



**MAHARISHI
UNIVERSITY**



MAHARISHI SCHOOL OF SCIENCE OF CONSCIOUSNESS

NOTES

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Unit – I: Science of Consciousness and Transcendental Meditation

Introduction to Science of Consciousness and its practical aspect

The Science of Consciousness is a broad and interdisciplinary field that seeks to understand the nature, origin, and functioning of consciousness. It encompasses various approaches from philosophy, neuroscience, psychology, and spirituality. Maharishi Mahesh Yogi's approach to this field, particularly through Transcendental Meditation (TM), offers a unique perspective that integrates both scientific and spiritual aspects.

- **Introduction to the Science of Consciousness**

1. Nature of Consciousness:

Consciousness is the state of being aware of and able to think about one's own existence, thoughts, and surroundings. It is a central topic in philosophy and cognitive science, often explored through questions like "What is the nature of awareness?" and "How does consciousness arise from the brain?"

2. Theoretical Approaches:

Philosophical Perspective: Philosophers explore consciousness through questions about the mind-body problem, qualia (subjective experiences), and personal identity.

Neuroscientific Perspective: Neuroscience investigates the neural correlates of consciousness, seeking to understand how brain activity relates to conscious experience.

Psychological Perspective: Psychology examines how consciousness affects perception, cognition, and behavior, including altered states of consciousness.

3. Meditative and Spiritual Perspectives:

Various spiritual traditions approach consciousness from a metaphysical standpoint, exploring higher states of consciousness, self-realization, and the ultimate nature of reality.

4. Maharishi Mahesh Yogi's Practical Aspect of Consciousness

Maharishi Mahesh Yogi's practical approach to the Science of Consciousness is closely tied to his Transcendental Meditation technique. Here's how it applies:

5. Transcendental Meditation (TM):

Technique: TM is a meditation practice where individuals silently repeat a specific mantra for 15-20 minutes, twice a day. This practice is designed to help the meditator transcend ordinary thinking and reach a state of restful alertness.

Goal: The aim is to experience a state of pure consciousness or "Transcendental Consciousness," which is said to be a silent, unchanging state of awareness beyond thoughts and perceptions.

6. Practical Benefits:

Stress Reduction: Regular TM practice is reported to reduce stress and anxiety, promoting a state of calm and relaxation.

Enhanced Creativity and Problem-Solving: Some studies suggest that TM can enhance cognitive function, creativity, and problem-solving abilities.

Overall Well-being: TM practitioners often report improvements in overall well-being, including better sleep, increased energy levels, and enhanced interpersonal relationships.

Scientific Research: Research into TM has explored its effects on brain function, cardiovascular health, and psychological well-being. While some studies show positive outcomes, the scientific community continues to debate and investigate the broader implications and mechanisms of TM.

7. Global Impact:

Maharishi Mahesh Yogi's teachings have influenced not only individuals but also educational and health systems worldwide. His approach integrates modern scientific insights with traditional wisdom, offering a holistic view of consciousness and its potential for improving human life.

In summary, the Science of Consciousness seeks to understand the nature and functioning of consciousness through various lenses, while Maharishi Mahesh Yogi's practical approach focuses on experiencing and harnessing this consciousness through Transcendental Meditation. His teachings aim to merge scientific understanding with spiritual practice, offering a comprehensive method for personal and collective transformation.

Concept of Knower, Known, Object of Knowing

The concepts of the "Knower," the "Known," and the "Object of Knowing" are fundamental to understanding consciousness and knowledge. These concepts are central to various philosophical, psychological, and spiritual traditions, including the teachings of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi and the broader field of epistemology. Here's a breakdown of these concepts:

1. Knower (Subject):

Definition: The Knower, or Subject, refers to the individual or entity that perceives, experiences, or understands something. In philosophical terms, the Knower is the consciousness or awareness that engages with and interprets the world.

Role in Consciousness: In the context of consciousness studies, the Knower is the aspect of the self that is aware of thoughts, perceptions, and experiences. It is the "I" or the "self" those experiences and interacts with the known world.

In Maharishi Mahesh Yogi's Teaching: Maharishi describes the Knower as the transcendental aspect of consciousness, which remains constant and unchanging. Through practices like Transcendental Meditation (TM), individuals are guided to experience this pure awareness, which is beyond the fluctuations of thoughts and sensory experiences.

2. Known (Knowledge or Awareness):

Definition: The Known is the content of awareness or the information that is perceived, experienced, or understood by the Knower. It encompasses everything that can be known, including sensory perceptions, thoughts, emotions, and concepts.

Role in Consciousness: The Known includes both external stimuli (like sights, sounds, and objects) and internal phenomena (such as thoughts and feelings). It represents the various experiences and information that the Knower engages with.

In Maharishi Mahesh Yogi's Teaching: Maharishi Mahesh Yogi emphasizes that the Known, when experienced from the perspective of pure consciousness, reveals its true nature as an expression of the unified field of consciousness. In TM practice, the distinction between the Knower and the Known becomes less pronounced as one transcends ordinary thought and experiences a unified state of awareness.

3. Object of Knowing (Object):

Definition: The Object of Knowing refers to the specific thing or phenomenon that is being perceived or understood by the Knower. This can be anything from a physical object to an abstract concept or feeling.

Role in Consciousness: The Object of Knowing is what the Knower is focusing on or interacting with. It is the target of perception or cognition and can vary widely depending on the context and the nature of the knowing process.

In Maharishi Mahesh Yogi's Teaching: Maharishi's teachings suggest that the Object of Knowing, in its essence, is also part of the unified field of consciousness. By transcending the ordinary experience of the Object through TM, practitioners can gain a direct experience of the underlying field of pure consciousness, where distinctions between Knower, Known, and Object dissolve.

Integration in Different Traditions:

Philosophy: In Western philosophy, especially in epistemology, the relationships between Knower, Known, and Object are crucial for understanding how knowledge is acquired and what constitutes reality. Philosophers like Immanuel Kant and René Descartes have explored these relationships in depth.

Eastern Philosophy: In traditions like Vedanta and Buddhism, the interplay between the Knower, Known, and Object is often explored in the context of the nature of reality and the self. These traditions may emphasize the non-dual nature of consciousness, where the distinctions between Knower, Known, and Object are ultimately seen as illusory.

Maharishi Mahesh Yogi: Maharishi integrates these concepts into a framework where the Knower, Known, and Object are all expressions of the same underlying field of pure consciousness. His teachings suggest that through practices like TM, one can experience this unified field directly, leading to a deeper understanding of the nature of consciousness and reality.

In summary, the concepts of Knower, Known, and Object are essential for exploring the nature of consciousness and knowledge. Maharishi Mahesh Yogi's approach highlights the interconnectedness of these concepts and offers practical methods to experience their unity through meditation.

Introduction to Transcendental Meditation (TM)

Transcendental Meditation (TM) is a popular and widely practiced meditation technique that aims to promote deep relaxation, self-awareness, and personal growth. It was developed by Maharishi Mahesh Yogi and gained prominence in the 1960s and 1970s, particularly in the West, through endorsements by various public figures and its reported benefits.

1. Basic Principles of TM

Simple Technique: TM is known for its simplicity. Practitioners use a specific mantra, a word or sound with no particular meaning, which is repeated silently during meditation sessions.

Effortless Practice: Unlike some meditation techniques that require concentration or visualization, TM is designed to be effortless. The practice involves sitting comfortably with closed eyes and silently repeating the mantra.

Twice Daily Practice: TM is typically practiced for 15-20 minutes, twice a day—once in the morning and once in the evening. The consistency of practice is key to experiencing its benefits.

2. Goals and Benefits

Deep Relaxation: TM aims to achieve a state of restful alertness. Practitioners often experience deep relaxation during meditation, which contrasts with ordinary waking states of stress and tension.

Reduced Stress and Anxiety: Many studies suggest that TM helps reduce stress and anxiety levels. The practice can activate the body's relaxation response, leading to a decrease in stress hormones.

Enhanced Mental Functioning: TM practitioners report improvements in cognitive functions, such as memory, creativity, and problem-solving skills. The practice is also associated with better emotional regulation and increased overall well-being.

Improved Health: Some research indicates that TM may contribute to improved cardiovascular health, reduced blood pressure, and better sleep.

3. How TM is Taught

Personal Instruction: TM is usually taught by certified instructors. Prospective practitioners undergo a personalized instruction process, which includes a private interview to determine an appropriate mantra.

Course Structure: The instruction typically involves several stages, including an initial introductory talk, one-on-one teaching sessions, and follow-up meetings to ensure proper practice and understanding.

Mantra Selection: Each practitioner is given a unique mantra based on factors such as age and gender. The mantra is meant to be a tool for effortlessly transcending ordinary thought processes.

4. Theoretical Foundations

Transcendence: TM aims to help practitioners transcend ordinary mental activity and experience a state of pure awareness, sometimes referred to as "Transcendental Consciousness." This state is characterized by deep inner silence and a sense of unity with oneself and the universe.

Unified Field of Consciousness: Maharishi Mahesh Yogi described this pure awareness as a field of universal consciousness underlying all individual experiences. According to TM theory, accessing this state regularly can lead to profound personal and societal benefits.

5. Scientific Research and Criticism

Research: Numerous studies have investigated TM's effects on mental and physical health. Research has generally supported TM's benefits for reducing stress, improving cardiovascular health, and enhancing overall well-being. However, results can vary, and some studies have been critiqued for methodological issues.

Criticism: Critics argue that some claims about TM's benefits may be overstated or not fully supported by scientific evidence. Additionally, the exclusivity of TM instruction, typically involving fees for courses, has faced scrutiny.

6. Cultural Impact

Popularization: TM gained significant attention and popularity in the 1960s and 1970s through endorsements by celebrities and its appeal to the counterculture movement. It has continued to influence various aspects of culture, including health, education, and personal development.

Global Reach: TM is practiced worldwide, and various organizations promote and teach the technique. The Transcendental Meditation movement has established institutions and initiatives, including programs in education and healthcare.

In summary, Transcendental Meditation is a meditation technique designed to promote deep relaxation, reduce stress, and enhance overall well-being through the effortless repetition of a mantra. Its simple approach, combined with its focus on transcending ordinary thought, has attracted a global following and is supported by a body of research demonstrating its potential benefits.

Scientific Research on Transcendental Meditation

Scientific research on Transcendental Meditation (TM) has explored its effects on various aspects of mental and physical health. The technique, developed by Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, involves the silent repetition of a mantra and aims to achieve a state of restful alertness and transcendent awareness. Research has focused on its impacts on stress reduction, cardiovascular health, cognitive functioning, and overall well-being. Here's a summary of key findings and ongoing debates:

1. Stress Reduction and Mental Health

Stress and Anxiety: Multiple studies have shown that TM can significantly reduce stress and anxiety. Research indicates that TM can lower levels of cortisol (a stress hormone) and improve physiological markers of stress. For instance, a meta-analysis published in the American Journal of Hypertension (2005) found that TM had a significant effect on reducing stress and anxiety compared to other relaxation techniques.

Depression: Research on TM's impact on depression has shown mixed results. Some studies suggest that TM can help reduce symptoms of depression, particularly when practiced regularly. For example, a study published in JAMA Internal Medicine (2014) reported improvements in mood and reductions in depression symptoms among TM practitioners.

2. Cardiovascular Health

Blood Pressure: TM has been associated with reductions in blood pressure. A meta-analysis of clinical trials published in Circulation: Cardiovascular Quality and Outcomes (2009) found that TM was effective in lowering blood pressure in patients with high blood pressure, with effects comparable to other lifestyle modifications such as diet and exercise.

Heart Health: Some studies suggest that TM may contribute to overall cardiovascular health by reducing risk factors such as blood pressure and cholesterol levels. However, more research is needed to fully understand the long-term effects and mechanisms.

3. Cognitive Function and Performance

Attention and Memory: Research indicates that TM may enhance cognitive functions such as attention and memory. A study published in Consciousness and Cognition (2010) found that TM practice was associated with improved performance on attention and memory tasks.

Creativity and Problem-Solving: Some studies suggest that TM can foster creativity and problem-solving abilities. For example, research published in *Creativity Research Journal* (2010) reported that TM practitioners showed increased creative thinking and problem-solving skills compared to non-practitioners.

4. General Well-being and Quality of Life

Overall Well-being: TM has been linked to improvements in overall well-being and quality of life. Research published in *International Journal of Stress Management* (2012) found that TM practice was associated with increased life satisfaction and improved psychological well-being.

Sleep: Some studies have found that TM can improve sleep quality and reduce insomnia. For instance, research in *Journal of Clinical Psychology* (2010) reported that TM practice was associated with better sleep and reduced symptoms of insomnia.

5. Scientific Criticism and Debate

Methodological Concerns: Critics argue that some studies on TM have methodological limitations, including small sample sizes, lack of control groups, and potential biases. For example, a review in *Psychological Bulletin* (2011) highlighted concerns about the methodological rigor of some TM studies.

Publication Bias: There is also concern about publication bias, where studies with positive results are more likely to be published than those with negative or null findings. This can skew the overall understanding of TM's effectiveness.

Comparative Studies: Some research has compared TM with other meditation techniques and relaxation practices, showing that while TM has benefits, its advantages over other methods are not always clear-cut.

6. Ongoing Research and Future Directions

Long-Term Effects: More long-term studies are needed to assess the sustained benefits of TM and its impact over extended periods.

Mechanisms of Action: Research is ongoing to better understand the mechanisms through which TM affects mental and physical health, including its effects on brain function and stress physiology.

Broader Applications: Future research may explore the application of TM in various settings, including education, workplace environments, and clinical settings for mental health treatment.

In summary, scientific research on Transcendental Meditation suggests that it has a range of benefits, particularly in reducing stress and improving cardiovascular health. While many studies support its positive effects, there are ongoing debates about the quality and consistency of the research. As with any therapeutic practice, individual experiences may vary, and further research is needed to fully understand the scope and mechanisms of TM's effects.

How Transcendental Meditation differs from other forms of meditation.

Transcendental Meditation (TM) differs from other forms of meditation in several key ways:

Technique:

TM: Practitioners use a specific mantra—a word or sound with no particular meaning—repeated silently in the mind. The practice is typically done for 15-20 minutes twice a day while sitting comfortably with the eyes closed. The goal is to settle the mind into a state of restful awareness, transcending ordinary thinking and experiencing a state of pure consciousness.

Other Forms: Techniques vary widely. For example, mindfulness meditation often involves focusing on the present moment and observing thoughts and sensations without judgment. Concentration meditation might focus on a single object, breath, or thought. Some practices involve guided imagery or visualization, and others use physical postures or movements (like in yoga).

Effortlessness:

TM: Emphasizes an effortless approach. Practitioners are encouraged to let thoughts come and go without trying to control them, and the mantra is repeated passively. The practice is designed to be easy and natural, requiring minimal concentration.

Other Forms: Some meditation techniques require active concentration or effort, such as focusing on the breath or trying to achieve specific mental states.

Training and Personalization:

TM: Requires instruction from a certified teacher. Each practitioner is given a personal mantra that is supposed to be specifically chosen for them based on various factors. The technique involves a structured learning process and often includes a fee.

Other Forms: Many forms of meditation can be self-taught or learned through various resources like books, apps, or online videos. Personalization varies; some techniques are standardized, while others might be adapted based on individual needs.

Philosophical and Theoretical Background:

TM: Rooted in Vedic tradition and philosophy. Maharishi Mahesh Yogi developed it based on ancient teachings from India, but it is presented in a secular context to appeal to a global audience. TM emphasizes the concept of "transcending" ordinary mental activity to experience a deeper level of consciousness.

Other Forms: Can be rooted in diverse traditions, including Buddhism, Taoism, Hinduism, or secular approaches. Philosophies and goals vary: some aim for enlightenment, others for stress relief, self-improvement, or spiritual growth.

Scientific Research:

TM: Has been the subject of various studies, with research often focusing on its effects on stress reduction, cardiovascular health, and overall well-being. However, the quality and interpretation of this research can vary.

Other Forms: Different forms of meditation also have scientific research backing their benefits, with studies exploring a wide range of outcomes such as emotional regulation, cognitive improvement, and mindfulness.

Overall, while TM shares some commonalities with other meditation practices, its distinct focus on effortless practice and personalized instruction sets it apart.



SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH ON TRANSCENDENTAL MEDITATION

Scientific research on Transcendental Meditation (TM) has explored various aspects of its effects and benefits. Here's a summary of some key findings:

1. Stress Reduction and Relaxation

- **General Findings:** Many studies have shown that TM can significantly reduce stress and anxiety. TM practitioners often report lower levels of perceived stress and greater overall well-being.
- **Mechanisms:** Research suggests that TM can reduce the production of stress hormones like cortisol and promote a state of restful alertness.

2. Cardiovascular Health

- **Blood Pressure:** TM has been associated with reductions in blood pressure. Studies indicate that TM can have a positive impact on hypertension, with some research showing comparable or even superior effects to standard lifestyle modifications.
- **Heart Health:** There is evidence suggesting that TM may improve heart health by reducing risk factors associated with cardiovascular diseases.

3. Cognitive Function and Academic Performance

- **Cognitive Benefits:** Research has explored TM's impact on cognitive functions such as attention, memory, and executive function. Some studies suggest improvements in these areas, although findings can vary.
- **Academic Performance:** Some studies have found that TM can positively influence academic performance, particularly in reducing stress and improving focus and concentration.

4. Mental Health

- **Depression and Anxiety:** TM has been studied as a complementary approach to managing depression and anxiety. Results have been mixed, but some research indicates that TM can be beneficial in reducing symptoms of these conditions.

- **Overall Well-being:** TM practitioners often report enhanced quality of life and increased levels of happiness and satisfaction.

5. Brain Function and Neuroimaging

- **Brain Activity:** Neuroimaging studies have shown that TM can influence brain activity. For example, TM has been associated with increased alpha brain wave activity, which is linked to states of relaxed alertness.
- **Neuroplasticity:** Some research suggests that TM may support neuroplasticity, the brain's ability to reorganize itself by forming new neural connections.

6. Longevity and Aging

- **Longevity Studies:** Some longitudinal studies have suggested that TM practitioners may experience longer lifespans compared to non-practitioners, though more research is needed to confirm these findings.
- **Aging:** TM may contribute to healthier aging by reducing stress and supporting overall well-being.

7. Impact on Social and Behavioral Outcomes

- **Behavioral Changes:** Studies have explored TM's effects on behavior, including reduced substance abuse and improved social behavior. Results suggest potential benefits, although findings can be inconsistent.

Considerations and Criticisms

- **Methodological Concerns:** Some studies on TM suffer from methodological issues, such as small sample sizes or lack of rigorous controls. As with many areas of research, more high-quality, peer-reviewed studies are needed.
- **Comparison with Other Techniques:** TM is often compared with other meditation techniques and stress-reduction methods. While TM has demonstrated benefits, it is important to consider it within the broader context of meditation research.

Overall, the scientific evidence supports several benefits of Transcendental Meditation, particularly in stress reduction and cardiovascular health. However, as with any intervention, individual results may vary, and further research is needed to fully understand its long-term effects and mechanisms.

Introducing CBE - Transcendental Meditation around the world

Consciousness-Based Education (CBE) is a system of education founded by **Maharishi Mahesh Yogi ji**. Its central idea is that **the development of consciousness is the foundation of true education**. While traditional education focuses only on acquiring knowledge of the outer world (subjects like science, mathematics, history, etc.), CBE ensures that the **inner world of the student**—their awareness, creativity, intelligence, and happiness—is also developed.

In short:

- Traditional education = Filling the mind with information.
- CBE = Awakening the full potential of the mind and consciousness, along with gaining knowledge.

2. Need for CBE

Modern education often leaves students with:

- Stress, anxiety, and lack of clarity.
- Superficial knowledge (facts without deep understanding).
- Limited creativity and problem-solving ability.
- Focus on job skills rather than **life skills**.

Maharishi ji observed that education without consciousness is like **watering the leaves of a tree but forgetting the root**. If the root (consciousness) is nourished, all aspects of life flourish.

3. Core Principles of CBE

1. **Consciousness is the foundation of knowledge.**
 - The *knower*, *known*, and *process of knowing* are incomplete unless the knower (the student's consciousness) is fully developed.
2. **Transcendental Meditation (TM) as a practical tool.**
 - CBE includes daily practice of TM, which allows students to experience pure consciousness—calm, expanded awareness, and deep rest.
3. **Integration of inner and outer knowledge.**
 - Students learn not just subjects, but also **how their consciousness is connected to universal laws of nature**.
4. **Development of total brain potential.**
 - Scientific research shows TM increases brain coherence, improves memory, learning, and creativity.
5. **Stress-free education.**
 - By dissolving stress through TM, students learn joyfully and with clarity.

4. Maharishi Mahesh Yogi ji's View on CBE

Maharishi ji said:

- *“Education should not be a mechanical process of stuffing information into students' minds. It should unfold the unlimited potential of their consciousness.”*

According to him:

- Every individual has an **infinite reservoir of energy, intelligence, and creativity** within.
- The role of education is to bring out that infinity, not just give limited outer knowledge.
- By connecting students with pure consciousness (through TM), education produces **enlightened individuals** who live in harmony with themselves and society.

He also linked CBE with **world peace**, because when students learn in peace and coherence, they naturally radiate positivity in society.

5. Benefits of CBE (supported by research)

1. **Academic Excellence** – better focus, comprehension, memory.
2. **Improved Health** – reduced stress, anxiety, blood pressure.
3. **Stronger Personality** – more confidence, self-discipline, and creativity.
4. **Social Harmony** – students become more cooperative, less violent, more compassionate.
5. **Preparation for Life** – not just career, but personal fulfillment, family harmony, leadership, and service to society.

6. Practical Features of CBE

- **Daily TM practice** in schools and universities.
- Courses linking **Vedic knowledge** with modern scientific subjects.
- **Holistic curriculum**: Developing heart, mind, body, and soul.

- Education that creates not just professionals, but **fulfilled human beings**.

7. Maharishi ji's Vision for the Future

Maharishi ji envisioned:

- **Consciousness-Based schools and universities worldwide.**
- Education that eliminates stress and violence from society.
- A world where knowledge and peace go together.

He often said:

- *"The purpose of education is the full development of the student, so that he or she may enjoy inner happiness, outer success, and contribute to world peace."*

Preparation to start learning Transcendental Meditation

Starting to learn Transcendental Meditation (TM) involves several steps to ensure you are well-prepared for the practice. Here's a guide to help you get ready:

1. Understand the Basics

- **Research TM:** Read about the principles and benefits of TM to ensure it aligns with your goals and expectations. Familiarize yourself with its origins, techniques, and what differentiates it from other meditation practices.
- **Set Expectations:** Understand that TM is a technique that requires personal instruction and commitment. It involves practicing twice daily for 15-20 minutes.

2. Find a Certified TM Teacher

- **Locate a TM Center:** Search for a Transcendental Meditation center or certified teacher in your area. TM is taught by trained instructors who provide personalized guidance.
- **Schedule an Introductory Session:** Most TM centers offer free introductory talks or consultations where you can learn more about the practice, ask questions, and understand the process.

3. Prepare Logistically

- **Time Commitment:** Ensure you can dedicate 15-20 minutes twice a day for meditation. Find a quiet and comfortable space where you can practice without interruptions.
- **Financial Considerations:** TM usually involves a fee for personal instruction and materials. Check the costs and consider how this fits into your budget. The fee often includes follow-up support and additional resources.

4. Mental and Emotional Preparation

- **Open Mind:** Approach TM with an open mind and willingness to follow the instructions given by your teacher. Be ready to embrace the practice and allow yourself to experience it fully.
- **Expect Gradual Results:** Understand that benefits from TM may take time to manifest. Patience and consistent practice are key.

5. Practical Considerations

- **Health Conditions:** If you have any health issues or concerns, discuss them with your TM teacher to ensure the practice is appropriate for you.
- **Lifestyle:** Consider how TM might fit into your daily routine and any potential adjustments you may need to make to integrate it smoothly.

6. Follow-Up and Support

- **Attend Follow-Up Sessions:** TM typically includes follow-up sessions to help you with any questions and to ensure you're practicing correctly. Take advantage of these opportunities for ongoing support.
- **Join TM Communities:** Engage with local or online TM communities to connect with other practitioners, share experiences, and get additional support.

By preparing in these ways, you'll be better equipped to start learning Transcendental Meditation and integrate it effectively into your life.