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Maharishi Mahesh Yogi's Insight into Vedanta, the Ultimate Knowledge of Life, and Its Application to Bring World Peace – from Philosophy to Science

Lothar Pirc, Br. Girish Momaya, & Susan Brown¹

Abstract

Vedanta, a brilliantly shining star amongst the galaxy of Vedic Literature, is an integral part of the six Darshan Shastras or the Upangas of the Veda, namely Nyaya, Vaisheshik, Sankhya, Yoga, Karma Mimamsa, and Vedanta. Vedanta deals with the knowledge and experience of the essence of totality of life and a systematic path to the highest evolution possible for mankind.

Vedanta, the Vedic cognition by Vyasa, brings to light Brahman as the ultimate source, course and goal of life and Moksha or enlightenment as the practical path to the highest pinnacle of human evolution. Brahma Sutra of Vyasa starts with the quest of total knowledge of life with the words 'Athato Brahma Jigyasa' and finds its fulfillment in the Mahavakyas of the Vedas, such as 'Aham Brahmasmi', 'Tat Tvam Asi', 'Ayam Atma Brahm' and 'Sarvam Khalu Idam Brahm', and in the aphorisms of the Bhagavad Gita such as 'Esha Brahmi Sthitih.' Vedanta deals with the knowledge and experience of the ultimate truth of life – Brahman, knowing which nothing more remains to be known.

Great sages of India like Adi Shankara, Ramkrishna Paramhansa, Raman Maharishi, and Maharishi Mahesh Yogi realized and lived their lives in Unity Consciousness and complete freedom – a state of Advaita and Moksha expounded by Vedanta. They taught and guided humanity to the path to enlightenment. Maharishi Mahesh Yogi's master Swami Brahmanand Saraswati, who had been the Shankarcharya of Jyotirmath in the Himalayas, was adored as Vedanta Incarnate by Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, eminent Vedic scholar and second President of India.

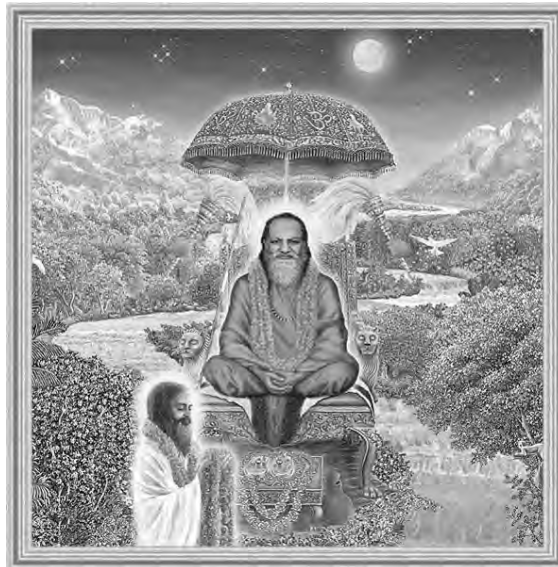
Maharishi Mahesh Yogi has successfully brought the light of Vedanta to the whole world through his teachings and through direct experience of the nature of the unified level of the Self, through his technique of Transcendental Meditation. He showed the world how the invaluable applications of Vedic knowledge and technology could transform the individual lives and transform the world consciousness to happiness, harmony and peace.

¹ *Acknowledgement:* The scientific research sections of this article and the chart summarizing higher states of consciousness are based on an article by Lothar Pirc, Karin Pirc, and Jeremy Fields previously accepted for publication in the *Light on Ayurveda Journal* (in press) (<http://www.loaj.com/index.html>).

Introduction

Vedanta, the ultimate knowledge of life brought to light by the great Veda Vyasa, illuminates the highest value of philosophy as a living reality. Great sages of India, such as Adi Shankara, Ramkrishna Paramhansa, Raman Maharishi, and in our time Maharishi Mahesh Yogi and his master Swami Brahmanand Saraswati, lived their lives in Unity Consciousness, the state of complete freedom described as Advaita and Moksha, and guided humanity on the path to enlightenment.

This paper discusses the global teachings of His Holiness Maharishi Mahesh Yogi in light of the wisdom of Vedanta.



Maharishi brought experience and understanding of enlightenment to the world through the systematic, scientifically authenticated technique of Transcendental Meditation, with its source in the Vedic tradition of India. Maharishi's master, Swami Brahmanand Saraswati – the inspiration and guiding light of all Maharishi's teaching had been the Shankaracharya of Jyotirmath in the Himalayas, and was adored as

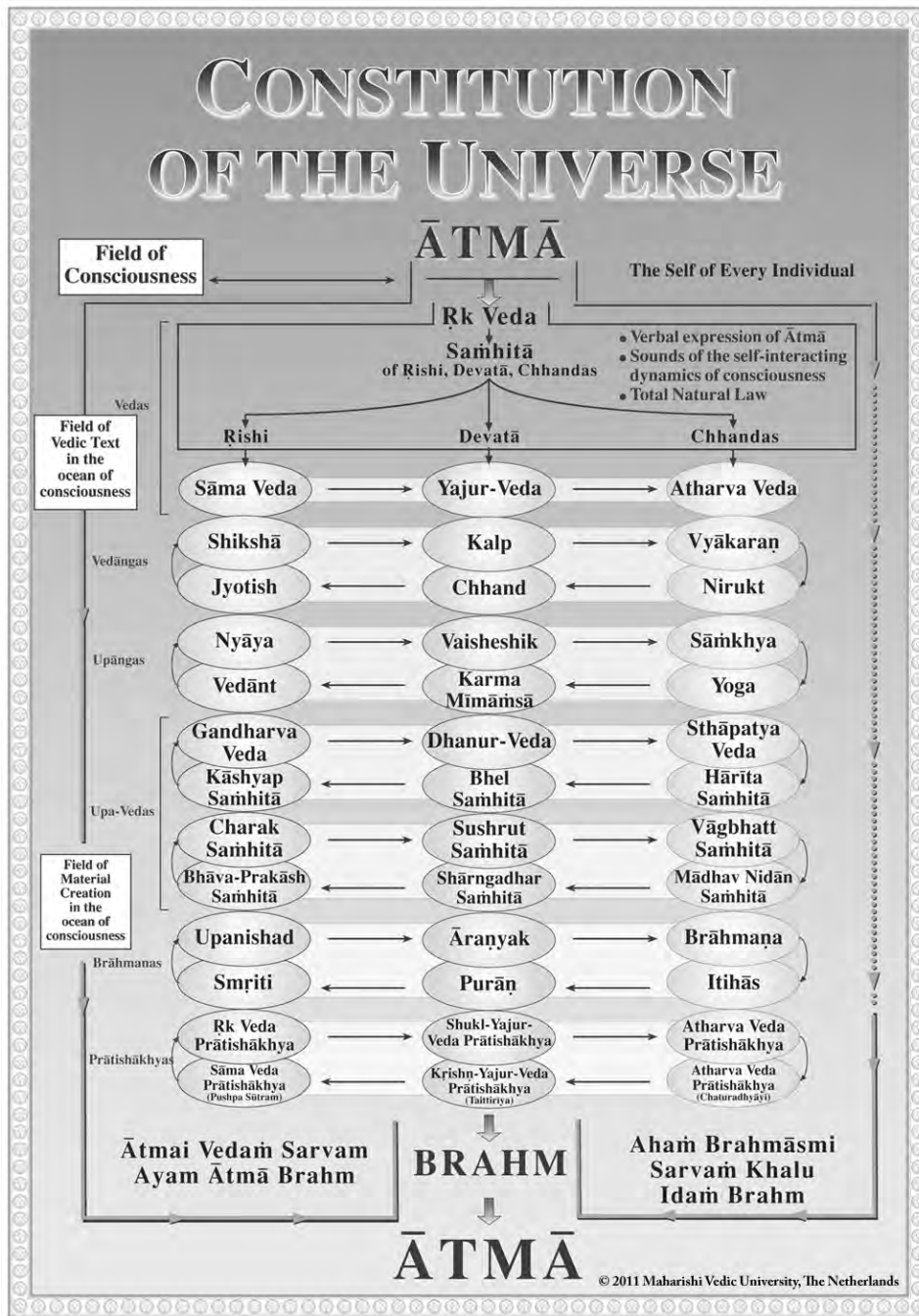
Vedanta Incarnate by Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, eminent Vedic scholar and second President of India.



Through the Transcendental Meditation technique, Maharishi gave millions of people of every culture and nationality the opportunity for direct experience of the unified level of the Self, Atma, the field of Transcendental Consciousness. He demonstrated the universality and naturalness of this experience, regardless of a person's beliefs or level of intellectual understanding, and developed a science of consciousness which brought enlightenment into the arena of systematic research methodologies.

In the vast scope of his teaching, Maharishi worked with Vedic experts to revitalize many traditional fields of knowledge in light of consciousness, demonstrating to the world how the invaluable applications of Vedic knowledge and technology can transform individual life and world consciousness to happiness, harmony and peace.

Forty Branches of Vedic Literature – Constitution of the Universe



To place Vedanta in the holistic context of Maharishi Vedic Science, and to consider the supreme value of direct experience, we will briefly discuss the chart *Constitution of the Universe*. A central theme of Maharishi’s teaching is to relate each part of knowledge to the wholeness of knowledge, and the wholeness of knowledge to the Self of the student. We see this principle applied to Veda and the Vedic Literature in this chart, illustrating each branch of the Vedic Literature as part of an integrated whole, rather than as scattered branches of literature.

In this chart, forty branches of Veda and Vedic Literature are seen emerging from Atma, the Self – the field of consciousness of everyone – and culminating in Brahm,

the ultimate wholeness of the Self that includes the totality of knowledge. This beautifully illustrates Maharishi's description of Veda, as stated on this chart, as the 'verbal expression of Atma', 'the sounds of the self-interacting dynamics of consciousness'. These self-interacting dynamics arise from the nature of consciousness to know itself – the self-referral nature of consciousness – which sets up a relationship, or reverberation, between consciousness as the knower, as the process of knowing, and as the known. In this way Maharishi illustrates the impulses of Veda as subtle 'sounds' within the inner field of consciousness of everyone.

Maharishi analyzes the four Veda and the other 36 branches of the Vedic Literature as unfolding sequentially, illustrated in the chart as moving vertically downwards. Rk Veda, the first expression, is identified as the totality of Natural Law – the *Constitution of the Universe*, the source of all the laws of nature governing the creation and evolution of the entire universe. In the same way that the diverse laws of a nation have their basis in and are unified by the nation's constitution, so the laws of nature have their common source in and gain their organizing power from the total potential of Natural Law in the Samhita, or wholeness, of Rk Veda. For this reason, Rk Veda is shown on the chart as the 'Samhita of Rishi, Devata, and Chhandas' – the togetherness of knower, process of knowing, and known.

Maharishi explains that Rk Veda is available in the field of self-referral which is 'intimately available to everyone in one's own Transcendental Consciousness, the source of all activity, the source of all performance that structures the brain physiology and remains lively within it' (1994, p. 172).

The branches of the Vedic Literature, referred to as the structuring dynamics of Rk Veda, emerge from this Samhita, each characterized by a specific quality of intelligence. In the research of Dr. Tony Nader, M.D., Ph.D. – honoured by Maharishi as Maharaja Adhiraj Rajaraam – each branch of Vedic Literature shown in this chart has been found to have a parallel in the human physiology, both in the quality of intelligence expressed in that aspect of the physiology, and in its structure and function.

It will be seen that this chart is arranged in a series of 'loops', representing the different Veda and branches of Vedic Literature. It is in the 'loop' known as the Upangas, in which Vedanta is located.

The *Constitution of the Universe* chart culminates with four Mahavakyas – great saying from the Upanishads expressing the supreme totality or completeness of

enlightenment. The expressions used in the chart are:

Atmai Vedam Sarvam – All this is Atma. (*Nrisimhottaratapaniya Upanishad* 7)

Ayam Atma Brahm – This Self is Brahman. (*Mandukya Upanishad* 2)

Aham Brahmasmi – I am Totality. (*Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* 1.4.10)

Sarvam Khalu Idam Brahm – All this is Totality. (*Chhandogya Upanishad* 3.14.1)

Maharishi's insight into the Mahavakyas is expressed in a recently published book by Dr. Vernon Katz, who worked with Maharishi on translating and commenting on the Brahma Sutras, the central text of Vedanta². The book records conversations with Maharishi on topics related to the Brahma Sutras – including the Mahavakyas:

the master usually gives the student one of the 'Mahavakyas', or 'great sayings', of the Upanishads, at the appropriate moment to bring about enlightenment . . . I asked Maharishi what difference the bestowal of these sayings could possibly make for Indians, who must have been familiar with them from childhood.

Maharishi replied: 'But when the experience is ripe ... it's a revelation.' When there is no basis of experience the Mahavakyas remain just phrases but when the experience is ripe, to be told 'That thou art' [Tat Tvam Asi]³ – or 'Truly, all this is Brahman' [Sarvam Khalu Idam Brahm], is awe-inspiring. (Katz, 2011, p. 54)

Six Upangas



We will now look more closely at the six Upangas – subordinate (upa) limbs (anga) – or Darshana (as illustrated in the chart). (*Darshana* means sight, or cognition.) These six are illustrated here as a 'loop', moving from Nyaya in the top left and culminating in Vedanta. Each of the Darshana was cognized by a Rishi – Nyaya by the sage Gautama, Vaisheshik by Kanad, Sankhya by Kapil, Yoga by Patanjali, Karma Mimamsa by Jaimini, and Vedanta by the great Veda Vyasa.

Although the Darshana have been viewed as the basis of varying, even opposing, schools of philosophical thought, Maharishi (1967, p. 472) sees them as each

² The translation and commentary are not yet published.

³ *Chhandogya Upanishad* 6.11.

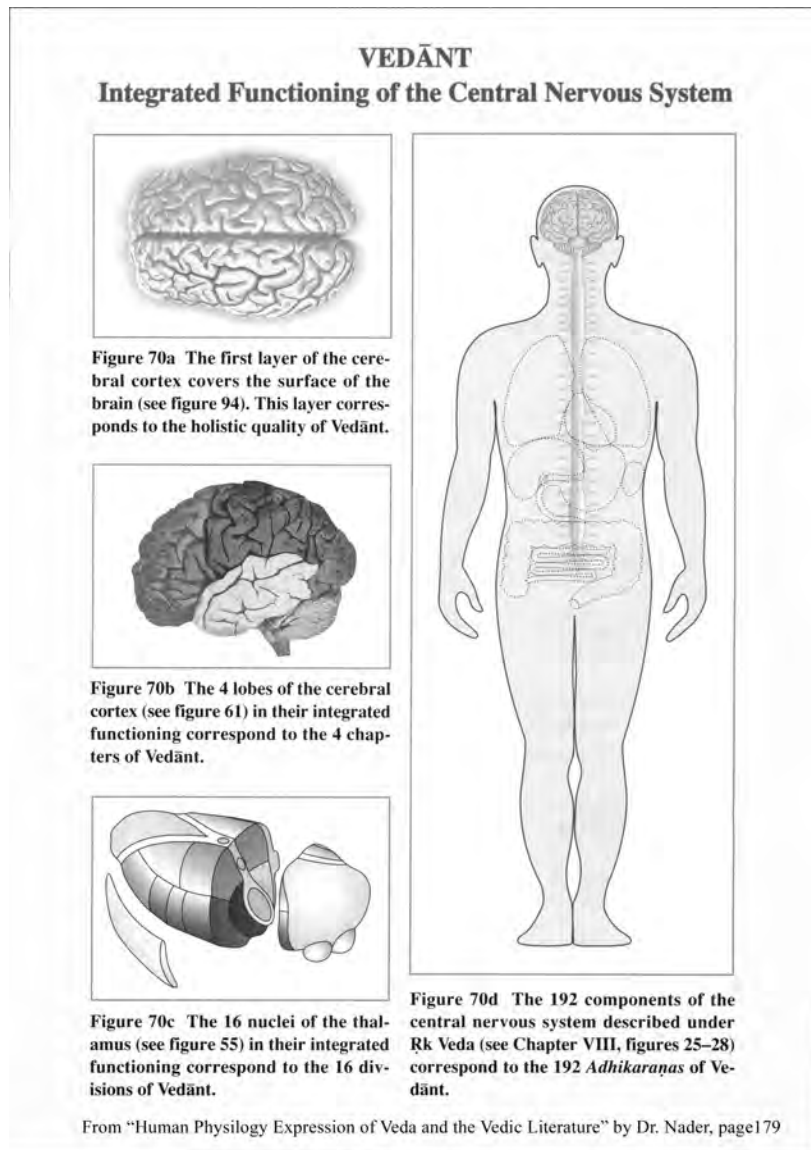
providing a necessary aspect of complete knowledge and growth of consciousness. In his commentary on the Bhagavad-Gita, Maharishi discussed the Darshana, saying: 'Each system is so thorough in itself that it appears to be sufficient to give complete knowledge for liberation', going on to say, however, that: 'In order to be complete, knowledge requires the support of all six systems,' so that every possible aspect of the object of knowledge will be considered (p. 473).

Likewise, all six Darshana are involved in the path of gaining enlightenment, with the first three – Nyaya, Vaisheshik, Sankhya – presenting 'the intellectual aspect of the path of enlightenment' and the other three – Yoga, Karma Mimamsa, Vedanta – presenting 'the experiential nature of the path to enlightenment' (Maharishi, 1994, p. 314).

Of the 40 qualities of intelligence associated with Veda and Vedic Literature, Yoga has the quality of *Unifying*. This unifying quality finds its fulfillment in the *Lively Absolute: Living Wholeness – I-ness or Being* quality of Vedanta. Vedanta, meaning the end (Anta) of Veda, is referred to as Uttar Mimamsa, the final analysis (Mimamsa) of Veda. In addition to the Brahma Sutras, the Upanishads expound the wisdom of Vedanta, with the Bhagavad-Gita also extolled as a Upanishad.

Knowledge of Vedanta, Maharishi (1967, p. 492) has commented, may seem to be beyond the comprehension of ordinary human intelligence – only in higher states of consciousness is Vedanta fully realized and lived. Fortunately, through Maharishi's simple, natural technique of Transcendental Meditation and its advanced programs, these higher states of consciousness are within reach of everyone. Knowledge of Vedanta no longer need remain abstract and seemingly beyond 'ordinary' human intelligence – it can be lived on a practical level in daily life.

The process of realization described by Vedanta is based on four qualities: Viveka, discrimination; Vairagya, non-attachment; Shatsampatti, the six treasures; and Mumukshatva, desire for liberation (Maharishi, 1967, p. 493).



In the context of the physiology, as brought to light through the research of Dr. Nader, first published in 1994 in the remarkable book *Human Physiology: Expression of the Veda and Vedic Literature*, Vedanta corresponds to the totality of the integrated functioning of the entire central nervous system and the whole physiology (p. 178).⁴

The grand wholeness of Vedanta is the supreme level of knowledge, in which all diversity is as if subsumed in Unity. As Maharishi (1995) comments:

this is the merger of diversity into unity; the whole reality, being self-referral, is visualized in terms of Unity, pure wakefulness, where every aspect of diversity has been dissolved, and having dissolved all variations of Unity, the spirit of Unity rejoices in its ultimate sovereignty. (p. 461)

⁴ The illustration 'Vedant: Integrated Functioning of the Central Nervous System', from the book *Human Physiology: Expression of the Veda and Vedic Literature* (see details in References), is used with permission.

Vedanta, as will be seen in reviewing higher states of consciousness, corresponds to the reality of Unity Consciousness – and its fulfillment in the state of Brahman – the final of the states of consciousness described by Maharishi and discussed below.

Brahman and higher states of consciousness

Inspiring descriptions of higher states of consciousness are found in the literature of many cultures, particularly the Vedic Literature of India, often referring to a sense of unity with existence, an expanded sense of Self, glimpses of a celestial realm, and inner transformation (Bucke, 1991). These accounts are sometimes thought of as ‘mystical’ or purely philosophical. Because the experiences may be fleeting or not repeatable, they have not been considered sufficiently reliable for objective evaluation. Maharishi’s technologies of consciousness culture experience in a systematic, reliable way, based on refinement of the physical body and nervous system, thus opening the way for regular, sustained, and physiologically measurable experiences of higher states of consciousness.

Maharishi summarized growth of higher states as growth of wholeness of life, known in Vedanta as Brahm, the totality. The following quote puts experiences of higher states in the context of Brahm, the totality:

Maharishi likes to explain wholeness by way of an analogy. ‘The whole is something more than the collection of parts. The house is more than the walls, floor, and ceiling put together, but without these components the house will not be found.’ We could say that the ‘houseness’ of the house is Brahman, and that its components are the experiences of higher states of consciousness. Brahman is built up out of these experiences but transcends them, not because it is an empty abstraction but because it is completely full – it excludes nothing. (Katz, 2011, p. 14)

The ‘story’ of higher states of consciousness can therefore be said to be the story of Brahm, which Maharishi discusses here in relation to the Brahma Sutra:

The word ‘Brahman’ derives from the root ‘brih’, to grow great, and its present participle, ‘brihat’ – vast, abundant, huge, unbounded. The Brahma Sutra traces the steps whereby Brahman waxes great in the awareness, until it becomes full-grown as that vast, unbounded whole which is more than the collection of the different states of awareness out of which it has grown. The story of Brahman, therefore, is the story of the growth of consciousness. (Katz, 2011, p. 14)

Before outlining this ‘story’ of the growth of consciousness, we can see this process as the fulfillment of the Brahma Sutra – and, therefore, as the fulfillment of Vedanta. As Katz (p. 14) points out, Brahman remains an empty abstraction unless seen in the context of higher states of consciousness, the parts that structure the whole. While Maharishi may see the Brahma Sutra as the final pages of the story, it is difficult to understand the final pages without being familiar with the earlier development of the

story. Indeed, the Brahma Sutra can be said to tell the whole story. In this context, Maharishi comments on the first Brahma Sutra, which is:

'Now from here the desire to know Brahma' – Athato Brahma Jigyasa'

(Brahma Sutra I.1.1)

Referring to growth of consciousness as a natural process of evolution, Maharishi comments:

'From here' means, having taken birth as man, having gained this beautiful nervous system. Anything that is born evolves; evolution is natural. Vyasa wants everyone to evolve in such a manner that the course of evolution is known to himself, not just to drift on the path of evolution like a river which does not know where it is heading. He wants everyone to desire to know Brahman, and then to evolve to that value [Brahman]. . . The sutra exhorts us to desire for the knowledge of Brahman, not in the future but here and now. Begin from here, from this moment, from this level of consciousness, from this place ... start to desire now.' (as cited in Katz, p. 15)

What, then, is the process that begin 'here and now', 'from this level of consciousness'? – what is the potential for individuals to develop higher states of consciousness and enlightenment through regular experience of Atma in Transcendental Consciousness?

Seven states of consciousness

Most people experience three major states of consciousness that are commonly known as waking, sleeping, and dream states. Modern science has shown that each state is characterized by a unique set of physiological correlates and a unique set of cognitive experiences. The mind and body cycle daily through these three states and this cycling is an essential requirement for maintaining normal health and mental functioning.

Although higher states can be found individually defined and described in different passages in the Vedic Literature, the organization of these into a coherent sequence reflecting developmental stages of the process of gaining enlightenment was one of the profound contributions of Maharishi to humanity.

In a 1964 lecture at the All-India Yogic Conference, Kolkata, Maharishi discussed higher states of consciousness by relating Yoga, the state of union, to Brahm:

The state of yoga is the state of unity, totality, Brahman, wherein lies great harmony, eternal power, and absolute bliss. All this is not very difficult to attain, as many think.

The knowledge of yoga is the knowledge of the Absolute. Besides being a straight path to Self-realization, it enables the knower to harmonize the inner field of life with the outer, and as such it becomes a base of material prosperity. In this way, man gains perfection and is able to give to himself and to society the best of his intellect and physique.

All human beings in every walk of life desire peace, energy, happiness, efficiency, and prosperity. Thus, yoga has its universal appeal for both the householder as well as the recluse. (Maharishi, 1986, p. 548)

In this beautiful description, Maharishi gives a taste of the meaning of higher states of consciousness – Self-realization – as experience of harmony, power, bliss, peace, energy, and efficiency, and the ability to experience the best of one’s intellect and physique, for one’s own fulfillment and as the basis for giving the best of oneself to society.

The ‘higher states’ of consciousness as Maharishi organized them begin with the fourth state, Transcendental Consciousness – Turiya Chetana – the state of restful alertness of mind and body experienced during the Transcendental Meditation technique, which is physiologically and experientially distinct from waking, dreaming, and sleeping (as discussed in the research section below). Regular experience of Transcendental Consciousness, alternated with activity during the day, gives rise over time to the fifth state, Cosmic Consciousness – Turiyatit Chetana – in which Transcendental Consciousness co-exists spontaneously with waking, dreaming, and sleeping. This is a state of complete inner freedom. The inner experience of restful alertness is not lost even during dynamic activity, due to a stress-free, integrated style of functioning established in the nervous system through regular experience of Transcendental Consciousness. As the restful state of the nervous system co-exists with the active state, stresses resulting from experience would not cast any impression and can be quickly dissolved.

With further refinement of the nervous system, the sixth state, Glorified Cosmic Consciousness or God Consciousness – Bhagavad-Chetana – develops. This state is characterized by perception of the finest level of relative existence, the glorious celestial sphere of experience, in which the heart flows in universal love for all creation. This refinement and expansion of the heart creates the ground for direct experience of the Divine.

As experience moves beyond the celestial to the unmanifest state at the basis of all existence, the seventh state, Unity Consciousness – Brahmi Chetana – brings together the transcendental fullness of the knower and the transcendental, unmanifest value of the objects of perception. Every object is perceived in terms of the Self. Nothing is foreign to the Self and unity of life prevails as a direct experience. This is the attainment of ‘Advaita’, the state of unity, expounded by Vedanta. This is where the

desire to know Brahman, which started as ‘Athato Brahma Jigyasa’ culminates as the ‘Anta’ or the end of Veda – Vedanta; where the realization of the Mahavakyas occurs; where ‘Esha Brahmi Sthitih’⁵ – ‘This is the state of Brahman’ – of the Bhagavad-Gita dawns.

In each state of consciousness, the world is thus perceived differently – each state has its own world. This is on the basis of a different style of functioning of mind and body. Maharishi has summarized this as follows:

Physiologically, mentally, intellectually, and spiritually (with reference to the Self), life is different in different states of consciousness. This means from zero level of awareness, zero level of intelligence (sleep state) to the infinite, unbounded level of the fully awake, fully alert state of consciousness (self-referral Unity Consciousness) the physiological structure and function is different.
(1995, p. 445)

The definition here of ‘spiritual’ as ‘with reference to the Self’, in the context of different states of physiological function, gives insight into the nature of Self-realization as a measurable reality of the normally functioning, stress-free human nervous system.

A scientific basis for the identification and characterization of a fourth major state of consciousness – Transcendental Consciousness – began with the research of Wallace and others in the early 1970s (Wallace et al., 1971, 1972). This research will be discussed below. There are now scientifically measurable, well-defined correlates for this fourth major state of consciousness – Transcendental Consciousness, the state of ‘restful alertness’, which corresponds to Samadhi. Similar research is being undertaken to identify physiological parameters for the fifth, sixth and seventh states of consciousness in available subjects who report sustained subjective experience compatible with the description of those states from the Vedic traditional texts.

These include a study of patterns of EEG coherence, power and contingent negative variation, which characterize the integration of transcendental and waking states (Travis et al., 2002), psychological and physiological characteristics of a proposed object-referral/self-referral continuum of self-awareness (Travis et al., 2004), and electrophysiological correlates of higher states of consciousness during sleep in long-term practitioners of the Transcendental Meditation program (Mason, Alexander, Travis, et al., 1997).

⁵ Bhagavad-Gita, 2.72.

The following chart summarizes the seven states of consciousness as organized by Maharishi, and gives some of the characteristics of each state.

Seven States of Consciousness as Organized in Maharishi Vedic Science			
#	Modern name	Vedic name	Description of experience and knowledge in this state of consciousness
1	Sleeping Consciousness	<i>Shushupti Chetana</i>	Mind and body resting and rejuvenating in preparation for activity; an important part of the daily cycle for health maintenance; no experience of objects of perception, and no experience of oneself.
2	Dreaming Consciousness	<i>Swapn Chetana</i>	Mind and body rejuvenating in preparation for activity; important for balanced mental and physical health; illusory experience of objects and of oneself. The validity of subjective dream experiences requires evaluation outside of the dream state.
3	Waking Consciousness	<i>Jagrat Chetana</i>	Mind and body are engaged in activity; oneself and the objects of perception are experienced as bound in space and time. The essential absolute nature of the object and the subject (self) are unknown, thus this is also called a state of <i>avidya</i> (or ignorance).
4	Transcendental Consciousness	<i>Turiya Chetana</i>	Described by Patanjali ⁶ as the complete settling of the mind; also known as pure consciousness or Samadhi. The mind transcends the activity of thought and sense perception, and identifies with the silent, non-active, non-changing, unified level of Atma – universal Self; experienced as a state of self-referral “restful alertness”.
5	Cosmic Consciousness	<i>Turiyateet Chetana</i>	Fourth state of inner unbounded awareness or temporary Samadhi becomes permanent Samadhi, spontaneously maintained along with the changing states – waking, sleeping, dreaming; the essential nature of the Self is realized, in a state of complete inner freedom, the basis for maximum skill in action.
6	Refined or Glorified Cosmic Consciousness	<i>Bhagavad Chetana</i>	Characterized by perception of the finest relative or celestial value of the objects of perception, which develops with increasing refinement of the nervous system; in this state the heart flows in waves of universal love.
7	Unity Consciousness	<i>Brahmi Chetana</i>	Realizing both the inner Self and the outer objects of perception to be essentially transcendental wholeness, the highest Yoga is attained – the unity of Self and non-Self. This is expressed by the Mahavakhyas: <i>Tat Tvam Asi</i> – Thou Art That, and <i>Sarvam Khalu Idam Brahma</i> – All this verily is Brahman.
Transcendental Consciousness (4 th state) is available in a systematic repeatable way with practice of the Transcendental Meditation technique. The 5 th , 6 th , and 7 th states of consciousness develop naturally as a result of regular alternation of experience of Transcendental Consciousness with waking, sleeping, and dreaming states. ⁷			

Research on Transcendental Meditation

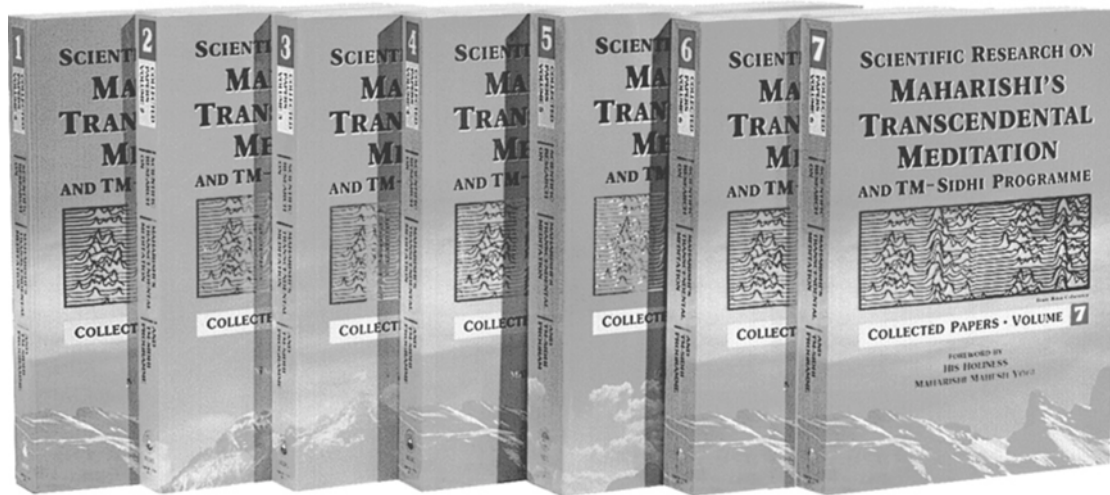
That the experience of enlightenment – the fulfillment wisdom of Vedanta – has been brought from the realm of mysticism into the practical world of today is illustrated in the scientific research on Transcendental Meditation. To date, over 600 published scientific studies have been conducted at over 200 research institutions and

⁶ Yoga Sutra 1.2.

⁷ For further references visit the website of the Center for Brain, Consciousness and Cognition at Maharishi University of Management:

<http://www.mum.edu/cbcc/publications.html> and <http://www.mum.edu/cbcc>

universities worldwide on the benefits, for both individual and collective health, of the transcendent state produced during the practice of the Transcendental Meditation technique (*Scientific Research on Maharishi's Transcendental Meditation and TM-Sidhi Program: Collected Papers, Vols. 1-6*).



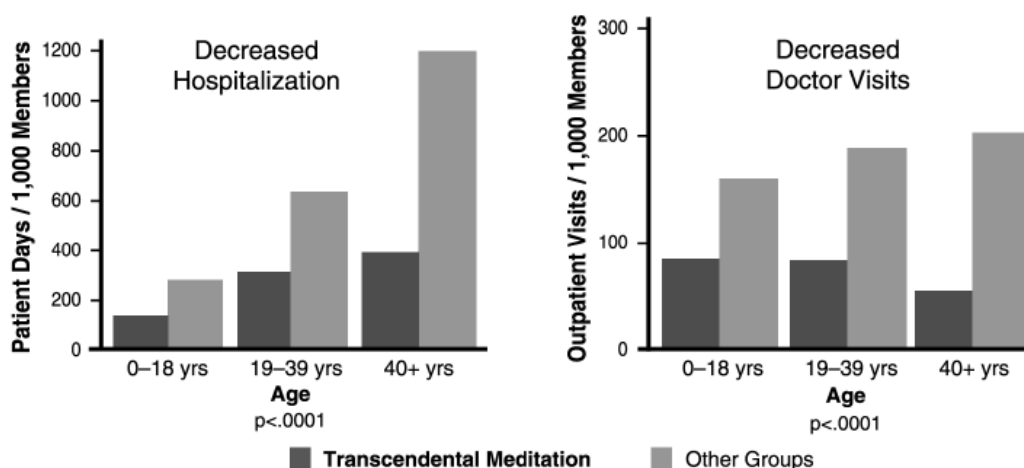
These benefits include changes in metabolic rate, brain wave activity, hormone levels and blood flow to the brain. Some of the studies received financial support from the US government. For example, the National Institutes of Health have awarded 24 million dollars over the past 20 years for research on the effects of the Transcendental Meditation technique on hypertension and cardiovascular health⁸. These effects include reduced use of hypertensive medications (Schneider, Alexander, Staggers, et al., 2005), reduced blood pressure (typically larger effects than with other procedures) (Rainforth, Schneider, Nidich et al., 2007), reduced heart failure (Jayadevappa, Johnson, Bloom, et al., 2007), reduced thickening of the coronary arteries (Castillo-Richmond, Schneider, Alexander, et al., 2000), reduced risk factors for hypertension, diabetes, and obesity (Paul-Labrador, Polk, Dwyer et al, 2006), and increased lifespan (Schneider, Alexander, Staggers et al., 2005).

There is evidence, even early on in an individual's regular practice of the Transcendental Meditation technique, of significant global health improvement. These health promoting and disease preventing effects suggest an integrative process of development in mind and body. Indicators of this development include a more

⁸ For a list of research on the Transcendental Meditation technique funded by the NIH please reference the NIH website at: <http://www.nih.gov/>, or at this link: http://search2.google.cit.nih.gov/search?site=NIH_Master&client=NIHNEW_frontend&proxystylesheet=NIHNEW_frontend&output=xml_no_dtd&filter=0&getfields=*&q=transcendental+meditation&btnG.x=18&btnG.y=7

balanced state of the physiology, changes in the EEG-pattern inside and outside of meditation that demonstrate greater coherence in brain function, reduction of all indicators of stress, rejuvenation (higher DHEAS levels), and improved bodily functions and behavior.

For example, five-year retrospective study conducted by Orme-Johnson using Blue Cross Blue Shield data compared health care usage over a wide range of medical categories in a group practicing TM (n=2000) and a matched control group not practicing TM (n=160,000). In the TM group, inpatient and outpatient length of treatment was significantly reduced – by 46.8% for children, and by 73.7% for midlife and older adults (age > 40 years) – as compared to controls. The health insurance costs for hospital admissions of the TM group were significantly reduced – 30.6% to 87.3% lower – in 17 of 18 disease categories than costs for the non-meditating group (Orme-Johnson, 1987).



TM also reduced health care costs. Cost data was obtained for 599 subjects for the period three years prior to starting the practice of TM with the period three years after starting the regular practice of TM. There was a significant pre-to-post intervention decline (-12.4%) in annual healthcare costs. In subjects who initially had the highest health care expenses there was an 18% reduction; in the over-50 age group there was a 19% reduction (Herron & Cavanaugh, 2005).

These results are truly unique, in that the treatment was not specific to the condition. That is, among TM practitioners, the intervention was the same – twice daily sessions of the Transcendental Meditation technique. Yet dramatic health promotion and disease prevention changes were found for meditating subjects even though they had a diverse range of medical conditions. That a mental technique, Transcendental Meditation, that is associated with the expansion of consciousness leads to health benefits supports the theory that consciousness is primary and matter secondary. It also leads to the logical conclusion that attending to the connection between consciousness and its expressed values in the mind and body, should be the primary line of therapy in any effort to promote or restore health, balance, and wholeness. This completes a feedback loop as health, balance, and wholeness are the psycho-physiological conditions fundamental to enlightenment.

Research has also been conducted on the health effects of Maharishi Vedic Vibration treatment, a treatment complementary to Transcendental Meditation used to restore balance to mind and body. For example, in a published, randomized double-blind experiment involving 176 people with arthritis, significant improvements were found after Vedic Vibration treatment. Another study of 358 people with chronic illnesses found significant improvements in each of six disease categories.

A remarkable body of research – around 50 studies – has also been conducted on the broader social effects of Transcendental Meditation and its advanced practice called the TM-Sidhi program, drawn from the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali. The TM-Sidhi program includes the practice of Yogic Flying, which creates maximum mind-body integration and a high degree of coherence in the brain. When practiced in large groups, the Transcendental Meditation and TM-Sidhi programs have been found to generate a powerful influence of coherence and peace in society. This has been called the Maharishi Effect.

The earliest evidence of the Maharishi Effect came towards the end of 1974, when reduced crime rates were reported in a number of cities in which over one percent of the population practiced the Transcendental Meditation technique. An expanded version of this study, with crime statistics for 24 cities, was published in 1981 (Dillbeck, Orme-Johnson, & Landrith, 1981). The first study published on the effect of large groups of Yogic Flyers was in 1987 (Dillbeck, Cavanaugh, Glenn, Orme-Johnson, & Mittlefehldt, 1987), reporting on decreased crime rates during four large gatherings of Yogic Flyers – in the U.S., India, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines. While the editor of the journal in which this study was published, *The Journal of*

Mind and Behavior, commented that ‘On the one hand, the paper was based on an extremely unconventional idea’, he went on to say that ‘On the other hand, this idea was backed up by rigorous statistical analysis, a level of mathematical sophistication rarely seen in psychological or sociological studies.’

A study using time series analysis to control for a wide range of factors, found a highly significant decrease in war deaths in Lebanon – up to 76% – along with decreased accidents and fires, and improvements in quality of life during times when large numbers of people practiced Transcendental Meditation and the TM-Sidhi programs together in the region (Orme-Johnson, Alexander, Davies, Chandler, & Larimore, 1988).

Maharishi Effect studies have also been conducted on terrorism, international relations, quality of life, and the economy, establishing the Maharishi Effect as the most thoroughly researched and practical method of creating peace and a high quality of life in society and the world as a whole.

The nature of the practice and how to learn

While theoretical discussion of Transcendental Meditation can touch on a vast range of philosophical topics, the true value of the technique is that it is so easy, natural, and enjoyable to practice. Maharishi was moved to teach this technique to others when he saw the disparity between the Vedic expressions of the nature of life as bliss – and the reality of what people experience in their everyday lives. The simplicity and effectiveness of the practice, and systematic way in which its regular practice allows one’s inner potential to unfold, brings the possibility of bliss and enlightenment to everyone.

Science has brought us so far in comprehension of the world around us, and in advanced technologies – and yet human life remains unfulfilled by material achievement alone. The heart and mind crave inner peace in a highly active world. Where is this peace to be found? As in the ocean, with great activity on the surface and silence below, our minds become caught in ceaseless waves of activity and we fail to experience the silence within. Without trying to stop the activity, Transcendental Meditation allows a natural inward dive – allows the mind to settle down and directly experience the inner silence beneath the waves of activity. Transcendental Meditation is not a technique that restricts the mind or forces concentration against thoughts. Rather it uses the natural tendency of the mind to move towards more and more happiness. This tendency is usually directed outwards,

but when given the right start, the mind flows effortlessly towards maximum bliss and fulfillment in the silent state of Transcendental Consciousness. Effort and strain will only inhibit this natural flow.

Research has found that Transcendental Meditation gives deep and revitalizing rest, unfolds the full potential of the mind, strengthens health and increases longevity, improves our behaviour with family, friends and colleagues – even reduces criminal behaviour – and as we have seen has a direct, measurable effect in reducing accidents, violence, and even war-deaths, and improving international relations. The quality of life in society can truly grow to Heaven on Earth.

Such benefits for a more blissful, peaceful life for individuals, and a peaceful, progressive society and world family is the most fitting result we can imagine from knowledge of the timeless, beautiful wisdom of Vedanta.

The technique is taught in seven steps of instruction – after the initial introductory talks, about an hour to an hour-and-a-half over four consecutive days. Everyone taught individually – as people are different and step-by-step instruction is needed for maximum benefit, it is learned from a trained teacher rather than from a book. There are a few simple, practical requirements to learn which are discussed individually with a teacher before you begin. However, to gain maximum benefit from Transcendental Meditation and unfold higher states of consciousness, the main ‘requirement’ is to enjoy twenty minutes twice a day of the natural, effortless process of transcending, while sitting comfortably with your eyes closed.

Major areas of Maharishi’s Movement activities

To enrich his programs for individual life and enhance growth of consciousness in the world, Maharishi brought out a vast array of practical programs in education, health, administration, and architecture. For example, in the field of education, he developed Consciousness-Based education, used widely now in the Maharishi Vidya Mandir system of schools in India, at Maharishi University of Management in the U.S., founded thirty years ago, and at other educational institutions in many parts of the world. In Latin America alone in recent times many thousands of students have enjoyed the benefits of Consciousness-Based education.

In the field of health, starting in the early 1980s Maharishi worked with leading Vaidyas to develop Maharishi Ayur-Veda and the Maharishi Vedic Approach to Health, in which all the traditional modalities – herbs, Nadi Vigyan, Panchakarma, use of Vedic sounds in Maharishi Vedic Vibration programs – are brought to their

full, original effectiveness through being applied in light of consciousness. Through Maharishi's work, knowledge of Ayur-Veda – previously unknown in the West – came to the attention of millions of people, with thousands of Western doctors being trained in Maharishi Ayur-Veda and Panchakarma clinics opened in many countries. Maharishi also worked with Vedic experts in the areas of Jyotish and Yagya, and in the field of architecture brought Sthapatya Veda to the West to provide houses, offices, and town planning in accord with natural law. In the Iowa, U.S., a city – called Maharishi Vedic City – has been established in which all buildings and town-planning follow the principles of Maharishi Sthapatya Veda.

Most importantly, Maharishi worked tirelessly to revitalize the training of Vedic Pandits, based in their experience of transcending and Yogic Flying, and established the foundation for large, permanent groups of Vedic Pandits to perform Yagyas for world peace, in the Brahmasthan of India, and eventually at locations around India and the world.⁹ Already there is a group of 1000 Yogic Flying Vedic Pandits in the U.S. – with a campus in Maharishi Vedic City – performing Yagyas from the heartland of America. Leaders of Maharishi's organization around the world are working hard to raise the funds to bring permanent financial support to the Pandit groups in India. In 2008 Maharishi established the Brahmananda Saraswati Trust, presided over by the current Shankaracharya of Jyotir Math, to establish these groups for creating and maintaining world peace.

Conclusion

Individual enlightenment and world peace through the timeless Vedic wisdom are the ultimate fulfillment and living realization of the supreme philosophy of Vedanta. Maharishi's genius, inspired by his master, was to bring out the full range of Vedanta in a practical form – the most profound philosophy of life brought into the realm of modern science – and to apply this for the long-lasting well-being of humanity.

⁹ See www.VedicPandits.org for further information.



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