

# Transcendental Meditation

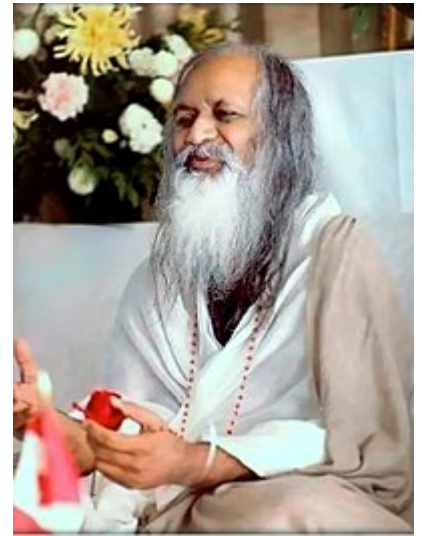
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**Transcendental Meditation**(**TM**) refers to a specific form of silent mantra meditation called the Transcendental Meditation technique,<sup>[1]</sup> and less commonly to the organizations that constitute the Transcendental Meditation movement.<sup>[1][2]</sup> Maharishi Mahesh Yogi introduced the TM technique and TM movement in India in the mid-1950s.

The Maharishi taught thousands of people during a series of world tours from 1958 to 1965, expressing his teachings in spiritual and religious terms.<sup>[3][4]</sup> TM became more popular in the 1960s and 1970s, as the Maharishi shifted to a more technical presentation, and his meditation technique was practiced by celebrities. At this time, he began training TM teachers and created specialized organizations to present TM to specific segments of the population such as business people and students. By the early 2000s, TM had been taught to millions of people, and the worldwide TM organization had grown to include educational programs, health products, and related services.

The TM technique involves the use of a sound called a mantra, and is practiced for 15–20 minutes twice per day. It is taught by certified teachers through a standard course of instruction, which costs a fee that varies by country. According to the Transcendental Meditation movement, it is a non-religious method for relaxation, stress reduction, and self-development. The technique has been seen as both religious and non-religious; sociologists, scholars, and a New Jersey judge and court are among those who have expressed views.<sup>[4][5][6]</sup> The United States Court of Appeals upheld the federal ruling that TM was essentially "religious in nature" and therefore could not be taught in public schools.<sup>[7][8]</sup>

TM is one of the most widely practiced and researched meditation techniques.<sup>[9][10][11]</sup> It is not possible to say whether it has any effect on health as the research, as of 2007, is of poor quality.<sup>[12][13]</sup>



Maharishi Mahesh Yogi

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## History

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Transcendental Meditation dates its origin back to the Vedic traditions of India.<sup>[14]</sup> The Transcendental Meditation program and the Transcendental Meditation movement originated with Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, founder of the organization, and continue beyond his death in 2008. In 1955,<sup>[15][16][17]</sup> "the Maharishi began publicly teaching a traditional meditation technique"<sup>[18]</sup> learned from his master Brahmananda Saraswati that he called Transcendental Deep Meditation<sup>[19]</sup> and later renamed Transcendental Meditation.<sup>[20]</sup>

The Maharishi initiated thousands of people, then developed a TM teacher training program as a way to accelerate the rate of bringing the technique to more people.<sup>[20][21]</sup> He also inaugurated a series of world tours which promoted Transcendental Meditation.<sup>[22]</sup> These factors, coupled with endorsements by celebrities who practiced TM and claims that scientific research had validated the technique, helped to popularize TM in the 1960s and 1970s. By the late 2000s, TM had been taught to millions of individuals and the Maharishi was overseeing a large multinational movement.<sup>[23]</sup> Despite organizational changes and the addition of advanced meditative techniques in the 1970s,<sup>[24]</sup> the Transcendental Meditation technique has remained relatively unchanged.

Among the first organizations to promote TM were the Spiritual Regeneration Movement and the International Meditation Society. In modern times, the movement has grown to encompass schools and universities that teach the practice,<sup>[25]</sup> and includes many associated programs based on the Maharishi's interpretation of the Vedic traditions. In the U.S., non-profit organizations included the Students International Meditation Society,<sup>[26]</sup> AFSCI,<sup>[27]</sup> World Plan Executive Council, Maharishi Vedic Education Development Corporation, Global Country of World Peace and Maharishi Foundation<sup>[28]</sup> The successor to Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, and leader of the Global Country of World Peace, is Tony Nader.<sup>[29][30]</sup>

## Technique

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The meditation practice involves the use of a mantra for 15–20 minutes twice per day while sitting with the eyes closed.<sup>[31][32]</sup> It is reported to be one of the most widely practiced,<sup>[33][34]</sup> and among the most widely researched, meditation techniques,<sup>[9][10][11][35]</sup> with hundreds of published research studies.<sup>[36][37][38]</sup> The technique is made available worldwide by certified TM teachers in a seven-step course,<sup>[39]</sup> and fees vary from country to country.<sup>[40][41]</sup> Beginning in 1965, the Transcendental Meditation technique has been incorporated into selected schools, universities, corporations, and prison programs in the US, Latin America, Europe, and India. In 1977 a US district court ruled that a curriculum in TM and the Science of Creative Intelligence (SCI) being taught in some New Jersey schools was religious in nature and in violation of the First Amendment of the United States Constitution.<sup>[5][42]</sup> The technique has since been included in a number of educational and social programs around the world.<sup>[43]</sup>

The Transcendental Meditation technique has been described as both religious and non-religious, as an aspect of a new religious movement, as rooted in Hinduism,<sup>[44][45]</sup> and as a non-religious practice for self-development.<sup>[46][47][48]</sup> The public presentation of the TM technique over its 50-year history has been praised for its high visibility in the mass media and effective global propagation, and criticized for using celebrity and scientific endorsements as a marketing tool. Also, advanced courses supplement the TM technique and include an advanced meditation program called the TM-Sidhi program.<sup>[49]</sup>

## Movement

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The Transcendental Meditation movement refers to the programs and organizations connected with the Transcendental Meditation technique and founded by Maharishi Mahesh Yogi. Transcendental Meditation was first taught in the 1950s in India and has continued since the Maharishi's death in 2008. The organization was estimated to have 900,000 participants worldwide in 1977,<sup>[50]</sup> a million by the 1980s,<sup>[51][52][53]</sup> and 5 million in more recent years,<sup>[54][55][56][57][58][59][60]</sup> including some notable practitioners

Programs include the Transcendental Meditation technique, an advanced meditation practice called the TM-Sidhi program ("Yogic Flying"), an alternative health care program called Maharishi Ayurveda,<sup>[61]</sup> and a system of building and architecture called Maharishi Sthapatya Ved.<sup>[62][63]</sup> The TM movement's past and present media endeavors include a publishing company (MUM Press), a television station (KSCI), a radio station (KHOE), and a satellite television channel (Maharishi Channel). During its 50-year history, its products and services have been offered through a variety of organizations, which are primarily nonprofit and educational. These include the Spiritual Regeneration Movement, the International Meditation Society, World Plan Executive Council, Maharishi Vedic Education Development Corporation, the Global Country of World Peace, and the David Lynch Foundation

The TM movement also operates a worldwide network of Transcendental Meditation teaching centers, schools, universities, health centers, herbal supplements, solar panel, and home financing companies, plus several TM-centered communities. The global organization is reported to have an estimated net worth of USD 3.5 billion.<sup>[64][65]</sup> The TM movement has been characterized in a variety of ways and has been called a spiritual movement,<sup>[66][67]</sup> a millenarian movement, a world affirming movement,<sup>[68]</sup> a new social movement,<sup>[69]</sup> a guru-centered movement,<sup>[70]</sup> a personal growth movement,<sup>[71]</sup> a religion, and

a cult.<sup>[67][72][73]</sup> Additional sources contend that TM and its movement are not a cult.<sup>[74][75][76][77]</sup> Participants in TM programs are not required to adopt a belief system; it is practiced by atheists, agnostics and people from a variety of religious affiliations.<sup>[78][79][80][81]</sup> The organization has also been criticized as well as praised for its public presentation and marketing techniques throughout its 50-year history

## Health effects

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The first studies of the health effects of Transcendental Meditation appeared in the early 1970s.<sup>[82]</sup> Robert Keith Wallace, the founding president of Maharishi University of Management, published a study in Science in 1970 reporting that TM induced distinct physiologic changes and a novel state of consciousness in practitioners.<sup>[83]</sup> In contrast, a 1976 study by independent researchers found that TM was biochemically similar to sitting with one's eyes closed.<sup>[84]</sup> A second 1976 study of five subjects found that TM practitioners spent much of their meditation time napping rather than in the unique "wakeful hypometabolic state" described by Wallace.<sup>[85]</sup> By 2004 the US government had given more than \$20 million to Maharishi University of Management to study the effect of meditation on health.<sup>[86]</sup>

It is not possible to say whether meditation has any effect on health, as the research is of poor quality,<sup>[12][13]</sup> and is marred by a high risk for bias due to the connection of researchers to the TM organization and by the selection of subjects with a favorable opinion of TM.<sup>[87][88][89]</sup> Most independent systematic reviews have not found health benefits for TM exceeding those produced by other relaxation techniques or health education.<sup>[12][90][91]</sup> A 2013 statement from the American Heart Association said that TM could be considered as a treatment for hypertension, although other interventions such as exercise and device-guided breathing were more effective and better supported by clinical evidence.<sup>[92]</sup> A 2014 systematic review and meta-analysis funded by the U.S. Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality found no evidence that mantra meditation programs such as TM were effective in reducing psychological stress or improving well-being.<sup>[93][94]</sup> A 2015 systematic review and meta-analysis found that TM may effectively reduce blood pressure compared to a control groups, although the underlying studies may have been biased and further studies with better designs are needed to confirm these results.<sup>[95]</sup> A 2014 Cochrane review found that it was impossible to draw any conclusions about whether TM is effective in preventing cardiovascular disease as the scientific literature on TM was limited and at "serious risk of bias".<sup>[96]</sup>

## Maharishi Effect

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In the 1960s, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi described a paranormal effect claiming a significant number of individuals (1% of the people in a given area) practicing the Transcendental Meditation technique (TM) could have an effect on the local environment.<sup>[97]</sup> This hypothetical influence was later termed the Maharishi Effect. With the introduction of the TM-Sidhi program in 1976, the Maharishi proposed that the square root of one percent of the population practicing the TM-Sidhi program, together at the same time and in the same place, would increase "life-supporting trends". This was referred to as the "Extended Maharishi Effect".<sup>[98][99]</sup> Evidence, which TM practitioners<sup>[100]</sup> believe supports the existence of the effect, has been said to lack a causal basis.<sup>[101]</sup> The evidence was said to result from cherry-picked data<sup>[102]</sup> and the credulity of believers.<sup>[101][103]</sup>

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## External links

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- Official website
  - Transcendental Meditation at Curlie (based on DMOZ)
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# Transcendental Meditation technique

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The **Transcendental Meditation technique** or **TM** is a form of silent mantra meditation,<sup>[1]</sup> developed by Maharishi Mahesh Yogi. The meditation practice involves the use of a mantra and is practiced for 15–20 minutes twice per day while sitting with one's eyes closed.<sup>[2][3]</sup> It is one of the most-widely practiced,<sup>[4][5][6]</sup> and among the most widely researched meditation techniques,<sup>[7]</sup> with over 340 peer-reviewed studies published.<sup>[8]:p 14</sup><sup>[9]</sup> Beginning in 1965, the Transcendental Meditation technique has been incorporated into schools, universities, corporations, and prison programs in the USA, Latin America, Europe, and India. In 1977, a U.S. district court ruled that a curriculum in TM and the Science of Creative Intelligence (SCI) being taught in some New Jersey schools was religious in nature and in violation of the First Amendment.<sup>[10]</sup> However, the technique has since been included in a number of educational and social programs around the world.<sup>[11]</sup>

The technique has been described as both religious and non-religious, as an aspect of a new religious movement, as rooted in Hinduism,<sup>[12]:p 188</sup><sup>[13]</sup> and as a non-religious practice for self-development.<sup>[8]:p 4</sup><sup>[14][15]</sup> Over its 50-year history the technique has had high visibility in the mass media and effective global propagation, and used celebrity and scientific endorsements as a marketing tool. Advanced courses supplement the TM technique and include an advanced meditation called the TM-Sidhi program. In 1970 the Science of Creative Intelligence, described as "modern science with ancient Vedic science",<sup>[16]</sup> became the theoretical basis for the Transcendental Meditation technique.<sup>[17]</sup> The Science of Creative Intelligence is pseudoscience.<sup>[18]</sup>

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# Practice

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The technique is recommended for 20 minutes twice per day.<sup>[19]</sup> According to the Maharishi, "bubbles of thought are produced in a stream one after the other", and the Transcendental Meditation technique consists of experiencing a "proper thought" in its more subtle states "until its subtlest state is experienced and transcended".<sup>[20][21]:pp 46–52</sup> Because it is mantra based, the technique "ostensibly meets the working definition of a concentration practice"; however, the TM organization says that "focused attention" is not prescribed, and that the "aim is an *[sic]* unified and open attentional stance".<sup>[22]</sup> Other authors describe the technique as an easy, natural technique or process,<sup>[23][24]:340–341[25]</sup> and a "wakeful hypometabolic physiologic state".<sup>[26]</sup> Practice of the technique includes a process called "unstressing" which combines "effortless relaxation with spontaneous imagery and emotion". TM teachers caution their students not to be alarmed by random thoughts and to "attend" to the mantra.<sup>[27]</sup> Scottish chess grandmaster Jonathan Rowson has said that his TM practice gives "a feeling of serenity, energy and balance", but does not provide "any powerful insight into your own mind". Laura Tenant, a reporter for *The Independent*, said that her TM experience includes going "to a place which was neither wakefulness, sleeping or dreaming", and becoming "detached from my physical self".<sup>[28]</sup> Worldwide, four to ten million people are reported to be practitioners.<sup>[29]</sup>

## Mantra

The TM technique consists of silently repeating a mantra with "gentle effortlessness" while sitting comfortably with eyes closed and without assuming any special yoga position.<sup>[24][30]</sup> The mantra is said to be a vehicle that allows the individual's attention to travel naturally to a less active, quieter style of mental functioning.<sup>[8]:pp 16–20[31][32]</sup> TM meditators are instructed to keep their mantra secret<sup>[24]</sup> to ensure maximum results ("speaking it aloud, apparently defeats the purpose"),<sup>[33]</sup> to avoid confusion in the mind of the meditators,<sup>[20]</sup> and as a "protection against inaccurate teaching".<sup>[34][35]</sup>

## Selection

The Maharishi is reported to have standardized and "mechanized" the mantra selection process by using a specific set of mantras and making the selection process "foolproof".<sup>[20][33]</sup> Professor of psychiatry Norman E. Rosenthal writes that during the training given by a certified TM teacher, "each student is assigned a specific mantra or sound, with instructions on its proper use".<sup>[8]</sup> The Maharishi said that the selection of a proper thought or mantra "becomes increasingly important when we consider that the power of thought increases when the thought is appreciated in its infant stages of development".<sup>[21]:p 51[36]</sup> He said that mantras chosen for initiates should "resonate to the pulse of his thought and as it resonates, create an increasingly soothing influence",<sup>[37]</sup> and that the chosen mantra's vibrations "harmonize" with the meditator, and suits their "nature and way of life".<sup>[38][39]</sup> TM students are therefore given a "specially suited mantra".<sup>[12]:p 188[40]</sup> Author George D. Chryssides writes that according to the Maharishi, "using just any mantra can be dangerous"; the mantras for "householders" and for recluses differ. The Transcendental Meditation mantras are appropriate mantras for householders, while most mantras commonly found in books, such as "Om", are mantras for recluses and "can cause a person to withdraw from life".<sup>[41][42][43]</sup>

Former TM teacher and author Lola Williamson reports that she told her TM students that their mantra was chosen for them based on their personal interview,<sup>[44]</sup> while sociologist Roy Wallis, religious scholar J. Gordon Melton and Bainbridge write that the mantras are assigned by age and gender.<sup>[12][45][46][47][48][49]</sup> In 1984, 16 mantras<sup>[12][50][51]</sup> were published in *Omni* magazine based on information from "disaffected TM teachers".<sup>[52][53]</sup> According to Chryssides, TM teachers say that the promised results are dependent on a trained Transcendental Meditation teacher choosing the mantra for their student.<sup>[41]</sup>

## Meaning and sound value

In his 1963 book *The Science of Being and Art of Living*, the Maharishi writes that words create waves of vibrations, and the quality of vibration of a mantra should correspond to the vibrational quality of the individual. Likewise, religious studies scholar Thomas Forsthoefel writes, "the theory of mantras is the theory of sound".<sup>[54]</sup> Author William Jefferson writes that the "euphonics" of mantras are important.<sup>[33]</sup> Sociologist Stephen J. Hunt and others say that the mantra used in the Transcendental Meditation

technique "has no meaning", but that "the sound itself" is sacred.<sup>[32][51]</sup> In Kerala, India, in 1955, the Maharishi spoke of mantras in terms of personal deities, and according to religious studies scholar Cynthia Ann Humes, similar references can be found in his later works.<sup>[54]:p 63[55]</sup>

According to authors Peter Russell and Norman Rosenthal, the sounds used in the technique are taken from the ancient Vedic tradition, have "no specific meaning",<sup>[8][56]:pp 49–50</sup> and are selected for their suitability for the individual.<sup>[57]</sup> Nevertheless, the Maharishi mentions that sometimes it is beneficial for the Mantra to be associated with a specific meaning in order to suit one's own private psychological background.<sup>[58]</sup> Author Lola Williamson writes that the bija, or seed mantras, used in TM come from the Tantric, rather than Vedic tradition, and that bija mantras are "traditionally associated with particular deities and used as a form of worship".<sup>[59][60]</sup> According to Needleman, many mantras come from the Vedas or Vedic hymns, which are "the root for all later Hindu scripture",<sup>[20]</sup> while the 1977 court case *Malnak vs. Yogi* accepted the TM mantras as meaningless sounds.<sup>[61]</sup> Likewise, philosophy of science scholar and former Maharishi International University professor Jonathan Shear writes in his book *The Experience of Meditation: Experts Introduce the Major Traditions* that the mantras used in the TM technique are independent of meaning associated with any language, and are used for their mental sound value alone.<sup>[62]</sup> Fred Travis of the Maharishi University of Management writes in a 2009 article published in the *International Journal of Psychophysiology* that "unlike most mantra meditations, any possible meaning of the mantra is not part of Transcendental Meditation practice".<sup>[63]</sup>

## Course descriptions

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The Transcendental Meditation technique is taught in a standardized seven-step course over six days by a certified TM teacher.<sup>[5]:148–149[24][56]:p 134[64][65][66]</sup> Except for a requirement to refrain from using non-prescription drugs for 15 days before learning TM,<sup>[20][67]</sup> all who want to learn are taught provided they can pay the course fee, which is \$960 for adults and \$480 for students.<sup>[68]</sup> The technique is taught via private and group instruction by a TM teacher trained to instruct students and provide follow up.<sup>[8]</sup> Instruction is given on separate days, beginning with a one-hour "introductory lecture" intended to prepare the student for subsequent steps.<sup>[24]</sup> The lecture discusses mind potential, social relationships, health, and "promoting inner and outer peace". The second step is a 45 minute "preparatory lecture", whose topic is the theory of the practice, its origins and its relationship to other types of meditation.<sup>[24][65][69]</sup> This is followed by the third step: a private, ten-minute, personal interview, allowing the TM teacher to get acquainted with the student and answer questions.<sup>[8][65][70]</sup>

According to the TM web site, the personal instruction session takes 1–2 hours,<sup>[69]</sup> and students are required to bring a clean handkerchief, some flowers and fruit, and their course fee.<sup>[12]</sup> The initiation begins with a short puja ceremony performed by the teacher. The stated purpose of the ceremony is to show honor and gratitude to the lineage of TM "masters",<sup>[12][71]</sup> or "Holy Tradition"<sup>[72]</sup> that is listed in the Maharishi's translation and commentary of the Bhagavad-Gita.<sup>[73]</sup> It is regarded as putting students in the right frame of mind to receive the mantra.<sup>[44]</sup> The ceremony is conducted in a private room with a "little" white altar containing incense, camphor, rice, flowers and a picture of Maharishi's teacher, Guru Dev.<sup>[44][74]</sup> The initiate observes passively as the teacher recites a text in Sanskrit.<sup>[72]</sup> After the ceremony, the "meditators" are "invited to bow", receive their mantra and begin to meditate.<sup>[39][44][74][75]</sup>

On the day after the personal instruction session, the student begins a series of three 90 to 120 minute "teaching sessions", held on three consecutive days, called "three days of checking".<sup>[5][8]</sup> Their stated purpose is to "verify the correctness of the practice" and to receive further instruction.<sup>[69]</sup> The first day's checking meeting takes place in a group on the day following personal instruction, and gives information about correct practice based on each student's own experience.<sup>[65]</sup> The second day of checking uses the same group format, and gives more details of the mechanics of the practice and potential results of the practice, based on student experiences.<sup>[65]</sup> The third day of checking focuses on subjective growth and the potential development of higher stages of human consciousness, and outlines the follow-up programs available as part of the course.<sup>[4][5][76][77]</sup> New meditators later return for private follow-up sessions to confirm that they are practicing the technique properly, a process called "personal checking".<sup>[20]</sup> The preferred schedule for follow up classes is 30 minutes, once per week for one month, and once per month thereafter. The purpose of the follow-up, or "checking sessions", is to verify the practice, give an opportunity for one-on-one contact with a TM teacher, and to address any problems or questions.<sup>[8][70]</sup> Course graduates may access a lifetime follow-up program which includes consultations, "refresher courses", advanced lectures and group meditations.<sup>[78][79]</sup> Advanced courses include weekend Residence Courses and the TM-Sidhi program.



According to the TM organization, TM course fees cover "initial training and the lifetime follow-up" program, while helping to "build and maintain TM centers" and schools in India and around the world.<sup>[8]:9[80]</sup> The fees also reportedly provide TM scholarships for special needs groups, as well as grants and scholarships through TM's Maharishi Foundation, a government approved 501(c)(3) non-profit, educational organization.<sup>[8]:p 9[69]</sup> The fees may "vary from country to country", depending on the cost of living,<sup>[8]:pp 9, 216</sup> and has changed periodically during the 50 year period it has been taught.

The Maharishi has drawn criticism from yogis and "stricter Hindus" who have accused him of selling "commercial mantras". At the same time, the Maharishi's "promises of better health, stress relief and spiritual enlightenment" have drawn "devotees from all over the world", despite the fees.<sup>[81][82][83]</sup> According to *The Complete Idiot's Guide to World Religions*, by Brandon Toropov and Father Luke Buckles, insistence on fees for TM instruction has caused critics to question the Maharishi's motives; however, "the movement is not, to all appearances, an exploitive one".<sup>[84]</sup>

## TM-Sidhi program

The TM-Sidhi program is a form of meditation introduced by Maharishi Mahesh Yogi in 1975. It is based on, and described as a natural extension of the Transcendental Meditation technique.<sup>[85][86]</sup> The goal of the TM-Sidhi program is to accelerate personal growth and improve mind-body coordination<sup>[87]</sup> by training the mind to think from what the Maharishi has described as a fourth major state of consciousness<sup>[88]</sup> called Transcendental Consciousness.<sup>[89]</sup>

Yogic Flying, a mental-physical exercise of hopping while cross-legged,<sup>[90][91]</sup> is a central aspect of the TM-Sidhi program.<sup>[92]</sup> With the introduction of the TM-Sidhi program in 1976 it was postulated that the square root of one percent of the population - that is, at least 0.01% of people in an area - practicing the TM-Sidhi program, together at the same time and in the same place, would increase "life-supporting trends" in that given area. This was referred to as the "Extended Maharishi Effect".<sup>[92][93]</sup> These effects have been examined in 14 published studies, including a gathering of over 4,000 people in Washington DC in the summer of 1993.<sup>[92][94]</sup> While empirical studies have been published in peer-reviewed academic journals<sup>[95]</sup> this research remains controversial and has been characterized as pseudoscience by skeptic James Randi and others.<sup>[96][97]</sup>

## Teachers

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The Maharishi began training TM teachers in the early 1960s,<sup>[98]</sup> and by 1978, there were 7,000 TM teachers in the U.S.<sup>[99]</sup> In 1985, there were an estimated 10,000 TM teachers worldwide,<sup>[100]</sup> and by 2003, there were 20,000 teachers,<sup>[101]</sup> and a reported 40,000 teachers in 2008.<sup>[102]</sup> Notable individuals trained to teach the Transcendental Meditation technique include Prudence Farrow,<sup>[103]</sup> John Gray,<sup>[104]</sup> Mitch Kapor,<sup>[105]</sup> and Mike Love.<sup>[106]</sup>

The first teacher training course was held in India with 30 participants in 1967 and 200 participants in 1970.<sup>[107]</sup> A four-month teacher training course was also held in the USA that year. The first part was four weeks long and was offered in both Poland, Maine and Humboldt, California with the final three months being held in Estes Park, Colorado. About 300 people completed the training.<sup>[108]</sup> In 1973, the TM teacher training course consisted of three months in-residence.<sup>[109]</sup> A 2007 TM web page and 2009 book, report that the TM teacher training course in more modern times consists of six-months in-residence,<sup>[23]</sup> and includes courses in Maharishi Vedic Science, extended meditation practice and becoming the "custodian" for an "ancient Vedic tradition". Additionally, TM teachers are trained to speak on the Transcendental Meditation program, teach it to others, provide "personal checking" of their student's meditation, create lectures on related topics, organize and lead advanced TM courses and programs.<sup>[110]</sup> The Maharishi trained his teachers to "make logical presentations in language suitable to their audiences", and teachers lead their students through a sequence of predetermined steps.<sup>[108]</sup>

A 2007 research study reported that details of the training and knowledge imparted to teachers are kept private.<sup>[70]</sup> In 1976, Janis Johnson wrote in *The Christian Century* that TM teachers sign a "loyalty-oath employment contract", saying "It is my fortune, Guru Dev, that I have been accepted to serve the Holy Tradition and spread the Light of God to all those who need it."<sup>[72]</sup> Author William Bainbridge writes that a section of a training bulletin for TM teachers called "Explanations of the Invocation" draws a "connection to Brahma, the Lord of Creation".<sup>[12]</sup> A 1993 article in the *Ottawa Citizen* reported a partial translation of the puja as "Whosoever

remembers the lotus-eyed Lord gains inner and outer purity. To Lord Naryan, to Lotus-born Brahman the creator, to Vaishista, to Shakti, to Shankaracharya the emancipator, hailed as Krishna, to the Lord I bow down and down again. At whose door the whole galaxy of gods pray for perfection day and night<sup>[111]</sup>

## Research

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Scientists have been conducting Transcendental Meditation (TM) research since the late 1960s and hundreds of studies have been published.<sup>[8]:14[112][113]</sup> The Transcendental Meditation technique is a specific form of mantra meditation<sup>[1]</sup> developed by Maharishi Mahesh Yogi and has become one of the most widely researched meditation techniques.<sup>[7][114]</sup> TM research has played a role in the history of mind-body medicine<sup>[115][116]</sup> and helped create a new field of neuroscience.<sup>[117]</sup>

Early studies examined the physiological parameters of the meditation technique. Subsequent research included clinical applications, cognitive effects, mental health, medical costs, and rehabilitation. Beginning in the 1990s, research focused on cardiovascular disease supported by grants from the National Institutes of Health.<sup>[118]</sup> Research reviews of the effects of the Transcendental Meditation technique have yielded results ranging from inconclusive<sup>[119][120][121][122]</sup> to clinically significant.<sup>[123][124][125][126][127]</sup> More research is needed to determine the therapeutic effects of meditation practices and sources vary regarding their assessment of the quality of research. Some cite design limitations and a lack of methodological rigor,<sup>[70][120][128]</sup> while others assert that the quality is improving and that when suitable assessment criteria are applied, scientific evidence supports the therapeutic value of meditation.<sup>[129][130][131]</sup> Reviewers Canter and Ernst assert that some studies have the potential for bias due to the connection of researchers to the TM organization<sup>[132][133]</sup> while TM researchers point to their collaboration with independent researchers and universities as signs of objectivity<sup>[134]</sup>

## Institutional programs

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### In schools and universities

Transcendental Meditation in education (also known as Consciousness-Based Education) is the application of the Transcendental Meditation technique in an educational setting or institution. These educational programs and institutions have been founded in the USA, United Kingdom, Australia, India, Africa and Japan. The Transcendental Meditation technique became popular with students in the 1960s and by the early 1970s centers for the Students International Meditation Society were established at a thousand campuses<sup>[135]</sup> in the USA with similar growth occurring in Germany, Canada and Britain.<sup>[12]:p 188</sup>



Maharishi Centre for Educational Excellence, Bhopal, India

The Maharishi International University was established in 1973 in the USA and began offering accredited, degree programs. In 1977 courses in Transcendental Meditation and the Science of Creative Intelligence (SCI) were legally prohibited from New Jersey (USA) public high schools on religious grounds by virtue of the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment.<sup>[136][137]</sup> This "dismantled" the TM program's use of government funding in U.S. public schools<sup>[54]:pp 63–66</sup> "but did not constitute a negative evaluation of the program itself".<sup>[138]</sup> Since 1979, schools that incorporate the Transcendental Meditation technique using private, non-governmental funding have been reported in the USA, South America, Southeast Asia, Northern Ireland, South Africa and Israel.<sup>[139][140][141]</sup>

A number of educational institutions have been founded by Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, the Transcendental Meditation movement and its supporters. These institutions include several schools offering public and private secondary education in the USA (Maharishi School of the Age of Enlightenment),<sup>[142]</sup> England (Maharishi School),<sup>[143][144]</sup> Australia,<sup>[145][146][147]</sup> South Africa (Maharishi Invincibility School of Management),<sup>[148]</sup> and India (Maharishi Vidya Mandir Schools). Likewise, Maharishi colleges and universities have been established including Maharishi European Research University (Netherlands), Maharishi Institute of Management (India), Maharishi University of Management and Technology (India), Maharishi Institute (South Africa)<sup>[149][150]</sup> and

Maharishi Mahesh Yogi Vedic University (India). According to an article in Newsweek, "critics believe that TM is a repackaged form of Eastern religious philosophy" and opposed its use in public schools<sup>[151][152]</sup> while a member of the Pacific Justice Institute says practicing Transcendental Meditation in public schools with private funding is constitutional.<sup>[153]</sup>

## Corporate programs

Transcendental Meditation has been utilized in corporations, both in the U.S.A and in India, under the auspices of the International Foundation for the Science of Creative Intelligence and the Maharishi Development Corporation. As of 2001, USA companies such as General Motors and IBM were subsidizing the TM course fee for their employees.<sup>[154]</sup> A number of Indian companies provide the TM technique to their managers. These companies include AirTel, Siemens, American Express, SRF Limited, Wipro, Hero Honda, Ranbaxy, Hewlett Packard, BHEL, BPL Group, ESPN Star Sports, Tisco, Eveready, Maruti, Godrej Group and Marico.<sup>[155]</sup> The Sunday Times Herald reports that there are "more than 100 Japanese companies where TM was introduced at induction."<sup>[156]</sup>

## Social programs

The TM technique has been incorporated in a variety of U.S. social programs for criminals, the homeless and war veterans. In 1979, the TM technique was offered to inmates at Folsom prison, San Quentin and the Deuel Vocational Institute. According to a TM representative, meditation has been included at "over 25 prisons and correctional institutions" in the U.S.<sup>[157]</sup>

In Senegal, "more than 11,000 prisoners and 900 correctional officers" in 34 prisons received instruction in the Transcendental Meditation technique between 1985 and 1987, and the wardens at 31 prisons signed a proclamation recommending that TM be offered throughout the entire system.<sup>[8]:pp 193–195[158]</sup> More recently, the TM technique has been introduced to prisoners in the Oregon Correctional System and a research study is underway to record the effects of the program.<sup>[8]</sup> Since the late 1980s the TM technique has been offered as part of the programs at Fundacion Hogares Claret sanctuary for homeless and orphaned children in Medellin, Colombia.<sup>[159]</sup>

In 1996, several judges of the 22nd Judicial Circuit of St Louis, Missouri, began "ordering convicted felons" to attend the Transcendental Meditation course as one of their conditions for parole.<sup>[160]</sup> The program was administered by the non-profit, Enlightened Sentencing Project and received endorsements from Federal Judge Henry Edward Autrey, and other members of the Missouri District, Federal, and Supreme Courts.<sup>[161]</sup>

In 2010, the Doe Fund of New York City began offering the TM technique to its residents, and homeless men were given instruction in the TM technique through an organization called Ready, Willing and Able.<sup>[162][163][164][165]</sup> In 2010, the Superintendent of Prisons announced that the TM technique was being offered to inmates at the Dominica State Prison.<sup>[166]</sup> In 2011, the technique was taught to about 65 individuals at the Children of the Night shelter for teen prostitutes in Los Angeles.<sup>[167][168]</sup> Psychiatry professor Norman E. Rosenthal says that TM is compatible with most "drug treatment approaches" and could be incorporated "into an overall treatment program"<sup>[8]:p 171</sup>

## Military

The TM technique was first employed by the military in 1985, when the US Armed Forces conducted "a small pilot study" on Vietnam veterans.<sup>[169]</sup> The Transcendental Meditation technique was taught to military personnel with post traumatic stress syndrome (PTSD) as part of two research studies conducted at the University of Colorado and Georgetown University in 2010.<sup>[170][171][172][173][174][175]</sup> In 2012, the Department of Veterans Affairs announced that it was "studying the use of transcendental meditation to help returning veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars"<sup>[176]</sup> and the Department of Defense funded a \$2.4 million grant to Maharishi University of Management Research Institute and the San Diego Veterans Administration Medical Center to further investigate the potential effect of the TM technique on PTSD.<sup>[169]</sup> Other initiatives to teach the TM technique to war veterans at risk for PTSD, were underway as of 2010.<sup>[177][178]</sup> The technique has been taught to students at Norwich University, a private military academy as "part of a long-term study" on meditation and military performance.<sup>[179][180]</sup>

# Theoretical concepts

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## Views on consciousness (1963)

In his 1963 book, *The Science Of Being and Art Of Living*, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi says that, over time, through the practice of the TM technique, the conscious mind gains familiarity with deeper levels of the mind, bringing the subconscious mind within the capacity of the conscious mind, resulting in expanded awareness in daily activity. He also teaches that the Transcendental Meditation practitioner transcends all mental activity and experiences the 'source of thought', which is said to be pure silence, 'pure awareness' or 'transcendental Being', 'the ultimate reality of life'.<sup>[21]:pp 44–53[24][31][181]</sup> TM is sometimes self described as a technology of consciousness.<sup>[32]</sup> Pathologist Vimal Patel, says TM has been shown to produce states that are physiologically different from waking, dreaming and sleeping.<sup>[182]</sup> According to author Michael Phelan "The fundamental premise of the psychology of fulfillment is that within every person exists a seemingly inexhaustible center of energy, intelligence, and satisfaction... To the extent that our behavior depends on the degree of energy and intelligence available to us, this center of pure creative intelligence may be described as that resource which gives direction to all that we experience, think and do."<sup>[183]</sup>

According to the Maharishi, there are seven levels of consciousness: (i) waking; (ii) dreaming; (iii) deep sleep; (iv) transcendental consciousness; (v) cosmic consciousness; (vi) God consciousness; and, (vii) unity consciousness.<sup>[184]</sup> The Maharishi says that transcendental consciousness can be experienced through Transcendental Meditation, and that those who meditate diligently could become aware of cosmic consciousness.<sup>[185]</sup> An indication of cosmic consciousness is "ever present wakefulness" that is present even during sleep.<sup>[186]</sup> Research on long-term TM practitioners experiencing what they describe as cosmic consciousness, has identified unique EEG profiles, muscle tone measurements, and REM indicators that suggest physiological parameters for this self described state of consciousness.<sup>[186][187]</sup> However, the Cambridge Handbook of Consciousness notes that it is premature to say that the EEG coherence found in TM is an indication of a higher state of consciousness.<sup>[188]</sup>

## TM and altered states of consciousness

Transcendental Meditation is linked with changes in the states of consciousness of the practitioners. For centuries, mystics and practitioners of meditation have held that people may attain 'higher' states of consciousness through meditation techniques. Transcendental Meditation is sometimes associated with what is called 'a fourth state of consciousness', which is gained through the practice of meditation, and is therefore termed 'higher' and more valuable because repeated experiences presumably enable a person with increased energy, intelligence and satisfaction.<sup>[58]</sup>

Studies involving the link between transcendental meditation and altered states of consciousness have existed since the beginning of the practice itself. Many early studies have reported brain wave patterns not seen in other states of consciousness. One, for instance, studied four Indian meditators who showed prominent alpha-wave activity in their normal resting periods, and a marked increase in the amplitude of their alpha waves during meditation.<sup>[189]</sup> In addition, the Japanese neuropsychiatrists Kasamatsu and Hirrai reported the appearance of waves other than alpha in zen meditators within fifty seconds after the beginning of the meditation period.<sup>[189]</sup>

Bloomfield (1975) links the continuous practice of TM with a 'fourth state of consciousness' which is different from the waking, sleeping, and dreaming states of consciousness. He claims that the psychophysiological state gained during the practice of TM is so unique that it qualified as a fourth major state of consciousness. He noted that the state had characteristic brain waves, level of Oxygen consumption and blood chemistry, suggesting that this state is distinctly different from waking, dreaming, and sleeping, as well as altered states such as hypnosis or autosuggestion.<sup>[58]</sup>

## Science of Creative Intelligence (1971)

In 1961, the Maharishi created the "International Meditation Society for the Science of Creative Intelligence".<sup>[190]</sup> In 1971 the Maharishi inaugurated "Maharishi's Year of Science of Creative Intelligence" and described SCI as the connection of "modern science with ancient Vedic science".<sup>[16]</sup> Author Philip Goldberg describes it as Vedanta philosophy that has been translated into scientific language.<sup>[191]</sup> A series of international symposiums on the Science of Creative Intelligence were held between 1970 and

1973 and were attended by scientists and "leading thinkers", including Buckminster Fuller, Melvin Calvin, a Nobel Prize winner in chemistry, Hans Selye, Marshall McLuhan and Jonas Salk.<sup>[191]</sup> These symposiums were held at universities such as Humboldt State University and University of Massachusetts.<sup>[192][193][194][195]</sup> The following year, the Maharishi developed a World Plan to spread his teaching of SCI around the world.<sup>[195][196]</sup>

The theoretical part of SCI is taught in a 33-lesson video course.<sup>[197]</sup> In the early 1970s the SCI course was offered at more than 25 American universities including Stanford University, Yale, the University of Colorado, the University of Wisconsin, and Oregon State University.<sup>[195][198]:p 125[199]</sup> Until 2009, Maharishi University of Management (MUM) required its undergraduate students to take SCI classes,<sup>[200][201][202][203]</sup> and both MUM and Maharishi European Research University (MERU) in Switzerland have awarded degrees in the field.<sup>[204]</sup> *The Independent* reports that children at Maharishi School learn SCI principles such as "the nature of life is to grow" and "order is present everywhere".<sup>[205]</sup> SCI is reported to be part of the curriculum of TM related lower schools in Iowa, Wheaton, Maryland<sup>[206]</sup> and Skelmersdale, UK.<sup>[207]</sup> In 1975 SCI was used as the call letters for a TM owned television station in San Bernardino, California.<sup>[208]</sup>

The Science of Creative Intelligence is not science.<sup>[18]</sup> Theologian Robert M. Price, writing in the *Creation/Evolution Journal* (the journal of the National Center for Science Education), compares the Science of Creative Intelligence to Creationism.<sup>[209]</sup> Price says instruction in the Transcendental Meditation technique is "never offered without indoctrination into the metaphysics of 'creative intelligence'".<sup>[209]</sup> Skeptic James Randi says SCI has "no scientific characteristics".<sup>[96]</sup> Astrophysicist and skeptic Carl Sagan writes that the "Hindu doctrine" of TM is a pseudoscience.<sup>[97]</sup> Irving Hexham, a professor of religious studies, describes the TM teachings as "pseudoscientific language that masks its religious nature by mythologizing science".<sup>[190]</sup> Sociologists Rodney Stark and William Sims Bainbridge describe the SCI videotapes as largely based on the Bhagavad Gita, and say that they are "laced with parables and metaphysical postulates, rather than anything that can be recognized as conventional science".<sup>[48]</sup> In 1979, the court case *Malnak v Yogi* determined that although SCI/TM is not a theistic religion, it deals with issues of ultimate concern, truth, and other ideas analogous to those in well-recognized religions.<sup>[210]</sup> Maharishi biographer Paul Mason suggests that the scientific terminology used in SCI was developed by the Maharishi as part of a restructuring of his philosophies in terms that would gain greater acceptance and increase the number of people starting the TM technique. He says that this change toward a more academic language was welcomed by many of the Maharishi's American students.<sup>[211]</sup>

## Maharishi effect (1974)

Maharishi Mahesh Yogi claimed that the quality of life would noticeably improve if one percent of the population practiced the Transcendental Meditation technique. This is known as the "Maharishi effect" and according to the Maharishi, it was perceived in 1974 after an analysis of crime statistics in 16 cities.<sup>[21]:329[92][212]</sup> Author Ted Karam claims that there have been numerous studies on the Maharishi effect including a gathering of over 4,000 people in Washington, D.C. in the summer of 1993.<sup>[92]</sup> With the introduction of the TM-Sidhi program including Yogic Flying, the Maharishi proposed that the square root of 1 percent of the population practicing this advanced program together at the same time and in the same place would create benefits in society. This was referred to as the "Extended Maharishi Effect".<sup>[92][93]</sup> The TM organization has linked the fall of the Berlin Wall and a reduction in global terrorism, US inflation and crime rates to the Maharishi effect.<sup>[213]</sup>

The Maharishi effect has been endorsed by the former President of Mozambique Joaquim Chissano.<sup>[214]</sup>

The effect has been examined in 42 scientific studies.<sup>[215]</sup> Critics, such as James Randi have called this research pseudoscience.<sup>[216]</sup> Randi says that he investigated comments made by former Maharishi International University faculty member Robert Rabinoff in 1978. He spoke to the Fairfield Chief of Police who said local crime levels were the same and the regional Agriculture Department who reportedly deemed that farm yields for Jefferson County matched the state average.<sup>[217]</sup>

## Maharishi Vedic Science (1981)

The Maharishi proclaimed 1981 as the Year of Vedic Science.<sup>[21]: 336</sup> Maharishi Vedic Science (MVS) is defined by author Patrick Williams as "a practical, workable Vedic science that is integrated with modern science" and a "scientific approach to human development based on complete knowledge and systematic techniques".<sup>[218]</sup> It is based on the Maharishi's interpretation of ancient



Vedic texts and includes subjective technologies like the Transcendental Meditation technique and the TM-Sidhi program plus programs like Maharishi Sthapatya Veda (MSV) and Maharishi Vedic Astrology (MVA) services which apply Vedic science to day-to-day living.<sup>[219][220]</sup> Vedic science studies the various aspects of life and their relationship to the Veda.

## Characterizations

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Characterizations of the TM technique vary amongst scholars, clergy, practitioners and governments. According to the Maharishi his technique requires no preparation, is simple to do, and can be learned by anyone.<sup>[21]</sup> The technique is described as effortless<sup>[221]</sup> and without contemplation or concentration<sup>[56]:pp 40–42</sup> Author Peter Russell says trying to control the mind is like trying to go to sleep at night, it won't work.<sup>[56]</sup> He says instead, the TM technique utilizes the tendency of the mind to move towards greater satisfaction.<sup>[32][62][63][222]</sup> According to TM advocates, the technique is "purely a mechanical, physiological process", the "two-minute ceremony" invokes no deities, the mantras are "sounds without meaning" and the technique "pre-dates Hinduism by 5,000 years".<sup>[153]</sup> Anthony Campbell, author of the book *Seven States of Consciousness* writes that TM requires no "special circumstances or preparations" and does "not depend upon belief".<sup>[223][224]</sup> A 2011 article in *Details* characterizes the TM technique as a "Hindu meditation practice ["stripped"] of its religious baggage" offered "as a systematic, stress-reducing, creativity-building technique".<sup>[225]</sup> Martin Gardner, a mathematician, has referred to TM as "the Hindu cult".<sup>[226]</sup> According to author R.S. Bajpai, the Maharishi "secularized the TM [sic] by purging it of all the religious rites and rituals and spiritual mysticism".<sup>[227]</sup>

## Religious leaders

Some religious leaders and clergy find TM to be compatible with their religious teachings and beliefs, while others do not.<sup>[228][229][230]</sup> Wayne Teasdale, a Catholic monk, said that TM "is what is called an open or receptive method" that can be described as giving up control and remaining open in an inner sense.<sup>[231]</sup> In 1968, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Michael Ramsey, "came to the support of Maharishi's theory".<sup>[33]</sup> William Jefferson wrote in 1976 that a Jewish Revivalist had called TM "an insidious form of worship" while Trappist monks in Spencer, Massachusetts, had found it useful.<sup>[33]</sup> In 1984, Cardinal Jaime Sin, the Archbishop of Manila wrote a pastoral statement after Ferdinand Marcos, then president of the Philippines, invited more than 1,000 members of the TM movement to Manila, saying that neither the doctrine nor the practice of TM is acceptable to Christians.<sup>[232]</sup> In 2003, the Roman Curia published a warning against mixing eastern meditations, such as TM, with Christian prayer.<sup>[233]</sup> though a 2013 statement suggests that eastern meditations can be useful.<sup>[234]</sup> Clergy who practice the TM technique and find it compatible with their religious beliefs include: Catholic priest Len Dubi;<sup>[235]</sup> Orthodox rabbi Abe Shainberg;<sup>[236]</sup> Irish Jesuit William Johnston;<sup>[237]</sup> Donald Craig Drummon, a Presbyterian minister; Raphael Levine, the emeritus rabbi of Temple De Hirsh Sinai; Placide Gaboury, a Jesuit priest who teaches at the University of Sudbury.<sup>[198]:pp 182–185</sup> Kevin Joyce, a Catholic priest; and Keith Wollard, a United Church minister.<sup>[238]</sup>

## Laypersons

Lay celebrities who have practiced the technique include David Lynch, who was raised a Presbyterian, and Clint Eastwood who says he found "there were no religious aspects",<sup>[33][239]</sup> comedian Andy Kaufman, political commentator and Roman Catholic Andrew Sullivan.<sup>[240][241]</sup> Jerry Seinfeld, who has been practicing the technique for 40 years,<sup>[242]</sup> and Pulitzer Prize winning music critic Tim Page.<sup>[243]</sup> Once asked if TM could substitute for religion, musician George Harrison replied that "It's not a substitute for religion. It is a religion."<sup>[244]</sup> According to John Lennon, "You can make it with meditation if you're a Christian, a Mohammedan or a Jew. You just add meditation to whatever religion you've got."<sup>[245]</sup>

## Scholars

The technique has been variously described by sociologists and religious scholars as religious and non-religious.<sup>[246]</sup> Its adherents says it is a non-religious, "scientific strategy", yet it appears to have "spiritual elements" such as the puja ceremony performed during the TM instruction.<sup>[32]</sup> Religious studies scholar Eugene V. Gallagher writes that, "practitioners describe TM as a science rather than a religious discipline", but its "principles were clearly derived from Hindu practice".<sup>[247]</sup>

In the book *Cults and new religious movements*, author Roy Wallis characterizes TM as a "world affirming new religion" that "lacks most of the features traditionally associated with religion".<sup>[248]</sup> Liebler and Moss write that "unlike some forms of meditation, the TM technique does not require adherence to any belief system".<sup>[249]</sup> Religious studies scholars Michael Phelan, James R. Lewis and Tamar Gablinger say that TM participants "may meditate for relaxation, but otherwise have no contact with TM", and that TM "attracts a large number of people with low levels of commitment around a much smaller group of highly committed followers."<sup>[31]</sup> <sup>[160]</sup><sup>[250]</sup> Moreover, Phelan writes that TM is "being opposed by many religious groups who believe that it is a religious practice", and that "the TM objectives and methods are congruous with the criteria of revitalization movements [as] defined by Anthony F.C. Wallace ... whose goal is to create a better culture."<sup>[31]</sup> Charles H. Lippy writes that earlier spiritual interest in the technique faded in the 1970s, and "it became a practical technique ... that anyone could employ without abandoning their religious identification."<sup>[251]</sup>

On the other hand, Bainbridge finds TM to be a "... highly simplified form of Hinduism, adapted for Westerners who did not possess the cultural background to accept the full panoply of Hindu beliefs, symbols, and practices",<sup>[12]</sup><sup>[252]</sup> and describes the TM puja ceremony as "... in essence, a religious initiation ceremony".<sup>[12]</sup> Metropolitan Maximos of Pittsburgh of the Greek Orthodox Church describes TM as "a new version of Hindu Yoga" based on "pagan pseudo-worship and deification of a common mortal, Guru Dev".<sup>[13]</sup>

In the book *Cults and new religions*, Cowan and Bromley write that TM is presented to the public as a meditation practice that has been validated by science, but is not a religious practice nor is it affiliated with a religious tradition. They say that "although there are some dedicated followers of TM who devote most or all of their time to furthering the practice of Transcendental Meditation in late modern society, the vast majority of those who practice do so on their own, often as part of what has been loosely described as the New Age Movement."<sup>[253]</sup> They say that most scholars view TM as having elements of both therapy and religion, but that it "has no designated scripture, no set of doctrinal requirements, no ongoing worship activity, and no discernible community of believers." They also say that Maharishi did not claim to have special divine revelation or supernatural personal qualities.<sup>[254]</sup><sup>[255]</sup>

George D. Chryssides and Margaret Z. Wilkins write in *A reader in new religious movements* that TM and other new religious movements have been criticized for "surreptitiously smuggling in forms of Eastern religion under the guise of some seemingly innocuous technique of self improvement or health promotion".<sup>[256]</sup> Chryssides went on to say in *Exploring new religions* that although one can identify the yogi's Hindu background, Hindu lineage, mantras and initiation ceremony, TM is unlike religion in its "key elements": "there is no public worship, no code of ethics, no scriptures to be studied, and no rites of passage that are observed, such as dietary laws, giving to the poor, or pilgrimages."<sup>[14]</sup> Psychiatry professor Norman E. Rosenthal, author of *Transcendence: Healing and Transformation Through Transcendental Meditation*, wrote that "Maharishi extracted the TM technique from its religious context and distilled it to its essence, which he believed could be of value to people of all creeds."<sup>[9]:p 4</sup>

## Government

In 1968, the yogi conducted a one-hour meeting with Secretary General of the United Nations U Thant. In the 1970s, courses in the TM technique were conducted at 47 military installations around the world (including eight in the U.S.), with 150 enrolling in the course at the West Point military academy. The TM technique was also taught at five U.S. federal prisons, and three in Germany and Canada. During this period, ten U.S. senators and more than 100 Congressional staff members learned the technique.<sup>[33]</sup> In 1972, the Maharishi met with the Governor of Illinois (Daniel Walker) and received a standing ovation when he addressed the Illinois state legislature before they passed a resolution characterizing Maharishi's Science of Creative Intelligence as useful for Illinois public schools.<sup>[257]</sup><sup>[258]</sup> In 1974, TM was cited in two Congressional records regarding the SCI course being offered at 30 American universities and the technique being "in use" in some American prisons, mental institutions and drug rehabilitation centers.<sup>[198]</sup>

In 1975, the yogi met with Pierre Trudeau to discuss "the possibility of structuring an ideal society" through TM,<sup>[259]</sup><sup>[260]</sup><sup>[261]</sup> In 1977 a U.S. district court in New Jersey held that a curriculum comprising the Science of Creative Intelligence and TM was religious in nature (*Malnak v Yogi*). The decision was appealed and in 1979 the 3rd Circuit opinion affirmed the decision and held that although SCI/TM is not a theistic religion, it deals with issues of ultimate concern, truth, and other ideas analogous to those of well-recognized religions and it therefore violated the Establishment Clause. Beginning in 1979 the German government released a number of booklets about problems arising for seven new religious movements in Germany, with the German term for these organizations variously translated as "psychogroups" and "psychotherapy groups". These organizations, including TM, filed

lawsuits trying to block the reports. The courts ruled that the booklets must only include factual information and exclude speculation, rumors, and matters that are unclear, and the booklets were re-released primarily containing quotations from materials of the organizations themselves.<sup>[262][263][264]</sup> In 1996 a commission appointed by the German government concluded that new religious movements and "psychotherapy groups" did not present any danger to the state or to society.<sup>[264]</sup> In 1987, an Israeli government report defined TM as a "cult group ... targeted by anti-cult activists".<sup>[265][266]</sup> The 1995 report of the Parliamentary Commission on Cults in France included Transcendental Meditation in its list of cults.<sup>[267]</sup> The U.S. government has characterized the Transcendental Meditation technique as worthy of research and has awarded more than \$25 million in funding from different branches of the National Institutes of Health for scientific analysis of the effects of TM on high blood pressure.<sup>[22][268][269]</sup> The U.S. United States Department of Veterans Affairs sees it as a potential tool for the treatment of post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, and commenced research on the technique (and two other meditation systems) in 2012.<sup>[270][271]</sup> According to Patrick Gresham Williams, "the government will pay" for any U.S. veteran to learn TM if it is prescribed by a Veterans Administration medical doctor.<sup>[218]</sup>

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