



THE BUCKS COUNTY FREE SYNAGOGUE

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To whom it may concern:

As a rabbi, I would like to comment on my experience of the technique of Transcendental Meditation (TM) in relationship to the practice of my religion of Judaism.

There is a common misconception amongst many different "western" religions, mainly Judaism, Christianity and Islam that Transcendental Meditation is a form of some kind of Hindu worship and is therefore pagan. Based on my direct experience with the TM technique, I can clearly say that this idea is a misunderstanding and is simply not true.

In fact, my experience as a TM practitioner, since the age of 17 (I am now 55) has proven just the opposite. At first I was attracted to TM as a way to reduce stress, and was very excited by the hundreds of studies that demonstrated it having a positive effect on lowering stress, blood pressure and improving generally well-being, both mental and physical. However, as I practiced TM, I found that these benefits were actually mere "by products" of the experience.

I found that I was opening, day after day, meditation after meditation, to what I considered to be a deep spiritual experience. Such an experience was not "other worldly", nor did it belong to "another religion". Such an experience was deeply rooted in the practical day to day experiences of life, and as such, became deeply integrated with the practice of my day to day Judaism. I found that TM opened me up to intuitive insights and understandings which helped "make sense" of my Jewish practice; it made the observance of my own faith increasingly alive and spiritually vibrant.

Many decades ago, I had come across a quote by Maharishi which said, "As you spontaneously meditate you begin to understand the religion of your birth." This has proven to be the truth. The more I meditated, the more the customs, the traditions, the theology and the practice of my religion deepened within me. TM did not



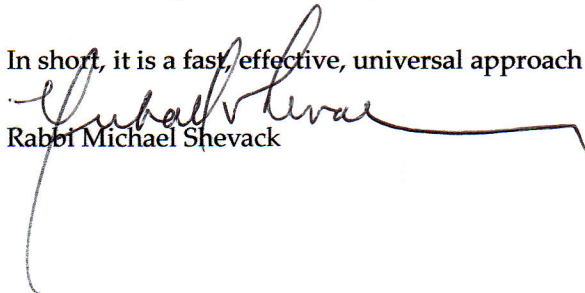
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remove me from Judaism; it actually guided me back to Judaism, with improved understanding, deepened spiritual experience, and greater love and commitment.

I have therefore recommended TM to many Jews within my congregation and beyond my congregation, as well as to all seekers-of-Truth, including many within Christianity and Islam. Based on my experience, I can say that there is nothing to fear about TM. If you are Christian it will make you more Christian. If you are Jewish, it will make you more Jewish. If you are Muslim, it will make you more Muslim. Due to the growing appreciation of one's own faith through TM, one does not seek out other religions; one becomes fulfilled in one's own.

Lastly, as a leader in inter-religious dialogue, who has worked with many of the world's noble religions, I believe that TM can provide a doorway to a common spiritual understanding and experience that can help bring about, and speed about, the development of mutual respect and understanding of the world's religions, by deepening and enlivening the universal spiritual foundation upon which they are all based.

In short, it is a fast, effective, universal approach to peace.



Rabbi Michael Shevack