

***The Clash: of Transcendental Meditation and Counselling Psychology* by Peter Lourdes, Siliguri, Salesian College Publication, 2016, x + 205 pages, Rs 500.00, ISBN: 9789382216148.**

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The Clash: Of Transcendental Meditation and Counselling Psychology is the abridged version of the PhD dissertation of author Peter Lourdes in the year 1978 that found its way into this book, 37 years later. In the words of the author, although the contents of this book may not appeal to the common masses, but it doesn't fail to arouse interest among professionals of Psychology, Clinical Psychology, Counselling Psychology or even Philosophy. The author, being a trained psychotherapist, understands the need and importance of various techniques outside the realm of 'traditional psychology' in the treatment of clients with various psychological/emotional problems. Therein comes the relation between Transcendental Meditation (TM), a form of meditation where the person practising it repeats a 'mantra' (say "OM") continuously, to relax the mind; and Counselling Psychology, a branch of psychology that essentially deals with manifold techniques of advising patients/clients with various psychological problems. Thus, the book explores the challenges faced by Counselling Psychology, when it tries to adopt TM as a modality of treatment; it is about 'the clash' between the conventional ideas of counselling and the Science of Creative Intelligence (SCI) on which TM is based; and all-in-all it is about the dilemma and 'the clash' of the ideas between TM and Counselling Psychology and the successful resolution of that clash.

The author begins the discussion on TM by glorifying it in terms of its number of followers and teachers as well as its various physiological benefits. The fact that TM delves into the depths of human consciousness, which counselling does not; perpetuates its usage in conventional counselling. The discussion of the author regarding the courses of the TM program, its procedures, along with its manifold beneficial effects intrigues the reader about the actual phenomenon of TM; and therefore, it would not be wrong to assume that it may motivate him/her to at least give a thought to its practice, in the very near future. Immediately after this, the author hints at the first signs of 'the clash' when he writes that the achievement of an altered state of consciousness through TM helps an individual in realising the creative patterning of his own psychic energies but this same altered state comes at loggerheads with the conventional counselling techniques that advocates the possession or delving of the mind into an altered state of consciousness as proof of mental illness. Therefore, the very use of TM in counselling becomes questionable in the minds of the readers.

To elucidate the relation between TM and Counselling Psychology as well as to explore the clash between them, the author, very lucidly goes on to explain the very essence of TM. The various analogies used by the author in explaining the process of reaching the root of one's thought by transcending the normal level of consciousness gives the reader ample understanding

of an otherwise complex process. The importance of the 'mantra' and its capabilities to reach the absolute depths of consciousness also intrigues us about its reality.

Just when the reader starts enjoying the benefits of TM, ranging from attaining self-actualisation, to being free of drug addiction and possessing clearer thought; the author starts introducing the opposing assumptions on which TM and Counselling Psychology are based; catapulting the reader back to its 'the clash'. Somewhere the reader feels that TM, with all its benefits is not fit for counselling after all. With its relevance on only a 'portion' of our consciousness and departure from the problem-at-hand, to an altered state of consciousness, TM deviates from conventional counselling that contrastingly believes in 'taking charge' of the situation and 'solving' your own problem. The 'clash' of ideas and assumption could, however, be written in a more lucid language by the author, to aid in its better understanding by the uninitiated.

The author's discourse suddenly turns philosophical when he begins to explain the Science of Creative Intelligence (SCI). In explaining this complex process, the author draws an analogy of a seed, given by the Maharishi, the one who propounded TM; whereby a tree grows from the absolute hollow of a seed. Similarly, SCI arises from the infinite depths of a person's being and expresses itself in his manifest being. The author tries hard to give some clarity to the actual purpose of life - which is to achieve happiness, by delving deep into one's consciousness and helping in the amalgamation of one's mind, matter and 'being'. In the author's view, TM is what helps to achieve this. When the author mentions about the depths of consciousness, he goes one step further in explaining the seven states of consciousness in SCI. The reader is left in awe when the author explains those seven states in terms of their awareness of the absolute dimension of 'being' and the relative dimension of existence. It is intriguing to the reader that states such as Pure, Cosmic, God and Unity Consciousness exist concurrently with states of sleeping, dreaming and waking. In all, the author emphasises on TM in achieving the highest level of consciousness, i.e. Unity; and reaching the fullest potential of an individual's abilities.

The author in the next instance realises that Counselling Psychology, which is an important aspect of the book, has not been given enough weight-age in its discussion; and therefore, proceeds unto it. According to him, counselling has a very limited view with regard to its belief that man's action and thoughts only affect himself and not the universe in general and that the universe exists without a purpose. The author again highlights 'the clash' between TM and Counselling Psychology, when he mentions that SCI has a completely opposing tendency to Counselling Psychology; whereby man is amalgamated into his cosmos; which is why certain trends in philosophy, neurology and psychology show a movement towards the direction of SCI. The introduction of the 'psi' phenomena (functions at different levels of consciousness), Transpersonal Psychology (focussing on the inner personal experience and the transcending process lying within) and the acceptance of various psychologists of the benefits of TM, have made this phenomenon a revolution in the field of human enhancement and growth; and consequently Counselling Psychology.

The author then returns to his discussion on the manifold benefits of TM, ranging from achieving a mental state of happiness, a more creative level of mental functioning - to achieving

'siddhi', including levitation, invisibility and mastery over the fundamental forces of Nature. Thus, the author gives ample evidence in the form of manifold research findings that highlight the benefits of TM and after careful analysis of these findings he comes to the conclusion that TM "improves physiology, unfolds man's full potential and leads to ideal behaviour". Therefore, the discussion on SCI and Counselling Psychology has revealed to the readers that both need to come together to shun the one-sidedness of the scientific method in Counselling Psychology in understanding human reality and also to compensate for SCI's focus only on the human phenomenon of consciousness.

The author, henceforth, redirects his discussion from the manifold benefits of TM to the practical disadvantages of its research methods. His focus shifts to the similarity between Counselling Psychology and TM, in this regard, stating that research methodology is questionable in both cases, but somewhat acceptable, nevertheless. The viability of both TM and Counselling Psychology depends upon their outcomes and not their research design, contrary to popular belief. The author oscillates between the similarity and the difference of Counselling Psychology and TM. The assumptions on which it is based, the cosmic reality, the manifold levels of consciousness, the concept of 'siddhi'; are contrary to the assumptions of orthodox Counselling Psychology. Therefore, there needs to be a paradigm shift in the formation of hypothesis, keeping in mind the assumptions of the phenomenon of TM.

In his concluding argument, the author tries to explain to the readers the reasons behind a paradigm shift from the conventional science of Counselling Psychology to the metaphysical essence of TM. He goes on to explain the viability of the adoption of TM into the realm of Counselling Psychology, making the counselling process more economically feasible, more self-enlightening and more in consonance with an individual's cosmic consciousness. The author highlights upon the liberation from the materialistic model of conventional science through this adoption and enlightens his readers about the positive effects in both the counsellor and counselee through this process.

Therefore, by focusing on "the clash" between the opposing assumptions of TM and Counselling Psychology, the author finally reaches the goal of his discussion, a successful amalgamation of the two. Through various research findings, the author establishes the benefits of using TM in Counselling Psychology and informs his readers about the same being done in the United States.

Thus, in conclusion the author mentions that adoption of meditation into Counselling Psychology dates back to as early as 1930s, but the study done by him tries to justify this adoption through the outcome studies of TM. Although, in certain parts of the world this adoption becomes tedious, but in general, the world is witnessing a shift towards this adoption, and that too, quite rapidly.