

FROM MUSICIAN TO SPIRITUAL TEACHER

■ Interview by Doris Iding and Martin Frischknecht

Mario Mantese – or Master M – is an author and wisdom teacher with a very special capacity to touch the hearts of living beings and bestow them with peace. He describes himself, however, as a completely ordinary person. In this YOGA-AKTUELL interview he speaks about the true meaning of wisdom, his darshan-like presence, and the magnificence of life.

In the 1970's, Mario Mantese was cutting albums that would turn gold for the soul-funk band *Heatwave*. *Too Hot to Handle*, *Boogie Nights*, and *Always and Forever* are among their most well-known hits. His career ended abruptly in 1979 after he was attacked with a knife. The bassist would lay for weeks hovering between life and death in a London hospital. Afterwards, Mario Mantese was paralyzed and blind. But this experience actually opened his eyes and allowed him a glance behind the veil of existence. That insight never abandoned him, and led him to becoming an author and wisdom teacher. In June he was in Winterthur.

YOGA AKTUELL: Between 1,200 and 1,600 people from all over the world come to

Switzerland to participate in your gatherings. Many come regularly. At this recent gathering you said that you are like a piece of blotting paper which absorbs all the heartlessness and misunderstandings of human beings so they can breathe freely again and see the world with fresh eyes. And you are like a black hole that sucks in all that is unreal and allows it to disappear. How should one best understand this?

Mario Mantese: In am not here to say something new or exciting to people or teach them such things. I am here to help people unlearn and to fulfill. I am no *satsang*-teacher.

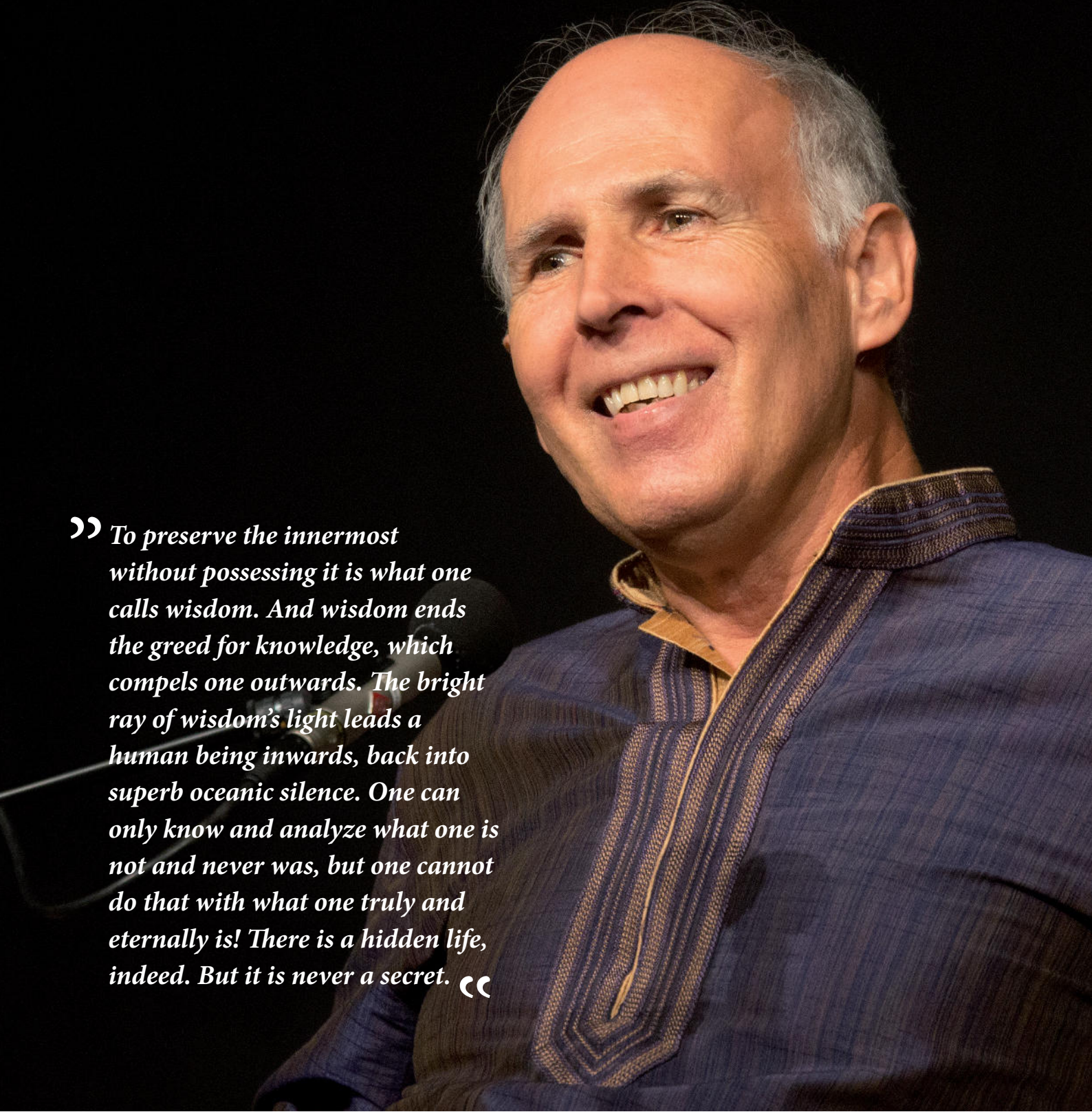
In your presence, an immense silence and energy expand throughout the room which encompasses everything. What do the hand movements which you make while you are in the hall have to do with that?

I don't speak about this. The golden leaf of silence lies still upon my tongue. What exists allows itself to be explained in words, but the primordial does not. To preserve the innermost without possessing it is what one calls wisdom. And wisdom ends the greed for knowledge, which compels one outwards. The bright ray of wisdom's light leads a

human being inwards, back into superb oceanic silence. One can only know and analyze what one is not and never was, but one cannot do that with what one truly and eternally is! There is a hidden life, indeed. But it is never a secret.

When we see the videos and read your books, we have the feeling that what you transmit from your heart and what touches people cannot in any way be described in words. Actually – this was my feeling – there is nothing at all to say: just to have this experience of profound silence and deep connection with everything, beyond time and space. How do you approach expressing the inexpressible in words?

For me, words are divine instruments, and I am very careful how I use them. Not everyone likes what I say or the power behind my words. I am really not here to stroke people's egos! The forces of the heavens make a person humble, and in that humility eternal being shines. When the night is over, the day appears, which is all day, every day. Life is something truly magnificent, but most folks have forgotten this and live mostly amid their distractions!



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You grew up as the son of an Italian father and a Swiss mother in a German- and French-speaking province of Switzerland. And as a musician with the American and European band *Heatwave* you achieved great success. For 36 years now you have been offering *darshan*. Do you sometimes long for that earlier life?

I do not offer *darshan*. My presence *is darshan*. I played the bass guitar for many years, and I loved it. Now the universe has revealed a different music in my being that is eternally fresh and new. The music from earlier times was perceived through the ears and the ears enjoyed it. This new music is perceived by people in their hearts, where it engages deeply and comprehensively.

In your books you tell of your encounters with masters in India. Some appear in flesh and blood, while others were met in spheres beyond the physical form. Which of these encounters was the one which had the most lasting effects in transforming your consciousness?

There are several. For example, I tell in my books *In Touch with a Universal Master* and *In the Heart*

of the World about my master. I was together with him for over 3,000 years, and he took me along on journeys through the endless, unseen universe. I know that this seems improbable and unthinkable for many readers. But my whole life is like that!

Do you work along the lines of these masters?

All lines within me have dissolved!

How much 'I' is still there with Mario Mantese? Or is there a big difference between Mario Mantese and Master M?

In eternal presence there are no differences anywhere, no Mario Mantese and no cosmic Master M. There is only pure universal love, overflowing and permeating everything.

What does yoga mean for you?

I am most familiar with *Jnana Yoga*.

You are severely limited in your physical movements through your physical disability. Is it still possible for you to complete the practices of Hatha Yoga?

Occasionally I go to a yoga teacher and she guides me in a therapeutic *Iyengar Yoga* practice. It's just right for me!

Yoga proscribes a way of practice for individuals leading to unification with the all-embracing Divine. It seems that for you there are no such paths.

Not all yogis are *Hatha* yogis.

In Winterthur you mentioned 'the path of the Siddhas'. What do you mean by that?

Siddhas are known to people

mostly in Tibetan and India. *Siddhas* are endowed with supernatural powers, and they are able to transcend the laws of Nature in a number of ways. Empirical science naturally sees all this as impossible and rejects it. However that may be, my essential being is well-acquainted with this elemental expression of being. But *Siddhas* are certainly not magicians. One should be very aware of this!

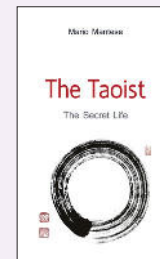
In your new book *In Touch with a Universal Master* people who are closest to you, some with you for decades, report of incomprehensible, amazing things that have taken place around you. But at the same time, you always emphasize that you are a normal person, and encourage everyone else to just be normal people as well.

Many things that are impossible to explain have happened over the years, and they still happen. Many see them as miracles, but for me these happenings are nothing special. I lead a very normal, unexciting life with my wife, and we are the parents of two grown-up children. We live in an apartment, and have no ashram or any kind of spiritual center. I work seven days a week, 365 days a year, very intensely.

Yes, my body is restricted in its movement, and that wasn't always the case. Now, my true being is truly limitless and eternally unrestricted. At the moment a documentary film about my being and work is being filmed. Next year it will be shown in public.

Thank you for the interview!

For further reading: a selection of books by Mario Mantese (Publisher BOD/www.bod.de):



The Taoist – A novel of devotion and ancient wisdom set in China.

ISBN 978-3-7528-7867-7

In the Land of Silence – Learning with my Master in the Himalaya – An autobiographical novel about an unorthodox master and his disciple.

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In Touch with a Universal Master – Those who know Master M for many years tell their stories.

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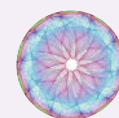
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