

# Maharishi's Absolute Number: The Mathematical Theory and Technology of Everything

John F. Price

Maharishi University of Management  
Fairfield, Iowa

## *Abstract*

*The Absolute Number, recently discovered and described by Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, fulfills the historical goals of mathematics by giving complete understanding of the entire range of orderliness and precision studied by mathematics. It provides a means of fathoming and perfectly quantifying the entire field of all the laws of nature governing the universe. Even more importantly, it provides a technology whereby everyone can live in full accord with these laws so that every aspect of life, individual and national, is lived mistake-free with complete coherence and harmony throughout the world.*

*As well as providing an overview of Maharishi's Absolute Number and outlining some of its special features, this article will introduce Maharishi's Vedic Mathematics which Maharishi describes as the structuring dynamics of Natural Law. Before doing this, however, it will briefly introduce two defining and central historical themes of mathematics, which we have called sensory-based mathematics and intellect-based or modern mathematics. This article will show how Maharishi's Vedic Mathematics and the Absolute Number are both a timely response to the weaknesses of these approaches to mathematics and a natural completion of the direction of knowledge initiated and developed by them. In addition, it will indicate how Maharishi's Absolute Number has the precision and the organizing power to make possible, rapidly and effortlessly, such achievements as invincible defense for all nations and perfect management for every level of society, thereby ushering in a new era for life everywhere—Heaven on Earth.*

## **Introduction**

Mathematics provides the language and the tools to study precision and orderliness through the careful definition and analysis of abstract mathematical concepts and to apply the results of this analysis to understand and quantify the orderliness of the physical world. Mathematicians usually explain that the goal of mathematics is to increase our understanding of this orderliness in its theoretical and its applied values. This article introduces Maharishi's Vedic Mathematics and the Absolute Number and shows that they do not just provide another step towards this goal through an increment in our understanding of orderliness. Rather, together they complete all areas of mathematics through providing full knowledge of the entire range of orderliness and hence of the entire range of all the laws of nature governing the universe. Even more importantly, Maharishi's Vedic Mathematics and the Absolute Number provide a technology for everyone to live in full accord with these laws and gain their support for every aspect of

life, individual and collective, to become mistake-free and lived in complete coherence and harmony.

In order to see the profundity of Maharishi's Vedic Mathematics and the Absolute Number, it will be necessary to consider two defining and central historical themes of mathematics; we call these sensory-based mathematics and intellect-based mathematics. Roughly speaking, sensory-based mathematics is mathematics that uses the senses to count and measure physical objects to generate and validate its statements. In contrast, intellect-based mathematics or modern mathematics uses the logical abilities of the intellect to form chains of deductions leading to universally accepted mathematical results, the theorems of mathematics.

Inherent weaknesses in these two types of mathematics limit their power to benefit mankind, but these weaknesses can be overcome through Maharishi's Vedic Mathematics and the Absolute Number. The major weakness of sensory-based mathematics is that it cannot deal with the abstract concepts essential for today's mathematics and its applications. For instance, this type of mathematics cannot deal with the concepts of infinity and infinite processes, concepts which run throughout modern mathematics. The weaknesses of intellect-based mathematics are more subtle. One problem is that it must proceed using discrete steps, whereas the laws of nature that govern the universe are instantaneous and all-encompassing. Another problem is that intellect-based mathematics can only passively observe and describe the laws of nature and therefore can never fulfill the goal of providing a technique for everyone to gain the spontaneous support of all the laws of nature by living in full accord with them.

When examined from the perspective of Maharishi Vedic Science, sensory-based and intellect-based mathematics can be seen as steps leading to the fulfillment of mathematics in Maharishi's Vedic Mathematics and its central component, Maharishi's Absolute Number. Maharishi Vedic Science presents the essential insight that the entire universe is the expression of a fundamental, unified field of pure intelligence, of pure consciousness. The laws governing the eternal self-referral or self-interacting dynamics of this field Maharishi refers to as the Constitution of the Universe. (See Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, 1996, pp. 77–149) for a full discussion of the discovery of the Constitution of the Universe within the structure of this unified field.) It is this dynamics that gives rise to all the laws of nature that structure creation and guide its evolution. In his Vedic Science, Maharishi explains how evolution for human life incorporates the development of higher states of consciousness in which the experience of self-referral, pure consciousness is increasingly integrated into daily life so that life becomes in harmony with the Laws of Nature and mistake-free. "Life according to natural law," Maharishi (1986) explains, "will always be orderly, evolutionary, and nourishing to everyone" (p. 98). In the highest state of consciousness, unity consciousness, the field of pure consciousness is experienced to be the underlying reality not only of one's subjective nature, but of every specific area of activity (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, 1995a, p. 506). Maharishi's Vedic Mathematics is the mathematics of this field of pure consciousness. "Vedic Mathematics," Maharishi (1996) points out, "is the mathematics of the absolute, self-referral field of pure consciousness, where everything is simultaneous, where everything is simultaneously administered on the level of perfect order" (p. 372).

Maharishi's Vedic Mathematics is not a branch of mathematics such as geometry or analysis, but a totally new level of mathematics. It provides the means to describe the

totality of all the Laws of Nature and is, at the same time, the structure of pure consciousness actually responsible for their harmony and orderliness. “Vedic Mathematics is the structuring dynamics of Natural Law; it spontaneously designs the source, course, and goal of Natural Law—the orderly theme of evolution” (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, 1996, p. 338).

Maharishi’s Absolute Number is a central feature of his Vedic Mathematics. Its defining role is that it is a common basis and source for all aspects and concepts of modern mathematics.

The mathematical precision and order maintained in the universe and calculable through the utilization of mathematical structures and number systems that serve to express the precise theories of different disciplines of modern science can now be seen as having their common basis in the field of the Absolute Number—the unmanifest catalyst of all numbers, number systems, and mathematical structures that quietly initiates (from the unmanifest field of intelligence—the field of the Cosmic Mathematician) all number systems and mathematical structures and their expressions in the entire, ever-expanding universe. (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, 1996, p. 381)

Maharishi’s Absolute Number is, however, more than just another mathematical concept. “The most important characteristic of the Absolute Number in Vedic Mathematics,” Maharishi (1996) explains, “is that it is a meaningful living reality, not just a notion or concept, and therefore does not depend on the intellect” (p. 625). This means that Maharishi’s Absolute Number is a field that supports all aspects of modern, *abstract* mathematics but which is, at the same time, able to be directly experienced as the field of pure intelligence. The qualities of Maharishi’s Absolute Number of orderliness and mistake-free precision can spontaneously develop in each individual through the regular direct experience of this field.

In this way, Maharishi’s Absolute Number is both a timely answer to the weaknesses of modern mathematics described above and a natural completion of the knowledge initiated and developed by modern mathematics. It also has qualities leading to benefits that go far beyond anything possible through modern mathematics. For example, Maharishi’s Absolute Number has the organizing power necessary to be the foundation for a totally new concept in the defense of a nation which creates a level of invincibility so powerful that it even prevents the creation of an enemy. Maharishi (1996) explains, “My Absolute Theory of Defence has its basis in invincibility, which is characterized by the self-referral dynamics of consciousness, the eternal, unbounded, unmanifest, never-changing state of eternal Unity, which stands for the Absolute Number.” (p. 634). Maharishi’s Absolute Number also has the precision and order necessary to form the basis for Maharishi Master Management<sup>SM</sup> which provides perfect management by engaging the managing intelligence of Natural Law. These applications are further discussed below.

This article presents a brief overview of Maharishi’s Vedic Mathematics and Absolute Number and might be considered as a map of some of the main features of a vast territory which Maharishi is charting. Other important features are the relationship of Maharishi’s Absolute Number with the first syllable, ak (Ak), of the Rk Veda, the starting point of the Vedic Literature and Maharishi’s *Apaurusheya Bhāshya* of Rk Veda, which, Maharishi explains, is the science of the Absolute Number. Details are given in Maharishi Mahesh Yogi (1996). Because Maharishi’s Vedic Mathematics and the Absolute Number are such new and profound additions to mathematics, much of the article will consist of recent quotations from Maharishi that discuss them. Most of these quotations will be from Maharishi’s *Absolute Theory of Defence* (1996). It is also planned that this article will form the basis for a later, more complete presentation of Maharishi’s Vedic Mathematics and the Absolute Number.

## **Sensory-Based Mathematics**

Earliest records of human history indicate that mathematics started as a means of counting and keeping records of quantities related to daily life—how many people in a tribe, how many animals in a herd, and so on. Later, mathematics served the practical needs of agriculture, business, and industry in civilizations such as Egypt, Mesopotamia, India, and China. Initially, the counting numbers were the only components of mathematics and they were used to tally numbers of objects. Records were frequently kept by the simple strategy of assembling piles of stones or using marks in a one-to-one correspondence with the objects they represented. These marks, lines on cave walls drawn with charcoal or, later, impressions in clay produced by a stylus, eventually evolved into more sophisticated number symbols. Menninger (1969) describes the steps in this evolution.

This counting, describing, and testing of mathematical facts done by identifying mathematical concepts with physical objects and marks we shall refer to as sensory-based mathematics. Apart from the ancient examples mentioned above, there are many present day instances of this approach; members of certain tribes have been observed drawing lines on the ground with a stick to count or to test numerical statements, and young children do the same thing with their fingers. Finding the area of an actual geometrical shape by representing it as a drawing on graph paper and counting the squares within the shape is another more complex example of this same sensory-based approach to mathematics.

## **Intellect-Based Mathematics**

So long as mathematics was tied to physical objects to describe mathematical facts and test their validity, its applications were severely limited. In the history of western mathematics, the Greeks were the first to cut this bond and treat mathematics as an abstract, intellectual endeavor—a momentous step which took place from 600 to 300 B.C. The Greeks recognized that even simple mathematical objects such as triangles really are completely abstract and only have existence within the mind and the intellect. Such objects cannot be a part of sensory-based mathematics. For example, the very definition of a triangle requires that it have three straight sides. But we can't draw such a side since the implication is that it is perfectly straight and infinitely thin. Any "triangle" drawn in a book is, as Plato wrote in the *Republic*, Book X, a "shadow" of the essential form of a triangle. Also, results such that the sum of the angles in a triangle add *exactly* to 180 degrees is a statement which can only have validity for these abstract triangles. Empirical statements about drawings or constructions of triangles can only be approximate.

Furthermore, during the period just described, the Greeks began to give rigorous proofs of mathematical facts. They recognized that these proofs were completely abstract and not dependent on sensory properties of objects. In other words, mathematics became an endeavor of the intellect, rather than an empirical fact-finding technology using specific objects. This view that mathematics should not be tied to the realm of objects was held so strongly by Plato that he criticized those who considered using mathematics for applications. "Nothing can be more ridiculous," he wrote in the *Republic*. For Plato,

mathematics had “divine necessity” and its students “must carry on [its] study until they see the nature of numbers with the mind only” (Book VII Sec 525; see Cornford, 1941).

Most concepts in modern mathematics, however, do not even have “shadows” in the physical world. Among the most important of these are the ideas of infinity and infinite processes which run throughout every area of mathematics. The most widespread use of the concept of infinity is in calculus, which requires the notion of an infinite limit for its basic definitions. Mathematicians also routinely use infinite-dimensional spaces and families of sets whose sizes are represented by hierarchies of infinities. Clearly mathematics involving infinity cannot be sensory-based since there are only a finite number of objects in the physical universe, even if considering objects down to the level of atomic particles. Yet the concepts of infinity and infinite processes are vital not only within the abstract realm of mathematics; their applications can be found ranging from the motion of satellites to the analysis of financial markets.

All mathematicians now practice what we have called intellect-based mathematics, or simply modern mathematics. This is mathematics in which its concepts and objects are abstract ideas, and its facts, called theorems, depend on chains of logical implications linking them together. On a simple level, the transition from sensory-based to intellect-based mathematics can be seen, at least at a preliminary stage, in the activities of children. When they are very young they count and add by using their fingers or manipulating objects; later they perform these same arithmetical processes using their intellects. Two apples plus three apples equals five apples becomes  $2 + 3 = 5$ . Thus the seeds of intellect-based mathematics are contained within sensory-based mathematics.

In the opposite direction, modern mathematicians frequently use sensory-based mathematics, such as analysis of diagrams or the construction of physical models, to generate and test hypotheses. But no matter how much sensory-based physical or experimental evidence there is for a particular conclusion, for it to be accepted as a part of the canon of mathematics, it must have its “signature” authenticated, and this can only be achieved by showing that it has a final proof conforming to the rigorous intellectual standards of modern mathematics. Modern or intellect-based mathematics raises sensory-based mathematics to new levels of permanence, universality, and, for many, aesthetic beauty.

The successes of modern mathematics are of such quantity and quality that many commentators believe we are now in the “golden age of mathematics” (Stewart, 1996). In this scientific age, the techniques of intellect-based mathematics have been applied to all areas of scientific knowledge. This success of modern mathematics is due to treating it as a creative intellectual discipline that deals, as G.H. Hardy, the great English mathematician, wrote, with ideas rather than objects (1940, p. 84). Yet here lies a puzzle. Mathematics relies on careful intellectual argument to validate its claims, while the testing of scientific claims requires precise measurements of the physical world. The sweeping universality of the scientific applications of mathematics has led mathematicians and scientists to speak of “the unreasonable effectiveness of mathematics in the natural sciences,” to quote the title of a landmark paper by E.P. Wigner, a physics Nobel Laureate. (See Wigner, 1967.) Gorini (this volume) has analyzed this problem offering a solution based on Maharishi Vedic Science. She explains that both mathematics and science study the same expressions of order and intelligence founded on the field of pure consciousness, the ground state of existence, but from different vantage

points. The language and procedures of mathematics provide the best intellectual tools for the scientist to study the physical world leading to the “unreasonable effectiveness” of mathematics.

Despite its successes, there are two major weaknesses in intellect-based or modern mathematics. The first is that since its arguments are constructions of the human intellect, they have to proceed temporally step-by-step. So long as mathematics proceeds in this way, it can never fully capture the laws of nature governing our universe, laws that are spontaneous and all-encompassing. Consider, for example, the motion of the earth through space. Even if we used Newton’s law of gravitation to predict the earth’s motion as it happens, we would instantly have to solve equations involving an almost infinite number of components representing the positions of every other physical object in the universe.

The second weakness of modern mathematics involves the compelling order and precision of our universe and humanity’s efforts to understand and even master the laws of nature that give rise to them. Intellect-based mathematics, that is, modern mathematics, became the primary language and means of trying to unlock the secrets of these laws. Yet, all that mathematics can do is passively describe the laws of nature governing our universe. It can neither provide a direct way to harness the support of these laws nor keep us from continually breaking them.

Maharishi (1995a) makes it clear that both these pitfalls of modern mathematics are inherent in the very approach that gave it its initial successes, namely the approach via the intellect, when he writes, “Modern Mathematics, as a tool of performance (logic as a means to conclude sequentially developing, progressive steps) traps the mathematician in a web of his own creation” (pp. 295–296). Maharishi indicates here that symbolic expressions or mathematical formulas keep the mathematician’s awareness “trapped” at the level of the intellect and do not by themselves allow this awareness to evolve into its self-referral, absolute value.

This separation of the concepts of mathematics and the actual self-referral consciousness of the mathematician is a necessary consequence of the intellect-based approach of modern mathematics because, as Maharishi (1995a) explains,

The field of the intellect is the field of duality, the field where the subject and the object are separate. In the field of the intellect diversity dominates. Only in the state of enlightenment, where the intellect becomes intelligence, are the subject and object unified, and the field of duality begins to breathe the freshness of Unity.  
(p. 399)

Just as the seeds of intellect-based mathematics were contained within sensory-based mathematics, Maharishi is explaining that it is necessary for the intellect to become intelligence so that, as we shall see in the next section, intellect-based mathematics will be raised to the level of Maharishi’s Vedic Mathematics.

### **Maharishi’s Vedic Mathematics**

The previous section discussed the underlying order of the universe glimpsed through the language and techniques of intellect-based mathematics describing and quantifying the laws of nature. In fact, progress in this area has been so great in the past decade that today’s physicists frequently talk about establishing the TOE or “theory of everything.” Steven Weinberg, a physics Nobel laureate, recently wrote:

We certainly do not have a final theory yet . . . but from time to time we catch hints that it is not far off. Sometimes in discussions among physicists, when it turns out that mathematically beautiful ideas are actually relevant to the real world, we get the feeling that there is something behind the blackboard, some deeper truth foreshadowing a final theory that makes our ideas turn out so well. (1992, p 6)

Other scientists believe that the “TOE is hovering right around the corner” (Mukerjee, 1996). On a closer reading, however, we see that “theories of everything” make no attempt to incorporate the consciousness of observers into their models; therefore, they still maintain the duality between the observer and the objects of observation. More precisely, they separate the observer, the process of observation, and the objects of observation.

Maharishi Vedic Science unifies these three qualities of knowledge by extending the objective approach of modern science to incorporate the observer and the process of observation into the field of investigation. (See, for example, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, 1994, pp. 153169.) This complete science originates from the Veda which, Maharishi (1994) explains, means pure knowledge or complete knowledge in both structure and function; it perfectly organizes and promotes all the processes of creation and evolution.

It encompasses the whole range of science and technology; it is theory and practice at the same time; it is the structure of total knowledge—*Saṁhitā* of *Ṛishi*, *Devatā*, *Chhandas*—the togetherness of the observer, process of observation, and object of observation. (p. 5)

The essential insight of Maharishi Vedic Science is that the entire universe is a sequential expression of a fundamental field of pure intelligence, pure consciousness. Maharishi describes the fundamental mechanics of creation as arising from the Unified Field of pure intelligence diversifying itself and thereby creating the observer, process of observation, and observer. As indicated in the preceding quotation, these are known as of *Ṛishi*, *Devatā*, *Chhandas*, while *Saṁhitā* refers to their unified value as pure consciousness or pure intelligence. Maharishi explains that the Veda and the Vedic Literature are the impulses of intelligence expressed as the sounds of the self-interacting dynamics of *Ṛishi*, *Devatā*, and *Chhandas* within the structure of *Saṁhitā* and that this is the administering intelligence of the universe. (See Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, 1994, p. 36 and Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, 1995a, p. 16.) The dynamic, ordering principle that gives precision to this sequential unfoldment is Maharishi’s Vedic Mathematics. “Vedic Mathematics,” Maharishi (1996) explains, “is the tool that structures different Laws of Nature from the holistic value of Natural Law in self-referral consciousness” (p. 355). It also creates the material universe from this same field (pp. 354–5) via the Veda and the Vedic Literature:

Vedic Mathematics is the self-sufficient tool of self-referral consciousness that designs the structuring dynamics of the Veda, and materializes the design in the orderly structure of the Vedic Literature, and from there, the orderly structure of the ever-expanding universe. (p. 358)

Maharishi also expresses this role of his Vedic Mathematics in terms of the Constitution of the Universe introduced in the Introduction and discussed in detail in Maharishi Mahesh Yogi (1996, pp. 77–149). For example, Maharishi (1996, p. 363) explains that his Vedic Mathematics constitutes the systems and procedures that are available in their entirety within the structure the Constitution of the Universe, which in turn is the source of all the Laws of Nature.

The transformation and unfolding of the Veda into the particular physical form of the human physiology and its functioning has recently been made very clear by Tony Nader, a medical doctor and international expert in the area of brain and cognitive science.

Working under the guidance of Maharishi, he discovered that the laws that construct the human mind and body are the same as those that give structure to the syllables, verses, chapters, and books of the Vedic Literature. Details are given in Nader (1995).

Maharishi's Vedic Mathematics is not only responsible for the precision of the laws of nature upholding the physical universe including the human physiology, but it also manages the laws that govern the behavior of all life:

Vedic Mathematics manages all the activity of everyone and everything, handling the innumerable tendencies in Nature with perfect order—maintaining the ever-expanding universe in perfect order. Every move of every ant and elephant, the stars and galaxies at every moment are in perfect precision in space and time, managed by Vedic Mathematics—the mathematics of pure knowledge. (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, 1996, p. 375)

On this basis, Maharishi (1996) has explained that it is “the sovereign ruler of the universe” and “the commander of Natural Law” (p. 335).

Maharishi (1996) points out that Vedic Mathematics, being structured within the field of pure consciousness, is available within the consciousness of everyone.

Vedic Mathematics, being the mathematics of the order-generating principle of pure consciousness, is itself the mathematician, the process of deriving results, and the conclusion; whatever consciousness is and wherever consciousness is, there is the structure of Vedic Mathematics, the source of perfect order. (p. 339)

The previous section ended by raising the need for the intellect of the mathematician to expand to the level of pure intelligence so that the expressed values of the formulas and laws are experienced as arising from the field of pure intelligence. This expansion is accomplished through the techniques described in the final section to become a master in Maharishi's Vedic Mathematics. The result, Maharishi (1995a) explains, is that knowledge that was once binding is transformed into knowledge that is liberating:

This remarkable transformation of the objectively available mathematical formulas to the reality of the subjective quality of the mathematician's intelligence is the most intelligent and most enjoyable display of the reality of the supreme sovereignty of knowledge, which raises knowledge from the quality of slavery to the most exalted state of freedom in mastery—the self-sufficient total potential of knowledge. (p. 298)

The second weakness of modern mathematics explained in the previous section is that, since it is based within the realm of the intellect, it must by its very nature proceed sequentially. In contrast, “Vedic Mathematics is the mathematics of the absolute, self-referral field of pure consciousness, where everything is simultaneous, where everything is simultaneously administered on the level of perfect order” (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, 1996, p. 372). Maharishi continues:

Modern Mathematics is the field of steps, whereas Vedic Mathematics is the field of pure intelligence that gets what it wants instantly without steps. It is the field of infinite correlation, the field of simultaneity of steps, because it functions in the frictionless field of infinite correlation—the field of self-referral intelligence.

In Vedic Mathematics all steps are synthesized to promote the result without the need for going through the steps and stages to arrive at the goal. Vedic Mathematics is a spontaneous revelation, it is not a step-by-step derivation. (p. 389)

One of the fascinating characteristics of Maharishi's Vedic Mathematics is the way that it completes the correspondence of levels of mathematics with the levels of consciousness or intelligence described in the Vedic Literature. The first three levels of consciousness are, starting with the grossest level and moving to the subtler levels, senses (*Indriyas*), mind (*Manas*), and intellect (*Buddhi*) (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, 1995b, p. 32). The correspondence of each of these levels with a particular level or approach to mathematics is straightforward. Starting with the grossest level, the level of the senses, its

natural correspondence is with sensory-based mathematics. The next level, one step deeper, corresponds to the first stage of modern mathematics where the concepts of mathematics are recognized to be abstract, but prior to the full rigor of intellectual analysis. The level of the intellect corresponds with intellect-based mathematics.

There is, however, a fourth level of consciousness referred to as *Ātmā*. This is the level of the Self, a unified level of Natural Law. On this point, Maharishi (1995b) explains,

It is interesting to observe that the holistic value of Natural Law has its seat in the *Ātmā* (Self) of everyone, the self-referral intelligence of everyone—the unified level of Natural Law, the level of that holistic value of Natural Law which is more than the collected value of all of the (thirty-six<sup>1</sup>) parts of Natural Law. (p. 31)

This is the level of Maharishi's Vedic Mathematics since, as Maharishi (1996) writes, "The field of modern Mathematics is the field of the intellect, whereas the field of Vedic Mathematics is the field of pure intelligence—*Ātmā* " (p. 577).

We shall now look at an even more recent discovery by Maharishi, his Absolute Number, to examine how it actually initiates and maintains order throughout the entire universe.

### **Maharishi's Absolute Number**

"Without the Absolute Number, modern Mathematics (logic guided by natural numbers) cannot explain the supreme level of reality—the world of wholeness or many wholenesses." With this opening sentence to the *Discovery of the Absolute Number* in *Maharishi's Absolute Theory of Defence* (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, 1996), Maharishi sets the stage for the introduction of a profound and fundamental element within Vedic Mathematics, Maharishi's Absolute Number which, he explains, is the starting point for Vedic Mathematics (p. 627) and the common source for all numbers (p. 613).

Maharishi's Absolute Number brings to completion the process of doing intellect-based mathematics since, as Maharishi (1996) points out, "Without the use of the Absolute Number, the intellect of the mathematician will always be questioning and searching for the ultimate on the ground of logic" (p. 612). More than this, it guides the orderly evolution from the unified field of pure consciousness to the process of its expression in the full diversity of the universe. Maharishi notes that this entire evolution can be experienced as self-interacting dynamics within our own consciousness:

Without the Absolute Number the order that prevails in the universe cannot be explained, it cannot be sustained; and we must admit that the order that is witnessed in the infinite diversity of creation and evolution has to be not only properly understood and accounted for on the intellectual level with mathematical accuracy, but also must be enlivened on the level of experience, so that life can be lived on the level of order—the eternal Cosmic Order, which upholds the total creative process in its ever-evolving quality. (p. 615)

When seeking a definition of Maharishi's Absolute Number it is necessary to step outside the framework of intellect-based mathematics just as it is necessary to step outside of the framework of sensory-based mathematics to define key concepts of intellect-based mathematics such as infinity and infinite processes. More specifically, since Maharishi's Absolute Number accounts for the order and evolutionary progress throughout the entire universe, it must lie beyond ordinary intellect-based numbers and mathematical concepts. In fact, as Maharishi (1996) explains,

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<sup>1</sup> In more recent analyses, Maharishi has explained that there are 40 parts of Natural Law.

It is a world on its own; it is a world of the enlightened. It is this world of the infinite number of wholenesses, which is expressed in the field of law, the world of Natural Law, where everything is permeated by wholeness—where every single Law of Nature is lively in terms of the total potential of Natural Law. (p. 611)

It is not just another mathematical concept to be defined using the language of modern mathematics, but something that can be directly experienced.

The most important characteristic of the Absolute Number in Vedic Mathematics is that it is a meaningful living reality, not just a notion or a concept, and therefore does not depend on the intellect. It is its own reality which functions within itself and gives a structure to knowledge and its infinite organizing power, and therefore is the basis of all numbers and mathematical structures just as the Unified Field of Natural Law is the basis of all the force and matter fields (Physics) the common source of all the Laws of Nature. (p. 625–626)

In order to provide a clearer understanding of the Absolute Number, Maharishi (1996) gives a number of definitions, but always on the basis that it is its own reality. For instance, Maharishi writes that the definition of the Absolute Number is “infinite and unlimited” (p. 625) and that it is the “total Unified Field of Natural Law” (p. 625). Later it is defined “as that which functions from within itself” (p. 626), but ultimately “everything in the universe offers a definition of the Absolute Number” (p. 626).

As a basis and a catalyst for all numbers, Maharishi’s Absolute Number gives ordinary numbers an absolute or cosmic status. This is the mathematical counterpart of unity consciousness in which everything in the universe is experienced in terms of the underlying reality of the field of pure consciousness. (See Alexander et al., this volume.) Further, as this field is recognized as the field of one’s own Self, everything takes on a cosmic status. Maharishi explains that by circling each number we are reminded of this status.

By circling any number, the number begins to indicate that it is a part and parcel of the Absolute Number—that its boundaries are unmanifest or, in spite of its boundaries, it is a continuum—it plays its part in explaining the eternal order that sustains the evolution of the universe. Its individual status has become Cosmic—as an individual it has been elected to be a ruler—the full potential of its creativity has blossomed. (p. 614)

Earlier we mentioned a weakness of modern mathematics that it cannot give more than a passive description of the laws of nature. In contrast, Maharishi’s Absolute Number has direct application to all practical areas of life since it maintains the orderly evolution of the individual and the universe. Maharishi (1996) explains the mechanics of this ordering of all aspects of life in the following way:

The mechanics of ordering have to be mathematically derived in order for the knowledge to be really complete, and also for the infinite organizing power of knowledge to be precisely, properly, and thoroughly applied so that life can be naturally lived on the ground of orderly evolution, so that nothing shadows life—nothing shadows the immortal, eternal continuum of bliss, which is the nature of the self-sufficient, self-referral quality of the Absolute Number, from where everything emerges, through which everything is sustained, and to which everything evolves. (p. 616)

Maharishi continues by explaining that this process of ordering to be lived in everyday life requires that his Absolute Number be enlivened in conscious awareness. In the next section, we will discuss how the Maharishi Transcendental Meditation<sup>SM</sup> program is the key method for achieving this.

Some indication of the depth and scope of the practical applications can be obtained from reviewing the two principal sources where Maharishi discusses his Absolute Number. The first, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi (1996), is dedicated to creating invincibility for every nation and a permanent state of world peace. In this book, Maharishi writes, “My Absolute Theory of Defence has its basis in invincibility, which is characterized by

the self-referral dynamics of consciousness, the eternal, unbounded, unmanifest, never-changing state of eternal Unity, which stands for the Absolute Number” (p. 634). The mastery over Natural Law provided by Maharishi’s Absolute Number is so complete that the question of defeating enemies does not even arise for it disallows the birth of an enemy (p. 630).

The second principal source, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi (1995b), is a book designed to create the most effective managers because they will manage from the level of self-referral, pure consciousness. Describing these managers, Maharishi writes, “They will be the embodiment of positivity and harmony, in whose presence nothing can go wrong, and will raise management to a new, enlightened level of performance, which will nourish everyone and everything” (p. 3). Such management requires a stable, secure basis at a level that supports and gives rise to the laws that manage all levels of life. This basis is provided by the complete precision of Maharishi’s Absolute Number. “My Absolute Number provides a reliable basis to that system of management that can achieve any objective and place management on a stable level of fulfilment” (p. 259). Furthermore, the essential role of the Absolute Number in perfect management cannot be played by ordinary intellect-based mathematics:

The Mathematics of natural numbers is not competent to explain the absolute precision and order that prevails in the field of perfect management, or absolute management; that is why I had to introduce the Absolute Number and evolve the Mathematics of the Absolute Number to account for the absolute precision and absolute order that perpetually prevails in the field of perfect management—the absolute management through the agency of the absolute value of Natural Law. (p. 326)

### **Mastery of Maharishi’s Vedic Mathematics and the Absolute Number**

The questions now arise: What is the proper and fastest way to become a master of Maharishi’s Vedic Mathematics and the Absolute Number? How can one quickly live all that they promise in everyday life? Maharishi (1996) makes it clear that first and foremost the answer to both questions is the practice of his Transcendental Meditation® technique since it enlivens the qualities of his Absolute Number qualities in one’s awareness:

It is a joy to mention here that Transcendental Meditation is the process of main-taining connectedness with the Absolute Number—the source of the creative process—and through this programme, the precision of evolution and order in the process of creation is enlivened in human awareness, and is expressed in all thought, speech, and action.

Through Transcendental Meditation, the Absolute Number has the spontaneous opportunity to infuse its holistic nature in every step of the creative process, and this process of maintaining connectedness with the absolute source in the absolute alertness of the Absolute Number is the theme of creation of the ever-expanding universe. (pp. 616–617)

Yogic Flying is also important for developing full expertise in Maharishi’s Vedic Mathematics. “Transcendental Meditation,” Maharishi (1996) writes, “is the blissful exercise of Vedic Mathematics, and Yogic Flying habituates the mind to float in the bubbles of bliss, developing invincibility—the ability to accomplish anything—the characteristic quality of a Vedic Mathematician” (p. 395).

The Transcendental Meditation technique is a simple technique that allows the mind to settle and directly experience the unbounded field of pure consciousness which we have

seen is the field of Maharishi's Absolute Number. The more advanced techniques comprising the Maharishi TM-Sidhi<sup>SM</sup> program, of which Yogic Flying is a central part, stabilize the experience of pure consciousness and develop the ability to act from the level of this field. Complete descriptions of the Transcendental Meditation program, Yogic Flying, and the TM-Sidhi<sup>®</sup> program are given in Maharishi Mahesh Yogi (1994, pp. 260–262, 283–288). A summary of their benefits is given in Orme-Johnson (1995). These benefits are found in all spheres of life—physiological, psychological, sociological, and ecological—and have been documented in more than 500 studies conducted at 200 independent universities and institutions in 33 countries and published in over 100 leading scientific journals.

Maharishi also adds reading the Vedic Literature as another procedure for becoming a master of Maharishi's Vedic Mathematics and the Absolute Number. The Vedic Literature is the elaborated form of the Veda which was described earlier as the field pure knowledge or complete knowledge. Writing on the role of the Vedic Literature in uncovering the total mathematical precision and order of life, Maharishi (1996) explains:

The Vedic Literature, as I have organized it in the form of a perfect science, displays the mathematics of order in creation, and this it does not only on the intellectual level, for the sake of understanding, but also on the practical level, in the field of application, by providing the technology to practically enliven, initiate, and sustain this Cosmic Order in individual life. (p. 617)

Reading the Vedic Literature helps to identify the awareness of the reader with the qualities of this field of pure consciousness which is the field of Vedic Mathematics and the Absolute Number. As Maharishi (1994) 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. (pp. 144–145)

For further details on the value of reading the Vedic Literature, see Sands (this volume).

After explaining that the Transcendental Meditation program, the TM-Sidhi program, particularly Yogic Flying, and reading the Vedic Literature is the program for becoming a master of Vedic Mathematics, Maharishi (1996) writes, “This is the only way to gain the knowledge that will make education fulfilling so that everyone attains perfection in life, and is able to accomplish everything with the full support of Natural Law” (p. 634).

Maharishi gives authenticity to this program by quoting from the Bhagavad-Gita, an area of the Vedic Literature he refers to as the essence of the Veda. Maharishi (1995a, p. 304) lists three verses in the Bhagavad-Gita that explain the requirements for becoming an expert in Vedic Mathematics. The first of these verses is:

inSn[wgu<yo .vjRun  
*Nistrai-gunyo bhav-Arjuna*  
Be without the three Gunas, O Arjuna! (2.45)

The three *gunas* are the forces responsible for the process of evolution. Since they belong to the relative or expressed levels of existence, Maharishi explains that this verse is the instruction to practice the Transcendental Meditation technique in order to experience the source of the *gunas* in pure consciousness, “Gain Transcendental

Consciousness—self-referral consciousness. For this, practice Transcendental Meditation twice daily” (p. 305). The second of the three verses is:

yogSg" k < km;Ri,  
Yogastha` kuru karmāni  
Established in the Self, perform action. (2.48)

The instruction from this verse, Maharishi (p. 305) explains, is “Act from the most settled, silent, coherent state of mind—act from the peaceful state of mind, the level of Transcendental Consciousness.” Maharishi makes clear that this is best accomplished through the daily practice of the TM-Sidhi program to optimize brain functioning and derive the support of Natural Law. The last of the three key verses is:

shj' kmR k\*Ntey  
Sahajaṃ karma kaunteya  
Perform natural duty because unfathomable is the course of action. (18.48)

This verse compactly describes the benefits of having the support of the Natural Law, a spontaneous feature of the state of enlightenment. Commenting on this verse, Maharishi writes: “Support of Natural Law will render all thought, speech, and action free from stress and strain—life will naturally progress to greater levels of achievement and fulfilment; life will naturally be easy, without problems or failures” (p. 305). Research shows that support of nature systematically and spontaneously increases with the regular practice of the Maharishi Transcendental Meditation and TM-Sidhi programs.

By including these simple, yet completely powerful, exercises in Maharishi’s Vedic Mathematics and the Absolute Number in every school, college and university, mathematics will become a procedure of revelation, rather than one of step-by-step derivation. Mathematics will be transformed from a series of problems to a welcome part of a program for growth to enlightenment. Through the regular practice of these exercises, students will directly experience the source of all mathematics in their own awareness and come to recognize that it is also the source of all the orderliness and precision guiding everything from their own actions to the evolution of the universe. Maharishi’s Vedic Mathematics and the Absolute Number, the mathematical theory and technology of everything, will nourish the full blossoming of Natural Law in the daily life of every individual and every nation so that the world enjoys, in Maharishi’s words, Heaven on Earth.

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