

Transcendental Meditation

LANE WAGGER recalls the legacy of MAHARISHI MAHESH YOGI at the conclusion of his centenary year

Maharishi Mahesh Yogi referred to the *Bhagavad Gita* as the pocketbook edition of the *Védas*. It contains all the wisdom necessary to take us from ignorance to enlightenment. The *Gita's* most important verse, Maharishi says, is verse 45 of chapter II. Here, Krishna instructs Arjuna: *Nistrai-gunyo bhavajuna*. 'Be without the three *gunas*, O Arjuna. Take your mind from the field of excitation and chaos, to the state of inner Unity, perfect orderliness'.

In his commentary on this verse, Maharishi says, "It is difficult for a man to improve his business affairs while he himself is constantly immersed in all their details. If he leaves them for a little while, he becomes enabled to see the business as a whole and can then more easily decide what is needed. Similarly, transcending all mental activity results in great clarity, peace, and broadened awareness, which naturally put life in its proper perspective".

Water the root to enjoy the fruit, sums up Maharishi. Just as a strong foundation is necessary for a sturdy

structure, so too, inner silence is the basis of successful activity. By enlivening the root of the mind, the vacuum state of consciousness, all aspects of life get nourished. Maharishi had the key for this: Transcendental Meditation (TM), a technique of effortless transcending.

To understand what TM is, we need only analyse its name. 'Transcend' means to 'go beyond'; 'medi-

ation' refers to 'thinking'. During TM, the mind goes from the surface, hectic level of thinking, to more quiet, less excited states, until one transcends thought altogether, arriving at the silent oasis of the mind. This is the state of *anandam*, pure consciousness, where the mind is completely calm and fully awake.

For centuries, scholars have said that it is very difficult to transcend thought and gain the state of perfect inner peace. Maharishi knew otherwise. Transcending is easy because the mind experiences increasing degrees of happiness at every step of the way. No effort is required. Any force or control actually prevents the mind from transcending. This technique of effortless transcending is validated by the *Gita* verse 40 of chapter 2: 'In this (yoga) no effort is lost and no obstacle exists. Even a little of this dharma delivers from great fear'.

Maharishi commented, "The flow of the mind towards this state is natural, for it is a state of absolute bliss, and the mind is always craving for greater happiness. Therefore, as water flows down a slope in a natural

way, so the mind flows naturally in the direction of bliss". By alternating between dipping a white cloth in yellow dye, and then hanging it in the sun, eventually it becomes colourfast. Similarly, the regular alternation of TM and daily activity results in a state where pure consciousness becomes permanent. Then one enjoys inner silence even while engaged in dynamic activity.

Besides the personal experience of over 60 lakh people in 140 countries practising TM, nearly 700 scientific research studies validate its effectiveness. For example, it has been found to increase alertness and focus, and brings 87 per cent reduction in heart disease, improves memory, and reduces stress.

Maharishi's legacy to humankind is a remarkably simple, natural procedure, which nourishes all aspects of life: mental, physical and spiritual. He said, "Life is here to be enjoyed and no one has the right to suffer". For over 50 years, Maharishi endeavoured to make the world aware of this. ■

Maharishi Mahesh Yogi
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MAHARISHI MAHESH YOGI, 1966

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