Maharishi Vedic Psychology Brings Fulfillment to the Aspirations of Twentieth-Century Psychology

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Abstract

Twentieth-century psychology has studied specific active processes of knowing—such as perceptions, thoughts, or feelings—but lacked an understanding of deeper levels of the mind underlying and integrating all active mental processes. Therefore, it has spawned isolated areas of investigation rather than successful grand theories. Maharishi Vedic Psychology provides complete knowledge and experience of transcendental consciousness, the cosmic psyche, at the basis of the individual psyche. The cosmic psyche is identified as an unrestricted field of intelligence and creativity at the foundation of not only human nature but Nature’s functioning as a whole. The applied aspect of Maharishi Vedic Psychology—which includes the Transcendental Meditation and TM-Sidhi programs—provides the means by which the cosmic psyche can be fully enlivened in daily life through the progressive unfoldment of four higher states of consciousness beyond waking, sleeping, and dreaming. By providing complete knowledge and direct experience of consciousness, Maharishi Vedic Psychology resolves the fundamental questions plaguing twentieth-century psychology. (1) Who is the knower, or self? Maharishi Vedic Psychology reveals that the ultimate status of the knower is the cosmic psyche. (2) What is the full range of mental processes through which one can know the self and the world? It describes a hierarchy of levels of mind from the most fundamental self-referral level of the cosmic psyche through progressively more expressed levels of functioning comprising: The individual ego, feeling, discriminating intellect, thinking mind, perception, physiological functioning, behavior, and ultimately the whole environment. (3) Can ideal behavior and relationships be developed with others? By fully attuning individual awareness with the cosmic psyche—the source of order and progress in Nature—thought and action becomes spontaneously progressive and nourishing to all levels of life. (4) Can we create a truly peaceful and harmonious world? By enlivening the underlying unified field of consciousness, the cosmic psyche, in only a small proportion of the population, an orderly and harmonious influence is created throughout society as a whole, establishing the basis for a heavenly life on earth. Over 500 scientific studies have verified the unique effectiveness of the applied programs of Maharishi Vedic Psychology in addressing these questions and solving the fundamental problems facing the individual and society.
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Psychology emerged at the turn of this century with the mission of applying the tools of modern science to address the grand unanswered questions in philosophy: who is the self (knower), what is the full range of mental processes through which one can know the world (processes of knowing), and how we can develop ideal relationships with others (the known). It considered consciousness as its constitutive issue in a like manner that energy and matter were for physics, and envisioned purely psychological laws that could explain mental events (James, 1890; Miller, 1981). The definition of consciousness embraced by the field has shaped the questions that were asked, the models that were developed and tested, and the practical applications that were generated.

Despite its lofty goals, twentieth-century psychology has not solved the questions which motivated its inception. Twentieth-century psychology has failed because it was based on a limited understanding of consciousness. It studied active processes of knowing—perceptions, thoughts, or feelings—and lacked awareness of deeper levels of the mind underlying active mental processes. Because its understanding of consciousness has been incomplete, psychology has remained a fragmented study of more superficial expressed aspects of the individual and has spawned only isolated areas of investigation, rather than successful grand theories. Working from fragmented models, the complex and multi-dimensional problems facing the individual and society have not been adequately addressed. The basic argument of this paper is that through understanding of a unified level of consciousness posited to underlie all aspects of life—mental, physical, behavioral, and environmental—one can answer the fundamental questions of psychology and fulfill its practical promise to mankind. This full understanding of consciousness is the contribution that Maharishi Mahesh Yogi has made to bring fulfillment to the aspirations of twentieth-century psychology, as formally structured in Maharishi Vedic Psychology.

The contemporary view in neuroscience is that consciousness is produced by the functioning of the nervous system (e.g., Gazzaniga, 1997). In contrast, Maharishi Vedic Psychology proposes that consciousness is a fundamental universal field that underlies and gives rise to all individual nervous systems and psyches (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, 1963, p. 61–63). Maharishi Vedic Psychology gives complete knowledge and experience of this transcendental field of consciousness, which it calls the cosmic psyche, at the basis of individual thoughts and feelings. The cosmic psyche is identified as an unrestricted field of intelligence and creativity at the basis of not only human nature but Nature’s functioning as a whole.

The full understanding of consciousness as inclusive of the cosmic psyche completely transforms our understanding of (1) who the knower is; (2) what is the full range of processes through which we can know the self and the world; (3) how to develop ideal behavior with others; and (4) how to create a peaceful and harmonious world. This paper explores these four basic issues from the perspective of twentieth-century psychology and then from the expanded perspective of Maharishi Vedic Psychology. The final section provides an overview of research documenting the practical benefits of application of Maharishi Vedic Psychology to the individual and to society.
Who Is the Knower?

The Existence of Pure Consciousness

In twentieth-century psychology, the concept of consciousness has been largely equated with “reportable experiences,” or with what one is “conscious of.” What one is conscious of is held to be constructed by automatic, unconscious processing of sensory information (Mandler, 1985). Marcel (1984) described this process:

Non-conscious perceptual processes automatically re-describe sensory data into every representational form and to the highest level of description available to the organism, . . . conscious perception requires a constructive act whereby perceptual hypotheses are matched against information recovered from records, and serves to structure and synthesize that information recovered from different domains. (p. 238)

Although equating consciousness with reportable contents of conscious experience may be an accurate description of experiences in waking state, in which consciousness is identified with the immediate processes and products of knowing, this is only part of the picture. Maharishi Vedic Psychology explains that human awareness can include not only these restricted, more superficial aspects of thought and action, but also the vast range of progressively subtler levels of mind, and ultimately an unbounded, unrestricted level of pure transcendental consciousness, the cosmic psyche, at their source (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, 1969, p. 240). Maharishi further explains (1986a):

When consciousness is flowing out into the field of thoughts and activity it identifies itself with many things, and this is how experience takes place. Consciousness coming back onto itself gains an integrated state. This is pure consciousness, or transcendental consciousness. (p. 25–29)

Maharishi (1994) later elaborates on this point:

When we say total reality of consciousness, we mean consciousness in its self-referral state, where consciousness knows itself and nothing else. This state of consciousness is pure consciousness. Another state of consciousness is when it knows other things, then it is known to be object-referral consciousness, because all objects can only be perceived by virtue of the intelligence quality of consciousness. (p. 54)

Twentieth-century psychology has only studied that part of the individual psyche that feels, thinks, perceives, and acts. Maharishi Vedic Psychology calls this the lower self. According to Maharishi (1969):

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. . . . 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. 249)

Twentieth-century psychology has lacked awareness of deeper levels of the mind, and was completely unaware of the cosmic psyche, our higher Self. As a consequence, it has not been able to accurately grasp the nature of consciousness.

For example, the early experimental psychologists (e.g., Wundt, 1907) tried to identify the elements that gave rise to conscious thoughts and experiences. They designed simple
tasks, and asked subjects to introspect about (report) their experiences, and to attempt to identify the building blocks of their conscious thoughts and perceptions. However, introspection was unreliable and results could not be replicated even by the same trained researcher performing the same task. Moreover, the ultimate source of these elements of thoughts and experiences remained unexplored. Maharishi (1963, p. 103) has explained that it is not possible to experience the silent source of thought while remaining in active thinking processes (such as introspection).

Maharishi emphasizes that only by completely transcending mental activity, can the individual psyche experience the cosmic psyche at the source of all mental processes. Maharishi Vedic Psychology includes a technology—the Transcendental Meditation® technique—that effortlessly identifies the individual psyche with the cosmic psyche, the field of pure consciousness at the source of thought. Maharishi (1976) describes the Transcendental Meditation technique in this way:

The Transcendental Meditation technique is an effortless procedure for allowing the excitations of the mind to gradually settle down until the least excited state of mind is reached. This is a state of inner wakefulness with no object of thought or perception, just pure consciousness aware of its own unbounded nature. It is wholeness, aware of itself, devoid of differences, beyond the division of subject and object, Transcendental Consciousness. (p. 123)

The experience of the cosmic psyche in the most settled state of our own awareness during practice of the Transcendental Meditation technique provides self validation of the assertion that the cosmic psyche is the ultimate status of the knower. This concept is explored next.

The Cosmic Psyche: The Knower of All We Experience

Twentieth-century psychology has not been able to answer the question: “Who is the Knower?” In waking state the self, or knower, is experienced as localized in time and space, and separated from the known by active processes of knowing—perceptions, thoughts, and feelings—which filter or qualify one’s experience of self and world. A fundamental limitation of the waking state is that the subject of experience is never able to directly know itself; instead knowledge of the self, like knowledge of any other object, is mediated by the active processes of knowing. All one actually knows are thoughts, perceptions, and feelings about oneself as an object, but one lacks immediate, direct experience of one’s own inner Self. Although we may try to step back from this thinking process, to discover who or what is doing the thinking, we end up thinking about our self as an object of thought, but we never catch up with the Self that is doing the thinking—the classic problem described in philosophy as an infinite regress (Gardner, 1987).

Even the field of psychology that studies the self—personality psychology—has focused almost exclusively on understanding the self as an object to be known (the “me”), as a “self-concept” or “self image.” This description has not focused on the self as the subject (the “I”), who is the locus or source of human consciousness. The need to go beyond this limited perspective is expressed in a literature review on the self by Marcus and Wurf (1987, p. 328): “The work reviewed here has yet to confront the perennially thorny issue of . . . who is this ‘I’ that is asking what is the ‘me’?” The solution to this problem offered by Maharishi Vedic Psychology is to transcend the division between
subject and object, between knower and known, and experience an underlying unbroken wholeness of awareness in which consciousness is fully awake to itself.

In his commentary on the Bhagavad-Gita, which Maharishi holds to be the central text of his Vedic Psychology, Maharishi (1969, p. 423) describes the cosmic psyche as the fundamental, transcendental reality underlying the individual psyche, the knower or the Self:

In the process of transcending all experience, the mind retires from the experience of multiplicity and gains the experience of Unity in its own individual nature. Then, transcending its individual status, its expands into cosmic Being [cosmic psyche]. This state of Being, the state of Transcendental Consciousness, is referred to by the words, ‘seeing the Self by the Self alone.’[see 6.20]

The word ‘alone’ is significant, for it emphasizes that the transcendental Self Itself forms the content of Its Being.

This state of seeing the ‘Self by the Self alone’ is brought out in this experience during practice of the Transcendental Meditation technique (in Alexander et al., in preparation).

I was meditating one late afternoon when I began to settle down much more deeply than usual. As I became more and more still, all thoughts and feelings settled and I was left in a deep quietness. All familiar boundaries that defined where I was and what time it was, and even who I was, began to fade from awareness and dissolve altogether. I was still awake and yet all that remained was my own wakefulness. The being of my wakefulness and the wakefulness of my being was what filled my awareness. There was nothing else. No trace of thought or memory entered into my awareness: even the sense of my body and its position in space had vanished. It’s not that I missed these things. It simply did not enter my awareness to miss them or not to miss them.

This experience presents the cosmic psyche as the essential nature of the individual psyche—“The being of my wakefulness and the wakefulness of my being.” It is the state of wakefulness that underlies waking processes, but is usually hidden when the attention is drawn to the changing contents in awareness.

Maharishi (1963, p. 53–56) teaches that the cosmic psyche does not need to remain hidden or overshadowed by mental processes. In higher states of consciousness, it can be integrated along with the active mental processes of waking, the illusory activity of dreaming, and the inertia of sleep.

**Higher States of Consciousness: Integration of the Cosmic Psyche with Waking, Dreaming, and Sleeping**

Maharishi, in his Vedic Psychology, delineates a new highest state of development. The conception of the highest state or endpoint of development is fundamental, for it guides our understanding about the direction, dynamics, and limits of human growth (Alexander et al., 1990), as well as shapes the application of the knowledge to individual and societal life (see papers in this volume on education and business). Moreover, all prior stages of human development may be viewed as progressive approximations of this goal. Modern psychology has been limited to the study of the three ordinary states of consciousness; the pervading viewpoint has been that fundamental intellectual development stops at adolescence (e.g., Piaget, 1969).

Maharishi Vedic Psychology describes four higher states of consciousness beyond waking, dreaming, and sleeping, based on experience of the cosmic psyche—transcendental consciousness—produced during practice of the Transcendental Meditation technique (Maharishi, 1972; cf. Alexander & Boyer, 1989). The experience of transcendental consciousness is physiologically described as a state of restful
alertness, profound rest for the body and heightened alertness for the mind (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, 1963, p. 47; Travis and Wallace, 1997). The experience of restful alertness is said to systematically remove stress from the nervous system (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, 1963, p. 118–119). When the nervous system is entirely stress-free then it naturally maintains the silent settled state of transcendental consciousness. Stable identification of individual awareness with the field of transcendental consciousness provides the foundation for development of the first stable higher state of consciousness, which Maharishi calls “cosmic consciousness” (Maharishi, 1986b). At this stage the knower can finally know himself directly, rather than indirectly through thoughts and feelings about himself. He becomes identified solely with pure consciousness, the essential nature of the Self, a self-referral field fully awake to itself. Being identified with complete silence in cosmic consciousness, one appreciates all the changing bounded states of waking, dreaming and sleeping as different from one’s own silent, non-changing status. Maharishi (1969) describes life in cosmic consciousness in this way.

Ever established in the state of pure consciousness, or eternal Being, he is simply a silent and innocent witness of what is happening through him; he is a means through which nature fulfills its purpose of evolution. His actions are a response to the needs of the time. Quite naturally he performs actions which result in every kind of good. (p. 291)

Maharishi Vedic Psychology refers to the next higher stage as refined cosmic consciousness, or “God consciousness,” since it is said to involve further refinement of perception and feeling to the finest possible level, thereby permitting appreciation of the finest values of the objective world. Maharishi (1972) describes the refinement of perception that occurs from cosmic consciousness to God consciousness:

When only the surface value of perception is open to our awareness, then the boundaries of the object are rigid and well-defined—the only qualities that are perceived are those which distinguish the object from the rest of the environment. However, when the unbounded awareness becomes established on the level of the conscious mind—then the perception naturally begins to appreciate deeper values of the object, until perception is so refined that the finest relative is capable of being spontaneously perceived on the gross, surface level. (SCI lesson 23, p. 6–7)

The highest state of development is described by Maharishi as unity consciousness, a state in which one experiences every object as an expression of the Self. The unified field of consciousness, which was experienced only within oneself in cosmic consciousness, comes to be experienced as underlying and permeating all of objective as well as subjective existence. Maharishi (1972, SCI Lesson 23) describes this state in this way:

This seventh state of consciousness could very well be called the unified state of consciousness because 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 experiences have both been brought to the same level of infinite value, and this encompasses the entire phenomenon of perception and action as well. (p. 9)

These higher states of consciousness are not merely proposed philosophical constructs, but living experiences. Empirical research has delineated physiological correlates of transcendental consciousness and of cosmic consciousness (Alexander et al., 1987; Wallace, 1993). Farrow and Hebert (1982) first reported respiratory suspensions during transcendental consciousness experiences in some of their subjects. Badawi, Wallace, Orme-Johnson, and Rouzere (1984) replicated the finding that respiratory suspensions are a marker of transcendental consciousness, and in addition observed significant decreases
in EEG theta power, and increases in 0–50 Hz global coherence (all pairs measured),
during respiratory suspension periods. Travis and Wallace (1997) replicated these prior
findings, and in addition observed skin conductance responses and phasic heart rate
deceleration at the onset of either respiratory suspensions or abrupt 40% decreases in
breath volume in 16 subjects reporting transcendental consciousness experiences. These
autonomic changes at the onset of breath changes are similar to those seen during
orienting—attention switching to environmental stimuli that are novel (Sokolov, 1963) or
significant (Spinks, Blowers, & Shek, 1985), and could mark the transition of awareness
from active thinking processes to the mental quiescence of transcendental consciousness.

Physiological parameters of cosmic consciousness have also been researched. The
critical test of cosmic consciousness is the maintenance of inner awareness even as the
body sleeps deeply, called “witnessing sleep” (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, 1969, p.
342–343). Banquet and Sailhan (1974) recorded EEG during sleep in advanced TM®
subjects, and reported that theta/alpha activity, seen during the TM practice, was
superimposed over delta activity, seen during deep sleep. Mason et al. (1997) further
researched the physiological correlates of witnessing sleep in eleven TM practitioners,
nine TM practitioners not reporting this experience, and eleven non-meditating subjects
also not reporting this experience. The witnessing group exhibited significantly greater
theta and alpha power during stages 3 and 4 sleep in their first three sleep cycles than the
other two groups. Compared to the two control groups, they also exhibited significantly
reduced muscle tone during deep sleep and increased eye movement density during
dreaming.

Higher states of consciousness are not just interesting phenomenological experiences
but have very important implications for daily life. Over 500 studies report significant
improvements in daily life with growth of higher states of consciousness through practice
of the Transcendental Meditation technique. The final section in this article summarizes a
broad range of empirical findings that demonstrate the practical significance of
developing higher states of consciousness.

**What is the Full Range of Processes through which We Can Know the World?**

Maharishi Vedic Psychology unifies the fragmented domains of investigation of
twentieth-century psychology by delineating a hierarchy of levels of subjectivity which
underlies and integrates all of these areas. This hierarchy, which Maharishi refers to as
the “levels of mind,” begins with the most fundamental self-referral level of the cosmic
psyche and extends to expressed levels of thought, physiological functioning, and
behavior. This model of mind and body will be explored next.

**Model of the Architecture of the Mind: Use of One’s Full Potential**

Twentieth-century psychology used the “computer-as-mind” metaphor to model
conscious functioning. Neisser (1976) described this metaphor as:

> the activities of the computer itself seemed in some ways akin to cognitive processes. Computers accept
information, manipulate symbols, store items in ‘memory’ and retrieve them again, classify inputs, recognize
patterns and so on. (p. 5)
However, experimental results from this approach have not been robust—a small change in stimulus type would yield significantly different outcomes (Gardner, 1987). Questions arose about the generalizability of performance in a lab on computer-generated tasks to real life situations. Predictive power of information processing models was low. Also, cognitive psychology was not able to identify the “attention director” or knower, who directs the flow of information and synthesizes conscious experience. Any attempts to put the knower into a box in the flow of information just begged the question—where is the knower within that box—leading to an infinite regress, as discussed earlier. Glass, Holyoak, and Santa (1979, p. ix; also see Posner & Raichle, 1994) in a review of cognitive psychology concluded, “Cognitive psychology is not getting anywhere. In spite of our sophisticated methodology, we have not succeeded in making a substantial contribution toward the understanding of the human mind.”

Maharishi Vedic Psychology explains that the different areas of mental functioning investigated by twentieth-century psychology are not separate and isolated, but are specific values of the cosmic psyche expressed through specific patterns of functioning of the human nervous system (Maharishi, 1972). According to Maharishi Vedic Psychology, the variety of mental functioning comprises layers from gross to subtle, from dynamic expressed activity to complete inner silence, from concrete to abstract, and from diversified to unified (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, 1969, p. 151). This hierarchical sequence of subtler aspects of subjectivity is described in the Bhagavad-Gita (3.42):

"विनयासि पराखयोहृत्र विस्मित्व: परं मन: 0
मनसस्तु परा ब्रह्मवैभव: परस्तं स: -टड़-

The senses, they say, are subtle;
more subtle than the senses is mind;
yet finer than mind is intellect;
that which is beyond even the intellect is he [the Self].

The levels of mind function in parallel as well as hierarchically, with more expressed levels being contained and guided by more fundamental levels. According to Maharishi (1969, p. 236), “Experience results when the senses come into contact with their objects.” Desire, the next level, motivates the flow of attention and connects the mind through the senses with the environment (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, 1969, p. 11). The next subtler level, the mind, is like an “open camera” that accepts all sensory impressions, considers possibilities and relations among them, and engages in thinking (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, 1972, SCI lesson 19, p. 10). The intellect, the next subtler level, discriminates and decides; it “filters the information which comes to it through the mind. Useful things are accepted, useless things are rejected.” (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, 1972, SCI lesson 19, p. 10) The intellect guides the mind and directs the senses to those aspects of life that are most useful and enjoyable. The final level is the ego, the active experiencer in individual life that synthesizes information gained through the other levels of mind.

According to Maharishi, direct experience of the cosmic psyche—the most fundamental level of life—nourishes simultaneously all of the more expressed levels of the mind constituting the individual psyche. Maharishi explains (1972):
When that universal value of life which we experience at the source of thought during meditation is appreciated on the basis of one’s own personal experience, we find that the ego, the emotions, the intellect, the mind, the senses, all begin to breathe a richer life. (19:4–5)

Maharishi (1994) further elaborates this principle:

If the individual intellect is not lively on this transcendental level of Nature’s Intelligence, which is the one ultimate, unifying, evolutionary power upholding all activity in Nature, the individual existence and performance remains intellectually, emotionally, and practically segregated from its own holistic basis.

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)

Empirical research supports the prediction that contact with the cosmic psyche through practice of the Transcendental Meditation technique enhances all levels of the mind. For example, on the sensory level, perceptual ability and field independence increase (Dillbeck, 1982; Pelletier, 1974); on the level of the mind, academic performance (Nidich, Nidich, & Rainforth, 1986; Nidich & Nidich, 1989) and college grades (Kember, 1985) improve; on the level of the intellect and feeling, fluid intelligence (Cranson et al., 1991; Dillbeck, Assimakis, Raimondi, Orme-Johnson, & Rowe, 1986), moral reasoning (Nidich & Orme-Johnson, 1982; Nidich, Ryncarz, Abrams, Orme-Johnson, & Wallace, 1983), creativity (Travis, 1979) and well-being (Gelderloos, Hermans, Ahlström, & Jacoby 1990) develop; and on the level of the ego, self-esteem, self-actualization, ego strength and ego development grow with practice of the Transcendental Meditation technique (Alexander, Rainforth, & Gelderloos, 1991; Alexander et al., 1990; Chandler, 1991; Turnbull & Norris, 1982; van den Berg & Mulder, 1976).

Maharishi Vedic Psychology explains that the same levels of subjectivity found functioning in the individual psyche find their most universal expression at the level of the cosmic psyche (see Dillbeck, 1988, p. 261). These universal levels may be understood as broad principles functioning throughout Nature as a whole, and not restricted to individual experience. The cosmic psyche may be understood as the universal ego awake to its own nature; it is wide awake pure consciousness, called in Sanskrit, SaµhitŒ (Maharishi, 1994). Its first expression is the universal principle of discrimination, or the intellect, which discriminates three concepts within the wholeness of the cosmic psyche. Maharishi (1994) explains:

The intelligence quality of self-referral consciousness conceptually creates the sequential emergence of three qualities—Rishi, DevatŒ, and Chhandas. By virtue of Rishi, quality [knower] within its nature, SaµhitŒ cognizes itself. The dynamism inherent in the process of cognition is known as DevatŒ [process]. Chhandas [known] is a quality that hides, and this quality is clearly apparent in that the nature of SaµhitŒ gets hidden with the blossoming of Rishi, and the silent quality of Rishi, gets hidden with the appearance of Devata. (p. 308)

The next expressed level within the wholeness of wide-awake pure consciousness is the infinitely dynamic interplay between three—Rishi, DevatŒ, and Chhandas—and SaµhitŒ. Maharishi explains (1994, p. 311–312):

Rishi, DevatŒ, and Chhandas promote the mechanics of transformation that produce whirlpools in the one unbounded ocean of consciousness; and eternally continuing, these mechanics of creation structure different frequencies, which spontaneously promote the basic momentum of the mechanics of creation.

At this universal level of mind, there is still nothing material. These “different frequencies” are the mechanics of transformation within wholeness, like the dynamic currents within water before it boils. Maharishi (1994, p. 117) explains that these different frequencies can be heard and, because sound has form, can be seen within self-
referral consciousness. The recording of what was seen and heard in self-referral consciousness comprises the Veda and the Vedic Literature (Maharishi, in Nader, 1994) (see William F. Sand’s article in this volume).

The next expressed level within wide-awake cosmic psyche is the universal principle of desire, which is responsible for the dynamism of the cosmic psyche—its innate desire to know itself, propelling the sequential elaboration of one into three, and then into the diverse combinations of one and three. This dynamic process gives rise to next level, the senses which are the intermediary between the mind and manifest existence. Maharishi (1994) describes the emergence of creation through these universal unmanifest levels of the cosmic psyche:

Consciousness continues to generate qualities one after the other. Saṁhitā generates Ṛishi, Devatā, Chhandas, and all the permutations and combinations of the three in sequential progression of the process of evolution of pure intelligence giving rise to the five senses of perception, the five elements, and from these the whole manifest creation within the nature of self-referral consciousness, promoted and sustained by the self-referral dynamism of consciousness. (p. 318)

This model presents an entirely new understanding of the relationship between mind and body.

**Veda in Human Physiology: The Solution to the Mind-Body Problem**

While science understands the generation of the smallest sub-atomic particles and records the movement of distant galaxies, the relation of the mind to the body remains an unsolved mystery—called the mind-body problem (Nagel, 1993). The overriding view held by most scientists, called the materialistic view, is that mental processes are brain processes, and therefore the central question in consciousness research is, “How do physical processes in the brain give rise to conscious experience?” (Chalmers, 1995).

From this materialistic perspective, little is really known about the relationship between the mind and brain. Williams (in Searle, 1993), at a symposium on the theoretical and empirical basis of consciousness, admitted:

[the] claim that the states of the brain cause personal experience, that there is a necessary connection between them is just bluff. We have no insight into what such a causal connection could be, at the level at which we actually understand this piece of nature. When people talk about the mind-body problem, they mean the difficulty of what it means to say that brain processes cause conscious states. (p. 76)

In addition, this materialistic view has no explanation for the simple experience that mental processes in turn affect brain processes. For instance, remembering an event, a mental process, can elicit a cascade of physiological events—one pattern if the event is happy, another if it is threatening. There are many other research examples of consciousness affecting brain functioning. For instance, the brain’s response to stimuli is enhanced when the stimulus is rare or significant (Johnson, 1986), or the individual is attending to one ear or the other (Hilyard, 1972).

As we have discussed in earlier sections, Maharishi Vedic Psychology explains that the self-referral functioning of the cosmic psyche gives rise to the active mental processes investigated by twentieth-century psychology as well as the objective universe as a whole. This model asserts a very new answer for the mind-body problem, that a field of pure consciousness is the basis and essential nature of the body as well as the mind. Maharishi explains (in Nader, 1994):
Therefore, the most fundamental aspect of the human physiology resides in the self-referral dynamics of consciousness knowing itself. That pure level of consciousness is the source of pure knowledge, which structures all thought and action. It is the source of the infinite organizing power of all physiological processes, anatomical structures, and all human behavior at the individual and social levels. (p. 13)

This model suggests that mind and body both emerge from the self-interacting dynamics of the cosmic psyche. The fundamental answer to the mind-body problem is that both mental processes and brain processes are expressions of the self-referral functioning of the cosmic psyche.

Nader (1994), working with Maharishi, has added a rich level of detail to this understanding. Earlier we reviewed Maharishi’s explanation of how the sequential unfoldment of the self-referral functioning of the cosmic psyche is elaborated in the Veda and the Vedic Literature. Nader has discovered that the descriptions of the structures and functions of the various aspects of the human physiology correspond precisely to the structures and functions of the 40 aspects of Veda and the Vedic Literature described by Maharishi Vedic Science. This discovery opens up an entirely new vista for medicine, called the Maharishi Vedic Approach to Health™ program (see Schneider and colleagues’ article in this volume). By enlivening the appropriate aspects of Veda and Vedic Literature in human awareness, the corresponding aspects of the physiology can be brought into full attunement with the inner intelligence of the body, thereby creating perfect balance and health (Nader, 1994).

The Fulfillment of Applied Psychology through the Knowledge and Experience of the Cosmic Psyche

As described earlier, psychology has examined the numerous parts of the mind without investigating the underlying wholeness of consciousness. Consequently, there is no consensus within the field about the nature of the mind, and how it can be developed. Thus it is not surprising that the applied aspect of psychology—psychotherapy or counseling—is also diverse and divided and has been described as “a bewildering world” (Frank, 1982) or a “therapeutic jungle place” (Parloff, 1970).

Over 500 psychotherapies have proliferated to treat acute and chronic mental health problems (Corsini & Wedding, 1995). Presumably, they continue to proliferate, in part, because none thus far has proven differentially effective. Despite the dramatic differences in the theories and applied approaches of these therapies, comparative studies have shown that they generally produce results similar in magnitude and kind (Bergin & Lambert, 1978) (except in the treatment of very specific behavioral symptoms such as phobias, see Duncan & Moynihan, 1994). Also, when psychotherapy methods are compared to placebo treatments which control for time, attention, and expectancy of positive outcomes, generally no significant differences are found between groups (Elkin et al., 1989). Moreover, a person may be as likely to be helped psychologically by an empathetic friend or caring paraprofessional as by an academically qualified professional (Arkowitz, 1989).

On the basis of extensive data, Lambert (1992) estimates that improvement in psychotherapy patients is due mostly to “extra therapeutic” change, including homeostatic mechanisms in the client and experiences arising from the environment such as fortuitous events and social support. He and others (especially Frank, 1982) have also
suggested that “common factors” operating across approaches (rather than treatment-specific factors) make a substantial contribution to any observed therapeutic effects. The three most widely cited classes of common factors are beneficial therapist factors, client factors, and factors associated with their positive interaction (Grencavage & Norcross, 1990; Weinberger, 1994). Regardless of therapeutic approach, the degree of personality development of the therapist appears to be predictive of therapeutic success (Frank, 1994). Unfortunately, only a very small proportion of the society sufficiently develops the self-actualizing characteristics (such as genuineness, warmth, and empathy) requisite for being a successful therapist (Cook-Greuter, 1994). Also, it has been shown that clients who are more receptive, higher in ego strength, etc. benefit more from counseling (Lampert, 1992). Again, these qualities are relatively rare, and shown least by the clients most in need of therapy. Of course, if therapists and clients remain undeveloped, then factors associated with their positive interaction will also be lacking.

From the perspective of Maharishi Vedic Psychology, the fundamental explanation for the limitations of 20th-century psychotherapies is that they were designed by and for people in waking consciousness—the level of consciousness in which only a small proportion of the human mind can be utilized (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, 1963, p. 80). In waking state, the three fundamental aspects of therapy—the therapist, patient, and their interaction—are as if cut-off from their foundation in the fully unified, all-nourishing value of transcendental consciousness (the cosmic psyche), and thus healing tends to be relatively weak and ineffectual. Maharishi (1969, p. 126–127) explains that taking awareness from the level of individual problems to the level of the cosmic psyche is like removing darkness by bringing in the light. Trying to consciously alter feelings, thought, and behavior on the surface of life is treating symptoms rather than their underlying cause. Maharishi (1969, p. 78–79) likens this to watering the withered leaves of a plant rather than watering its root. This approach is superficial and piecemeal. Only the expressed level of different problems is being treated rather than their common underlying cause: Weakness of mind and body due to lack of connection with the higher Self. For positive change in thought and behavior to be profound, lasting, and comprehensive, it should occur naturally as a byproduct of growth of consciousness, of greater integration of the Self with mind and body.

Interestingly, while there are hundreds of psychotherapies, they cluster into only a few basic approaches. Each basic approach tends to correspond to one or two of the levels of mind identified by Maharishi Vedic Psychology (see the prior section model of the architecture of the mind). However, no approaches correspond to the cosmic psyche level at the origin of all the other manifest levels of the mind, nor do any approaches correspond to the most all-encompassing levels of the social environment—i.e., the city, state, national, or world levels. Due to the psychological theorists’ own level of consciousness or past professional and intellectual experiences, they tend to focus on the dimensions of psychological life most meaningful or important to them: e.g., behavioral therapists deal primarily with the behavioral level; cognitive therapists deal primarily with the thinking and discriminating levels; and humanistic therapists deal primarily with the feeling and ego levels. Because each level of mind is part of an interacting whole, in order to produce a profound effect even at any one level, all other levels must also be attended to (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, 1963, p. 101).
Only the applied aspect of Maharishi Vedic Psychology enlivens the cosmic psyche, which produces a profoundly nourishing and integrating effect across all the more manifest levels of individual and collective life. As Maharishi explains (1986):

The Transcendental Meditation and TM-Sidhi program trains human brain physiology and human awareness to function in accord with the total potential of natural law and spontaneously exhibit natural law in daily life. Thereby all aspects of life come to be always in the direction of evolution. (p. 32)

Research supports this conclusion. For example, a statistical meta-analysis of all available studies has shown that the Transcendental Meditation technique, in comparison with clinical relaxation techniques and placebos, was significantly more effective in promoting positive mental health and improved relationships with others as operationalized by measures of self-actualization (Alexander, Rainforth, & Gelderloos, 1991). Clinical populations have also been shown to benefit from TM practice. A randomized study of Vietnam veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder showed that practice of the Transcendental Meditation technique reduced multiple indicators of psychopathology significantly more than weekly psychotherapy over a 3-month period (Brooks & Scarano, 1985). As will be seen, group practice of the Transcendental Meditation and TM-Sidhi programs has also been shown to reduce negative trends in society as a whole.

The “case studies” of ordinary approaches to psychotherapy typically focus on providing examples of a wide range of psychopathologies. In contrast, Maharishi describes the Bhagavad-Gita—which contains the essence of all the branches of the Veda and Vedic Literature—as a positive case study in his Vedic Psychology (Dillbeck 1991). The Bhagavad-Gita provides an example of how a highly developed individual—beset with a seemingly unsolvable moral dilemma—rises to enlightenment after only a two-hour “counseling session” in the principles and practices of Vedic Psychology (Dillbeck, 1991). Whereas all other aspects of psychology study the outer manifestations of consciousness, the Bhagavad-Gita studies the development of consciousness, the cosmic psyche, itself. It serves as a basis for creating ideal behavior and resolving any problem facing the individual and society. As Maharishi (1969, p. 13) explains in the introduction to his translation and commentary to the Bhagavad-Gita:

The Bhagavad-Gita presents the science of life and the art of living. It teaches how to be, how to think and how to do. Its technique of glorifying every aspect of life through contact with inner Being is like watering the root and making the whole tree green. It surpasses any practical wisdom of life ever cherished by human society.

Maharishi has indicated that by studying the Bhagavad-Gita, students of Vedic Psychology gain a profound understanding of the mechanics of creation and of their own lives (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, 1969, p. 9–17). By applying the principles in the Bhagavad-Gita, which bring about the coordination of the individual mind and the unbounded strength of cosmic intelligence, the problems of life can be effortlessly solved. Careful attention to two key verses in the Bhagavad-Gita provides the basis for problem-free life.

Maharishi has highlighted Chapter 2 verse 45 as presenting the technique for transcending. A practical way is presented for bringing the mind from the ever-changing aspects of life (referred to as the three guṇas) to the state where all differences dissolve and the individual is left in a state of inner fulfillment, or Being.

**गुणरूप्तवप्य वेदन निर्गुण्येऽभवार्जुन ॐ**
The Vedas’ concern is with the three gunas. Be without the three gunas, O Arjuna, freed from duality, ever firm in purity, independent of possessions, possessed of the Self.

The Transcendental Meditation technique, as developed by Maharishi, is the step-by-step fulfillment of this verse. It provides a natural process of experiencing finer states of thought, until transcending the finest value of thought, one experiences transcendental consciousness.

Commenting on Chapter 2 verse 48, Maharishi explains that when awareness is established in Being, a completely unified and balanced state of awareness is attained (Yoga), which provides the basis for spontaneously performing right action.

Established in Yoga, O winner of wealth, perform actions having abandoned attachment and having become balanced in success and failure, for balance of mind is called Yoga.

Throughout the Bhagavad-Gita the advice is given to experience Being, the cosmic psyche, and thereby become balanced and successful in all situations. Maharishi emphasizes that this is the basis of his Vedic Psychology, the basis for resolving all problems in life, and the basis for right action.

Right Action: The Fruit of Connecting the Individual Psyche with the Cosmic Psyche

A deeper issue that modern psychotherapy cannot address is how to determine correct behavior, when it is based on a limited range of experience that has been filtered and distorted by underdeveloped processes of knowing and hampered by the build up of stress. Some theorists even argue that “right action” does not exist; they argue that all action is relative to the (immediate) time and place (Gilligan, 1992).

Maharishi Vedic Psychology agrees that the world is too complex, extended, and changeable to determine right action based on moral codes intellectually conceived and implemented from the highly restricted perspective of waking consciousness (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, 1963, p. 222). It does, however, offer a new answer to this intractable problem: connect the individual psyche with the cosmic psyche and thereby act
increasingly in accord with the evolutionary value of Natural Law. This can be the only firm foundation for right action. Maharishi (1963) explains this principle:

The question of right and wrong in the relative field of life is very complex. We have seen that right action can be determined only on the level of the laws of nature, and that a man established in the state of Being naturally moves in accordance with the laws of nature. Only on that level of heightened pure consciousness is it possible for the mind to be righteous. (p. 172)

In Maharishi Vedic Psychology, Natural Laws are the organizing principles that underlie and orchestrate orderly growth throughout the infinite diversity of the universe. They are the laws that govern not only physics and biology, but also the functioning of the individual and society as a whole. Modern science attempts to observe and describe the functioning of Natural Law; Maharishi Vedic Psychology gives direct experience of the integrated state of all the Laws of Nature within the simplest form of one’s awareness, transcendental consciousness, the cosmic psyche. It therefore becomes possible for the individual to act spontaneously in accord with Natural Law, and thereby, spontaneously perform action which nourishes everything in creation.

This connection of the individual psyche with the cosmic psyche is the only basis for right action in every situation. Maharishi (1963) elaborates on this concept:

It does not seem possible to entertain thoughts which are always right by trying to think rightly. Any conscious attempt on the part of the mind to entertain only right thoughts will only mean straining the mind on a plane over which there can be no control. In order that the mind succeed in entertaining only right thoughts, it should be cultured so that by nature it picks up only a right thought. If the mind is not established on the plane of cosmic law, then the discontented mind, hindered by shortsightedness, will not succeed in having only right thoughts. (p. 140)

The reality of simple right action is reflected in this experience from a teacher of the Transcendental Meditation program who reported this experience during an extended course:

I seem to say and do the right thing at the right time. The intellect does not seem to be relied upon as much, just the intuitive feelings. I am just doing right action spontaneously, without even thinking of what is right or wrong. This, I think, may be the most refined level of intuition. (in Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, 1977, p. 83)

Maharishi (1969, p. 221) defines right action as “that which produces good influence everywhere.” Therefore the consideration of right and wrong should also take into account our influence on the society as a whole.

How to Create a Peaceful and Harmonious World

Although psychotherapy recognizes the influence of the environment on individual welfare, no psychotherapeutic approach has conceived of how to influence society as a whole. As we will see in this section, enlivenment of the cosmic psyche also produces a profound effect on the larger social environment, which can reflect beneficially back to the individual.

The United Nations charter states that wars begin in the minds of men. This places the responsibility for world peace with psychology. Only when individuals achieve a state of peace, can societies be at peace.

Maharishi Vedic Psychology recommends that to improve the quality of human life in society, we must begin with consciousness. On the individual level, the quality of
consciousness is the primary determinant of the degree to which individual thought, speech, and behavior contribute to the good of others (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, 1963, p. 102–137). On the level of society, the quality of collective consciousness, determines the degree to which harmony predominates in the entire social system (Maharishi, 1978). Maharishi describes each level of society as having its own characteristic collective consciousness, such as family consciousness, community consciousness, or city consciousness (Maharishi, 1977). The collective consciousness is the wholeness of consciousness of the entire group.

Each level of collective consciousness may be thought of as a field that permeates the entire society. At the basis of all levels of collective consciousness is the field of pure consciousness, the cosmic psyche (Maharishi, 1986a). Because pure consciousness is the source of creation, when individuals contact and thereby enliven the cosmic psyche, a life-supporting influence is generated in the field of collective consciousness. The Transcendental Meditation technique allows the individual mind to contact the cosmic psyche. The TM-Sidhi program, an advanced practice, develops the ability to think and act from the level of transcendental consciousness, thereby creating greater enlivenment of the cosmic psyche underlying all aspects of individual and collective behavior (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, 1986, p. 96). Thus, through practice of the Transcendental Meditation and TM-Sidhi programs, individuals can generate an effect from the deepest level of their own consciousness, the cosmic psyche, to nourish the whole environment.

This is called the Maharishi Effect, after Maharishi, who predicted its measurable effects on society as early as 1960. This influence was also described in an ancient Vedic text, *Patanjali’s Yoga Sutras*: “In the vicinity of yogic influence (coherence and union) hostile tendencies do not arise” (Maharishi, 1996). This “yogic influence” of coherence is reflected in heightened EEG (brain-wave) coherence the moment before the body lifts off the ground in Yogi Flying—a key aspect of Maharishi’s TM-Sidhi program (Travis & Orme-Johnson, 1990). Heightened EEG coherence has been shown in other studies to correlate with enhanced neurophysiological functioning (Wallace et al., 1983) and improvements in fluid intelligence, concept learning, and creativity (Dillbeck, Orme-Johnson, & Wallace, 1991; Orme-Johnson & Haynes, 1981).

Furthermore, over 40 studies have reported positive changes in the social coherence or integrated functioning of society as a whole through the Maharishi Effect. When as few as one percent of a population practices the Transcendental Meditation program, or when even a smaller number, on the order of the square root of one percent of a population, collectively practices the TM-Sidhi program, a measurable and holistic influence of harmony in the entire population is created, as measured by decreased crime rates, accident rates, and improved quality of life (e.g., Dillbeck, 1990; Orme-Johnson, Alexander, Davies, Chandler, & Larimore, 1988).

The ability of a small number of people to affect the larger society can be understood in terms of an analogous phenomena in physical systems called “superradiance.” While the power emitted from a system is the sum of the contributions from each individual element, when the elements are emitting coherent waves, the effect is the square of the number of elements. Maharishi (1986a) describes the process of Super Radiance during the TM-Sidhi practice:

This transcendental level of nature’s functioning is the level of infinite correlation. When the group awareness is brought in attunement with that level, then a very intensified influence of coherence radiates and a great
richness is created. Infinite correlation is a quality of the transcendental level of nature’s functioning from where orderliness governs the universe. (p. 75)

We have seen that Maharishi Vedic Psychology gives profound knowledge to enrich individual and societal life. The practical application of this knowledge is reviewed in the last section.

**Practical Outcomes of the Application of Maharishi Vedic Psychology to Daily Life**

By providing complete knowledge and direct experience of the full range of human consciousness, Maharishi Vedic Psychology has brought fulfillment to not only the theoretical but also the practical aspirations of twentieth-century psychology. The practical application of Maharishi Vedic Psychology has been shown to dramatically enhance all aspects of life. These benefits have been investigated by over 500 scientific studies conducted in over 200 universities and research institutes worldwide (see *Scientific Research on Maharishi’s Transcendental Meditation and TM-Sidhi Program: Collected Papers*, Volumes 1–6; Alexander, 1994; Wallace, 1993). This body of research will be briefly reviewed in five different areas.

**Physical and mental health**

A five-year field study of health insurance statistics on over 2,000 Transcendental Meditation participants showed a 50% reduction in both inpatient and outpatient medical use, and lower sickness rates in 17 disease categories, including 87% less hospitalizations for heart disease, compared to matched controls (Orme-Johnson, 1987). In a more recent observational study, conducted over an 11-year period, 693 individuals practicing the Transcendental Meditation technique in combination with other aspects of the Maharishi Vedic Approach to Health program reduced medical usage by an even larger amount and showed a 63% reduction in medical costs compared to norms (Orme-Johnson and Herron, 1997). Also, a longitudinal study in Quebec, Canada, showed comparable reductions in medical costs in Transcendental Meditation program subjects over the long term (Herron et al., 1996). Even over just a 3-month period, a randomized clinical trial on hypertension in 127 elderly African-Americans found that practice of the Transcendental Meditation technique reduced systolic and diastolic blood pressure from a hypertensive to a normal level (Alexander et al., 1996; Schneider et al., 1995). This change was significantly more than that produced by the most widely used physical relaxation technique or a health education control group. Compliance with the Transcendental Meditation technique was very high (greater than 90%), and the technique produced side-benefits in quality of life rather than the negative side effects of anti-hypertensive medication. A five-year follow up of this study showed significantly lower cardiovascular and all-cause mortality in the TM program group compared to the other conditions. Also, a randomized study with 73 institutionalized Caucasian elderly (81 years of age) indicated that practice of the Transcendental Meditation technique reduced blood pressure and cognitive decline (over 3 months) and mortality rate (over 3 years) compared to mental relaxation, mindfulness training, or no-treatment (Alexander, Langer, Newman, Chandler, & Davies, 1989; Alexander et al., 1996). A follow-up to this study also showed significantly reduced cardiovascular and all-cause mortality in the TM
program subjects compared to the other groups over a 15-year period (Alexander et al., 1996). These outcomes are consistent with physiological indicators of reversal of aging in long-term practitioners of the Transcendental Meditation technique (Wallace et al., 1982).

In terms of mental health, an epidemiological study by the Swedish National Health Board found that psychiatric hospital admissions for the 35,000 TM participants in Sweden was 150–200 times lower than for national norms (Ottoson, 1977). Also, a comprehensive meta-analysis (of 143 independent outcomes) that compared the Transcendental Meditation technique with various forms of concentration and contemplation, and clinically devised relaxation techniques, showed that the Transcendental Meditation technique was markedly more effective in reducing chronic anxiety than these other approaches (Eppley et al., 1989). This is clinically important because anxiety is implicated in many major mental and physical health problems.

**Criminal and drug rehabilitation**

A controlled field study showed that 259 inmates from California state prisons who learned the Transcendental Meditation technique showed significantly better parole outcomes for five years after release compared to controls closely matched on multiple social history factors or compared to other standard treatments such as psychotherapy, education, and vocational training (Bleich & Abrams, 1987; Dillbeck & Abrams, 1987). A follow-up study showed that the parolees practicing the TM technique maintained a significantly lower reconviction rate over a 15-year period (Alexander, Rainforth, & Bleick, in press). Moreover, in a nationwide experiment in the country of Senegal in East Africa, almost the entire criminal prison system—over 11,000 inmates and 900 staff—learned the Transcendental Meditation technique. As a result of this large scale implementation, the national recidivism rate was reduced by more than 90% (Anklesaria, Diop, & King, in press).

A longitudinal study of 133 maximum security inmates in Massachusetts showed a significant reduction in aggression, anxiety, and psychotic symptoms, and a significant increase in self-development and experiences of higher states of consciousness (and ultimately reduced recidivism) through the TM technique compared to other rehabilitation programs. These changes along with reduction in neuroendocrine imbalances associated with violence (Walton & Levitsky, 1994) through practice of the Transcendental Meditation technique may contribute to the decrease in return rate to prisons described above.

Moreover, there is a well-established direct relationship between crime and substance abuse, with more than half of the violent crimes in America being produced by individuals under the influence of drugs or alcohol. A recent meta-analysis of 198 studies showed significantly greater reductions in illegal drugs, alcohol use, and cigarettes for subjects practicing the TM technique compared to standard treatment and prevention programs—with abstinence rates ranging from 51–87% up to two years after learning the technique (Alexander, Robinson, & Rainforth, 1994; Gelderloos, Walton, Orme-Johnson, & Alexander, 1991).

**Business**
A five-month longitudinal study of almost 800 workers conducted by the Japanese National Institute of Health found that employees practicing the TM technique in one of Japan’s largest companies showed significant decreases in physical health complaints, anxiety, insomnia, and smoking compared to controls from the same industrial site (Haratani & Henmi, 1990 a,b) Similar results were found in a Fortune 100 company in the U.S., along with enhanced job satisfaction, self-reported productivity, and improved relationships at work and at home (Alexander et al., 1993; Schmidt-Wilk, Alexander, & Swanson 1996).

**Education**

A 10-year longitudinal study indicated that alumni from Maharishi International University (now Maharishi University of Management) practicing the TM technique markedly improved on principled moral reasoning, capacity for warm relationships, and on Loevinger’s self-development scale (a holistic measure of cognitive, affective, and moral development) compared to no change in self-development for alumni (matched on age and gender) from three other universities over the same period (Chandler, 1991; Alexander, Heaton, & Chandler, 1994). Also, MIU students practicing the TM technique improved significantly more on Cattell’s Culture Fair Intelligence Test and on an IQ-related measure of choice reaction time than other college students over a two-year period statistically controlling for relevant demographics (Cranson et al., 1991). Moreover, differential improvement on Iowa Tests of Basic Skills have been shown for students practicing the Transcendental Meditation technique from grades 1–12 (Nidich, Nidich, & Rainforth, 1986).

**Quality of life in society**

As explained above, when 1% of a population practices the TM technique—or when even the square root of that number practices the advanced TM-Sidhi program in a single group—significant reductions in crime, auto accidents, suicide, political violence, and improvements in the economy, political cooperation, and quality of life are seen in the whole society—at the city, state, national, and even international level (Cavanaugh, 1987; Cavanaugh & King, 1988; Cavanaugh, King, & Ertuna, 1989; Dillbeck et al., 1981, 1987, 1988, Dillbeck, 1990; Dillbeck & Rainforth, 1996; Dillbeck & Orme-Johnson, 1993). For example, in a planned sociological experiment conducted in Washington, D.C., weekly time series analysis showed a highly statistically significant reduction in violent crimes in D.C. over a two-month period corresponding to a graduated increase in the size of the group (from 1000 to 3,800) practicing the TM-Sidhi program (Hagelin et al., in press). With respect to political violence, during a two-month prospective study in Jerusalem, daily time series analysis found that whenever the TM and TM-Sidhi group size approximated the square root of 1% of Israel’s population, fatalities in Lebanon were reduced by over 70% and significant improvements occurred on multiple social indicators in Israel (Orme-Johnson et al., 1988). This finding of a 70% reduction in fatalities in the Lebanon war corresponding to sufficiently large groups practicing the
TM-Sidhi program was then repeated seven times over a 2 1/4-year period, from even thousands of miles away (Davies, 1990; Davies & Alexander, 1990).

Similar striking findings were found on a global level during three major assemblies attended by approximately 7,000 practitioners of the TM-Sidhi program, the square root of 1% of the whole world’s population. During these assemblies, international conflicts decreased throughout the whole world by more than 30%, and international terrorist events (according to a Rand Corporation database) decreased by 72% compared to control periods before and after the assemblies (Orme-Johnson, Dillbeck, Alexander, Chandler, & Cranson, 1989).

**Conclusion**

In bringing to light complete knowledge and experience of the cosmic psyche, Maharishi Vedic Psychology provides the missing basis for twentieth-century psychology. It reconnects the mental processes of the individual psyche with the unrestricted field of intelligence and creativity at the basis of human nature and Nature’s functioning as a whole. We have seen that this reconnection in principle and practice enriches the knower (the Self), the processes of gaining knowledge (levels of mind and body), and the known (our behavior and the environment). Ideal individual and social life is the practical gift of Maharishi Vedic Psychology to the world. More than 30 years ago, Maharishi foresaw the limitations inherent in twentieth-century psychology. He stated (1995) “what is the use of the study of mind which fails either to unfold the latent mental faculties or to quench the thirst for happiness?” Describing a component of his applied Vedic Psychology, he added:

> The system of Transcendental Meditation is a method of sharpening the mind to its ultimate point of refinement. This is a process which positively makes active the latent levels of the subconscious mind, develops latent faculties, and brings out in life the inner happiness of the soul, thereby improving the man in aspects of thought, speech, and action, and for all good in life—both individual and social. (p. 217)

This is the vision of possibilities that Maharishi Vedic Psychology extends to this and all future generations.

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