

The Significance of Pure Consciousness for Education

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Abstract

This article presents the seminal contributions that intellectual understanding and experience of pure consciousness make to education. This knowledge of consciousness, which has been brought to light by Maharishi Mahesh Yogi and systematically presented in his Vedic Science, supplies a missing fundamental to education that deeply transforms the way we understand all aspects of the field, including foundational concepts, educational practices, and educational outcomes.

This paper is divided into four parts. The first lays the foundation for the paper by examining the concept of pure consciousness, as presented by Maharishi, and providing experiential and scientific evidence for its existence. The second demonstrates that the knowledge and experience of pure consciousness transform our understanding of basic educational concepts, including knowledge, development, learning, and human potential. The most important implication of this more complete understanding is that enlightenment—higher states of consciousness—should be the goal of education.

The third section examines the implications of pure consciousness for educational practice. These implications include: new courses for giving experiential and intellectual understanding of consciousness; new approaches to the teaching of traditional subject matter that emphasize wholeness of awareness and refinement of the emotions; and care for the physiology because of its role in supporting deeper experiences of consciousness. The final section of the paper examines implications of pure consciousness for individual and social life—the key outcomes of education. Drawing on experience in Consciousness-Based educational institutions and empirical research, this section demonstrates that incorporation of knowledge of pure consciousness into education can significantly enhance academic outcomes, structure enlightenment in students, and contribute directly to the realization of the highest ideals of society—peace, economic growth, and social progress.

If the age is to change to one of invincibility¹ a fundamental value has to be supplied to the field of education. This missing fundamental is knowledge of pure consciousness and how to experience it. (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, 1978, pp. 148–149)

The field of education has immense importance for individual and social life. This point is eloquently stated by John Dewey, America's most influential philosopher of education:

I believe that education is the fundamental method of social progress and reform. All reforms which rest simply upon the enactment of law, or the threatening of certain penalties, or upon changes in mechanical or outward arrangements, are transitory and futile. . . . By law and punishment, by social agitation and discussion, society can regulate and form itself in a more or less haphazard and chance way. But through education society can formulate its own purposes, can organize its own means and resources, and thus shape itself with definiteness and economy in the direction in which it wishes to move. (Dewey, 1966, p. 57)

The ability of education to promote social progress, however, is dependent on the quality of the educational system. In America today, as in most countries around the world, there is widespread dissatisfaction with education due to perceived educational failures. In the best American schools, for example, attended by students with relative affluence, the overwhelming impression of the classroom is one of "affective neutrality," as one leading researcher expressed it. The student-teacher relationship in the typical classroom is "neither abrasive nor joyous" (Goodlad, 1984, p. 111). Combine this emotional disengagement with the increasing pressures to perform at high levels, and the resulting atmosphere in schools is a mixture of boredom, cynicism, and anxiety (LoVette & Jacob, 1995; Gardner, 1996). In one recent large-scale study of California and Wisconsin schools, researchers found that roughly 40% of the students said they were "just going through the motions" in school. The average student, they found, spent only four hours a week on homework outside of school (Steinberg, Brown, & Dornbusch, 1996). In the more troubled schools in many countries, on the other hand, the learning environment is even more discouraging. Children's concern is less whether they will make good grades than whether they can stay awake and whether they will make it home safely after school (Kozol, 1996).

From a societal perspective the greatest concern for today's schools is not the apathy or lack of satisfaction, but the waste of human capital—the development of which is the chief function of the school. Jean Piaget, for example, identified the highest level of cognitive development to be "formal operations," the foundation of scientific reasoning; however, research-based estimates of the percentage of adults who actually attain formal operations vary between 15 and 50% (Greidanus, 1984; Sachs-Brannock, 1980; Darion, 1981). Similarly, Lawrence Kohlberg developed a theory of moral development with six stages leading to principled moral reasoning, yet the average middle-aged adult in society functions at level four on this scale, a level of conventional moral thought (Bakken, 1983). Jane Loevinger developed a scale for ego development which includes six levels; yet typically only 1% of the adult population reach either of the two highest levels (Holt, 1980). These comparatively low levels of human development indicate that the schools are not developing the primary resource of all nations—human potential. What can society accomplish, if its human resources remain languishing in the schools?

This article presents a new educational paradigm, introduced by Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, that provides a solution to these deficiencies, among others. Maharishi, also, is a strong proponent of the power of education to improve human life. "Through proper education," he declares, "we can create anything" (Maharishi, 1991, p. 13). "Proper" education, however, must be based on sound educational foundations. The problem with current education, from Maharishi's perspective, is that it lacks a missing fundamental—intellectual understanding and experience of pure consciousness (Maharishi, 1978). Intellectual understanding and experience of pure consciousness are so fundamental that they transform all aspects of the field of education, including foundational concepts, educational practices, and outcomes of education. This knowledge of pure consciousness, which has been utilized in educational curricula around the world for the past 25 years, constitutes a huge contribution to education and must be incorporated into this field if the social ideals of humankind are to be realized.

This paper will be divided into four parts:

¹ An invincible society for Maharishi is an ideal society because true invincibility only comes as a result of having no enemies. A society will have no enemies when it is integrated and strong within itself and radiates values of love, truth, virtue, and peace (Maharishi, 1978).

- the understanding of pure consciousness as presented by Maharishi;
- the implications of understanding and experience of pure consciousness for fundamental concepts in education;
- educational practices that follow from these fundamental concepts; and
- outcomes of Consciousness-BasedSM education.

The Nature and Verification of Pure Consciousness

Pure consciousness—or simply “consciousness,” as Maharishi often refers to it—is the most basic concept in Maharishi Vedic ScienceSM,² and knowledge of pure consciousness, including experience and intellectual understanding, is the most important contribution of Maharishi Vedic Science to contemporary education. It is necessary at the outset to understand the nature of pure consciousness—the roles that it plays and qualities associated with it—because these provide the basis for an understanding of the implications of pure consciousness for education. These characterizations of consciousness will inevitably be abstract; therefore, it is important to remember that experience of pure consciousness can be gained easily through Maharishi’s systematic and effortless technologies for developing consciousness, the Transcendental Meditation[®] and TM-Sidhi[®] programs, and that even beginning experience with these programs verifies many of these characterizations.

Pure Consciousness

Pure consciousness, as Maharishi defines it, is the basic reality of life, the unmanifest, unchanging basis of all subjective and objective existence (Maharishi, 1963/95, pp. 21–23; Maharishi, 1986, pp. 25–26). In *Vedic Knowledge for Everyone*, his most complete exposition on the implications of Vedic knowledge for education, Maharishi expounds on the fundamental nature of pure consciousness as follows:

All speech, action, and behaviour are fluctuations of consciousness. All life emerges from and is sustained in consciousness. The whole universe is the expression of consciousness. The reality of the universe is one unbounded ocean of consciousness in motion. (p. 68)

As the ultimate reality, pure consciousness can be characterized in different ways.³ All characterizations, however, are linked either to its status as the basis of subjective existence or as the basis of objective existence. These different characterizations are significant because they emphasize different qualities of pure consciousness that are enlivened in the individual when it is experienced.

Pure consciousness as the basis of subjective experience.

• *Self.* Maharishi points out that pure consciousness, as the basis of subjective existence, is the universal Self that underlies the individual self. He clarifies this point in his commentary on the *Bhagavad-Gita* (1967):

Self has two connotations: lower self and higher Self. The lower self is that aspect of the personality which deals only with the relative aspect of existence. It comprises the mind that thinks, the intellect that decides, the ego that experiences. This lower self functions only in the relative states of existence—waking, dreaming and deep sleep. Remaining always within the field of relativity, it has no chance of experiencing the real freedom of absolute being. That is why it is in the sphere of bondage. The higher Self is that aspect of the personality which never changes, absolute Being, which is the very basis of the entire field of relativity, including the lower self. (p. 339)

² Maharishi Vedic Science is a systematic exposition of the ancient Vedic knowledge of eternal reality cognized by the enlightened seers of ancient India. As such, it is pure Vedic knowledge and Maharishi can be seen as the most recent exponent of this ancient tradition of knowledge. The term “science” is used to convey the emphasis that Maharishi has placed on direct experience and empirical testing as the foundation and criteria of this knowledge (Chandler, 1987, pp. vii–viii; Maharishi, 1994).

³ In the history of his teachings, Maharishi has used many terms to refer to this fundamental reality. Pure consciousness is the term he has used most often. Other terms include Being, transcendental consciousness, pure intelligence, Unified Field of Natural Law, Unified Field, and Veda.

Experience of pure consciousness is, therefore, knowledge of the Self.

- *Source of thought and simplest state of awareness.* As the basis of individual mind, Maharishi teaches that it is the source of our thinking process. As the source of thought, it is experienced as a state of no thought, the simplest state of human awareness (Maharishi 1963, pp. 44–50; Maharishi 1967, pp. 470–71). These qualities are significant because they indicate that pure consciousness is easily accessible to every human being through transcending the thinking process.

- *Field of infinite energy, intelligence, and creativity.* Because thoughts exhibit movement and intelligence, Maharishi (1972, Lesson 2) observes that their source, from which innumerable thoughts arise, is a field of infinite energy and intelligence. Pure intelligence is used frequently by Maharishi as a synonym for pure consciousness. All intelligence expressed by human beings and seen in nature has its source in this field. All creativity expressed by human beings and also seen in the huge diversity of nature also has its source in this field. The field is thus one of unbounded creativity.

- *Perfect orderliness.* Maharishi closely associates the idea of intelligence with orderliness. The order in creation reflects the underlying intelligence in Nature. As a field of pure intelligence, therefore, pure consciousness is also a field of perfect orderliness (Maharishi, 1972, Lesson 5).

- *Pure wakefulness and alertness.* Awareness is a synonym for consciousness. Maharishi therefore indicates that the field of pure consciousness is a field of pure awareness. Pure awareness is fully wakeful and alert (Maharishi, 1994, pp. 57–62).

- *Freedom.* As the ultimate reality that permeates all of creation, pure consciousness is experienced as unboundedness. Experience of this unbounded consciousness brings a sense of complete freedom. This is why the term “liberation” has been associated with this experience in Vedic texts such as the *Bhagavad-Gita* (Maharishi, 1967, pp. 378–9).

- *Wholeness.* Another term Maharishi frequently associates with experience of pure consciousness is wholeness. Because the whole animate and inanimate universe is the expression of consciousness, pure consciousness is known and experienced to be wholeness. When experience of pure consciousness is fully developed, all of manifest creation is experienced as suffused with this underlying wholeness. Maharishi (1995a) has referred to this experience as “wholeness on the move.”

- *Bliss.* A key quality associated with pure consciousness by Maharishi and the ancient Vedic seers is bliss. In Sanskrit this field is traditionally referred to as Sat-Chit-Ananda—absolute bliss-consciousness (Maharishi, 1967, p. 187). In the *Bhagavad-Gita*, pure consciousness is referred to as a field of “infinite joy” (pp. 424; 439). As a field of bliss, this experience brings supreme fulfillment to life.

Pure consciousness as basis of objective experience. Maharishi explains that many of the above qualities responsible for structuring subjective experience are also responsible for upholding the objective world. Qualities of intelligence, energy, orderliness, and creativity permeate the natural world. In addition, there are other characterizations of pure consciousness that come to the fore in its role as source of all manifest creation. As discussed in the next section, these qualities correspond precisely to concepts that can be found in modern-day quantum field theory (Hagelin, 1987). Maharishi emphasizes the following qualities:

- *Total potential of Natural Law.* From the perspective of modern science, the universe is governed by natural law. The source of the universe must, therefore, be the home of all the laws of nature, and have within it the total potential of natural law. Maharishi (1986, 1994) often refers to pure consciousness as the Unified Field of Natural Law, that unified field containing all laws of nature. Because of its role as the source of Natural Law, Maharishi also frequently refers to pure consciousness as the Constitution of the Universe. Just as the constitution of a nation is the source of all laws of a nation, the Constitution of the Universe, pure consciousness, is the source of all the natural laws that function in the universe.

- *All possibilities.* As the source of the infinite diversity in creation, pure consciousness is a field of all possibilities (Maharishi, 1986, pp. 25–31).

- *Infinite correlation.* Because pure consciousness is a unified field out of which all of creation comes, at this level all of creation is connected or correlated (Maharishi, 1977, p. 150).

- *Infinite dynamism.* As the source of the ever-expanding universe, pure consciousness is infinitely dynamic. It also has infinite organizing power because it is responsible for the organization of all events in the universe (Maharishi, 1995a, pp. 34–47).

- *Source of physiology.* As the source of the entire objective world, pure consciousness is also the source of our physiology. This is important to make explicit because of the profound beneficial effects that experience of pure consciousness can have for the physiology. Dr. Tony Nader (1995), in an historic discovery made under Maharishi’s guidance, has recently established the profound correspondence

between the expressions of pure consciousness, as found in the Vedic Literature, and the structure of human physiology. This correspondence concretely demonstrates that the total potential of Natural Law is lively within the human physiology.

Confirmation of the Existence of Pure Consciousness

The most important confirmation of the existence of pure consciousness comes from the direct experience that individuals have had, and are continuing to have around the world, that conform to key characterizations of pure consciousness listed above. Edward Carpenter, a 19th-century British social philosopher, for example, describes his experience as follows:

The Man at last lets Thought go; he glides below it into the quiet feeling, the quiet sense of this own identity with the self of other things—of the universe. He glides past the feeling into the very identity itself, where a glorious all-consciousness leaves no room for separate self-thoughts or emotions. He leans back in silence on that inner being . . . and so there comes to him a sense of absolute repose, a consciousness of immense and universal power, such as completely transforms the world for him (1904/1921, p. 228)

The British poet Tennyson reports a similar experience:

A kind of waking trance I have frequently had, quite up from boyhood, when I have been all alone . . . as it were out of the intensity of the consciousness of individuality, the individuality itself seemed to dissolve and fade away into boundless being, and this not a confused state, but the clearest of the clearest, the surest of the surest . . . utterly beyond words, where death was an almost laughable impossibility, the loss of personality (if so it were) seeming no extinction, but the only true life. (1899, p. 268)

A practitioner of the Transcendental Meditation technique expresses a remarkably similar experience as follows:

During meditation, the experiences of being the whole universe started to occur more and more often. It reached its climax in one meditation when I had the overpowering realization that I was so unbounded and so unlimited that anything I wanted could easily be obtained. I kept feeling more and more expanded, and the feeling of bliss kept growing and becoming more powerful within me. . . . This gave me a feeling of being whole which I knew could no longer be taken away. (Maharishi, 1977, pp. 79–80)

These experiences express several of the qualities of pure consciousness brought out by Maharishi. Carpenter and Tennyson both communicate the experience of connection with universal Self; all three communicate in different ways the experience of unboundedness. Carpenter's sense of connection to the things of the universe reflects the status of pure consciousness as source of the whole manifest universe and his sense of "immense and universal power" communicates the experience of all possibilities. Tennyson's experience of extraordinary clarity reflects the pure wakefulness quality of pure consciousness as well as perfect orderliness. The experience of the individual practicing Transcendental Meditation in turn reflects the bliss and wholeness qualities of pure consciousness.

Individuals in different cultures throughout the ages—for example, Shankara, Buddha, Lao Tze, Plato, Augustine, Emerson, Whitman—have reported similar experiences of an unmanifest, universal field that supports all subjective and objective existence (Huxley, 1962; Bucke, 1901/1969; Pearson, in process). The reports of this experience throughout time suggest that it is universally available and not culturally bound or a product of a particular Eastern or Western mind set. This direct experience, which is now easily accessible to everyone through the Maharishi Transcendental MeditationSM program, is the basis for our confidence in the existence of pure consciousness.

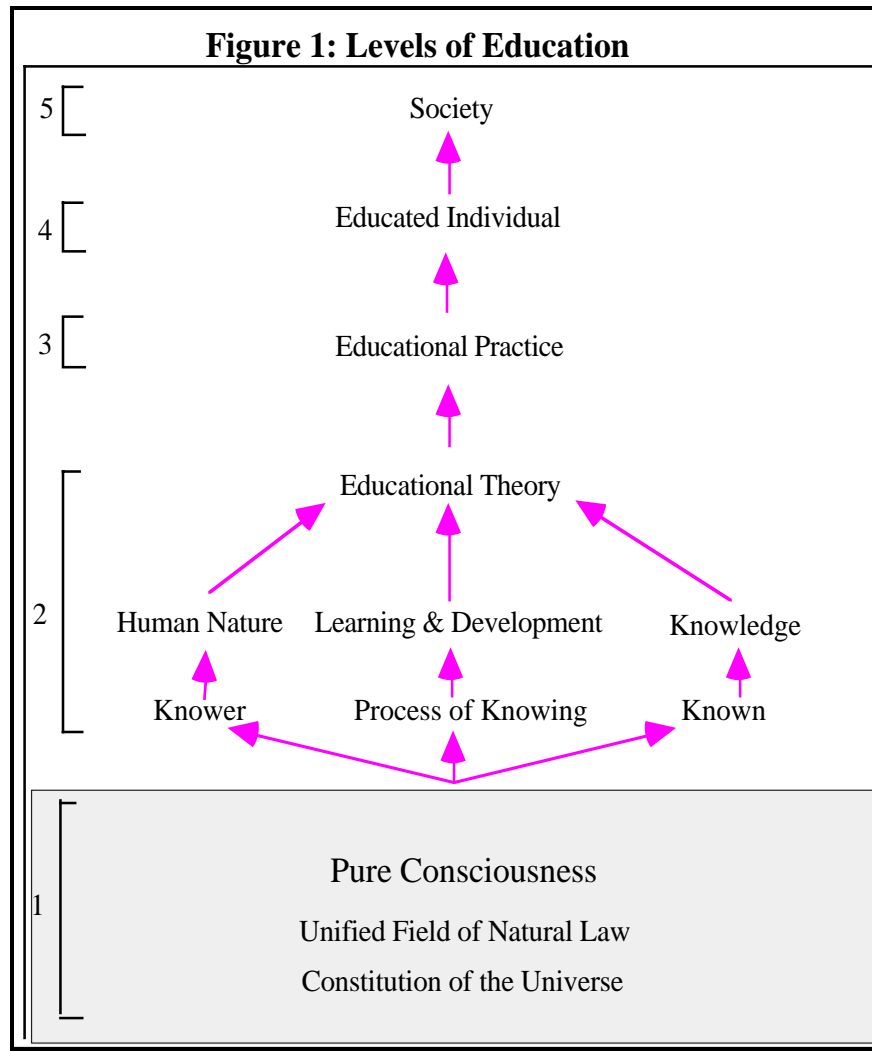
Today this subjective experience has also been confirmed by the objective methodologies of modern science. The understanding that there is an unmanifest, unified basis for all creation is now supported by advances in quantum physics during the past 20 years (see article in this issue by Kai Drühl). Quantum field theories describe a single unified field that completely unifies all particles and forces of nature. This field is recognized as the source of all material creation and is characterized as universal, self-interacting, self-sufficient, and infinitely dynamic, creating from within itself all the laws of nature. The similarities between these qualities of the unified field and the qualities associated with pure consciousness have led Maharishi and prominent unified field theorists to the conclusion that the unified field and pure consciousness are the same reality (Maharishi, 1986, p. 29; Hagelin, 1987).

The existence of pure consciousness and ability to directly experience it have also been verified by physiological and psychological research. The provision by Maharishi Vedic Science of standardized and

easily repeatable technologies for developing consciousness—the Transcendental Meditation and TM-Sidhi programs—has made it possible to empirically examine the effects of the experience of pure consciousness. The Transcendental Meditation program is a natural, effortless procedure that allows the mind to settle down and experience pure consciousness. The TM-Sidhi program is an advanced aspect of the technology of Maharishi Vedic Science. It trains the individual to think and act from the field of pure consciousness, enhancing the coordination between mind and body and greatly accelerating the stabilization of enlightenment (Maharishi, 1994, pp. 283–9).

The research on the Transcendental Meditation and TM-Sidhi programs indicates that there are unique psychophysiological correlates of this experience, which set it off from experiences of other states of consciousness (Wallace, 1986; Mason, 1995). In addition, psychological research has demonstrated that this one experience leads to holistic growth of the individual—enhancing mental abilities, improving health, and promoting pro-social behaviors—further verifying its fundamental nature (Alexander et al., 1991; see discussion under “Learning and Development”). Powerful verification of the field nature of consciousness also comes from dozens of sociological studies indicating that practice of Maharishi’s technologies for developing consciousness by sufficient numbers of people improve the health and behavior of individuals who are not themselves practicing these technologies. This “action-at-a-distance” effect, now referred to as the Maharishi Effect, is explained by the enlivenment of the common field of pure consciousness, which, as a field of infinite correlation, connects all people (Orme-Johnson et al., 1988; see discussion of the Maharishi Effect at the end of final section).

The above discussion has provided a general substantiation of the existence of pure consciousness and a description of important qualities associated with it by Maharishi. The existence of a field of pure consciousness that can be systematically experienced has important implications for education. These implications can be understood in terms of the different levels of education presented in Figure 1. This figure shows that all educational systems (Level 3) have their basis in fundamental educational concepts (Level 2). Educational systems, in turn, have outputs, or products. These are depicted as the educated individual (Level 4) and ultimately the society itself (Level 5), which is determined by the quality of the individuals who compose it. Pure consciousness (Level 1), as the basis of the whole field of education, has implications for all the levels above it. The following analysis will examine implications of pure consciousness for basic educational concepts (Level 2), educational practices (Level 3), and educational outcomes (Levels 4 and 5).



Significance of Pure Consciousness for Basic Educational Concepts

All theories of education, and consequently educational practice, are based either explicitly or implicitly on an understanding of fundamental concepts. One way of understanding these basic concepts is in terms of the three-part nature of knowledge. Maharishi (1986; 1994) has brought out that, in order for there to be any knowledge, there must be a knower, an object of knowledge, and a process of knowing connecting the two. If any of these is missing, there can be no knowledge. As we see in Figure 1, all educational systems derive from an understanding of these three basic conceptions: the nature of the individual (knower), the nature of learning and development (process of knowing), and the nature of knowledge (the known).

The major differences in educational theories throughout the ages can all be traced back to differences in perspective on these fundamental conceptions. John Dewey's educational theory, for example, is informed by the view of modern science that knowledge is objective and gained through acting on the environment. This view of knowledge underlies his emphasis on experience and learning by doing. Plato, on the other hand, viewed knowledge as transcendental and not knowable by the senses. His educational theory therefore emphasizes educational practices, such as the study of abstract mathematics and the dialectic, that train the mind to act independently of sense experience. The adequacy of any theory—its ability to produce desirable educational outcomes—rests ultimately on the adequacy of its understanding of these foundational conceptions. If understanding is limited and therefore inadequate, the theory based on it will be limited and, in turn, educational practice guided by the theory will not produce optimal results.

Ultimately this limitation has significance for society itself, because the quality of a society depends on the quality of its educational system.

The knowledge of pure consciousness and how to experience it is significant for education because it leads to a deeper and more adequate understanding of these foundational educational conceptions. No understanding of knowledge, development, or of the individual can be adequate without an understanding of pure consciousness if pure consciousness is the ultimate reality that underlies them all. If we accept the existence of pure consciousness and of a systematic means to experience it, we see that they provide the basis for a more adequate understanding of education and, consequently, for a more optimally functioning society. The following analysis will look, in turn, at the significance of pure consciousness for the three basic educational conceptions identified above:

- 1) Knowledge;
- 2) Learning and development;
- 3) Individual (human potential).

These are located at level 2 of Figure 1, proceeding from right to left.

Nature of Knowledge

The development and transmission of knowledge are fundamental tasks of education (Scheffler, 1965). One's particular conception of knowledge has significant implications for educational practice. All models of teaching, for example, have implicit or explicit positions on what knowledge is and how it is learned (Joyce and Weil, 1996). As pointed out above, the different conceptions of knowledge held by Plato and Dewey led to very different educational practices. Optimal practice must be based on a complete view of knowledge, and this only comes, as we will see, with an understanding of pure consciousness.

The knowledge of pure consciousness provided by Maharishi Vedic Science contributes two central ideas to our understanding of knowledge: first, that there is an absolute level of pure or total knowledge, and second, that knowledge, because of its basis in human consciousness, cannot be adequate without experience of this field. Knowledge, as we have seen, arises from the coming together of a knower and known through a process of knowing. At the level of pure consciousness these three values are unified. Maharishi (1994) has described how, at this level, consciousness, in the act of knowing itself, is all three values simultaneously.

In the process of knowing itself, wholeness of consciousness, pure consciousness, self-referral consciousness, pure wakefulness, in its singularity, takes on the threefold structure of knower, process of knowing, and known; or observer, process of observation, and observed; or in Vedic terminology, *Ṛishi*, *Devatā*, and *Chhandas*. *Saṁhitā* (togetherness) of *Ṛishi*, (the observer), *Devatā* (the process of observation), and *Chhandas* (the object of observation) is the structure of pure knowledge. This is the level of absolute education, where the knower is the embodiment of total knowledge—pure knowledge and its infinite organizing power. (pp. 108–109)

Maharishi refers to pure consciousness as total knowledge or the home of all knowledge (Maharishi, 1972), because it is that unified level of life—the Unified Field of Natural Law—that gives rise to all diversified values.

Knowledge in traditional areas cannot be adequate without knowledge of pure consciousness because pure consciousness is the source of all disciplines. Knowledge of each area of life needs to be connected to pure consciousness to be complete. As Maharishi explains: If, along with the study of each subject, the experience of [pure consciousness] is taught to the students, then they will be able to fathom the deeper levels of that subject, and the whole range of that subject will be studied properly. When the two extremities of that subject—the gross, expanded value and the transcendental value—are connected, then the field of that subject will be complete, and the study of that subject will bring something real and useful in life. (Maharishi Vedic University, 1986, p. 269)

As the various articles of this issue of *Modern Science and Vedic Science* reveal, the complete understanding and experience of pure consciousness provided by Maharishi Vedic Science has profound significance for all of the disciplines. In the humanities, pure consciousness helps us to understand the nature of the self, the source of the creative process, and the nature of the full aesthetic experience. For the social sciences, understanding pure consciousness provides knowledge of the knower, the nature of full human potential, how to develop this potential, and of collective consciousness and its implications for improving social life. In the natural sciences, knowledge of pure consciousness provides an understanding of how the language of the natural sciences—mathematics—which is subjectively derived, can describe

regularities in the objective world and of the source of all of these disciplines in the Unified Field. Understanding that all disciplines have their source in pure consciousness also helps the student to realize that all knowledge ultimately has its source in his own consciousness and that he himself is therefore the lively source of all knowledge (Maharishi, 1994, p. 151). This is the complete understanding of knowledge.

Experience of pure consciousness is crucial to gaining complete knowledge for another reason: It transforms the way we see the world. Cognitive psychology has demonstrated that the schemas, or concepts, that we have about the world determine how we see the world (Anderson, 1980; Gagne et al., 1993). Perception is active and therefore how we see the world, our perception of reality, changes as we ourselves change. This has led contemporary adherents of the constructivist view of knowledge to declare that there is no objective knowledge, that all knowledge is relative to the knower (Derry, 1992). This relativity of knowledge corresponds to a central principle of Maharishi Vedic Science: Knowledge is structured in consciousness (Maharishi, 1972, Lesson 9; Maharishi, 1977). According to this principle, as our state of consciousness changes, our experience of reality changes, and as our experience of reality changes, our “knowledge” of the world changes.

The experience of pure consciousness, however, allows one to break from the radical subjectivity of the constructivist view of knowledge. Because pure consciousness is a universal, non-changing level of consciousness, perception based on this non-variable state of consciousness can be non-relative and fully reliable (Maharishi, 1994). Because knowledge is structured in consciousness, full development of consciousness gives fully adequate knowledge. In the most fully developed state of consciousness—unity consciousness—one directly perceives that pure consciousness, our own Self, is the essence of all things, permeating all creation. Maharishi (1972) describes this highest state of knowledge as follows:

in that state, the ultimate value of the object, infinite and unmanifest, is made lively when the conscious mind, being lively in the unbounded value of awareness, falls on the object. The object is cognized in terms of the pure subjective value of unbounded, unmanifest awareness. . . . In this unified state of consciousness, the experiencer and the object of experience have both been brought to the same level of infinite value, and this encompasses the entire phenomenon of perception and action as well. The gulf between the knower and the object of his knowing has been bridged. . . . In this state, the full value of knowledge has been gained, and we can finally speak of complete knowledge. (Lesson 23, p. 9)

This understanding that knowledge is structured in consciousness has profound implications for education. It means that consciousness must be fully developed in order to have complete knowledge. Because pure consciousness is the Self, it means that Self knowledge—complete knowledge of the knower—must be the basis for all other knowledge. Without this basis, Maharishi (1973) points out that knowledge is incomplete and, as a result, non-fulfilling:

The foundation of knowledge is the consciousness of the knower. If the knower is in doubt, if the knower doesn't know himself, then the whole structure of knowledge has no basis to it. And such baseless knowledge can only be non-fulfilling.

The fact that knowledge is incomplete in educational institutions today, that it lacks knowledge of the foundation of all knowledge, is of immense consequence. It is the root cause, according to Maharishi, of all of the problems and suffering in the world today (Maharishi, 1994, p. 15; see discussion in final section of this article).

Learning and Development

Development and learning, the second set of foundational educational concepts presented on Figure 1, are clearly central to education. John Dewey went so far as to say that education *is* growth or development (Dewey, 1916/1966). An educational experience, in this view, is one that promotes human development. Learning is valuable both as a means to development and because the product of learning—knowledge—is an educational aim in its own right. Given the centrality of these concepts to education, it is imperative for educators to understand them adequately.

Contribution of pure consciousness to development. Nature and nurture are the two generally understood sources of human development (Woolfolk, 1995). Nature, or maturation, refers to changes that occur naturally and spontaneously and that are, to a large extent, genetically programmed. Nurture refers to those spurs to development that come from interaction with the environment. Because natural endowments are considered to be relatively fixed, educators are primarily concerned with structuring those

environmental interactions that promote maximum growth. The understanding and experience of pure consciousness provided by Maharishi Vedic Science extends our understanding of development in two primary ways: It contributes to our understanding of *the mechanisms of development* and *the ends of development*.

Mechanisms. Our understanding of the mechanisms of development is enhanced by the understanding that experience of pure consciousness is itself a profound means to promote growth. Maharishi explains that bringing our attention to something enlivens its qualities in us (Maharishi, 1972). Consequently, when the attention opens to experience of pure consciousness, its qualities become enlivened in us. Because pure consciousness is a field of infinite intelligence, creativity, power, and bliss and at the same time a field of perfect orderliness, this experience enlivens these qualities in our mind and body, thereby promoting growth. Over 500 scientific studies have now documented that experience of pure consciousness gained during practice of the Transcendental Meditation technique promotes integration and efficiency of the entire nervous system, leading to improved mental abilities, health, and social behavior. Specific results relevant to education include:

- increased intelligence, learning ability, and intellectual performance (So, 1995; Cranson, 1991);
- improved academic performance and academic orientation (Nidich, Nidich, & Rainforth, 1986; Nidich & Nidich, 1989; Kember, 1985);
- increased creativity (Tim, 1995; Travis, 1979);
- optimized brain functioning (Orme-Johnson & Haynes, 1981; Dillbeck & Bronson, 1981; Dillbeck et al., 1981);
- improved mind-body coordination (Appelle & Oswald, 1974; Holt, Caruso, and Riley, 1978);
- increased energy and dynamism (Jonsson, 1975; Alexander et al., 1993);
- increased organizational ability and efficiency (Seeman, Nidich, & Banta, 1972; Jonsson, 1975; Alexander et al., 1993);
- improved health (Orme-Johnson, 1987; Herron, 1993);
- increased integration of personality and growth of self-actualization (Alexander, Rainforth, & Gelderloos, 1991; Chandler, 1991); and
- reduction in negative personality characteristics such as anxiety, neuroticism, and drug abuse (Eppley, Abrams, and Shear, 1989; Alexander, Robinson, & Rainforth, 1994; Alexander et al., 1993).

These findings taken together indicate that experience of pure consciousness is a fundamental and powerful means of promoting human growth. This understanding that growth is promoted by the process of transcendence adds knowledge of a third major mechanism of human growth, different from interaction with an external environment and maturation. In addition to promoting growth within the cognitive and affective domain currently studied by contemporary psychology, this mechanism makes possible growth to highly integrated and comprehensive values of development, termed higher states of consciousness in Maharishi Vedic Science.

Ends of development. Knowledge of pure consciousness also fundamentally changes our understanding of the ends of human development. A basic principle of Maharishi Vedic Science is that repeated experience of pure consciousness develops a state of enlightenment in which the awareness is permanently open to the field of pure consciousness (Maharishi, 1994; see “Outcomes of Consciousness-Based Education” below). Enlightenment is a term that for Maharishi (1972, Lesson 23) encompasses three “higher” states of consciousness that are fundamentally different from the three states of consciousness familiar to contemporary psychologists—waking, dreaming, and sleeping. These are as follows: cosmic consciousness, in which pure consciousness is maintained as a continuous non-changing level of awareness along with the changing experiences of waking, dreaming, and sleeping; refined cosmic consciousness (or God consciousness) in which there is a refined perception of the objective world and expansion of love along with permanent Self awareness; and unity consciousness in which everything in creation is seen in terms of the unbounded Self. Maharishi (1995b) explains that in the highest state of enlightenment, “the total creative intelligence of the Self is fully awake on all levels of life—intellect, mind, senses, body, behavior, environment, and to the individual’s relationship with the entire cosmic life. This means that the infinite power of Natural Law is spontaneously available to the whole field of thought, speech, and action.” It is a state of complete fulfillment in which the individual is able to know anything, do anything, and

achieve anything (Maharishi, 1985). This state is the ultimate endpoint of human development and can be realized by any human being with access to education based on Maharishi Vedic Science.

Scientific research on long-term practitioners of the Transcendental Meditation and TM-Sidhi programs is now beginning to empirically verify the existence of higher states of consciousness. Groundbreaking research recently demonstrated that the EEG patterns found in individuals reporting experience of pure consciousness during sleep (a characteristic of experience in higher states of consciousness) are significantly different from those during regular sleep (Mason, 1995). Psychological research also confirms that long-term practitioners of the Transcendental Meditation and TM-Sidhi programs experience higher levels of personality development as measured by the Loevinger ego development test. Longitudinal research showed that Maharishi University of Management alumni were nearly 40 times more likely than the general population to be at the integrated or highest stage of ego development (Chandler, 1991). Other research has shown that individuals reporting sustained experiences of higher states of consciousness have greatly enhanced affective experiences characterized both by a constant internal state of well-being that is independent of events in the external world and by richer and more differentiated emotions (Guttman, 1996). These are just a few of the studies indicating that individuals practicing the Transcendental Meditation and TM-Sidhi programs are growing to higher states of consciousness.

The significance of pure consciousness for learning. Learning is a specific case of growth. Just as pure consciousness has important implications for growth in general, it also has important implications for learning. As John Dewey noted (Dewey, 1938/71) and Maharishi has developed at length over the last 30 years (Dillbeck and Dillbeck, 1987), learning involves an interaction between a subject and an object. Effective education must take into account both poles in the education process—the organization of subject matter and the receptivity of the learner. Progressive educators (Dewey, 1938/71) focus on enlivening receptivity through relating subject matter to the life experience of the child, which enhances interest. If a student is interested in the subject matter, receptivity will be increased and learning improved.

Experience of pure consciousness provides an even more profound way to enliven receptivity: It directly develops the cognitive qualities—such as intelligence, memory, alertness, and creativity—and affective qualities—such as self-concept and well-being—that enhance learning (Dillbeck and Dillbeck, 1987). This is highly significant for education because entering levels of cognitive and emotional development largely determine student success in school (Bloom, 1976). Whereas other educational programs depend for their effectiveness on the pre-existing receptivity, intelligence, and creativity of the students, extensive research on the Transcendental Meditation program indicates that it develops these characteristics in all students irrespective of their background, attitudes, or abilities. With the knowledge of development of consciousness provided by Maharishi Vedic Science, we do not need to accept human potential as fixed; it can be expanded, and with this expansion comes increased capacity for learning. In Maharishi's words, practice of the Transcendental Meditation program "expands the container of knowledge" (Maharishi, 1972, Lesson 9).

Experience of pure consciousness enhances learning in another way: It develops the full range of subjective knowledge. As Maharishi notes, "Life as such is not only objective; life is subjective and objective both together" (Maharishi, 1985, p. xii). A major failing of modern education, as discussed above, is that it does not provide knowledge of the knower, the subjective side of knowledge. This crucial omission is rectified by experience of pure consciousness, because it is the Self and thus this experience brings knowledge of the Self.

The intellectual understanding of pure consciousness provided by the Maharishi Science of Creative IntelligenceSM (SCI) course also enhances learning by offering universal principles of Natural Law through which any new material can be connected to the student's personal experience. In this course, Maharishi points out that the same principles that uphold the structure of a poem uphold the structure of the universe and our own intimate experience of growth of consciousness. SCI principles such as *the whole is more than the sum of the parts*, *every action has a reaction*, and *rest and activity are the steps of progress* are found in all disciplines. The principle of rest and activity, for example, can be observed in the growth spurts of a plant, phases of activity and consolidation during periods of social reform, and in the progression of a symphony. Growth of consciousness also requires rest (experience of pure consciousness) alternated with activity in order to stabilize pure consciousness in daily life. Knowledge and experience of unifying principles, like rest and activity, provide a structure into which all new knowledge can be fit. Because learning involves the relation of new information to an existing structure of knowledge, intellectual familiarity with universal principles facilitates learning in any field. The process of learning becomes very

comfortable because all knowledge can be related to ourselves. (See article by Boothby in this issue for fuller discussion of this point.)

From the above discussion, we see that the knowledge of pure consciousness provided by Maharishi Vedic Science—both experiential and intellectual—has great significance for our understanding of development and learning. Experience and understanding of pure consciousness constitutes a third major mechanism for development, different from maturation and interaction with the environment, and also extends our understanding of the endpoint of human development to include higher states of consciousness. Experience of pure consciousness promotes the learning of objective knowledge through enhancing receptivity. It fulfills the student's desire for complete knowledge by also providing subjective knowledge of the Self. Intellectual knowledge of pure consciousness related to the SCI principles promotes learning by providing a framework for understanding that allows students to more readily relate knowledge to themselves. These contributions of Maharishi Vedic Science to the understanding of development and learning are highly significant. They form the basis for a new educational paradigm that allows a reconceptualization of the goals of education.

Nature of the Individual

The third basic educational concept that is transformed in light of an understanding of pure consciousness from Maharishi Vedic Science is the concept of the individual. This understanding is fundamental to education because all education has as an aim the development of the individual. The way one views human nature and human potential impacts the way one perceives education. Rousseau, for example, viewed human nature as innately good but corrupted by society. Therefore, education had for him the role of protecting the individual from the negative influences of society so that natural development could proceed unimpeded (Rousseau, 1980). As another example, many societies historically have felt that women have not had the same potential as men. Consequently, women have been excluded from the education process.

As the discussion of pure consciousness in the previous section indicated, knowledge of pure consciousness contributes significantly to our understanding of human nature. Most fundamentally, we see that pure consciousness is the full potential of the knower, the Self. Without knowledge of pure consciousness, there can be no Self knowledge. In addition, we have seen that the true nature of human potential, the endpoint of human development, is enlightenment. The state of enlightenment is the only natural state of life, according to Maharishi, because it is unnatural for human life to be segregated from its holistic basis. As he explains in *Vedic Knowledge for Everyone*:

This segregation of the individual from the cosmos is very unnatural, and anything that is unnatural is non-evolutionary, non-progressive, and damaging to life, because the very nature of life is to evolve. (p. 200)

This recognition that the endpoint of human development is enlightenment or higher states of consciousness is highly significant because it changes the way we think of the goal of education. Goals have a very important role in education. As Lawrence Kohlberg notes:

The most important issue confronting educators and educational theorists is the choice of ends for the educational process. Without clear and rational educational goals, it becomes impossible to decide which educational programs achieve objectives of general import and which teach incidental facts and attitudes of dubious worth. (Kohlberg & Mayer, 1978, p. 123)

One can formulate educational goals in different ways, from individualistic or societal viewpoints, but there is one formulation that encompasses both: the full development of individual potential. As Dewey says, "Here individualism and socialism are at one. Only by being true to the full growth of all the individuals who make it up, can society by any chance be true to itself" (Dewey, 1980, p. 5).

With the knowledge of pure consciousness provided by Maharishi Vedic Science, we can now recognize that enlightenment is the most important end for education. As Maharishi writes, "An individual whose consciousness is fully developed is an enlightened individual, and this full enlightenment, which develops the ability to achieve anything, would be the goal of education" (1994, p. 113). Only with the understanding that enlightenment is the highest goal of education is it possible to structure a truly effective educational system capable of realizing the full potential of both individuals and the societies they compose.

Implications of Pure Consciousness for Educational Practice

The significant implications that knowledge of pure consciousness has for basic educational concepts translate into significant differences for educational practice. These differences in practice fall into four interrelated areas that together comprise Consciousness-Based education—a distinct system of education based on knowledge of pure consciousness:

- 1) Technologies for experiencing consciousness (e.g., the Maharishi Transcendental Meditation and TM-Sidhi programs);
- 2) New courses added to the curriculum to give intellectual understanding of consciousness (e.g., the Maharishi Science of Creative Intelligence course);
- 3) New approaches to the teaching of traditional subject matter (including a variety of Consciousness-Based teaching tools and strategies);
- 4) Prevention-oriented health education (also known as the Maharishi Vedic Approach to HealthSM program).

Technologies for experiencing consciousness

The discussion in the previous section of the implications of pure consciousness for our understanding of knowledge and human potential indicates that experience of pure consciousness must be basic to education. This experience is necessary both to have complete knowledge, because knowledge is dependent on consciousness, and in order to achieve the goal of education, realization of full human potential in enlightenment. For this reason, Maharishi emphasizes that the self-referral experience of consciousness should be the essence of education:

The process of education is to bring the awareness to this level of pure intelligence, self-referral intelligence, self-referral consciousness—Transcendental Consciousness—and let the awareness be the lively embodiment of total knowledge—pure knowledge fully awake in its infinite organizing power—so that every state of consciousness is always lively in its infinite organizing power.

Education, therefore, is to bring the awareness from knowing anything else (object-referral consciousness) to knowing oneself (self-referral consciousness, subject-referral consciousness). (1994, pp. 110–111)

The Sanskrit term that captures the essence of education for Maharishi is *nivartadhwam*, which he translates as “return” or “transcend.” In *Vedic Knowledge for Everyone*, he refers to it as “the one word expression of my Absolute Theory of Education.” He says that the “total dynamics of education is contained in this one word of Rk Veda—*Nivartadhwam*” (p. 324).

Given the centrality of the experience of consciousness for education, technologies for developing consciousness become central to educational practice. Maharishi emphasizes that two technologies are particularly important:

- 1) Practice of the Transcendental Meditation and TM-Sidhi programs;
- 2) Reading the Vedic Literature on the basis of this practice.

The Transcendental Meditation and TM-Sidhi programs have already been introduced. They allow the mind to directly experience pure consciousness and train the mind to think from this field. Reading the Vedic Literature after practicing these techniques is another powerful technology because, as Maharishi explains, the Vedic Literature is the sound of the self-interacting dynamics of pure consciousness. (See Sands article in this issue.) The Vedic Literature has the status of being *apaurusheya* or “uncreated” by human minds. It is cognized by highly enlightened individuals who have the ability to open their awareness fully to the eternal reality of pure consciousness and record the fluctuations of that field. The consequence of reading the Vedic Literature is then the enlivenment in the consciousness and physiology that quality of intelligence associated with the particular branch one is reading. As Maharishi writes:

Every aspect of the Vedic Literature expresses a specific quality of consciousness. Reading every aspect of the Vedic Literature as it flows and progresses in perfect sequential order has the effect of regulating and balancing the functioning of the brain physiology and training consciousness, the mind, always to flow in perfect accordance with the evolutionary direction of Natural Law.

This training of the mind fulfills the purpose of education by fully training the student to think and act spontaneously according to Natural Law. (pp. 144–145)

With recognition of the importance of experiencing pure consciousness for education, technologies for developing consciousness take a central place in the curriculum. At Consciousness-Based institutions such as Maharishi University of Management and Maharishi School of the Age of Enlightenment, a research in consciousness course is a mandatory, academically evaluated part of the curriculum.

Courses for intellectual understanding of consciousness

Maharishi emphasizes that both experience and intellectual understanding are necessary for complete knowledge (Maharishi, 1994). This is true equally for subjective and objective knowledge. To fulfill the need for intellectual understanding of pure consciousness, Maharishi, as mentioned earlier, developed the Science of Creative Intelligence® (SCI) course. At the college level, this is taught as a 33-lesson course; at the K–12 level, this is a class with special themes that is taught continuously throughout the year and adapted to age level. SCI serves as a bridge between the main principles of modern science and Vedic Science. In the SCI course students gain a deeper understanding of themselves and Nature by focusing on the basic principles and qualities of consciousness that structure the whole creation. This knowledge thus provides a basis for connecting all subjects to each other and to the student's own Self, which is demonstrated to be the source of all the qualities of consciousness.

In addition to the SCI course, undergraduate students at the college level take a core course program, which presents an overview of the academic disciplines and shows how they all relate to consciousness. This program makes clear how consciousness manifests in all the different disciplines and throughout life.

Courses in Vedic ScienceSM also provide both intellectual knowledge and further experience of consciousness, and describe its relevance to different areas of life. All 40 areas of the Vedic Literature have value for life, but Maharishi has particularly emphasized the importance of the following areas of study in Vedic Science:

- *Maharishi Ayur-Veda*SM—a prevention-oriented approach to individual and collective health that is holistic, time-tested, free from harmful side effects, cost effective, and easily applied. This is one aspect of the Maharishi Vedic Approach to Health program (Maharishi 1995c, p. 422–424).
- *Maharishi Jyotish*SM—the Vedic system of predicting the future. This study, along with Maharishi Yagya procedures—Vedic performances—allows an individual to avert potential problems and promote good fortune (Maharishi 1995c, p. 426, 428).
- *Maharishi Sthapatya Veda*SM—Vedic architecture. This area of knowledge provides principles of designing, orienting, and constructing buildings and cities in harmony with Natural Law, so that every structure is life-supporting and auspicious for its inhabitants (Maharishi 1995c, p. 428).
- *Creating Coherence in Collective Consciousness*—knowledge of how large groups of Yogic Flyers, operating from pure consciousness, radiate an influence of coherence and harmony into the whole society. This is knowledge of the most fundamental means of bringing positive social transformation (Maharishi 1995c, p. 63–65). (See also discussion in final section.)

New approaches to teaching traditional subject matter

In addition to new curriculum that provides experiential and intellectual knowledge of pure consciousness, Consciousness-Based educational institutions also incorporate new approaches to teaching traditional subject matter that help to promote growth of consciousness and enhance learning.

Emphasis on wholeness of awareness. Structuring wholeness in the awareness of the student is a basic aim of Consciousness-Based education. Wholeness is one of the qualities of pure consciousness that is directly experienced by everyone who practices the Transcendental Meditation technique. It gradually grows through repeated practice, leading to an integrated state of life “in which all the material, intellectual, and spiritual aspects of life are beautifully correlated” (Maharishi, 1994, pp. 145–146). It is a balanced, comprehensive state of awareness capable of focusing sharply while at the same time never losing connection of part to whole. Wholeness of awareness is the foundation of wisdom because wisdom is the ability to put particulars in their broader context.

This comprehensive state of awareness is achieved primarily through Maharishi's technologies for experience of consciousness but can also be enhanced through curriculum and teaching techniques that emphasize wholeness. Teaching in this way both aids learning, because learning involves relating new parts

to existing wholes, and helps structure holistic awareness. Strategies for promoting wholeness used in Consciousness-Based education include:

- *Main point charts*. These charts, which are used in every class, have a wholeness point at the beginning which summarizes the most important point of the class and several main points, which provide wholenesses for each part of the lecture.
- *Course overview charts*. These charts present the wholeness of each course at a glance. They include the topic of each day's presentation and homework assignments.
- *Block system of instruction*. This system is used at the collegiate level and involves teaching only one course at a time. It preserves focus and prevents the fragmentation of the awareness which comes when one is taking several courses simultaneously. This approach also makes learning more stress free, because one never has competing assignments from different classes.

Connecting all knowledge to the Self. Because the Self is pure consciousness and pure consciousness is the source of all disciplines, it is possible to relate all knowledge to the Self (Maharishi, 1994). This is another general means of maintaining wholeness of knowledge in Consciousness-Based education, because the Self is the ultimate wholeness. This approach to teaching also fosters an intimacy with knowledge for the student, which makes learning more fulfilling and easy.

Modern theorists understand that learning is fundamentally a process of making connections, of connecting new information to existing structures of knowledge that are meaningful to the learner (Caine & Caine, 1991). A system of education which connects all knowledge to the Self thus facilitates making meaningful connections and enhances the learning process. In addition, Maharishi notes that this approach to learning allows each discipline to be a means of developing the Self, of structuring enlightenment.

Every discipline becomes a means to develop the creative potential of the conscious mind, to enliven the Self.

Whatever the students study, in the process of gaining specific knowledge of different subjects, they grow in the awareness that the center of all knowledge is present within themselves. This means that if they study 30 different disciplines, then 30 times the Self is connected with the discipline, and with this, all the knowledge remains intimately connected with the knower. (quoted in Dillbeck & Dillbeck, 1987, p. 405)

There are several methodologies in Consciousness-Based education for connecting knowledge to the Self:

- *SCI Points*. All main point charts include points from the Science of Creative Intelligence (SCI) course that correspond to the discipline main points. SCI points present a broader perspective on the discipline point by expressing a universal principle of the functioning of consciousness presented in the SCI course relevant to the discipline point. These principles, which describe orderly growth in Nature, are experienced as the dynamics of the student's own consciousness. The principles therefore provide a means of directly connecting material from academic disciplines with the student's own life. They also allow students to see connections between different areas of knowledge, and thus contribute to appreciation of the unity of knowledge. (See Boothby and Fairchild/Setzer articles in this issue for examples.)
- *Unified Field Charts*. Unified Field Charts present at a glance the knowledge of a discipline or subject area and show its relationship to the Unified Field of Natural Law. The left side of the chart presents the subject matter of the discipline; the right side represents the subjective approach to knowledge through Maharishi Vedic Science and shows how the mind connects to the Unified Field. The discipline knowledge is organized so that the most abstract, foundational areas are at the bottom and the most expressed areas are at the top. The whole discipline is shown to arise from the Unified Field of Natural Law. Maharishi describes the use of these charts in the following passage from *Vedic Knowledge for Everyone*:

Intellectual understanding of total knowledge is fully actualized through a simple and unique approach of teaching. Every part of knowledge, unfolding day by day in the classrooms, is connected with total knowledge.

This is accomplished by the teacher during the last minute of every class, when he shows all the students a chart that gives a vision of the connectedness of the knowledge of the lesson with the knowledge of the corresponding discipline, and also shows the connectedness of the discipline with the total knowledge of all disciplines at the common basis of all disciplines in consciousness.

In this way the WHOLE (of knowledge) is not allowed to be shadowed by the PART (of knowledge), and the PART is always understood with reference to the WHOLE. (pp. 22–23)

These charts provide an antidote to the problem of fragmentation of knowledge that so afflicts contemporary education.

- *Unity Charts*. These charts are used to conclude each lecture. They summarize a central theme of the lesson from four different perspectives, each reflecting greater subtlety and power. The two deepest levels connect the theme to experience of pure consciousness, allowing students to relate central themes of the course to their own Self.

Nurturing the most refined level of feeling. Upholding and refining the level of feeling is important for Consciousness-Based education because of the contribution of this level to holistic growth of the individual. Maharishi describes the activity of feeling and emotion as the finest level of activity and states that it has an important role in culturing the complete physiological integration necessary for fully mature enlightenment (Maharishi, 1967/72, p. 315). If a teacher's communication achieves an effect but damages the level of feeling, then it damages the student's growth. For this reason, it is important to consistently nourish the feelings of others.

As a consequence of this emphasis, teachers in Consciousness-Based institutions always strive to have a nurturing attitude toward their students, uplifting and supporting even when correcting. Practice of the Transcendental Meditation technique becomes important for teachers in this context because of the refining effect it has on the teachers' consciousness. Maharishi explains this point in *Science of Being and Art of Living*:

This quality of kindness and delicacy of the heart develops when the heart begins to melt at the experience of bliss and great happiness of transcendental Being. The heart becomes softer and then, by nature, a man cannot be harsh or displeasing to anyone. Speech will naturally flow in all harmony. (p. 148)

This softening of the heart along with the revitalizing influence of Transcendental Meditation practice insures that the teacher is most capable of responding in a positive way to the actions of the students.

Concern for the feeling level, and for refining consciousness generally, also affects choice of curriculum materials and the way the learning environment is structured in Consciousness-Based educational institutions. Teachers seek out literature which nourishes the students' emotions. Literature with low or depressing values is avoided as much as possible, in favor of literature which is uplifting and positive. A basic principle of Maharishi Vedic Science is that "what we see we become," what we put our attention on becomes stronger in our lives. This principle reflects Maharishi's more general analysis that the way we know anything is by the awareness taking the form of the object of perception (Maharishi, 1980). It is important therefore to expose students to positive, life-supporting influences that will support their growth of consciousness. By maximizing students' growth of consciousness, the teacher strengthens students from within, thus enabling them to handle the negative situations they will have to face in life. In this regard the environment is also important. Recent research confirms that peripheral perception influences the learning process (Caine & Caine, 1991). The classroom, therefore, needs to be orderly, well lighted, and attractive as possible.

The value of refinement in the learning environment has been beautifully stated by Plato in the *Republic*, an educational treatise that emphasizes the existence of an absolute and describes the importance of gaining knowledge of it:

Rather we must seek out those craftsmen whose instinct guides them to whatsoever is lovely and gracious; so that our young men, dwelling in a wholesome climate, may drink in good from every quarter, whence, like a breeze bearing health from happy regions, some influence from noble works constantly falls upon eye and ear from childhood upward, and imperceptibly draws them into sympathy and harmony with the beauty of reason, whose impress they take. . . . Moreover, a proper training in this kind makes a man quick to perceive any defect or ugliness in art or in nature. Such deformity will rightly disgust him. Approving all that is lovely, he will welcome it home with joy into his soul and, nourished thereby, grow into a man of a noble spirit. (Plato, 1982, p. 90)

Nurturing the physiology

Education devoted to the development of consciousness must be devoted to care of the physiology because physiology supports experience of consciousness. As Maharishi explains in his commentary on the *Bhagavad-Gita*:

for any experience there must be a corresponding state of the nervous system. The most normal state of the human nervous system is that which can support 'contact with Brahman', the omnipresent Reality. It must necessarily be a state of extreme refinement and flexibility, and this is possible only when the nervous system is entirely pure. (p. 439)

Maharishi (1972) considers stress and fatigue clouding the nervous system as two of the biggest barriers to clear experience of pure consciousness. For this reason, Consciousness-Based education places strong emphasis on promoting optimum physical health. Elements of Consciousness-Based education that support the physiology include the following:

- *Transcendental Meditation and TM-Sidhi programs.* Maharishi teaches that the most profound way of refining the nervous system is through bringing it in contact with pure consciousness. Extensive scientific research on the Transcendental Meditation and TM-Sidhi programs demonstrate that they produce deep levels of physiological rest, optimize orderly functioning of the nervous system, and enhance physical health (Wallace, 1986).
- *Balanced daily routine.* The most important aspect of the daily routine is proper rest at night. Early to bed and early to rise are encouraged to promote maximum clarity of consciousness.
- *Diet.* Diet has an important influence on health and clarity of mind. Fresh, organic foods are encouraged. In addition, vegetarian diet is recommended because it is easily digested and most healthy.
- *No drugs or alcohol.* Drugs and alcohol have a well-established, deleterious effect on mind and body. They are contrary to growth of consciousness and strongly discouraged for students in Consciousness-Based education.
- *Exercise.* Exercise promotes integration of mind and body, as well as better health. Regular physical exercise is recommended, especially physical exercise that integrates mind and body, such as yoga asanas.

Outcomes of Consciousness-Based Education

All problems in life—whether they are individual life, in the collective life of a nation, or in the life of an individual—are the problems of education. And the problems of education are the problems of knowledge. (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, 1985, p. xii)

As this paper noted at the beginning, education is highly valued by societies for its outcomes—its contribution to individual and social life. Maharishi's central contribution to education is the understanding that a missing fundamental—understanding and experience of pure consciousness—must be added to education if it is to fulfill its potential for enhancing life. Educational systems and societies everywhere suffer from problems because they lack adequate knowledge of the foundations of education—the nature of knowledge, the process of development, and human nature—which come only with an understanding of pure consciousness. Consciousness-Based education, because it is based on complete knowledge, on knowledge of pure consciousness, is capable of greatly enhancing the outcomes of education for the individual and the society and thereby bringing fulfillment to education.

Individual Outcomes

The individual outcomes of Consciousness-Based education can be divided into two areas: learning outcomes and development outcomes. The two areas are closely related because, as discussed in the second section, one's level of intellectual and emotional development strongly influences one's ability to learn. Because educators tend to be more expressly concerned with learning outcomes, these will be discussed first; implications for promoting development, culminating in enlightenment, will conclude this discussion of individual outcomes of Consciousness-Based education.

Improved Academic Achievement. As discussed in the section "Significance of Pure Consciousness for Basic Education Concepts," experience of pure consciousness enhances learning by developing the cognitive and affective prerequisites for effective learning, including intelligence, creativity, field independence, memory, health, and emotional stability. As one would expect, therefore, when students begin practice of the Transcendental Meditation program, their academic performance improves. This has been reported in research done both at the collegiate and pre-collegiate level by researchers in North America, Europe, and Asia. Kember (1985) showed significant improvement relative to controls in grade point average in graduate students randomly assigned to begin the Transcendental Meditation program.

Similar improvements in academic performance at the undergraduate level were found in retrospective studies done by Collier (1973) and Heaton and Orme-Johnson (1974).

Similar changes have been seen at the pre-collegiate level. Kory and Hufnagel (1976), even with relatively small groups of students, found significant increases over just one semester in students at two of three high schools who learned the Transcendental Meditation technique as part of an SCI course. At a secondary school in India, where all 5,000 students learned the Transcendental Meditation technique, academic performance on country-wide exams improved noticeably and more students began achieving national academic honors than in any other non-governmental school in India (Dillbeck & Dillbeck, 1987, p. 415). In an inner city school in the United States, performance of students in a 6th grade that had learned the Transcendental Meditation technique improved markedly on the California Test of Basic Skills, compared to a previous administration and to other 6th grades in the city. Students at this school who practiced Transcendental Meditation, said the following about their experience:

- “I have more energy in gym and I think better in my classes all day.”
- “I am more into what I am doing.”
- “I get energy the whole day.”
- “I feel relaxed and ready to learn.”
- “I feel more aware.”
- “I felt very happy for the first time.”
- “I feel like I can do anything at least better than I have.”
- “I feel different. I feel smart.”
- “I don’t act up as much.”

One student, in the week following Transcendental Meditation instruction, reported getting a 94 on a test in his science class. He had failed every previous test in the class and attributed the change to practice of Transcendental Meditation.

The most powerful demonstration of the efficacy of Consciousness-Based education at the pre-collegiate level comes from the first Consciousness-Based primary and secondary school in the world, the Maharishi School of the Age of Enlightenment in Fairfield, Iowa. The Maharishi School, in which all students, faculty, and staff practice the Transcendental Meditation technique, has a liberal admissions policy and the standardized test scores of entering students are close to the national average. The achievements of this school, therefore, reflect the quality of its educational program. This is substantiated by research on new students, which indicates that students make significant gains relative to age norms—from 10 to 15%—on the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills and the Iowa Tests of Educational Development over the course of their first year at the Maharishi School (Nidich, Nidich, & Rainforth, 1986; Nidich & Nidich, 1989). In addition, these researchers found that length of time practicing the Transcendental Meditation technique correlated with overall academic achievement scores and added significantly to the prediction of academic achievement beyond that which could be accounted for by IQ scores alone (Nidich & Nidich, 1987). This again indicates that growth of consciousness is the key factor behind improved academic performance. General achievements include:

- Upper School classes consistently score in the 95th percentile or above in the nation on the Iowa Tests of Educational Development. In both of the last two years, 1995 and 1996, all Upper School classes, 9–12, scored in the 99th percentile on the ITED, both nationally and in Iowa.
- In seven of the last eight years, Maharishi School students have won at least one of the two first prizes in the state science and engineering fairs.
- In the last two years, individuals and groups from the school have won first places in state competitions in speech, Odyssey of the Mind (a competition in improvised creativity), spelling, the American Junior High School Mathematics Exam, the American High School Mathematics Exam, poetry and writing competitions, the Iowa History Fair, and many areas of artistic achievement.
- Over the past five years, 95% of the graduates of the Maharishi School have gone on to college.

The above findings, at both the collegiate and pre-collegiate level, indicate that giving students experience of pure consciousness is a direct means of increasing academic achievement.

Realizing the potential of human development. In today’s age of exponential knowledge and technology growth, it is widely recognized that an important aim of education must be to develop the full potential of

the individual. The best way to adequately prepare students for a future that is going to be very different from the present is to give them full command over their own powers (National Institute of Education, 1984; Hirst, 1974; Dewey, 1966). As discussed earlier, a fundamental implication of the knowledge of pure consciousness provided by Maharishi Vedic Science is that the state of full human development is enlightenment. The cognitive and affective growth mentioned above—growth in intelligence, creativity, self-actualization, field independence, etc.—are natural consequences of rapid growth of enlightenment. The state of enlightenment, however, is more than just a state of heightened intelligence and creativity—it is a qualitatively different state of life. Maharishi (1994) describes this highest endpoint of education as follows:

Ideal education is capable of providing enlightenment, which is the ‘fruit of all knowledge’, to every student. The ‘fruit of all knowledge’ is mistake-free life, fulfilling life, daily life in satisfaction and fulfillment—the natural ability to think and act in accordance with Natural Law so that one enjoys the full support of Natural Law. (pp. 114–115)

Elsewhere, Maharishi refers to the fruit of all knowledge as “the ability to know anything, the ability to do anything, and the ability to achieve anything” (Maharishi, 1985, p. xiv). From these descriptions, we see several related qualities of enlightenment: the ability to achieve anything, full support of Natural Law, mistake-free life, and fulfillment.

- *Ability to achieve anything.* Pure consciousness, as discussed in the first section, is a field of infinite energy, intelligence, and power. Knowledge of this field, both experiential and intellectual, therefore, transforms the knower, fully unfolding his creative intelligence and making him master over this most basic field of life. Because pure consciousness is the source of all creation, full mastery over it brings full command over nature. Maharishi (1985) explains:

Knowledge of consciousness is that one knowledge whereby the entire field of creation could be handled. It is like handling the root of a tree and thereby handling all aspects of the different branches and leaves and petals, red, green, and brown . . . So by handling consciousness, it is completely within the grip of everyone to have the main switchboard of the whole universe within oneself. (p. xv)

Maharishi (1994) has also described the effect of full enlightenment as gaining the ability to spontaneously engage Cosmic Intelligence—pure consciousness—to act for oneself:

This ability to spontaneously utilize Cosmic Intelligence in all thoughts and actions is the ability to spontaneously engage Cosmic Intelligence, the Cosmic Performer, to perform for oneself.

‘Fruit of all knowledge’ is the ability to spontaneously live life from this level of intelligence.

Rk Veda beautifully expresses this as:

Yatinam Brahma bhavati sarathih
(Âk Veda, I.158.6)

Those established in self-referral consciousness—Cosmic Intelligence—for them, Cosmic Intelligence, the Creator, Brahma, is the charioteer, the administrator, of all their actions.

This is the fruit of absolute education, supreme education, which develops complete self-sufficiency, bestows freedom and invincibility, and places life on a pedestal of enlightenment and fulfillment. (pp. 120–121)

In this state, one has full support of Natural Law, of Cosmic Intelligence, and this support allows all desires to be achieved effortlessly.

- *Mistake-free life.* Support from Natural Law is closely connected to attunement to Natural Law. One can only gain support from Natural Law through complete attunement, through unity with this basic value of life. Perfect attunement to Natural Law allows mistake-free life. Mistakes can be defined as violations of Natural Law, actions which are not life-supporting for oneself or the environment (Maharishi, 1986). In enlightenment, thinking from the level of pure consciousness, one’s actions are always guided by the total potential of Natural Law, which makes them spontaneously right. Maharishi (1994) describes the action of the enlightened individual as follows:

He spontaneously commands situations and circumstances; he spontaneously controls his environment; his behaviour is always spontaneously nourishing to himself and everyone around him. He has the ability to spontaneously fulfill his interests without jeopardizing the interests of others. (p. 115)

The repeated use of “spontaneously” is significant. Maharishi explains that spontaneous right action, or mistake-free living, is possible because of perfect attunement with the guiding force of Natural Law. Only Natural Law, which simultaneously orchestrates the evolution of the entire universe without mistake, can guide individual life so that it is always evolutionary for oneself and the environment (Maharishi, 1986, p. 32).

• *Fulfillment.* Fulfillment, Maharishi points out, is the natural by-product of a mistake-free life in which one can know anything, do anything, and achieve anything (Maharishi, 1994). This is a life of complete freedom on all planes of life—physical, mental, and spiritual. Life in which there is no obstruction to realization of personal desire and in which personal desire is in tune with the needs of the environment is completely fulfilling.

Maharishi also points out that fulfillment in enlightenment arises from another source: the nature of pure consciousness itself. An essential quality of pure consciousness is bliss; experience of pure consciousness brings bliss to the knower (Maharishi, 1963/1995, pp. 21–22). Because the state of enlightenment is one in which the mind is permanently open to, or established in, pure consciousness, in this state, one is able “to experience the great waves of bliss in the ocean of cosmic consciousness—experience that joyfulness of eternal life which brings complete fulfillment to his existence” (Maharishi, 1967, p. 163).

In the state of complete enlightenment, unity consciousness, one’s perception is transformed so that one sees and experiences everything in terms of the bliss of pure consciousness:

The world is the active divine; everything rises as a wave on the eternal ocean of bliss consciousness. Every perception, the hearing of every word, the touch of every little particle, and the smell of whatever it may be, brings a tidal wave of the ocean of eternal bliss—in every arising of a thought, word, or action is the arising of a tide of bliss. (Maharishi, 1963/1995, p. 248)

This is the state of complete fulfillment in life. This is the goal of Consciousness-Based education on the individual level.

Student experiences of growing enlightenment. This experience of enlightenment is growing concretely in students at Consciousness-Based institutions around the world. It is experienced as growth in the ability to achieve desires, to act without making mistakes, and to enjoy increasing bliss and fulfillment in daily activity. Empirical research has documented this growth, as have interviews with students. The most striking empirical confirmation of growth to unprecedented levels of development was conducted by Howard Chandler (1991). He conducted a 10-year longitudinal study of Maharishi University of Management alumni that measured growth in ego or self development, using Loevinger’s ego development test, a projective test with high construct validity and reliability (Loevinger et al., 1985). This study, which used students from three other liberal arts universities as controls, found a highly significant mean increase of nearly one step on ego development compared to the other schools. Thirty-eight percent of those meditating achieved fully postconventional Autonomous or Integrated levels (the two highest levels on Loevinger’s test) up from 9% at pretest and compared to 1% of control samples. The proportion of Maharishi University of Management students achieving fully postconventional development is nearly four times higher than the highest percentage found in any of 30 other published studies and nearly 40 times higher than the proportion of those having achieved postconventional development in the general population. This research is consistent with other research on Maharishi University of Management students showing continued growth in IQ, at an age when IQ growth has stopped in the general population (Cranson et al., 1991), and integrated growth on measures of autonomy, spirituality, creativity, well-being, and integration beyond what is normally seen in college populations (Gelderloos, 1987; Jones, 1989).

The unique capacity of Consciousness-Based education to produce growth to enlightenment is captured even more richly by students’ descriptions of their experience. Below are a series of experiences related by students at Maharishi University of Management:

- “I find I am infinitely more effective in activity than before I began [at Maharishi University of Management]. My thinking and action toward fulfilling my desires is much clearer, simpler, and more focused. Therefore, the results I am experiencing from my activity are much more rewarding than ever before. I know this to be the result of aligning my thinking more and more to Natural Law.”
- “As I read the Vedic Literature, I experience bliss and wholeness in my awareness and in my physiology. As a result, my experience during Maharishi’s Transcendental Meditation and TM-Sidhi

programs is that of even greater bliss: program is settled and clear and bliss is very lively. In activity, my whole physiology feels more integrated and balanced; I feel a broad, immovable, very expanded awareness accompanied by a great sense of invincibility; and I feel very connected to the universe as a whole.”

- “I feel myself becoming more lively and awake to knowledge. I feel myself becoming stronger in every way. I feel an inner strength that is unshakable. I can stand up and speak with confidence, where before I was completely overshadowed. I feel blissful and loving and confident more and more.”
- “After coming to Maharishi University of Management and taking the TM-Sidhi course, I found that I was much more tolerant of conditions which used to make me angry, sad, or impatient. Moreover, I found that I appreciated the good things in life much more. Now I see beauty in more of my surroundings. . . . I am more patient with others, less critical of my actions, yet, at the same time, continuing to grow at a strong pace. I feel, and others have pointed out to me, that I am growing faster and overall am much happier than I was before coming to Maharishi University of Management.”
- “I have learned an incredible amount here at Maharishi University of Management. Not only in terms of the knowledge of my discipline but also a deep and profound understanding about myself, about my own great potential. I have always been shy and afraid to step out into action for fear of failure. But at Maharishi University of Management that potential and power inside of me has woken up and I have had no choice but to put it to work and enjoy it. With this realization of the power of the Self has come a new found confidence that I can and will accomplish anything.”
- “Since coming to Maharishi University of Management five years ago, the experience of bliss in activity has been greatly increased. This is a unique experience of life, not comparable to any normal experience. It is the beginning of the fulfillment of life, and at Maharishi University of Management, that fullness of experience is amplified by meditating in the dome and sharing daily activity with others who are experiencing the same growth.”

These quotes provide concrete examples of the unique outcomes of Consciousness-Based education in the lives of individuals. One can imagine that the quality of society would be dramatically improved if composed of such individuals.

Ideal Society

The quality of a society reflects the quality of the individuals who compose it. The ability of Consciousness-Based education to create fully enlightened individuals, therefore, transforms our understanding of the potential of social life. Societies everywhere today are shrouded by problems, Maharishi (1994) notes, because they do not have the ability to develop fulfilled individuals living spontaneously in tune with Natural Law. Societies populated by enlightened individuals will be very different—they will be enlightened societies. “When man functions in full accord with Natural Law, there will be no violation of Natural Law. Society everywhere will be free from negativity, free from suffering. That will be the blossoming of the Age of Enlightenment brought about by [consciousness-] based education” (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, 1986, p. 101).

Because pure consciousness is a field of infinite correlation—the common source of all individual consciousness and behavior—it is only necessary for a small percentage of a society to experience pure consciousness through regular practice of the Transcendental Meditation and TM-Sidhi programs in order to generate a positive influence in the whole society (Maharishi, 1994; see Alexander et al. in this issue). Maharishi illustrates this phenomenon, referred to as the Maharishi Effect, by an analogy. When one drops a pebble onto the surface of a still pond, the whole surface of the pond is enlivened. Similarly, the entire underlying field of pure consciousness is enlivened when individuals transcend and experience it. When, for a given population, a critical mass of people practice the Transcendental Meditation and TM-Sidhi programs together, the enlivenment of the field of consciousness is enough to influence the consciousness and physiology of every individual in that population, even those not meditating. This critical mass has been found to be one percent of a population practicing the Transcendental Meditation program or the square root of one percent practicing the more advanced TM-Sidhi program together. More than 40 rigorously controlled studies have shown that when the requisite number practice these technologies, there are reductions in negative tendencies such as crime, violence, sickness, and accident rates, and increases in

positive indicators such as political cooperation and economic indices (Orme-Johnson, 1992; Orme-Johnson et al., 1988).

This groundbreaking research suggests a very direct and achievable way of creating an ideal society: establish groups of individuals practicing the Transcendental Meditation and TM-Sidhi programs. Schools and universities are the natural sites for these groups because of the value that practice of these technologies has for individual development and learning. Students and faculty can practice the Transcendental Meditation and TM-Sidhi programs for their own benefit and create the Maharishi Effect as a side benefit for the society. Because only 7,000 individuals practicing the TM-Sidhi program together can positively influence the whole world's population, establishing groups at large universities around the world can quickly change the direction of human life everywhere on earth.

The potential of educational institutions to create enlightened individuals and generate the Maharishi Effect means that the goal of education, from a societal perspective, should be nothing less than to create an ideal, problem-free society. On a global level, Maharishi refers to this as Heaven on Earth, a world characterized by "all good to everyone, and non-good to no one" (Nader, 1995, p. 5). Maharishi described this ultimate outcome of Consciousness-Based education more than three decades ago in his Introduction to the *Science of Being and Art of Living*:

A new humanity will be born, fuller in conception and richer in experience and accomplishments in all fields. Joy of life will belong to every man, love will dominate human society, truth and virtue will reign in the world, peace on earth will be permanent, and all will live in fulfillment in fullness of life in [enlightenment]. (1995, p. xliii)

Conclusion

Education has the potential to greatly improve the quality of individual and social life if based on the proper foundations. Maharishi Vedic Science provides this foundation—knowledge and experience of pure consciousness. This fundamental knowledge brings fulfillment to the field of education by providing an adequate understanding of the foundational concepts upon which education is based. The basic educational concepts of knowledge, development, learning, and human potential cannot be adequate without an understanding of pure consciousness because pure consciousness is the ultimate reality that underlies them all. With this understanding comes knowledge of the holistic basis of knowledge, the nature of full human potential, and the means to achieve it. This knowledge provides a firm foundation for educational practice, a foundation that allows for full development of the individual and society.

There is an old saying that it takes a new seed to yield a new crop. With the knowledge of pure consciousness integrated into the educational system, the potential harvest is rich indeed—a new era for humankind, the dawning of Heaven on Earth.

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