

MY INNER SELF IS THE BASIS OF ALL CHANGE: A CASE STUDY OF LIVED EXPERIENCE*

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Abstract

This paper presents a qualitative phenomenological case study of lived experiences resulting from one student's research in consciousness while participating in the Bachelor of Arts degree program in The Science of Creative Intelligence for Management, Rajapark Institute, Thailand. In common university settings today, techniques for research in consciousness are not offered. As a result, the benefits documented in over 350 published studies including increased intelligence, creativity, critical thinking, moral reasoning, ability to manage stress, and more fulfilling social relationships are not offered. Thus, these critical areas of students' lives remain underserved. This study seeks to understand meaning and to explore significance of results that were gained through research in consciousness technologies—the Transcendental Meditation (TM) technique and its advanced programs, which form the practical aspect of the Science of Creative Intelligence, a complete science of consciousness. The results are centered on the theme: research into what is beyond change. In her results, the student describes lived experiences of what she calls her deepest

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inner Self, leading to feelings of contentment, bliss, love, fulfillment, and happiness just from within herself. This study examines these results in the context of the theoretical principles of the Science of Creative Intelligence. Findings reveal the results clearly suggest the development of higher states of consciousness—particularly Transcendental Consciousness—which the consciousness literature explains is characterized by an inner experience of an unchanging field of pure consciousness, one's inner Self. In doing so, this qualitative study meaningfully complements the existing body of quantitative research.

Keywords: consciousness, Transcendental Meditation, intelligence, creativity

Introduction

Taught by Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, the TM technique is the fundamental technology for research in consciousness. This technology can be easily applied in a university academic setting to benefit students in everything they do. It is simple to learn and can be mastered in four one-hour lessons. The practice is not a religion. Learning the practice does not require adopting a belief system or lifestyle. TM is practiced effortlessly while sitting comfortably with closed eyes (Forem, J., 2012). The theoretical framework for this technique is found in the Science of Creative Intelligence (SCI), formulated by Maharishi by drawing on principles found in the ancient Vedic literature as well as deep principles of modern science that point to the underlying reality of the universe as a purely abstract field, the source of all the laws of nature (Greene, B., 2004) He explains how this abstract, unmanifest non-changing field underlying all manifest changing phenomena is a field of pure consciousness. Further, over 350 published research studies document the benefits for all areas of life. Research documenting some of the benefits particularly relevant to students include increased creativity, intelligence, moral reasoning and improved ability to manage stress. tm.org



Worldwide, in common university settings today, such techniques are not offered for improving these basic and critical areas of students' lives to give them a foundation for success in their academic performance and in later life. Over 60 years of research on the TM technique has brought forward two main physiological (body-brain) markers of the experience of pure consciousness or Transcendental Consciousness. These markers are a) natural breath suspension and b) high alpha1 (8-10 Hz) global brain wave coherence (Travis, F.T. et al., 2010) Natural breath suspension means that the body is resting profoundly. On the other hand, high alpha1 global coherence signifies inner wakefulness—lively inner silence. While most academic experiences activate localized brain areas, such as sensory, emotional, or motor areas, the experience of Transcendental Consciousness leads to a global EEG pattern—alpha1 coherence across the whole cortex—that can be called total brain functioning. Interestingly, it is not that the whole brain is active, the whole brain is awake (Travis, F.T. et al., 2010). Researchers call this unique mind-body state, restful alertness (Wallace, R.K., 1970) describe the restful-alertness achieved during the TM practice, "Stated most simply, this state is one of extreme quietness and coherence in the nervous system, experienced in full conscious awareness, and achieved by means of a remarkably quick and natural process" (Orme-Johnson, D.W. & Farrow, J. (Eds.), 1977)

This study is designed to complement the objective quantitative research by presenting the lived experience of this state described by researchers as restful alertness. This study is a case study of one student's lived experiences. This student participated in the Bachelor's Degree in Science of Creative Intelligence for Management that utilizes the Consciousness-Based education approach to university study and offers this technology for research in consciousness. In addition to traditional courses/classes, this degree program includes practice of technologies for research in consciousness. These



technologies are TM—allows the mind to experience restful alertness, pure consciousness—and an advanced research program, the TM-Sidhi program—which trains the mind to think and act from this state of restful alertness, pure consciousness. According to SCI, the first step in developing higher consciousness is stabilizing the fourth state of consciousness, restful alertness of Transcendental Consciousness, during everyday life. This in itself brings benefit to students. The restful value promotes the ability to manage stress. The alertness value, total brain functioning, enables students to perform well—to see parts in terms of the whole—a larger abstract arena that includes time, values, memories, and goals. This higher brain integration is associated with increased happiness, higher creativity, mental clarity, inner fulfillment, and the ability to make good judgments (Harung H.S., Travis F., 2012) (Travis, F.T., Harung, H., & Lagrosen, Y., 2011)

This qualitative study highlights those experiences recorded by the subject that relate to the theme: research into what is beyond change. SCI explains how TM promotes the direct experience of pure consciousness. SCI describes this field of pure consciousness, pure wakefulness, as the underlying non-changing field of intelligence sustaining the ever-changing phenomena of life, parallel to the quantum vacuum field in quantum physics (Hagelin, J. S., 1987) SCI also explains how the holistic and extensive documented benefits are a natural and spontaneous outcome of the development of higher consciousness achieved through the regular practice of the technologies for research in consciousness. However, in the extensive research that exists, no studies singularly highlight a qualitative analysis of the lived experience of students practicing this technology. The student in this study wrote at the start of the BA study period, From my experience of life so far, I see that young life grows old, a green leaf turns yellow, the flowing river freezes, and a hard stone erodes. Life appears to be ever-changing. At the same time, I also see that life never ceases to be. Does this



feeling that life has an eternal value to it signify that there is something beyond its ever-changing aspect? If so, can I capture this non-changing value in my awareness so that it can support me through the rapidly and constantly changing situations in my life ?

Research Objectives

1. To code experiences from the student's journal relating to the theme;
2. To examine the selected experiences within the context of SCI to discover meaning and significance related to the theme; and
3. To compliment the quantitative research on the TM program.

Research Methodology

This study blends traditional phenomenological methods of qualitative research and methods specific to SCI. SCI methods for data gathering used were, a) standardized techniques for research in consciousness and b) standardized methods for documenting/recording experiences. Standard phenomenological methods used were, a) thematic content analysis (bracketing, coding, horizontalization, phenomenological reduction) and b) theory-guided analysis (correlating data with theory) (Merriam, S.B., & Tisdell, E.J., 2016)

Subject: One Student—Biographical Data

The individual featured in this case study is a single woman from Mongolia, age 28, a student in the Bachelor of Arts degree program in the Science of Creative Intelligence for Management and a practitioner of the TM and TM-Sidhi program. During her study, she was also a member of a women's coherence-creating program (The Mother Divine program, 2565) that focuses on extended practice of the research technologies of consciousness for accelerated development of higher states of consciousness and to create coherence—harmony—in collective consciousness.



After following standard SCI instructions for research in consciousness, the student documented/recorded her results of research in a journal. Journal entries were made weekly over 11 months during her third year of study.

Data Gathering Methods

For researching consciousness, the TM technique, its advanced techniques, and the TM-Sidhi program were used. Notably, research in consciousness does not take place in a classroom. It takes place deep within the student's consciousness. Here, there are no steps for learning, there is no outside teacher, what is here is the structure of pure consciousness. Here the Self reveals itself to itself by itself.

In his SCI, Maharishi makes it clear that it is the experiencer alone who can describe his/her experience of pure consciousness with most accuracy. SCI utilizes two specific methods for recording experiences into a journal. The method chosen by this student is as follows: a) read through Vedic verses from the Upanishads until you find a phrase or verse that triggers a memory of an experience during the practice of research in consciousness, b) underline the phrase or verse, and then, c) record the experience with reference to the underlined phrases or whole verse.

Therefore, this study considers the student's records describing her lived experiences during her practice of the TM and TM-Sidhi program with reference to a Vedic verse as guidance. This procedure for matching the experience to the verse is standardized in SCI. As such, the verse serves to validate the experience and at the same time it serves to guide the description of the student's direct experience much like an interview question does in more traditional phenomenological studies.



Thematic Content Analysis

At the end of eleven months of data gathering, the standard phenomenological methods for thematic content analysis were used. After this coding, two results (records of lived experiences) were selected for analysis.

Theory-Guided Analysis

To give meaning and significance to the two results, they were analyzed with reference to four characteristics that SCI attributes to the experience of Transcendental Consciousness.

A silent inner field that is beyond change. SCI describes Transcendental Consciousness as a state of no activity, a silent inner field where consciousness is in its pure state.

A permanent, uncreated reality. SCI explains that Transcendental Consciousness is an absolute state of Being (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi., 1969). SCI also says, “The ‘I’, is uncreated; it belongs to the field of the Absolute (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi., 1969).

A self-Referral silent and dynamic field. This field unfolds (know) itself from within itself (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, 1994).

A state of fulfillment. Through research in consciousness, the mind gets soaked in the silence and flow of pure consciousness and experiences deep fulfillment (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, 2001)

Results

Presented here are two documented results that relate to the theme, researching what is beyond change. They were documented with reference to verses from the Upanishads and its quality of intelligence. (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, 1994) The relevant words in the verse are underlined. In the experience, the quality is italicized.



Experience #1, Shvetashvatara Upanishad, First Adhaya, v. 2

“Time, one’s own nature, necessity, chance, the elements, the womb, man—are these regarded as the cause? Is it a combination of these? It is not, however, because there is the Self. Even the Self is unable to be the cause of pleasure and pain” (Katz, V., & Egnes, T., 2015) Quality of Intelligence:

Transcending in the light of Lively Absolute (Living Wholeness I-ness or Being)

Once I start my practice of TM, I often feel I have been physically transferred to an unknown place, where there is only silence. Continuing the practice, the experience of silence becomes clearer. In this silence, I feel I am welcomed with mother’s love and curled up comfortably in the mother’s “womb.” I experience tenderness and softness all over my body. I feel every part of my body is tasting the silence.

One time, when I was experiencing the silence, I felt I remained only with me, with my Self. Without any influence of thoughts or feelings, I felt peaceful, but my whole body and my mind were fully awake, *lively absolute*. I experienced myself as one with silence, as whole. I experienced *living wholeness I-ness or being*. I felt, at that moment, any thought or feeling or past impressions were insignificant and unimportant. I felt, at that moment, my Self and silence, which I was experiencing pleasantly and lovingly as whole, was everything. At that moment, I felt I was just being.

At the same time, I felt I was completely content; I did not need anything to be happy. I felt a blissful feeling all over my body. “Time, ...necessity, chance, the elements”—anything could not be “regarded as cause” to make me happy. “I felt I have left behind my thoughts and feelings, left behind any notion of “pain and pleasure” and stayed with “the Self.” I experienced, in this silence that, I, my Self was the only thing



real and existing. “Even the Self is unable to be the cause of pleasure and pain.”

Experience #2, Mundaka Upanishad, Third Mundaka, Second Khanda, v.3

“This Self cannot be gained by instruction, nor by the intellect, nor yet by much learning. He is gained only by one whom he chooses. To him, this Self reveals his own nature” (Katz, V., & Egnes, T., 2015) *Quality of Intelligence: Transcending in the Light of Unfolding*

An abstract and absolute realm opens up and embraces all my body and mind in my deepest transcending experience. I sit silently with closed eyes while I am practicing my TM and TM- Sidhi program. I observe that my mind is getting reluctant to create thoughts and my critical intellect is loosening up. “This Self cannot be gained by instruction, nor by the intellect, nor yet by much learning.” I am letting go of everything and just breathing. Only then, when my mind is relieved from logic and reasoning, the realm of the absolute comes to my awareness as if the sun is shining brightly when the sky is cleared of clouds. Only then, I experience my deepest and innermost Self. I can be my Self with my settled mind. “He is gained only by one whom he chooses.”

Even though I had just glimpsed this absolute realm within me, the feeling of happiness and joy was overwhelming. I felt my heart was melting; I was made of love and I was all love. I felt there was nothing greater than love. I was more than this identity of the small individual me and I was living to express unbounded love. I felt my true Self—was unfolding to me as this verse describes “this Self reveals his own nature”

Discussion

The results are discussed within the framework of the four SCI principles described. Firstly, a correlation was found between SCI characterization of pure



consciousness as a silent inner field and the student's experience. For example, she wrote in experience #1, "Once I start my practice of the TM technique, I often feel I have been physically transferred to an unknown place, where there is only silence....the experience of silence becomes clearer...I felt I had escaped all my feelings through transcending...changing thoughts and feelings have no place in this silence." This description correlates with Maharishi's description, "Be without activity" (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi., 1969) Result #2 gives further such descriptions. The correlation is clear.

Secondly, a correlation between theory and experience is seen in the description of pure consciousness, the Self, as a permanent, uncreated reality. For example, she wrote in experience #1, "I felt, at that moment, my Self and the silence, which I was experiencing pleasantly and lovingly, as whole, was everything—the only thing important, significant and the only thing which was real." In experience #2, she wrote, "I feel I am letting go of everything...the realm of the absolute comes to my awareness....I experience my deepest and innermost Self." Maharishi also says, "The higher Self is that aspect of the personality which never changes....the very basis of the entire field of relativity" Maharishi also says, "When, during transcendental meditation, the mind goes so deep within that it transcends the subtlest state of relativity, it attains the transcendental absolute state of Being. This is the state of pure awareness, or consciousness of the Self" (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi., 1969). Her descriptions of her inner Self match how Maharishi describes the inner Self. The correlation is clear.

Thirdly, a correlation was found between theory and her experience of the inner Self as self-referral. For example in #2, she wrote, "I felt my true nature—my own Self—was unfolding to me as this verse describes 'this Self reveals his own nature' which is my nature, who I really am." Maharishi (1994) says, "Consciousness is the knower of itself".



Fourthly, a correlation between the SCI description of the self-referral dynamism of consciousness and the student's experience was identified. For example in the student's research results #1 and #2, she described feeling the flow of love, tenderness, softness, happiness and joy while experiencing the silence of her inner Self. In experience #1, she wrote, "I experience tenderness and softness all over my body. I feel every part of my body is tasting the silence." In experience #2, she wrote, "the feeling of happiness and joy was overwhelming." Maharishi (1994) says, "In its pure wakefulness, human awareness comprehends the details of its own structure and finds that the silent value of its own nature is coexisting with the dynamic value of its own nature". As Maharishi makes clear, there is a flow (dynamism) within the silence—the student's description reveals that she is feeling the Self flow—moving within itself—to reveal itself. Again, the correlation is clear. (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, 1994)

Lastly, a match between SCI's description of the Self as being a state of inner fulfillment and this student's experience can be identified. She writes in #1, "At that moment, I felt I was just being. At the same time, I felt I was completely content just for being. I felt I did not need anything to be happy. I felt a blissful feeling all over my body...anything could not be 'regarded as cause' to make me happy." She further described that when her mind was absorbed in her deepest inner Self, she felt happy and content from within, just from being. Maharishi (2001) says, "There is nothing in the world which could possibly give lasting contentment to the individual because everything is perishable and ever-changing and phenomenal." And "Once you are possessed by your Self, the purpose of all wisdom has been achieved... that is the state of fulfilment." (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, 2001) (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi., 1969) The correlation is clear.



Conclusion and Recommendation

The four characteristics of Transcendental Consciousness described in the literature were found closely correlating with the student's experiences of her deepest inner Self. Therefore, it appears that the student is not only experiencing Transcendental Consciousness, her inner Self, but is becoming well-established in this experience. Thus, this analysis brings a clear meaning and significance to the research results. To summarize, the student wrote after this exercise, Through this research, I have discovered that my ever-changing life is sustained by an inner never-changing absolute reality—Transcendental Consciousness—my innermost Self. The experience of transcending brightens all aspects of my life because my deepest inner Self is my source of inner happiness, fulfillment and stability. No one created this reality for me. I am experiencing it and am becoming increasingly familiar with it through my own meditation practice. My Self is becoming a giant anchor which will never allow me to be swept away with ever-changing situations of life. I feel confident that these experiences are the first milestone on my path to higher evolution. However, this study includes only two experiences from one subject. Studies could be conducted with more subjects. In fact, a fascinating body of qualitative research describing the development of higher states of consciousness could be built. This body of research could include hundreds of similar qualitative phenomenological studies.

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