

TM: MORE THAN MEETS THE MIND

Transcendental Meditation (TM) advocates would have us believe that the conclusions reached in their literature are universal and concrete. However, even a cursory investigation will reveal the fact that scientists do not agree about the effects of the practice. The November, 1975 issue of *Psychology Today* magazine, in discussing pro-TM literature, points out that, "the authors gloss over and distort any aspect of TM that might interfere with its appeal."¹ Indeed, intellectual honesty requires one to examine the claims of TM carefully.

Science magazine examined tactics employed by TM propagandists and concluded that, "MIU (Maharishi International University) tries to give the impression that it has the endorsement of great minds in scholarship and science, many of whose names are scattered about the catalog. But such is not quite the case."² Nobel Prizewinner Melvin Calvin, who spoke at one SCI symposium, states that by using his name in their catalog MIU has come "perilously close to false advertising."³ According to the article "Calvin, who says he practiced meditation long before he heard of TM, asserts, 'Maharishi's principal business is collecting money from new acolytes. He doesn't know anything about science,' but does know that cloaking his dogma in scientific jargon is the only way to gain legitimacy."⁴

Many scientists who are highly involved in studying the effects of TM are uncertain about its effects. In another article in *Psychology Today*, TM researcher Gary Schwartz cautions that "certain other research suggests that the proponents have promised more than they can deliver."⁵ For example, "the assertion, in short, that TM cures drug abuse may be true but remains unproven."⁶ In an article in *Science News Magazine*, Edward Taub of the Institute of Behavioral Research warns, "there is no clear interpretation of the data yet,"⁷ and more recent study shows that the early "Wallace and Benson findings are not as clear-cut as they seemed."⁸ (Their findings are used in 10-20 percent of the graphs in the TM pamphlet, *Fundamentals of Progress*.)

TM may have some drawbacks also. In *Psychology Today*, Leon Otis warned that "several meditators in our study and several mock-mantra control subjects dropped out, in fact, after recurrence of classical psychosomatic symptoms (ulcers, depression, etc.) which they had previously controlled."⁹ Colin Martindale, Associate Professor of Psychology at the University of Maine, found that TM may reduce one's ability to think creatively. He reports that, "Gary Schwartz studied teachers of Transcendental Meditation (TM) who should be especially good at physiological self control and found that on tests of creativity they scored worse or only as well as control groups . . . It's possible then that all efforts to promote biofeedback gadgets, alpha machines, and meditation, transcendental or otherwise may have the side effect of decreasing our ability to think creatively."¹⁰ Is this not ironic, when one remembers that the TM theory course is entitled the Science of *Creative Intelligence*?

The effects of TM leave many questions unanswered. Scientific investigation suggests that the conclusions reached in TM literature are not universal and are by no means concrete. If then the physiological claims are questionable, we must also call into question its claims to be the panacea for all of man's spiritual problems.

1. *Psychology Today* magazine, November, 1975, p. 90
2. *Science* magazine, March 28, 1975, p. 1179.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid, p. 1180.
5. *Psychology Today* magazine, April, 1974, p. 39-40.

6. Ibid
7. *Science News Magazine*, December 15, 1973, p. 378.
8. Ibid.
9. *Psychology Today* magazine, April 1974, p. 46.
10. *Psychology Today* magazine, July 1975, p. 50.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON THE PHYSIOLOGICAL DRAWBACKS OF TM, CONTACT:



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TRANSCENDENTAL MEDITATION AND SPIRITUAL TECHNOLOGY

I first learned about Transcendental Meditation (TM) in 1965. I had been taking psychedelic drugs of various kinds for several years, and felt firmly committed to the search for that experience of unity and the vision of truth that opened up to me when I was "high." It seemed obvious to me that there should be some simple technique of consciousness-alteration that bypassed drugs altogether. The classical spiritual disciplines of the East seemed to work, all right, but they were far from simple - they demanded a life-commitment and a life-style that put them totally out of reach for the ordinary man in society. TM seemed to share the effectiveness of these techniques without sharing their limitations; it looked like my answer.

I received my initiation in 1966, and very quickly discovered that TM does in fact deliver on its promise by affecting certain features of one's inner experience. The Maharishi's technique of meditation does produce an alteration of consciousness, and it does get you "high."

Nevertheless, three years later, I stopped my meditation. Why? Because TM cannot deliver on the most important of all the promises it makes: the promise to produce a true solution to the human condition, the promise to produce a fundamental healing of the spiritual sickness of Man. The promise itself is clearly made. Maharishi Mahesh Yogi plainly states that his technique of Yoga brings final fulfillment to all levels of human existence, that it can overcome the ultimate problems of despair, alienation...and death. Maharishi promises that through Transcendental Meditation one reaches a state of "God-consciousness" in which "action ceases to decay life... mental and physical planes come to the level of the spiritual plane which has eternal life" (Bantam Books, *The Meditations of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi*, p.23). This is simply untrue. It is obviously untrue. The plain fact is that death is the final enemy, not just of some men, but of all. No Sage or Yogi, however great, has ever failed to die. The Maharishi himself is visibly aging, and will also someday die. Indeed, the final failure of consciousness alteration and spiritual technology lies in the fact that it too is subject to the same law of decay and death that is responsible for our human condition - that ultimately is our human condition. No human achievement is eternal, just as no human being is immortal, no matter how "conscious" he may be. Even if man boasts possession of the powers of a god, and lays claim in his consciousness to the title of "God," he remains, in brutal fact, a slave to the power of death.

The reason that TM cannot truly deal with the fact of death is that it cannot truly deal with the fact of our alienation from God, which is the source of death. Indeed, the Maharishi teaches that there is only one reality in existence, which is God; that we are by nature a part of that Divine Reality, and only by ignorance or illusion do we falsely think ourselves cut off from it. The Maharishi's error is a common one. In meditation we transcend the forms of conceptual thought and experience the deep unity of our own being. Because Man is made in the image of God, it is easy to mistake this for an experience of God, or of union with God.

But there is one who dealt with death, and who fully overcame it. I stopped my meditation because I met Jesus Christ - the one who does not err. His verdict on Man is shockingly harsh, but his offer of pardon is free. He does not bring us costly techniques, but simply "good news" of what he has done. Not only in his words, but in his deeds and in his death, Jesus bluntly demonstrated that our separation from God is more than an ignorance of the mind; it goes to the very roots of our being: "You who once were estranged and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and irreproachable before him" (Colossians 1:21-22). Here then is the gospel of God. Jesus of Nazareth teaches that at physical death He can transcend your soul into eternity. The only prerequisite for entrance into his kingdom is that you acknowledge Him as "the Way, the Truth, and the Life" (John 14:6).

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