

INDIA'S TIMELESS VEDIC HERITAGE: MEETING THE CHALLENGES OF OUR MODERN AGE

By Dr. John Hagelin

About the Author

John Hagelin, Ph.D., is a world-renowned quantum physicist, author, educator, and public policy expert.

Dr. Hagelin received his A.B. summa cum laude from Dartmouth College and his M.A. and Ph.D. from Harvard University, and conducted pioneering research at CERN (the European Center for Particle Physics) and SLAC (the Stanford Linear Accelerator Center). His scientific contributions in the fields of electroweak unification, grand unification, supersymmetry and cosmology include some of the most cited references in the physical sciences. He is also responsible for the development of a highly successful Grand Unified Field Theory based on the Superstring. Dr. Hagelin was named winner of the prestigious Kilby Award, which recognized him as "a scientist in the tradition of Einstein, Jeans, Bohr and Eddington."

Dr. Hagelin is currently Director of the Institute of Science, Technology and Public Policy, a leading science and technology think tank at Maharishi University of Management, and International Director of the Global Union of Scientists for Peace, an organization of leading scientists dedicated to ending nuclear proliferation and establishing lasting world peace.

At this time, when stress and stress-related illness have reached epidemic proportions, and the demand for creativity and peak performance is higher than ever, it is deeply satisfying to see how India's cherished meditation tradition is filling a vast void—making its way into boardrooms, classrooms, and medical practice.

Among such practices, one in particular has entered America's mainstream: Transcendental Meditation—the most widely practiced, extensively researched, and broadly prescribed mental technique for the prevention of disease, promotion of health, and development of full human potential. This technique is at once ultramodern and ancient: it has been revived from the timeless Vedic wisdom by the world's foremost scientist of consciousness and renowned Vedic scholar, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, who introduced Transcendental Meditation to the world over 50 years ago.

Transcendental Meditation is a unique technique, taught through personal instruction by a qualified teacher, and is practiced for 20 minutes twice a day sitting comfortably with the eyes closed. The technique has been learned by over 5 million people of all ages, religions and walks of life.

The benefits are well documented. More than 600 studies, many funded by the US Government's National Institutes of Health, have been conducted at more than 250 independent universities and research institutes and published in leading peer-reviewed academic journals. These studies have confirmed the wide-ranging mental, physiological and even sociological benefits of this simple, effortless practice. Such documented benefits include reduced cardiovascular disease—the world's number one killer—reduced ADHD and other stress-related learning disorders in children, and development of full brain potential. A proper scientific understanding of these wide-ranging results is only now possible, based upon the most advanced scientific discoveries of quantum physics and neuroscience.

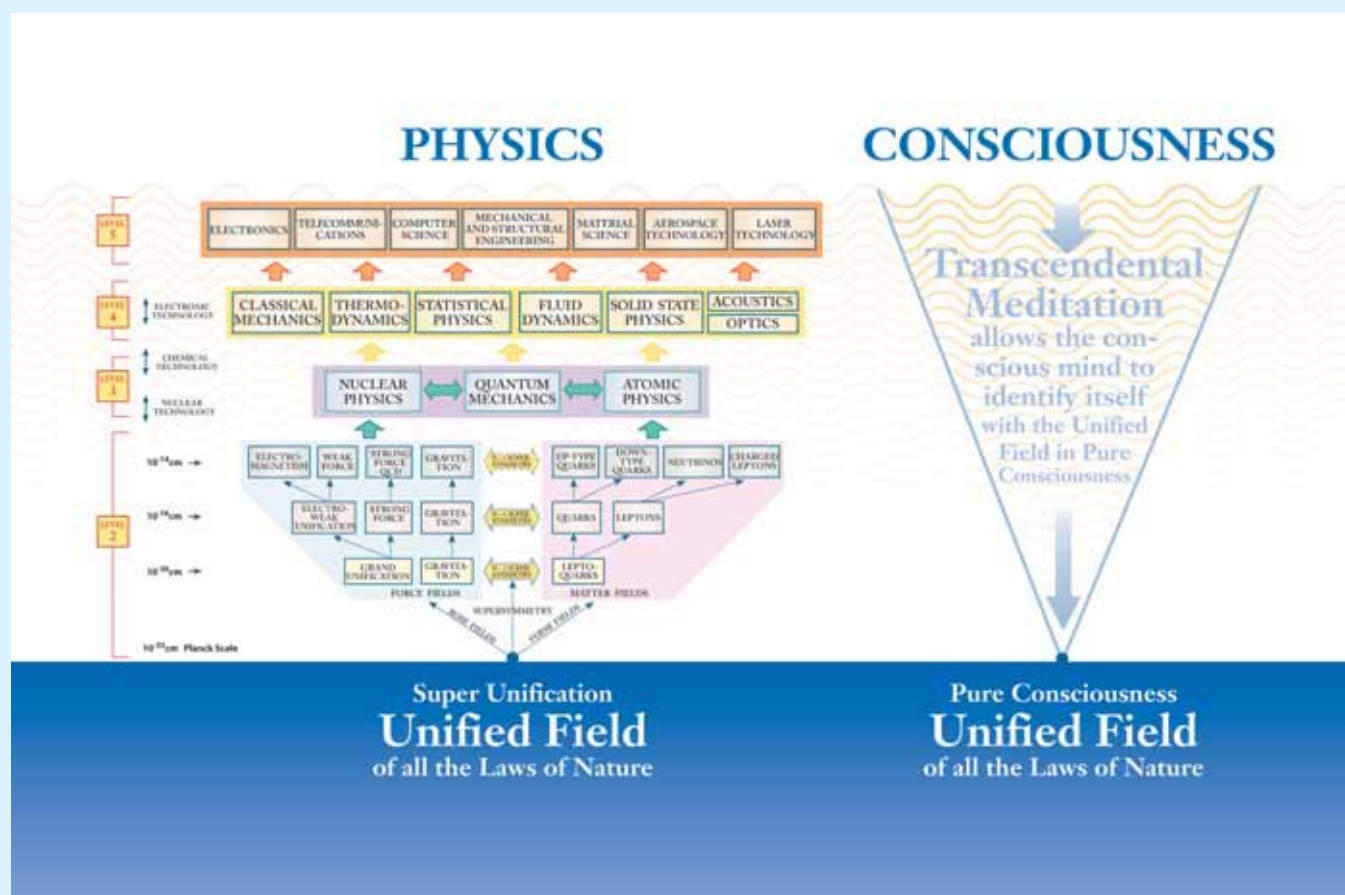


Figure 1: Unified Field and Consciousness
 On the left side, this chart shows the hierarchical structure of the laws of nature as revealed by modern science. At the top of the chart are the diversified levels of natural law at macroscopic, observable scales. Underlying these are progressively deeper levels of natural law at the molecular, atomic, nuclear, and subnuclear levels, extending to electroweak unification, grand unification, and super unification—the discovery of the Unified Field at the foundation of the chart.

On the right, the chart shows the hierarchical structure of human consciousness, from the diversified nature of superficial awareness at the top of the chart to progressively more silent, unified states of awareness at deeper levels of the chart—culminating in the direct experience of the Unified Field in the meditative state brought about by Transcendental Meditation.

A series of Nobel-Prize-winning discoveries during the past quarter century have revealed a universal field of intelligence at the basis of mind and matter—the Unified Field or “heterotic superstring.” This discovery is the fulfillment of Einstein’s lifelong dream to locate the unified source of the diversified universe—the fountainhead of all the laws of Nature. (Please see figure 1 on previous page) During the meditative state, which is very easily and systematically achieved during Transcendental Meditation, human awareness opens to the direct experience of the Unified Field. This fundamental experience of unity has since been identified as a fourth major state of consciousness, distinct from waking, dreaming, and deep sleep.

Physiologically, the experience is characterized by a state of profound rest—much deeper than sleep—while the mind remains restfully alert. This state of restful alertness effectively dissolves accumulated stress and fatigue and thereby prevents a wide range of stress-related disorders—which account for 80 percent of all disorders.

Mentally, this experience is characterized by a highly ordered state of brain functioning, which produces greatly increased creativity and intelligence. In normal waking consciousness, the electrical activity of the brain is extremely fragmented. The firing of neurons in different areas of the brain is uncoordinated, with only small pockets of relative coherence engaged in specific cognitive processing. During Transcendental Meditation, as the awareness expands, these pockets of coherence spread and merge until the entire brain functions in a highly integrated and coordinated fashion. (Please see Picture 1) With regular practice, this orderly brain functioning becomes an increasingly stable feature of the brain.

This coherent brain functioning is scientifically correlated with increased intelligence (IQ) and creativity, and improved learning ability (short-term and long-term memory), academic performance, moral reasoning, psychological stability, emotional maturity, alertness, and reaction time. This is particularly significant in light of the previous widespread misconception that intelligence freezes at adolescence and that further improvements are not possible.

Of even greater importance, this integrated brain functioning includes the critical prefrontal cortex, located behind the forehead. The prefrontal cortex is called the “higher brain”

*Picture 1: Meditating Student
Research on the neurophysiology of enlightenment—higher states of consciousness. Brain scientist Fred Travis, Ph.D., examines the brain functioning of a volunteer student meditator at Maharishi University of Management.*



because it is responsible for all of our higher “human” attributes, such as moral reasoning, planning, decision-making, judgment, and sense of self. One of the great shortfalls of conventional education is that it fails to systematically develop the higher brain, leading to a general lack of executive functioning, leadership, and moral reasoning in the broader population. Moreover, under stress the prefrontal cortex shuts down, and under chronic stress it shuts down chronically. It is vitally important for success in life to fully engage and develop the total brain, including the prefrontal cortex. (Please see Figure 2)

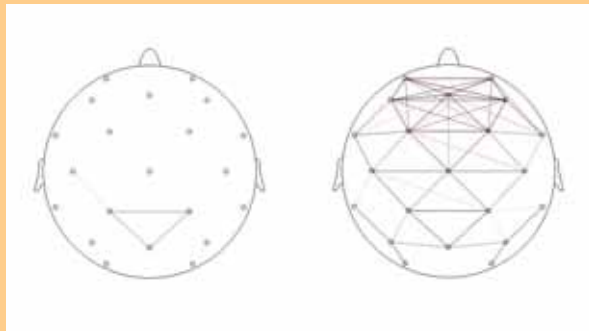


Figure 2: Increased Brain Coherence through Transcendental Meditation

This chart contrasts the electrophysiology (EEG) of a subject experiencing ordinary waking consciousness (left) with the EEG of a subject practicing Transcendental Meditation (right). The greater number of bars connecting distant regions of the scalp indicate a highly correlated state of electrophysiological functioning (“global EEG coherence”) in the meditative state. Global EEG coherence is the basis of increased IQ, creativity, learning ability, academic performance, psychological stability, emotional maturity, and moral reasoning.

Transcendental Meditation achieves this by reducing stress and its deleterious effects on brain functioning, and furthermore, by directly engaging the prefrontal cortex and integrating it with the entire brain.

The implications of these findings cannot be overstated. Such total brain development is the key to executive success, academic achievement, and a happy, healthy family life. This important message was delivered to over 2000 Indian executives who attended the TiEcon national conference held last year in Santa Clara, California.

Building upon decades of research on such individual benefits comes research on the positive impact of Transcendental Meditation on society as a whole. It is not surprising that a technique that creates more peaceful, creative, and dynamic individuals would contribute to a more peaceful, creative, and dynamic society. What is surprising is the degree to which merely a few thousand meditating individuals can positively affect trends throughout society. Researchers have found a remarkable “spillover” effect, in which the calming, stress-reducing, creativity-enhancing power of Transcendental Meditation influences non-meditators in the social environment—especially when this meditation is practiced in groups.

The extraordinary power of such meditating groups in promoting positive social trends, while reducing crime, social violence, and even terrorism born of acute societal stress, has been well established through more than 50 peer-reviewed scientific studies.

Taking these studies to a new level, right now, in America’s heartland, in Maharishi Vedic City, Iowa, and nearby Maharishi University of Management, a group of 2000 experts

are practicing Transcendental Meditation and its advanced programs, including the peace-promoting Yogic Flying technique, to create an intensified influence of peace and positivity in US national consciousness. Now entering its second year, this \$12- million-a-year demonstration project, called the Invincible America Assembly, constitutes the largest sustained and rigorously controlled experiment in the history of social science. (Please see Picture 2)



Picture 2: Golden Dome

Two thousand advanced practitioners of Transcendental Meditation gather to create coherence in US national consciousness as part of the ongoing Invincible America Assembly.

As predicted in advance, the positive, coherent influence of the group is having a marked impact on national consciousness. It has bolstered the national mood and increased investor and consumer confidence, which has, in turn, strengthened the economy and

driven the markets to unprecedented heights. Simultaneously, the US government has responded with more peaceful initiatives in North Korea, the Middle East, and other critical hotspots throughout the world. (See www.InvincibleDefense.org.)

It is utterly remarkable to see how the widely misunderstood and nearly forgotten tradition of ancient India—the Vedic science and technologies of consciousness—has entered the American mainstream to powerfully enhance human health and brain potential and to successfully address the widespread challenges of our modern age.

For more information, please contact:

Dr. John Hagelin, c/o Julia Busch, Institute of Science, Technology and Public Policy, Maharishi University of Management, Fairfield, IA, 52556.

Phone: 800-326-0867

www.istpp.org, Email: istpp@mum.edu

or to learn Transcendental Meditation, please contact:

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