **taught by a cult**, and no one can tell ahead of time whether they are one of the many people who automatically and significantly suspend "reality testing" during and after a dissociative experience (trance).

Being susceptible to cult recruitment is not a matter of intelligence. Dr. John Hagelin is a truly incredible world-class genius yet [he was totally sucked into the TM alternate reality](#). Also, a person doesn't have to have significant psychological issues in order to be vulnerable to recruitment. And "strength of will" is most definitely not a factor at all, just consider Tom Cruise.

The more you expose yourself to the TM organization the more likely you are to be succumb. For some people recruitment happens gradually over a period of years.

- (2) Stop if you have symptoms of dissociation outside of meditation. This is usually experienced as "spaceyness."
- (3) Stop if you start having any other sort of problems associated with TM, such as headaches. *Don't* go to "have your meditation checked."

Otherwise, if you like it then enjoy it. You've already taken the risk of having your reality testing suppressed and of being led into TM Wonderland, and have survived.

I (or my friend or my relative) never had anything but good experiences from TM.

People end up with different levels of participation in TM.

Most begin TM and then quit again very quickly! These are the people who are not susceptible to trance induction, or who at least are not susceptible to the trance induction techniques used in TM. They therefore don't get anything at all out of TM and quickly drop it.

Others in fact do enjoy some "relaxation" benefit, but they do not internalize TM dogma and they never have problems with "unstressing." These people proved susceptible to the TM trance induction script and are indeed getting relaxation out of it. But they haven't drunk the Kool-Aid. Their only problem (a) they ran the risk of ending up [bouncing on foam rubber](#), and (b) is that they paid a *lot* of money or a benefit they could have gained elsewhere, such as, for example, with the ["Relaxation Response"](#). This is a secular version of TM that produces relaxation without the intense dogmatic indoctrination of TM. And there are other things that one can do for oneself that aren't taught by a cult.

Other people experience some "unstressing" or "headache" difficulties from even the basic "twenty minutes twice a day" practice. In such cases the TM checkers and teachers will encourage them to continue with the TM practice even though they should really quit because they are experiencing toxic side-effects. However, I don't know that anyone who has completely limited themselves to "twenty minutes twice a day" has ever had dramatic psychological damage as a result. Still, these "unstressing" symptoms indicate that they shouldn't really be continuing the practice, and they probably wouldn't continue in the face of such difficulties if TM personnel didn't talk them out of quitting. As with the prior group, I believe that these people are susceptible to TM trance induction techniques but have not proven susceptible to TM dogmatic indoctrination. However, these people have proven sensitive to even the amount of trance, dissociation, and toxic suggestion that even the basic "twenty minutes twice a day" brings. Hopefully they will stop paying attention to the TM checkers and teachers and will quit the practice of TM entirely.

Other people internalize the TM dogma, fall down the rabbit hole, and end up in the [foam-rubber room](#), and worse.

If some people do have good results from TM, why are you so completely negative about TM?

Consider a hypothetical new drug therapy. The pharmaceutical company did *not* reveal negative clinical trial results that showed an unacceptably high incidence of serious liver complications at some of the higher dosages. The positive results of the therapy are, however, indeed positive when they occur.

Based on the partial data available, the drug becomes officially certified as an acceptable therapy and it becomes widely prescribed and used, often at the higher dosages. After introduction to the public, however, the drug therapy does in fact continue to have an unacceptably high rate of dangerous liver complication. The pharmaceutical company publicly dismisses reports of such complications, denying that they are a result of the drug therapy, pointing as proof to their "excellent" clinical trial results. They claim that those having negative results must have had some sort of undiagnosed pre-existing condition.

If the drug company then revealed that they had known of the incidence of complications, yet still marketed the drug, the public outcry would be tremendous.

The tragic thing is that there were [other](#) drug therapies on the market that provided acceptable "positive" benefits, and which did *not* have the same risk of dangerous complication. (The reason that "relaxation response" is not dangerous is that is not being taught by a cult.)

Some patients and some physicians begin to engage in "consumer warning" campaigns. They recommend to the public, and to the medical profession, that they use the other safer therapies instead.

Are they being "too negative"?

Mahesh won't tell you about the people who experience a negative impact from TM.
The "benefits" are just not worth the risk of exposing yourself to the TM recruiting mechanism.

I am a TM teacher (or a satisfied TM practitioner) and this whole web site is a personal attack on my integrity.

See "[I intend no criticism of any individuals other than Maharishi Mahesh Yogi!](#)"

My strong sense of my own integrity was perfectly intact when I was a TM practitioner, and also when I was a TM teacher. At most, I now wish that I had told *everyone everything up front*, rather than "protecting" them from things they "weren't ready for". So, I assume that your personal integrity is intact too.

I have validated Maharishi's teachings through my own innocent experience, without any exercise of faith. And his teachings have been scientifically validated and are intellectually sound. I am *not* in a cult!

I accept your sincerity. I was of the same opinion myself once. However, none what you said of *itself* rules out the possibility that you are in a cult. See "[Nobody who is in a cult is in a cult.](#)" Furthermore, [your experience was never, ever, "innocent"](#)!

What is wrong with you? Why drives you to do such a horrible thing as to betray your oath as a TM teacher, to betray the [Holy Tradition](#), and to attack TM?

Yes, I did sign an [oath as a TM teacher](#) that included statements along these lines:

It is my fortune, Guru Dev [Mahesh's deceased master], that I have been accepted to serve the Holy Tradition and spread the Light of God to all those who need it. It is my joy to undertake the responsibility of representing the Holy Tradition in all its purity as it has been given to me by Maharishi and I **promise on your altar, Guru Dev, that with all my heart and mind I will always work within the framework of the Organisations founded by Maharishi. And to you, Maharishi, I promise that as a Meditation Guide I will be faithful in all ways to the trust that you have placed in me.**

Pretty heavy, yes?

However, I subsequently found out what TM *really* is. Any promises that I had given had to be weighed against what I felt was a conflicting responsibility to inform others of the facts of TM.

Why don't you just get over your anger and resentment, drop this whole vendetta, and get on with your life?

I'm not at all angry at Mahesh. Truthfully.

I think that Mahesh was an incredibly brilliant and talented [sociopath](#). This means that he was *completely* devoid of the facility that we call "conscience." He was acting completely within the limits of and in accordance with his nature. One might as well be angry at a hurricane.

Suggestions for further research



Web sites that are critical of TM...

[TM-Free](#). This is a blog with several highly knowledgeable ex-TMer contributors. These are people who know where the bodies are buried.

[Coming To Life Stories](#). This is Gina Catena's blog. I mention her in my [discussion of David Lynch](#). She literally grew up in the "TM Movement" (as TMers like to call it) and also knows where the bodies are buried. She is also a frequent contributor to the TM-Free blog mentioned above.

[TranceNet](#)

[Behind the TM Facade](#) (specializes in very effectively debunking TM's claims to "scientific validation")

[Meditation Information Network](#) (don't miss the [TM-EX Newsletter Archive](#) and the [TM Dissenter's FAQ](#))

Web sites that educate the public about destructive cults

[International Cultic Studies Association](#).

[The Rick Ross Institute](#)

[Steven Hassan's Resource Center for Freedom of Mind](#)

[FactNet](#)

[Cult Awareness & Information Centre](#)

Books that educate the public about destructive cults

The best single book to start with is [Combatting Cult Mind Control](#) by [Steven Hassan](#). This book is an excellent popular introduction to the psychological techniques used by destructive cults to surreptitiously alter their recruits' experience of reality.

I also recommend Hassan's second book, [Releasing The Bonds: Empowering People to Think for Themselves](#).

Another excellent book is [Cults in Our Midst](#) by Margaret Thaler Singer, Janja Lalich, and Robert Jay Lifton. Dr. Margaret Singer is emeritus Professor of Psychology at the University of California at Berkeley, and is one of the foremost contributors to the understanding of the psychological influence techniques used by destructive cults in order to recruit and retain members. There are many references in the book to "empty mind meditation." Before publication she had originally specifically written "Transcendental Meditation" instead, but a professor at [MUM](#) caught wind of it and she was threatened with a [SLAPP suit](#) that she didn't want to have to defend.

[TM and Cult Mania](#) was the book that introduced me to how TM worked via trance and suggestion. It is written by Michael A. Persinger Ph.D. He is Coordinator of the Behavioural Neuroscience Program at Laurentian University.

Web sites that are *favorable* toward TM...

[TM.org](#)

[AllTM.org](#)

[Ask the Doctors](#) (This site is a *hoot*! I discuss it [here](#)).

Fun with TM web links

- Here's a fascinating new angle on the [Evolution of Man](#). I recommend the whole thing, but if you get tired of it be sure to at least search for "2001" before giving up.
- Have a look at [The Maharishi Channel](#). Just click around, there are hours and hours of fun here. "Coronation of New Rajas" is pretty cool.
- Are [these guys](#) really hovering?
- Click on some of [these trademarks](#).
- Make ["Global Good News"](#) your primary news source every day!
- TM has a [King of the World](#).
- Maharaja Raam is [is anxious to help](#) (and in a big way!).
- In fact, Maharaja Raam will lead the world to a state of ["non-good nowhere"](#)!

- Not only do they go out in public in those things, but they give speeches! In [this video](#) David Lynch introduces the Raja of Germany at a press conference being held to announce the purchase of a site for Berlin's new [Tower of Invincibility](#) (that's what the building in the picture is). The Raja starts to spout torrents of standard TM-babble but the German crowd is apparently culturally very perceptive of snow-jobs.
- Maharaja Raam's "Global Country of World Peace" [issues its own currency](#). It's pegged to the dollar.
- Help make your nation [become "invincible"](#) by becoming a yogic flyer!
- Get your horoscope cast, not just by any old astrologer but by a special [Maharishi-branded astrologer](#).
- If your horoscope says that things are looking dark then don't panic, you can make [sacrifices to the Vedic gods](#) to make things ok again. (Hey, that's cool if you're Hindu but this is supposed to be a completely secular relaxation technique that's being taught!)
- You can also help dig yourself out of a karmic hole by living in a house built according to Maharishi-branded (of course) [Indian feng shui](#). This will help because the [orientation of the house means everything!](#)
- In fact, as a TMer you'll buy just about anything with a "Maharishi" brand!. The ["Maharishi Vedic Observatory"](#) is just amazing. Click on the yantras (those things in the ring) to read about the "Vedic influence" of each according to "Maharishi Vedic Science." And the Observatory is easy to use! All you have to do is to [look at the thing](#) (search for "How to Use") and "ten kinds of specific balancing influences are enlivened in the physiology." [Ordering is easy!](#) It's [a mere \\$4,000](#) and comes with its own maple table and domed cover!
- Here's an experiment:
 - Please meet [John Hagelin, Ph.D.](#), Director of the Institute of Science, Technology and Public Policy at Maharishi University of Management, and Minister of Science and Technology of the Global Country of World Peace. Whew.
 - The experiment involves listening to his "important message for all military leaders." Go to his website at the link above, find "Dr. Hagelin presents the Invincible Defense Technology", and click on the "Watch on Flash" link just below.
 - Listen to it for a full 15 minutes, making your best effort to follow his arguments.
 - Did your mind sort of glaze over while listening, enough so that you had to struggle somewhat to resume your effort to pay attention? In other words, did you get a bit spaced out? You may have gone into a light trance. Listening to extended complicated nonsense delivered in a pleasant monotone is a form of trance induction. You only had to listen for 15 minutes, but a TMer would have listened to the entire hour and a quarter! TMers, who have already proven themselves to be susceptible to trance induction, listen to thousands of hours of this sort of thing during their careers.

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TM-FREE Blog

Monday, January 22, 2007

Mantras

This is the revised four-part Mantras post in one continuous piece.

Mantras - when I was instructed, my teacher had recently returned from her course at which the fab four had been briefly involved. She gave me the mantra "I'm" (that's what it sounded like but I visualized it as an eye with an *m* after it, at least for a while). [11 May 2007: I have edited all 4 part together here. This is the beginning of part one]

When I became a TM teacher (30 months after learning TM) I was given two lists, one for men, one for women. I immediately pointed out to Mahesh that my own mantra was "wrong" according to the piece of paper he had just handed me. I instantly asked if I should change my mantra. He said *no, doesn't matter*.

ages 6-15 (children's technique from 6-10 ing, boys, im girls)

11-16 ing male, im female

15-30 aing male, aim female

30-45 shring male, shrim female

45 and over shiam male and shiama female.

I had gotten my "second" (a.k.a. night) technique from Sattyanand (this turned out to be slightly different from what a friend had gotten in a different group either before or after my group – I'll dig out my notes in order to discuss this later, I don't recall it being hugely significant, we had all been taught to check it, essentially give it, the same way). – The night technique never worked until about 18 months later in Fiuggi, then it worked brilliantly until my next technique which Mahesh gave me, then it stopped working completely and I forgot about it.

Two months after becoming a teacher, Sattyanand gave me my third technique. He asked me what my mantra was and I said **aim** (pronounced *I'm* ... right age, wrong gender). He more or less grunted *I'm namah* and told me to go and meditate.

I did.

It felt like I was falling out of an airplane. I felt dragged down and down and down, becoming increasingly and increasingly, heavy, woozy, dreamy and all the time consciousness of this and increasingly unable to form a clear thought, like *help*, for example.

After about two more tries of this, I asked him to check my mantra. He asked what it was, I said *I'm namah* and he grunted *no, eye'ng namah*. Lots of emphasis on his part, I knew unquestionably I had made no mistake of understanding before. After that, meditation was just meditation, moderately dull, kind of restful.

In Fiuggi the mantras list was just ages and mantras. the first two the same as my first two, but no gender

differentiation [I doubt he had gone equal opportunity given his penchant for separating men and women, but that came later anyway]. I don't remember the ages, but I do remember the mantras: ing, im, inga, ima (obvious, add **a** to the end of the first two) aying, ayim, (obvious, add **ay** to the end of the first two) then ayinga. ayima, (adding **a** to the end), then shring, my 40-45 men's mantra.

Long story (omitted here but it was after Fiuggi), I asked Mahesh to make me an M-Group teacher. Which he did. I could teach monks, nuns, priests, and religious brothers so they could take the SCI course. Mahesh wasn't just trying to invade politics! – I was given two mantras *aying* for men, *ayim* for nuns.

I still have the piece of paper he picked up to write them for me.

What's personal about *personal mantra* in the mythical purity of the teaching?

Next, I want to mention a few things about some observations I have about what Mahesh said about mantras in *Beacon*. And then, maybe, what Yogananda said about his use of mantra.

§ part two

Mahesh lied (3 to 5 years to CC, gimme a break) in order to sell the product I believed in. That's a given. But I certainly believed and he certainly lied, depending on rumour and innuendo to persuade me, all of us, of not only the greatness of TM but his personal greatness as well.

But he lied and he wasn't so great, either.

We all, as far as I know, believed at one time that if lying was what it took to spread TM, then that was OK. The end justified the means because, speaking for myself, I truly, deeply, completely believed TM was the greatest gift that could be given.

Sure, I had some difficulty with the fact that anyone wanting to learn had to pay so I could give this great gift; but I managed.

I rationalized.

To this day, I firmly believe that meditation is a great and valuable gift. But is TM meditation? Is TM "great" and is it "valuable"? I want to look at this in Part 3.

It certainly is not a gift. It is an expensive commodity – one not only purchases TM like a pair of shoes, but also comes to possess something to which of necessity commits like raising a child. Except this product surreptitiously elevates you to another life-style. And while you might have started out as the one taking care of *it* (good old 2x20) eventually it takes over and you are buying it the next thing Mahesh is selling, the next thing that will make it work better, faster, smoother.

Are we also to absolutely trust Mahesh when he tells us his method* is the only thing that can be called meditation? In the early days he referred to smoke, to unwinding. It was not until his meeting with Hans Selye that we discovered that we were unstressing. Didn't he understand his own *method*? Whose meditation is it, anyway?

Can someone "own" a method?

I have tried several different forms of meditation. BUT I am not claiming that my assessment is sufficient reason for anyone to stop what is working, or switch to something else. If you personally are happy with the results of TM or any other form of meditation, if your life is running smoothly and you are not

dependent on anyone to tell you what kind of life-style is most appropriate, what life-partner you should or should not have, if you are making good decisions that are working out for you and not alienating you from family and friends, if you are not having to get new friends to support new life-style – then you are most likely on a path very likely appropriate for you.

TM is one of several mantra-based methods. What is special about TM as a method is THE WAY the mantra is used. I have found this **way** to be brilliant, highly effective in every one of the meditation methods I have tried. I do not know where Mahesh got this method, from whom he borrowed it or from whose efforts he extracted it.** I am, however, very grateful for this method. The meditation I am presently doing gives me much, much more peace, calm and insight than the TM mantra-based method did.

What is the method? Return to an awareness of the object of meditation (in the case of TM, the **mantra**; in the case of one of the methods practised in Theravāda Buddhism in the Thai Forest Tradition, the **breath**) as effortlessly as you experience the awareness of having drifted off the object.

This is simply brilliant.

My question is this: why are the results in activity so much more rewarding for me using the breath as an object than using a "meaningless sound".

The “method” is useful, but what about the “mantra”?

The mantra (a.k.a. meaningless thought, meaningless sound): Let’s look at what Mahesh said at the beginning:

*We do not select any sound like mike, flower, table, pen, wall etc. because such ordinary sounds can do nothing more than merely sharpening the mind; whereas there are some special sounds which have the additional efficacy of producing vibrations whose effects are found to be congenial to our way of life. This is the scientific reason why we do not select any word at random. For our practice we select only the suitable mantras of personal Gods. Such mantras fetch to us the grace of personal Gods and make us happier in every walk of life.****

So, first we don’t want sounds that just *do nothing more than merely sharpening the mind*. Isn’t this in and of itself a **red flag**? Why wouldn’t we want sharp minds? If we had sharp minds might we detect something not in Mahesh’s best interests? That was my thought when I read this remark by Mahesh.

Like any totalitarian thinker, Mahesh would only want sharp minds from which he could cull information. Then, as he has done so often when finished with someone providing him with answers, he could send them to round and do the ‘sidhi’ program until they were no longer sharp enough to realize they were being blindsided and their work siphoned off to the credit of someone else. This requires some more discussion and I intend to get to that in Part 3.

So, we need “special” sounds that have the *additional efficacy of producing vibrations whose effects are found to be congenial to our way of life* – doesn’t that suggest maintaining the *status quo* and feeling better about it?

Is Mahesh actually saying, as I obviously suspect he is: *give me your devotion and resources and I'll make you happy*. Doesn't that sound suspiciously like some grubby guy on a street corner our mothers told us to stay away from?

Then Mahesh mixes science and God. *This is the scientific reason why we do not select any word at random. For our practice we select only the suitable mantras of personal Gods. Such mantras fetch to us*

the grace of personal Gods and make us happier in every walk of life.

How is this scientific? Is Mahesh suggesting that what he **says** is as valid as “science” [just because he says it]? Isn’t science based on observation, trial and error until we find what works consistently? In what way could such experiments be undertaken to find the suitable mantras of personal Gods?

What are personal Gods and how is this not a religion? (An unanswered question, as far as I know.)

To me, his words suggest that you somehow get the calling card of some “god” (whatever he might or might not mean by that) or maybe you get the private, unlisted number of some god (a super-being, a fairy godmother, a notion that can only be the product of magical thinking) who then owes you? How can that possibly make sense? Again, how is this scientific?

What are personal Gods? What are Gods and who determines how they get personal? When did this become acceptable thinking? Or, as has been easily observed so consistently, the development of Maheshism resides in the repetition of the same words which finally brings *acceptance*, not necessarily *understanding*, but definitely **unquestioned acceptance**. Back to page one of *Beacon Light of the Himalayas* **mind control**. Mahesh was advertising “his” method as **mind control**.

Who was going to control whose mind, anyway? Or has that become increasingly obvious since those early days? Did he or did he not know what he was talking about then? If he did, why isn’t he talking about it now? Is TM a secret religion?

In **Mantras Part 3**, I want to look at what the mantra is doing as opposed to what Mahesh says the mantra is doing.

--- The Notes ---

* Mahesh referred to TM as “my method” from the very beginning; this is unquestionable. You can refer to Beacon Light of the Himalayas in the related links section. But note also that he advertises on the cover of this document MIND CONTROL. Who will be controlling whose mind? It doesn’t say.

** I am suspicious that he might have conned it out of some Lama fleeing Tibet as it so closely resembles some of the teachings of Dzogchen, such as “sky-like” mind and “nonmeditation”.

*** *Beacon Light of the Himalayas*, page 65, published in THE MAHARISHI, by Paul Mason, 2005, [see footnote 310] pages 248-9. The complete text of Beacon is available at Paul’s web site.

§ part three

The TMO (TM Organization) has been careful to ignore and cover up the problem of casualties: such things as loss of mental stability, depression, suicide, bankruptcy (in the effort to buy the next greatest course rumoured to be the next greatest course), burgeoning drug use amongst its children, neglect of children in favour of “program” and so on.

Yet, we know people who did TM, got checked regularly, did or tried to do all the courses but crashed, burned and were simply invisible on the radar of Movement.

Of course, we also know people with varying degrees of success (as described by Mahesh and the TMO).

In the end, it seems only one thing can be said about TM: **results vary**.

Why?

On one level, TM is no different from any other practise or endeavour in which large numbers become involved. If Mahesh chooses to only notice the “good news” brought to him by his tail-wagging sycophants and on that basis believes that “his” meditation is some universal good, that tells us much more about Mahesh than it does “his” meditation.

In Part 2, I questioned Mahesh’s primary statement about “his” method and mantras. Any ordinary word, he said, would only “merely sharpen the mind”. But to make a stronger case for himself/”his” method, he said, “for our practise we select only the suitable mantras of personal Gods. Such mantras fetch to us the grace of personal Gods and make us happier in every walk of life.”

We might wonder how this is not religious or why he said something very different in the West.

I am very much indebted to Paul Mason (author of the 'The Maharishi') for editorial comments and for sharing with me his excellent analysis regarding what Guru Dev apparently taught, what Mahesh initially did with it and then simply ignored any kind of obligation he might have had toward Guru Dev and his own Hindu heritage by “masking” his religious teaching as a meditation method based on ‘meaningless sounds’.

(see and the contents of 'Beacon Light of the Himalayas'. See also the Blog [more about "techniques"](#))

The Images

Mahesh used two images which, I am sure, are familiar to all TMers: the image of dipping-the-cloth and the bubble diagram.

The bubble diagram purports to explain that since thoughts arise and come to our attention on the “surface” of the mind, the gross awareness, we should therefore be able to follow a specific thought backwards, to the source of thought.

We accepted that as factual.

But, is it?

Then, we accepted as factual that a specific thought, not just any thought, but a specifically chosen personal (meaningless sound), would do just this, dissolve into the source from which all thought arises.

Is this factual?

What would the source of thought look like? If we found it, how would we know. The answer seemed to be ***you just would***.

Then we learned that no thought and no mantra (personal meaningless sound), an after-the-fact experience, was just that, pure consciousness, the source of thought.

Was it?

A Sideways Look at Things, a different perspective:

This is how I think the bubble diagram and the dipping-the-cloth image can be explained and account for some TM casualties. Since no blanket explanation can be made about the effects of TM because so

many different people have had so many different experiences, results and so on, I will try, here, to explain just one possible result of the TM method and meaningless sound:

(1) When you just sit and think a thought, you notice that it leads to other thoughts which in turn lead to other thoughts. I do not think it is possible to think one and only one thought for any prolonged period. It certainly is not possible to think the mantra and only the mantra because it is very clearly laid out in the checking procedure that when we realize we are “off” the mantra, we come back to it as easily as we notice any thought.

You can check <http://www.trancenet.net/> or <http://minet.org/checktoc.html> for the precise wording of the checking notes.

(2) What were you doing when you noticed you were “off” the mantra? Were you daydreaming? Were the daydreams clear or were you unable to recall what the mind was experiencing?

(3) OR, and especially after some familiarity with the practice, were the daydreams much muzzier than your usual daydreaming? Have you noticed that this kind of experience/daydreaming tends toward long absences from memory?

Since so many people have so many different experiences and few if any have the same experience repeatedly, I want to talk about just this one possibility: muzzy disconnected daydreaming becoming increasingly gossamer until there was a blank spot. – This is where I think TM leads, to a bleary, disjointed, ephemeral experience of increasingly vague, insubstantial daydreaming until (that other image) dipping the cloth becomes complete.

Dipping-the-cloth

Sometimes, this takes a long, long time, sometimes, not. Some might and some might not remember the process; BUT on teacher training courses in the past and I suspect ‘sidha’ experience today, the vague and woolly experience (dipping yourself into the dye of no meaning and no memory) gets speeded up. The cloth (that’s you and your awareness) becomes more and more the state of vagueness and less and less a “merely” sharp mind.

Just what colour was he impregnating your cloth with, anyway!

As I did not like the way rounding made me feel, I didn’t do much of it, so at the peak of rounding, when Mahesh told the assembled pie-eyed believers that only he could love them, that no one could love them as he could, I was just a little shocked; I became more taken aback as he clarified that neither mother nor father could love you as he could. He kept at this theme for some time. The assembled were malleable, supple in the hands of an expert at indoctrination (of course, I only recognized this for what it was much, much later). So many of us had dipped-the-cloth to the point of total surrender; no wonder he didn’t want us to make any new decisions on the course, he wanted us to accept his decisions, he wanted us to leave no room for any but his decisions, the permanent dye of his thinking.

My interpretation of mantras/meaningless sounds used in the intimate way of Mahesh’s meditation

The mantra does NOT draw the mind into finer and finer levels of thought until it reaches the “bottom” or the source of thought. Rather, the mantra takes the awareness, the clarity of mind, the thinking process sideways into a vague state of daydreaming and disconnect from meaningfulness where no clear perception or clear thought can be formed.

What else can a meaningless thought do? Mahesh told his Indian audience about personal gods and suitable mantras for those gods but then later taught that the mantras were meaningless.

Which is it? To whom was he lying?

Was he suggesting Guru Dev was wrong? Did he know better than the teacher to whom he pretends such devotion? Or was he simply modeling our future behaviour toward himself?

Words with no attached meaning ARE meaningless and meaning does not arise from meaninglessness. But if you are sufficiently saturated with the colour of TM, the colour of rounding, the colour of imagining you can fly – then how easy would it be to insinuate an idea that seemed completely meaningful *i.e.* that by repeating the mantra one would discover blissfulness, heaven on earth!

A simple experiment:

(after you read this)

Sit and close your eyes and say/think/ponder some word over and over; just that word, over and over, some word you understand, some particular word you know the meaning of. Pick a simple word like *house* or *flower* or *chair*.

What happens?

If you keep doing it you notice that it becomes nonsense. The sound and the meaning detach from one another. There's just this very strange sound that does not have the sense it had when you started. It's even funnier if you do it again and pick a complex word like *hypothalamus* or *train station*. After a while you begin to hear what someone who known no English hears.

Now notice: do you get intellectually sharper doing this, or do you feel slightly spacey? – Ask yourself very carefully how different is “just any word” and your personally selected meaningless sound? Do different words bring different experiences of silliness? Is this a beneficial experience of altered alertness? Is this experience of altered alertness beneficial?

Only you can answer. Obviously experiences may vary.

Suppose that you undertake to do this experiment 2x20 (twice each day for twenty minutes each time) and go on a teacher training course where you do this 4x20 twice morning and twice afternoon). Suppose, given the fun of group meditation and suchwhat you do this 4x30 or 4x45 ? On the teacher training courses I attended the “rounding” escalated to 4 morning rounds and 4 afternoon rounds.

Now the ‘sidhi’ program requires something near 4 **hours** morning and afternoon. In the early days before the ‘sidhi’ program, Mahesh only encouraged 2x20, but when he surveyed an ATR for which I was course-leader, everyone was doing AT LEAST 45 to 50 minute meditations! He didn't have a hissy fit, he didn't get angry, he didn't do anything.

Apparently no response is assent.

Dipping-the-cloth. Whose colour was your dye?

The more you dip into the TM pool, the Maheshism pool of altered alertness, the more easily it is to disconnect from meaning and clarity and get comfortable with that spacey feeling where no meaningful thinking is taking place ... do you remember “the mind goes in the direction of more and more”? That is a

definition of greed and craving; but Mahesh wanted you to think that more and more meant encountering the “source of thought”, the “field of all possibilities”. He wanted you to think you were becoming more and more enlightened. Were you becoming more and more enlightened? Are you more and more enlightened? (What in the heck does “enlightened” mean, anyway, more and more spacey?)

If Mahesh brought anything to the west, it was the super fast-drying dye-job of Maheshism.

I am firmly convinced that when Mahesh said the nature of the mind is to go in the direction of more and more, what he knew was that the more you became absorbed in that spacey realm of the unclear and purposeless, the more easily you simply accepted every word and any word he said, bought into every new course, concept and product, made every effort to attend every program.

Just consider those moments you thought of as no thought, no mantra – might they have been blackouts, periods when you were not there! Might you have been in some hypnotic frame of mind, open to suggestion?

Meaninglessness takes the awareness sideways.

The more you willingly participate in the super fast-drying dye-job of Maheshism, the more sideways, dissociated, disconnected, purposeless your mental function becomes. The more you readily believe the magical thinking of Maheshism, the more willingly you participate and tell others.

Remember when Mahesh said again and again on your teacher training course “we do not make any decisions on teacher training”? He wanted you to get the full benefit of what you were being exposed to: the disconnect nature of your own mental processes which he told you was the source of thought. You were being shepherded from your colour to his preference, he was dipping you in his dye, you were taking on his colour. – Have you ever asked yourself what became of your colour? What was your original colour, can you remember?

You don't have to give this any further thought if you truly and sincerely believe you are getting or have gotten your money's worth from TM. Many are firmly convinced they are truly blessed by all that is Mahesh and TM. But if you have doubts, you might want to consult with <http://www.suggestibility.org/> .

§ part four

There is a significant difference between what Mahesh said (“For our practice we select only the suitable mantras of personal Gods.”) and understanding the concept that some things are endowed with spiritual significance. To endow a thing with spiritual or religious significance does not change the thing in any way. What changes is **attitude** on the part of those who subscribe to the endowment.

Mahesh clearly endowed his actions/teachings and "vision" with spiritual and religious significance and cultured that attitude in us. Remember **The Spiritual Regeneration Movement?**

Unstressing

When bizarre behaviour began to erupt at Mallorca, Mahesh called it *waves of bliss*. He said *something good was happening*. He didn't teach that the experience was just another experience and we were to experience the feeling until it resolved itself. Yes, something like that was somewhere in the checking notes, but people thrown off guard by suddenly strange behaviours and feelings, seeing their neighbours in the same situation are highly UN-likely to run off to check the checking notes.

From my side, I see "unstressing" as the body-mind experiencing a crisis, cognitive dissonance in

opposition to which it cannot restore its integrity: body and mind feel like they are coming apart and behaviours beyond will-power or aside from what one had previously considered her/his will-power display themselves. I think that many of us accepted Mahesh *in toto* rather than resolve a crisis.

Feeling the Body

Many of us were there, saw it, even experienced it. The checking notes as they appear on line now <http://minet.org/checkinggpp.html> or <http://www.trancenet.net/secrets/checking/checkinggpp.shtml> give excellent if somewhat inconsistent teaching regarding untoward experiences arising in meditation. But were these "general points" in the checking notes at the time? I would very much appreciate knowing if anyone has the checking notes from Mallorca or prior to Mallorca and could tell me or preferably show me how the understanding of "feeling the body" was taught. Maybe they were, but who had the presence of mind to look? Where were the "monitors" who should have kept people sane by making sure they weren't going off the deep end? Where was Mahesh's head when he suggested that during the week of silence we should meditate as much as possible! He never mentioned round as much as possible, suggesting asana breaks!

I only remember a conversation with Jerry Jarvis, prior to Mallorca. He said that 'it' probably shouldn't be called *feeling the body* but should be called **continuing**. At the time, however, this concept seemed a very minor consideration.

I do not ever recall any time when Mahesh explained "feeling the body" as anything integral or as a necessary element to know or practise with as part of long periods of rounding. I can recall no mention of feeling-the-body as a "stitch in time". Regarding the horrendous freak-out that was Mallorca and (to a lesser extent) Fiuggi, apparently very few if any others remembered or knew or thought about this, either. – My conclusion: Mahesh is irresponsible, or, even more irresponsibly, he thought that he was weeding the weak from the strong, separating those he might like to use from those he could discard.

Beyond

I knew that I was really seeking something.

In a story Ramakrishna* told, he said that the seeker is like a thief in the night, he slips into the darkened house, touches this and that always muttering *not the gold, not the gold*. But when his hand feels the gold, he knows, he grasps it and is immediately gone into the night.

In some way, I knew I was in the darkened house of ignorance and TM really had the feel of gold. Maybe it might have been just that; but much later I discovered that Mahesh was corrupted by his own greed and narcissism subsequently corrupting not only what he had purloined from his tradition and teacher, but those he taught as well. This is my perception to this day, based upon my interaction with Mahesh and observing his interaction with others.

But just because I had been hoodwinked by a charlatan whose motives I felt were highly suspicious, I did not cease seeking. I kept looking for the gold and now I feel I have found that gold and have been examining it in the broad daylight, questioning practitioners and teachers alike, watching, observing, certainly looking for the behaviours and attitudes with which TM allowed me to be familiar. I am also looking at criteria such as Lifton's to see if I am being cheated. I wish I could have done this from the beginning with TM.

I have continued the search that began in the spring of 1964. I can only conclude at this time that there is much more to life than TM. There is more than imagining that if you believe something good is happening long enough something good will happen. There is more to life than imagining you have been spiritually

endowed by using the suitable mantras for personal gods.

I am a Buddhist presently practicing in the Thai Forest Tradition of Theravāda Buddhism. I have no intention of suggesting that this is better than or superior to what Mahesh or Guru Dev is teaching/taught. However, if you are or feel you might be or might have been a TM casualty, you might want to look at “feeling the body” as explained in the Buddhist teachings.

If, and only if after considerable reflection on your part you feel that this is a step, endeavour or exercise you feel confident in making read through

<http://www.sinc.sunysb.edu/clubs/buddhism/vimalaramsi/main.html>. This is a link to The Anapanasati Sutta – A Practical Guide to Mindfulness of Breathing and Tranquil Wisdom, the Buddha’s own very straightforward, uncomplicated alertness-based method of meditation and/or

<http://www.accesstoinsight.org/lib/authors/soma/wayof.html>, The Satipatthana Sutta, basically the same method, but given in more detail. Notice, there is nothing held back, no secret courses, no fees.

I am suggesting nothing easy, but I am suggesting something very do-able and uncomplicated. But, if you will, notice that the teaching begins with following the breath and letting mind and body become calm. Do you remember from the checking procedure how, before any mention of mantra, after opening and closing the eyes, you felt some quiet and calm, just naturally?

Did you realize anything or ever think about this?

You already knew how to be calm and quiet. It is my opinion that Mahesh’s teachings beyond establishing this insight is nothing more than a distraction from that calm and quiet, sidestepping the only meaningful reality, your own innate, knowable reality.

How can there possibly be any other basis for happiness in the world than knowing your own specific reality (your own colour)?

Cultivating this calm-and-quiet is the object of the Anapanasati Sutta. The method and teaching above ([A Practical Guide](#)) has been extremely helpful for me and I feel that if it is only read as an explanation it is helpful to understand the concept of mindfulness in the Buddhist tradition.

Further, in the [The Satipatthana Sutta](#), we read how the Buddha established mindfulness in four REALITIES, the primary four realities of the individual, the person, YOU.

The first foundation is, basically, feeling the body, getting settled in and comfortable with your own physical reality just as it is. Little by little, as the impediments to mindfulness come up, they are skilfully abandoned.

I want to leave off with the advice of Padmasambhava**, an 8th century CE Tibetan teacher, who summarized his advice on spiritual development like this:

As for the innermost advice: no matter what kind of disturbing emotion you feel, look into the emotion and it tracelessly subsides. The disturbing emotion is thus naturally freed. This is simple to practice.

This is for me the gold and legitimate teachers share this innermost advice but do not sell it.

* Ramakrishna late 19th Century Indian saint living in the Bengal

** Padmasambhava’s Advice from the Lotus-Born (‘Pointing the Staff at the Old Man’)

Posted by Sudarsha at [1/22/2007 04:49:00 PM](#) [9 Comments](#) 

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Labels: [belief](#), [cult](#), [God](#), [Hinduism](#), [lies](#), [meditation](#), [mind-control](#), [rumour](#), [spirituality](#), [techniques](#), [TM](#), [transcendental meditation](#)

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Wednesday, January 30, 2008

Why I Believe The Transcendental Meditation Org Is Dangerous

I got an email from a reader recently that I thought — at first — was pretty flip: "hey john, what is the problem with transcendental meditation? please let me know. ciao." I figured we were making a pretty good case for the problems with TM and the Maharishi on this Blog, [TranceNet.net](#), Joe Kellet's [site](#), and my cult counseling site.

But as I thought about my correspondent's question, I realized that to my knowledge, no TM critic has ever created a concise, one-page summation of just what's wrong with TM.

Well, here's my stab at doing just that.

I write largely about people who are, or were, deeply involved with the Movement: meditating for hours a day, practicing the TM-Sidhis, been on long "rounding" courses (with extra hours of meditation a day, for weeks or months at a stretch), becoming a TM Teacher or Governor. It's a rare occurrence among the over 2,000 people that I've worked with in the last 13 years that someone practicing the original twice-a-day, 20-minutes-a-pop meditation has developed serious problems. (Although some have.)

For starters, let's look at TM and the TM Org's effects on the individual. A word about anecdotal reports: Most of these specific damages come from anecdotal reports in my counseling practice. There is some documentation in the ["German Study"](#) — although the "snowball sample" methodology used essentially renders those findings anecdotal, as well. To my knowledge, no researcher has ever used a truly random sample: Because the TM Org does not publish a list of its members, it isn't possible for a researcher to poll them randomly. It's my understanding that researchers approach the TM Movement for meditating participants. The Org is glad to oblige, offering meditators with only "good experiences" and positive results.

No one experiences all damages listed below. In fact, it's not clear to me what percentage of TM meditators experience any of these effects. But having dealt with hundreds of cases myself — and compared notes with other critics and mental health providers — it's clear to me that nearly everyone experiences at least one negative side effect. If Transcendental Meditation were a drug, it would long ago been taken off the market.

Physical Health Effects uncontrollable fatigue; insomnia and hypersomnia; stomach and bowel complaints; chronic neck and back pain (especially among "Yogic Flyers"); chronic headaches; difficulty with the menstrual cycle; involuntary body movements (twitching; spasms; head shaking; etc. in, and out, of meditation); serious health effects, including death, when TMers turn to Maharishi Ayurveda and ignore traditional medical treatment.

Emotional Health: states of anxiety or fear; obsessive ideas; pathological guilt; [dissociation](#) and [pseudo-identity](#) (similar to multiple personality disorder); suicidal ideation, gestures, or successful attempts; "nervous breakdowns;" psychosis; depression; avoidance; secondary narcissism; delusional thinking; auditory and visual hallucinations; divorce, frequently multiple.

Cognitive Health: difficulty with memory and/or concentration.

Social Health: decreased job performance; decreased educational performance;

Spiritual Health: conflict with birth religion (Judaism/Christianity/Islam: puja, use of graven images, mantras are names of Hindu gods, yagyas to Hindu deities; Buddhism: conflict with tenets such as anatta or no-self); spiritual confusion; replacing birth religion with TM/Hinduism or other spiritual practices.

Problems with the Policies and Actions of the TM Organization

Lies and Fraud: TM Org claims to be a secular organization, but is in fact at least religious in nature, if not a religion; mantras are not meaningless sounds, but rather the names of Hindu gods; there has never been a demonstration of successful TM-Sidhis (levitation, mind-reading, knowledge of past and future, etc. — the maharishi was successfully sued for fraud over the sidhis in the 1980s); no one has ever been demonstrated to attainment enlightenment, despite past claims this state would evolve in TM practitioners within 5-7 years; world peace and invincibility are belied by the constant state of war in modern times, despite the Maharishi announcing world peace attained on numerous occasions; claims that large groups of TMers meditating together would cause a drop in crime, ending wars, or increase in stock market never been demonstrated in a way that passes scientific scrutiny (note that the Maharishi's organization predicted in summer 2007 that the stock market would hit 17,000 and is currently dropping precipitously).

Dangerous Practices

Centralized power, without oversight: The Maharishi centralizes all power and control in himself and a few trusted followers, with no oversight. Most religions have oversight by elders, the law, legislative bodies, and so forth.

Invasion of Schools, Courts, Prisons: Despite having lost the [New Jersey Court Case](#) in the 1970s and being kicked out of the public schools, TM is again attempting to [invade the public school system](#), despite its obvious religious overtones. There is also conflict with the separation of church and state when people are sentenced to TM in American courts, or when prisoners are coerced into taking up TM.

Questionable Research: Much of the published research on TM is questionable in methodology, sample recruitment, and objectivity of researchers (who nearly always include TM practitioners).

Jealousy of Other Spiritual Leaders: Most New Age groups are quite inclusive; followers pick and choose from teachings of many authors and leaders. The TM Movement may ban members who seek out spiritual teachers beside the Maharishi. Members who seek out psychological counseling may be banned from attending "courses," similar to be cut off from the sacraments in a Christian church.

"Impermissible Experiments": The Maharishi has always taught that his meditation and advanced techniques were passed down as "perfect" knowledge from guru to disciple for thousands of years. Actually, it appears that the Maharishi either made up his techniques, read about them, stole them from other spiritual leaders (Yogananda, et al.), or taught common, entry-level techniques as "supreme knowledge." He then tested his eclectic techniques on participants in teacher training, "Six-Month Courses," or other courses to see their effects. *In essence, course participants were paying thousands of dollars to be used as guinea pigs.* Not being an experienced meditation teacher who could guide his students past the dangers of the meditative path, the result were thousands of TMers who experienced debilitating physical, mental, and emotional side-effects as outlined above. After World War II and the horrific Nazi human experiments, the international community developed the [Nuremberg Code of Ethics](#), parts of which were later incorporated into the Geneva Conventions. International law made it illegal to perform any type of human experimentation without the informed consent of participants. Informed consent requires that "test subjects" be told in advance that they are taking part in experimental procedures – and the possible side effects. "Impermissible experiments" on humans explicitly included not just medical, but psychological experimentation as well.

Paranoid Thinking: In recent years, the Maharishi's thinking and policies have become increasingly paranoid. He rails about the Movement being in danger from Rakshasas (demons) — who can only enter buildings from south-facing entrances, while gods protect and enter buildings from east-facing entrances. He has claimed at various times that the TM Movement has been infiltrated by agents of the CIA, American Medical Association, and pharmaceutical companies. He has complained about poisoned food. When confronted with [allegations of child molestations](#) on his Indian facility, he claimed that these stories were planted by his enemies.

Constant Emphasis on Money and Empire The Maharishi charges \$3,000 to learn the basic meditation technique, although it is learned in about 1 hour and is virtually indistinguishable from traditional *japa* techniques that can be learned from a book. He charges larger and larger amounts for succeeding advanced courses, the most advanced of which he charges *\$1 million* dollars for. This is particularly ironic in that the Maharishi is not a Brahmin and is forbidden to initiate or teach the Vedas, most spiritual teachers throughout history have taught for the love of God, never charging their followers (for example, Buddha, Christ, Mohammed). In addition to the hundreds of millions raised through course fees, the Maharishi pressures his wealthy followers to donate millions to hundreds of millions of dollars to fund his dreams of empire. There are press reports that estimate the TM Movement's net worth in the billions of dollars.

Recruitment over Charity: Despite the billions of dollars collected, the Maharishi has never engaged in charity among the world's poor, choosing rather to surround himself with the ultra-wealthy.

Inherent Danger in Isolated Communities: The Maharishi pressures followers to congregate in isolated communities: course participants, often sequestered in out-of-the-way locations, may not mingle with non-participants or even sometimes family; TMers are encouraged to move to Fairfield, Iowa or other

Movement enclaves where they can basque in the "purity" of an all meditator community; TM Sidhas are encouraged to attend courses in Third World countries to avert an impending "World War III." Any isolated community is subject to the tendency of "[groupthink](#)," making them susceptible to believe — and act on — the wildly delusional, grandiose pronouncements of the Maharishi without benefit of critical thought. Groupthink that contributed to the mass-suicide tragedy at [Jonestown](#).

The definition of a cult remains controversial. In my psychotherapeutic practice, I tend to focus more on cultic relationships than developing a list of "known" cults. Nevertheless, many critics have labeled the Transcendental Meditation Movement a cult led by the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi. Authors Lalich and Tobias, in *Take Back Your Life* (2006), outline the main characteristics of a cult. Decide for yourself if these characteristics are present in the TM Movement:

- The group displays excessively zealous and unquestioning commitment to its leader and (whether he is alive or dead) regards his belief system, ideology, and practices as the Truth, as law.
- Questioning, doubt, and dissent are discouraged or even punished.
- Mind-altering practices (such as meditation, chanting, speaking in tongues, denunciation sessions, and debilitating work routines) are used in excess and serve to suppress doubts about the group and its leader(s).
- The leadership dictates, sometimes in great detail, how members should think, act, and feel (for example, members must get permission to date, change jobs, marry—or leaders prescribe what types of clothes to wear, where to live, whether or not to have children, how to discipline children, and so forth).
- The group is elitist, claiming a special, exalted status for itself, its leader(s) and members (for example, the leader is considered the Messiah, a special being, an avatar — or the group and/or the leader is on a special mission to save humanity).
- The group has a polarized us-versus-them mentality, which may cause conflict with the wider society.
- The leader is not accountable to any authorities (unlike, for example, teachers, military commanders or ministers, priests, monks, and rabbis of mainstream religious denominations).
- The group teaches or implies that its supposedly exalted ends justify whatever means it deems necessary. This may result in members' participating in behaviors or activities they would have considered reprehensible or unethical before joining the group (for example, lying to family or friends, or collecting money for bogus charities).
- The leadership induces feelings of shame and/or guilt in order to influence and/or control members. Often, this is done through peer pressure and subtle forms of persuasion.
- Subservience to the leader or group requires members to cut ties with family and friends, and radically alter the personal goals and activities they had before joining the group.
- The group is preoccupied with bringing in new members.
- The group is preoccupied with making money.
- Members are expected to devote inordinate amounts of time to the group and group-related activities.
- Members are encouraged or required to live and/or socialize only with other group members.
- The most loyal members (the "true believers") feel there can be no life outside the context of the group. They believe there is no other way to be, and often fear reprisals to themselves or others if they leave (or even consider leaving) the group.

I've done my best to summarize my major concerns about the TM Org. I'm sure that my fellow editors and our readers will have additions, deletions, and qualifications. You would do me a personal favor if you would note your thoughts in the comments section below.

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From: borden@cfa.harvard.edu (Dave Borden) Newsgroups: alt.meditation.transcendental
Subject: Information on TM Message-ID: <1992Jun9.153247.1285@m5.harvard.edu> Date: 9 Jun 92 15:32:47 GMT Reply-To: borden@m5.harvard.edu Organization: Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory, Cambridge, MA, USA Lines: 121 Sorry to those of you who have already seen this, but that was quite a while ago and there are a lot of readers who didn't start following this newsgroup until after the article became unavailable.

There was a recent large posting on the subject on brainwashing and cults; this is along the same lines. Here it is: The following is an excerpt from "Combatting Cult Mind Control", by Steven Hassan, pp. 87-88, published by Park Street Press in Rochester Vermont in 1988 and 1990: PATRICK RYAN AND TRANSCENDENTAL MEDITATION Patrick Ryan, now a successful entrepreneur, was involved in Transcendental Meditation for ten years. He is a graduate of Maharishi International University (MIU) in Fairfield, Iowa, an accredited institution. Most people think of TM as a harmless way to relax through meditation. **But for those who plunge deeply into the TM organization, it takes on cult qualities.** Pat has since founded a support group called TM-Ex for former members, and talks openly about the movement's darker side. "It has all of the characteristics of a destructive cult," he says. "A lot of my friends and I have been greatly damaged by our involvement with it."

Like most destructive cults, TM uses a good deal of deception (1). Its public spokespeople say that "TM is not a philosophy, a religion, or a lifestyle." Yet, Pat points out, "People become vegetarian, celibate, recite mantras composed of the names of Hindu gods, and worship Maharishi Mahesh Yogi as the 'enlightened master of the universe.'" **In its advertising, TM emphasizes the practical benefits of meditation - particularly the reduction of stress.** TM promoters show videos of members from all walks of life testifying to its benefits. TM sales pitches are full of blood pressure charts, heart-rate graphs, and other clinical evidence of TM's effectiveness. Not mentioned is the fact that scientific tests show similar benefits can be obtained by listening to soothing music, or by performing basic relaxation exercises available in books costing a couple of dollars. After a TM student pays up to \$400 and receives his own personal mantra to chant, he is told never to reveal it to another. Why? Because the same "unique" mantra has been given - on the basis of age - to thousands of people (2). Most people who learn TM never go beyond the prescribed twenty minutes of meditating twice a day, in the morning and the afternoon. They can hardly be called cult members.

But a few continue to visit the TM centers for "checking," and go on to pay for more and more advanced courses. Eventually they may get to the point Pat did. **He paid \$3,000 to learn how to levitate and fly.** In reality, he found himself reciting the more "advanced" mantras while vigorously hopping up and down with his legs crossed in the lotus position for two hours in the morning and two hours in the afternoon. Not surprisingly, he experienced painful muscle spasms, headaches, and involuntary twitching. He went to his instructors for help. "They told me that I was

unstressing." he said. "They told me to go back and meditate and fly harder." "It wasn't until Bob Kropinsky won the first lawsuit against TM for fraud and negligence that I learned about people who have been hurt by Transcendental Meditation," (3) Patrick continued. "The top leaders blame the members for everything and haven't done anything to correct their policies."

As in other destructive cults, there is never a problem with the leader, the doctrine, or the organization's behavior - it's always the fault of the members. Pat began to question his involvement with TM only after sitting in on the deprogramming of his sister Michelle from The Way International. As Way ex-members told Michelle the criteria that define a mind control environment, Pat began to hear alarm bells going off in his head.

The same methods were used in TM. He realized his problems were a response to practices that were short-circuiting his nervous system. Pat started digging into every source he could find to understand the history and background of Maharishi and the organization. He discovered from former MIU faculty members that some of the much-touted medical experiments had been conducted without proper scientific procedure (4). He has now become very critical of the organization in which he was previously involved, and active in warning others of its destructive and deceptive practices. 1) "'Psychological Damage' from TM Found Worth \$137,890," The Washington Times Metro (Jan 14, 1987), 5B. Snapping, 174, 176. 2) Darrel Sifford, "A Psychiatrist Probes Effects of Transcendental Meditation," Philadelphia Inquirer (June 19, 1988), 2F. 3) Michael A. Persinger, Normand J. Carey, and Lynn A. Seuss, TM and Cult Mania (Massachusetts: The Christopher Publishing House, 1980), 155-56. 4) Ibid., 60-65. Here are some useful addresses and phone numbers: Cult Awareness Network National Office (local affiliates nationwide) 2421 West Pratt Blvd., Suite 1173 Chicago, IL 60645 312/267-7777 TM-EX Patrick Ryan P.O. Box 2520 Philadelphia, PA 19147 215/467-4939

Steven Hassan is widely recognized as America's leading Exit-Counselor. (Exit-Counseling is a non-coercive alternative to deprogramming.) A little bit of my personal opinion: meditation can be a profound, wonderful thing - it's too bad that frauds like Maharishi use the western mystique for eastern culture to further their own greedy desires for money and power. I vote "aye" for an "alt.meditation" newsgroup. - David Borden borden@m5.harvard.edu