

Meditation as Transcending All Thought

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ABSTRACT

Patanjali's Yoga Sutras in ancient Vedic literature identifies the essential practice of Yoga as settling mental activity to inner silence, samadhi. Vedic proponent Maharishi Mahesh Yogi has re-clarified the systematic technology to experience samadhi effortlessly, the Transcendental Meditation® technique. Its efficacy is supported by extensive research on transcendental consciousness as a fourth state in addition to waking, dreaming, and sleep that results in a wide range of mental, physical, and social health benefits. This *effortless* technique has been distinguished from concentrative, contemplative, and mindfulness practices that correlate with psychophysiological signatures associated with the ordinary waking state of consciousness. Direct experience of samadhi expands the systematic means to gain knowledge associated with the ordinary waking state that has been fundamental to modern science.

Key Words: samadhi, fourth state of consciousness, effortless transcending, yoga

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Introduction

Throughout western civilization, the primary means to gain knowledge have been recognized to be *reason* and *experience*. Reason emphasizes deductive thinking; experience emphasizes direct sensory observation. The objective scientific method integrates deductive reasoning with inductive reasoning based on ordinary empirical experience.

Sensory observations provide tangible evidence to develop logical theories predicting how natural phenomena behave. The predictions are tested through 'objective' empirical observation, and then the theories are reevaluated for a better fit with the observations. It thus has been described as a *self-correcting* process, in which theories are continually improved to withstand rigorous logical inquiry and objective testing (Boyer, 2008).

However, limitations of this classical objective view of scientific epistemology are becoming more evident. Modern science has progressed beyond ordinary direct sensory observation, through the use of indirect experimental methods to probe theorized levels of nature at time and distance scales far beyond the capabilities of our ordinary senses. And in recent years it has progressed beyond even indirect experimental observation. Scientific theories are now being both proposed and evaluated on the basis of mathematical logic and abstract principles such as symmetry, without empirical means to validate them due to current limitations of direct and indirect experimental methods.

When mathematical models based on reasoning are not validated empirically, the *self-correcting* process of modern science is incomplete. This is evident in speculative models now prominent in theoretical physics with little or

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no empirical validation from the standpoint of experimental physics. Indeed, this has led to growing concern for the rise of 'faith' in theoretical physics (Smolin, 2006; Woit, 2006) and assertions that objective science involves beliefs that are not in such sharp contrast to religion as had been professed.

Direct first-person approach

To protect against unreliable subjectivity in reason and ordinary sensory experience, the objective experimental approach also relies on consensual validation or public agreement. But it is important to recognize that consensus is based on the level of functioning of those who contribute to it.

The entire enterprise of modern science is based primarily on logical reasoning and sensory experience shared by individual investigators in the ordinary waking state of consciousness. And there has been almost no recognition of this state-dependent limitation, especially in the objectified 'hard sciences.'

A recent quote from one of the most respected contemporary theorists, physicist and mathematician Edward Witten, reflects this objectified view of consciousness in modern science. In reply to an interviewer's question about objective physics and the 'mystery' of consciousness, Witten notes:

"I can't conceive of it not remaining a mystery unless there is some modification of the laws of physics that is relevant to understanding the function of the brain, and I think that is very unlikely. I'm not going to attempt to define consciousness...because I don't believe it will become part of physics.... I'll leave it as an undefined term, like the undefined terms at the beginning of a math book.... If anything, I suspect that it will require new dimensions...."

Although this perspective embraces a laudable disciplined approach to scientific objectivity, at least some other leading experts assert quantum theory has revealed a more integrated approach is needed that must and can address subjective mind and consciousness. It is of value to recognize in modern science that all 'third-person' *objective* perspectives depend on 'first-person' *subjective* perspectives. Third-person *objective* observations are also necessarily first-person *subjective* observations. Objectivity is

a subset of subjectivity, and we scientists are beginning finally to acknowledge this core point.

Many factors influence the *subjective* processes of reason and sensory experience in gaining objective knowledge. In the same way that a measuring device can malfunction, physiological and psychological processes also can malfunction due to fatigue, stress, disease, or other disorderly influences. Our daily lifestyles affect how our bodies and minds function, adding stress that reduces coherent functioning or refinement that increases it. This has major effects on reliability, consistency, and accuracy of knowledge within and across individuals (*intra*-subjectively and *inter*-subjectively).

Not only must the object and the processes of observing and measurement now be considered in gaining knowledge, but also the observer's inner subjective state needs to be recognized as even more basic. Many respected scientific authorities don't yet seem to appreciate the fundamental influence that their own state of consciousness, mind, and brain have in their work. But the subjective state of the scientist can no longer be ignored in objective science.

The level of functioning of the mind—and most fundamentally the *state of consciousness*—shapes the reasoning and sensory perceptions upon which scientific consensus is built. The ordinary waking state is characterized by an *experiential* gap between outer objective and inner subjective. This is the object/subject independence that is core to objective science. It is a fundamentally fragmented experience of nature, contributing to fragmented worldviews as well as, in turn, fragmented daily lives. This gap needs to be bridged for a completely unified view of nature.

The ordinary waking state is a representational or object-referral mode of knowing. It is the phenomenological basis for the independence of observed and observer long believed fundamental to scientific objectivity (Einstein, 1998). The fragmented, localized view of object-subject independence is tacitly imposed on nature in the observer's ordinary waking experience.

Fortunately, modern science has now arrived at the doorstep of the ultimate unification in unified field theory, truly a profound achievement. It is significant that the general concept of a single underlying *source of everything*—apart from its specific descriptors



and cultural icons—has been perhaps the most widely accepted belief across religions. Unified field theory has brought modern science to the doorstep of a unified view of nature that religions long ago intuited in different languages and contexts.

Unified field theory and its implications—including fundamental order rather than randomness, and the orderly *source of everything* rather than literally *nothing*—need to be taught in our educational systems. This addition can reverse disintegrative trends from cultural relativism and existential meaninglessness that have eroded societal coherence. It further can bridge chasms that historically separated modern science, religion, and spirituality (Boyer, 2008).

But progress toward ultimate unity is in terms of theoretical understanding—intellectual wholeness. It has not yet included *direct empirical validation*. Validating theories of unification remains a most daunting task. This is evident even in the most successful theories, which still reflect deeply fragmented views of nature.

In the manner modern science has been practiced, the locus of experience remains the concrete, sensory, external physical world that is believed to exist independently of the observer. A logically consistent account of how the objective world links to subjective mind and consciousness has not been achieved applying experimental methods in the view that only the physical is real.

This objectified means to gain knowledge allowed us to progress beyond superstitious beliefs, as well as to make great technological advances. Unfortunately, it also is associated with lack of fundamental grounding that has rendered daily life devoid of meaning for much of society. Focusing only on the physical level of nature, modern and post-modern life has been tightly bound to the superficial flatland of material existence. The issue is not realism in science, but physicalism—belief in the material level of nature as the *only* reality. As Vedic Proponent Maharishi Mahesh Yogi (1963) points out:

“Those whose hearts and minds are not cultured, whose vision concentrates on the gross, only see the surface value of life. They only find qualities of matter and energy.... They do not enjoy almighty Being in Its innocent, never changing status of fullness and abundance of everything that lies beyond the obvious phase of forms and phenomena of

matter and energy, and of mind and individual... Pure Being is of transcendental nature because of Its status as the essential constituent of the universe. It is finer than the finest in creation; because of Its nature, It is not exposed to the senses which primarily are formed to give only the experience of the perception of the mind... (pp. 24-25).”

Fortunately, progress beyond the physicalist worldview is now being made in modern science. But it has taken a relatively long time to gain sufficient understanding to go beyond it given only ordinary sensory experience. Some investigators become enthralled with intellectual rigor, puzzle solving, wonder, cynicism, and sometimes existential empathy and compassion, resigned to the ‘reality’ that life is ephemeral, random, and meaningless—frozen in reductive physicalism based on ordinary waking experience.

At some point the reductive, objectifying intellectual mind overshadowed by surface materialism paints itself into a corner and finds *nothing*. This is evident in the consensus cosmological theory of the big bang associated with the view that everything in nature ultimately comes from *literally nothing*, as well as views in cognitive science that mind and consciousness are not ‘real’ and can be eliminated entirely as a topic of scientific study. Eventually this approach will be recognized to be fragmented, incomplete, inconsistent, outside oneself, and unfulfilling.

The term *Veda*, sometimes translated as ‘total knowledge,’ has been described as the oldest continuous tradition of knowledge (*Maharishi Vedic University: Introduction*, 1994). It applies the same principles of logical consistency and empirical validation as in modern science; thus it is not a faith-based belief system. It does, however, go beyond fragmented reductive understanding of nature in mainstream modern science. It purports to do this by applying systematic methods of empirical experience in natural higher states of consciousness, associated with *enlightenment*.

The Vedic meaning of enlightenment distinctly differs from the ‘Enlightenment’ of the 18th and 19th Centuries, an age of intellectual reasoning (‘Age of Reason’) and its further development to our current ‘Age of Science.’ In the Vedic tradition, enlightenment isn’t just intellectual understanding but also direct empirical experience of ultimate unity (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, 1963; 1967). This has major implications for scientific means to gain reliable



knowledge that expand the core practices of reasoning and sensory experience associated with the ordinary waking state.

Historically fundamental to Indian society, today perhaps the most recognized aspect of the Vedic tradition is Yoga, now popular world-wide with growing interest in healthier lifestyles and the mind-body connection. Frequently the emphasis is on the aspect of Yoga associated with light physical exercise and body postures. Less emphasized is its core epistemology to expand the mind through direct empirical experience.

Yoga is one of the *Darshana*, sometimes called the six systems of Indian philosophy. It can be understood to be a “developmental epistemology” (Scharf, 2012) that emphasizes transcending all mental activity to inner silence—*samadhi*—as the primary means to gain reliable knowledge and experience (Maharishi, 1967). Over the years a few leading scientists recognized the deeper unified understanding in ancient traditions—most frequently referencing the *Darshana* of Vedanta. But apparently they didn't have access to its systematic means for empirical validation of unity in their own experience.

This brings us to Maharishi's fundamental re-clarification of the Vedic developmental approach of Yoga (Maharishi, 1963, 1967). He has emphasized that systematic direct first-person investigation beyond ordinary sensory experience complements and expands the indirect objective experimental approach of modern science. It allows us to address long-standing problems that have again become prominent, such as the seemingly intractable dilemmas of the ‘hard problem’ of consciousness, the mind-body problem, and theories of ultimate unification. Yoga is held to be a necessary complement to build knowledge and experience of the nature of mind, consciousness, and the ultimate unity of nature (Maharishi, 1963, 1967). ‘Consciousness’ is a hard problem in the absence of clear experiences of what consciousness itself is. In ordinary waking, consciousness is conflated with the mental activity of feeling, thinking, and perception.

Yoga epistemology

Maharishi (1963, 1967) has stated that, through regular Yoga practice (*sadhana*), unified experience of nature develops in higher states of consciousness. He describes Yoga as a reliable means to validate empirically the thesis that

consciousness itself underlies both matter and mind. It fosters natural experiences of more refined thinking and subtler perception that go beyond the mainstream scientific consensus and physicalist worldview associated with the ordinary waking state of consciousness. In the context of ingrained reductionism and lack of direct experience of subtle levels of nature in the ordinary waking state, it is quite challenging even to envision non-physical mind as subtler than the brain. In ordinary waking, it feels like our mind is behind our eyes in the brain, as a localized subjective ‘screen of the mind.’

In higher states, this ‘screen’ includes subtler sensory experiences, along with the inner sense of ‘self’ as the background observer of the ‘screen.’ In even higher states, it is experienced as an unbounded, nonlocal observer of all individual experience. And in the highest state of unity consciousness, all objects of experience on any level of nature are directly experienced as essentially the universal Self or pure Being, the unified field of consciousness.

Taking the view that ultimately “consciousness is all there is,” Vedic researcher Tony Nader (2015) addresses many fundamental quandaries that modern science has not been able to address. In this completely holistic approach, our daily experience is not restricted to a view of nature from a localized inner individual experiencer divorced from the totality of existence. This holistic knowledge and experience is so far beyond the ordinary waking state that attributes ‘self’ to a localized area centered somewhere in the physical brain that even the notion of nonphysical, nonlocal mind in a subtler level of nature that permeates the physical seems to be quite hard to conceptualize.

Phenomenal experience of subject-object independence in the ordinary waking state is commonly associated with the sense that the objective outer world is more *real*, substantial, reliable, and consistent than inner subjectivity. In the holistic Vedic account, the view of an objective world separate from inner subjectivity is a product of the discriminative property of the intellect without sufficient grounding in unity. It is characterized as the state of *ignorance*, identified as *Pragya aparadha*, sometimes translated as the ‘mistake of the intellect’ (Sharma, 1983).

In modern society the belief has become increasingly popular that the intellect is the most reliable tool to gain knowledge, especially in the



'Age of Reason' and contemporary 'Age of Science.' It also has been the primary focus of training in modern education. While the discriminative intellect certainly is a precious faculty with which we have probed nature in incisive analysis, unfortunately the result has been to reduce nature—including us—to meaningless random bits of matter/energy/information.

There is, however, growing recognition in modern science of wholeness and unity as the basis of the parts of nature (Nader, 2015; Hagelin, 1987, 1989). In unified field theories, the *source of everything* is an abstract field of order, which can be said to be the opposite of *fundamental* randomness. As this deep holistic understanding grows, it can reverse disintegrating trends resulting from cultural relativism and existential meaninglessness that pervade our fragmented modern society.

But again, holism or unity still remains within the framework of intellectual understanding as a concept only. It is important to recognize that unity cannot be lived on the basis of intellectual reasoning, or a mood, or an attitude to try to remain mindful of, or an applied social ideology.

At this pivotal time in modern science, it is crucial to recognize that major advances toward unified understanding and experience of nature won't come through manipulation of somewhat deeper levels of the outer material surface of nature. This is because they are still based on the fragmented physical theories—reflected in bioengineering to alter our natural genetic inheritance, colonization of outer space, or nano-implants to build human-machine cyborgs in a *post-human* era. In many cases these research initiatives reflect sincere efforts to address major concerns of humankind. But they are predicated on incomplete understanding and experience of nature that does not reach a unified view.

Of critical concern is that artificial attempts to reengineer human life could destroy our natural relationship with the cosmos and eliminate our natural ability to transcend the ordinary waking state. Substantive practical advances in human capabilities are *not* likely to come from reductive dismantling of nature, including our genetic nature, as if the bottom-line of our existence is merely inert random matter. When we objectify nature and attend only to matter, we treat everything as if it were just bits of matter—ourselves included.

Rather than continuing in this fragmenting and disintegrating direction based on untenable physicalism, the advances will come from subtler, more profound *alignment with nature*. This is said to be accomplished through scientific application of psychophysical laws for natural development in the inner laboratory of the scientist's mind, related to the 'developmental epistemology' of Yoga (Scharf, 2012).

Reliable systematic means to attain samadhi regularly

To distinguish popular mental practices in order to clarify them, neuroscientist Fred Travis and philosopher Jonathan Shear (2010) identified three categories, in part based on characteristic EEG patterns. The three categories are: *Focused Attention*, characterized by beta and gamma wave activity; *Open Monitoring*, characterized by theta wave activity, and *Automatic Self Transcending*, characterized by alpha wave activity.

The now popular practice known as "mindfulness" is assigned to the Open Monitoring category. Prominent mindfulness researcher Jon Kabat Zinn (Simons, 2016)) describes 'mindfulness' as

"...truly pure awareness. Awareness and mindfulness are the same thing.... I offered what I call an operational definition of mindfulness. It's not the essence of it, it is the path, and that is the awareness that arises from paying attention, on purpose, in the present moment, non-judgmentally."

In distinct contrast is the description by Travis and Shear (2010) that

"Focus on a single object of experience [Focused Attention] and an orientation to monitoring changing objects of experience [Open Monitoring] keeps...[the practitioner's mind]...involved with the procedures of the technique—these practices are not designed to transcend their activity."

Like sensory experience, reasoning involves thinking, or active mentation. Thinking about matter, energy, nothing, everything, the unified field, God or the Godhead, as well as introspection, self-reflection, or being mindful of some object of experience, keeps the thinker in the mental activity of ordinary waking. The basic experience is fragmented subject/object, self/other duality, not the state of *pure awareness itself* in which the



subject/object duality is transcended. This crucial recognition has been missed for centuries.

In the 20th Century, materialistic and existential views that life is meaningless became widespread—as if entirely disconnected from the universal value of life. Maharishi (1997) has pointed out that this occurs when only the indirect, object-referral, third-person approach is applied and the scientist remains within the subject-object duality of ordinary waking.

By no means does this mean to abandon the discriminative function of intellect. Rather, it means to refine its functioning such that unity is not overshadowed by diversity—that is, unity and diversity, wholeness and parts, holism and reductivism, universal and individual together.

Maharishi (1997) has stated that ultimate unity is naturally attained by *transcending the intellect*; otherwise, it remains hidden:

“Being objective in its approach, modern science brings only intellectual understanding about the functioning of the laws of nature. It does not penetrate into the life of the scientist. It does not integrate his personality. He can do some little jugglery here and there in the field of creation, converting this into that and that into this, but he himself is open to all kinds of destructive values because the modern approach to the investigation of natural law does not and cannot enable the scientist to imbibe knowledge and live it in daily life.” (pp. 122-123)

Sages from time immemorial have taught that ‘direct experience’ of unity is not on the level of intellectual reasoning alone, and not on the basis of the subject/object duality of thinking about something, of ‘being aware of’ some other object of experience. As teacher who revived the natural ability to transcend to the ‘direct experience’ of unity from the Vedic tradition of Yoga, Maharishi (1967) has pointed out:

“Transcending thought is infinitely more valuable than thinking.” (p. 444)

Maharishi (1967) addresses how the ‘direct experience’ of unity, of pure Being, of consciousness itself, repeatedly can be missed:

“When a flower is seen, then only the flower remains in the mind, as if the mind had been completely annihilated, void of its own glory, and the glory of the flower had overtaken it—as if the flower had overshadowed the glory of

the mind itself. The experiencer is missing, only the sight remains and the object... This is called objective life, material life. Matter remains dominant....” (p. 294)

“Since Being is of transcendental nature, It does not belong to the range of any of the senses of perception. Only when sensory perception has come to an end can the transcendental field of Being be reached. As long as we are experiencing through the senses, we are in the relative field. Therefore, Being certainly cannot be experienced by means of any of the senses. This shows that through whatever sense of experience we proceed, we must come to the ultimate limit of experience through that sense. Transcending that, we will reach a state of consciousness where the experiencer no longer experiences.... When we have transcended the field of the experience of the subtlest object, the experiencer is left by himself without an experience, without an object of experience, and without the process of experiencing.... The transcendental state of Being lies beyond all seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, and tasting—beyond all thinking and beyond all feeling.” (pp. 45-46)

A systematic means to transcend ordinary waking to the fourth state, samadhi, has been revived by Maharishi from the ancient Vedic science of Yoga. He has systematized this ancient subjective means to gain knowledge in the context of modern scientific technology as the Transcendental Meditation (TM)® technique.

In the past 40 years, this technique has been one of the most extensively researched and validated mental techniques for stress reduction, psychological health, and human development. Over 600 studies on the results of TM practice have been published, about 400 in refereed journals (e.g., Orme-Johnson, 2010; Scientific research on Maharishi’s Transcendental Meditation and TM-Sidhi Programme—collected papers, Vols. 1-5, 1977-90; Dillbeck, 2011; Eppley, Abrams & Shear, 1989; Alexander, Rainforth & Gelderloos, 1991; Travis, Haaga, Hagelin, Tanner, Arenander, Nidich, Gaylord-King, Grosswald, Rainforth & Schneider, 2009; Barnes, Treiber, & Davis, 2001; Rosenthal, 2011).

Subjective experience in the ordinary waking state typically involves active mental attention directed outward toward the objects of sense. This can be viewed as the opposite of



turning inward and transcending mental activity to the unbounded inner silence of pure consciousness itself, the fourth state, samadhi. Transcending is described as an effortless process during which the mind settles naturally to its least excited ground state—complete inner silence—like a wave settles back into the unbounded ocean (Maharishi, 1963).

As a simple comparison, included in the ability to run is the ability to slow down; and included in the ability to slow down and run less strenuously is the ability to stand still. Included in the ability to talk is the ability to talk softer, and to be silent. Likewise, included in the ability to think is the natural ability to settle to the state of inner silence or stillness—to transcend all the mental activity of thinking and feeling to the underlying ground state of the mind. This natural, effortless process is said to be an inherent capability of the human nervous system and mind. However, it is subtle and has been relatively rarely experienced, due to habits of ordinary thinking that render it seemingly quite difficult to attain. These habits have become long traditions both in secular and non-secular knowledge systems.

Maharishi (1963, 1967) has noted that there has been a general misunderstanding of how the mind effortlessly settles. In *trying* to still the mind, the typical experience is that it is fickle and shifts from one object of experience to another. Long traditions have been established based on the view that the mind must be controlled to attain inner stillness, and that the process is difficult.

In contrast, Maharishi has emphasized that transcending involves softer and softer thinking to deeper stages of relaxation in an *effortless* process based on the natural tendency of the mind. The TM® technique avoids mental effort and sensory, emotional, or intellectual processing that keep the mind on active surface levels. This deep and integrated understanding of the mind is so simple as to have been overlooked for centuries by interpreters of the Veda as well as other ancient and modern traditions.

As noted above, the contrast between the inner silent state of samadhi and active mental states is becoming clearer through direct experimental comparisons. Some mental practices correlate with increased gamma synchrony, proposed as the best measurable neural correlate of consciousness (Hameroff, 2008; Stapp, 2007). This view is consistent with the ordinary waking state understanding and experience of

consciousness. But this EEG pattern is not correlated with reported experiences of transcending mental activity to the theorized fourth state of consciousness, which typically involves peak alpha power indicative of restful alertness (Travis & Arenander, 2006; Alexander, Rainforth & Gelderloos, 1991; Scientific research on Maharishi's Transcendental Meditation and TM-Sidhi Programme—collected papers, Vols. 1-5, 1977-90; Travis & Arenander, 2006; Travis & Shear, 2010).

As noted earlier, modern science can be viewed as a *self-correcting* process of gaining knowledge through repeatedly testing theories and improving them based on empirical findings. But the self-correcting loop from logical theories to empirical validation and back to reevaluation of the theories does not extend deeper into the underlying basis of reason and experience in the pure consciousness of the knower. It remains on the ordinary levels of mental activity—with the deeper, underlying inner levels of mind remaining an experiential 'black box,' and with no 'direct experience' of pure consciousness itself.

The transcending process in the systematic mental practice of Yoga is said to settle the mind to the underlying source of thought in consciousness itself. This involves much deeper *self-correcting* processes beyond ordinary abstract thinking, the result of natural healing mechanisms activated through deep rest in mind and body. This refinement is said eventually to result in spontaneously maintaining the unbounded transcendent state of samadhi along with waking, dreaming, and sleep—the foundation for permanent higher states of consciousness.

In this integrated understanding of objectivity and subjectivity, inner development of the knower is fundamental to *educate* accurate and reliable knowledge. Systematic refinement of mind and body through the natural effortless process of transcending to the state of samadhi results in subtler, more integrated experiences, and eventually stable higher states of human consciousness (Maharishi, 1963, 1967). These claims, with immense positive implications for modern science and society, are directly testable. They are increasingly supported by extensive published research, and are open to systematic empirical investigation through both experimental and experiential means.



In the absence of regular transcending, attaining samadhi was believed to be an arduous path requiring disciplined control of mind and body. The belief became common that one must control behavior, body, and mind in order eventually to be able to attain the state of samadhi. It often was believed to be so difficult and rare as to require long periods of isolation from outward distractions. The 'direct experience' of isolating pure consciousness from ordinary mental activity was interpreted as isolating oneself from the constant din of society in order to have a chance at gaining inner silence. Also, taking the senses away from the objects of sense was assumed to require concentration and control of mental impulses. For centuries, Yoga was taught with these emphases, and held to be for those devoted to an austere, reclusive lifestyle—not practical life for most of individuals in society.

Consistent with these misunderstandings, Yoga was interpreted to be a series of steps to prepare for samadhi. According to this view, arduous practice of each step prepared the mind for the next step, generally progressing in sequence and eventually purifying the mind enough to be able to attain the state of samadhi.

In contrast, Maharishi (Sands, 2014)) has explained that the common interpretation of *Patanjali's 8-fold Ashtanga Yoga* as a sequence of 'steps' to discipline mind and body on the 'path' to samadhi emerged once the systematic effortless practice to attain samadhi was lost. 'Ashtanga' refers to 'eight limbs' or 'spheres of life,' which develop simultaneously with repeated experience of the eighth limb, samadhi. Natural progress in the other seven limbs validates this experience. Repeated experience of the state of samadhi fosters natural development of all the limbs of

Yoga together. The other limbs are not *steps* in preparation to be able to reach samadhi.

Maharishi has revived systematic effortless transcending as the essential practice (sadhana) of Yoga. He has emphasized that the state of yoga is not established by focusing on effortful disciplining of the body, or the senses, or the emotions, or the intellect. *Patanjali's Yoga Sutras* describes the goal, the state of unity, from different spheres of objective and subjective life. The *Karma Mimansa* and *Vedanta Darshana* describe further natural progress to ultimate unity consciousness (Maharishi, 1967) far beyond the ordinary waking state of consciousness.

Conclusion

If unity is not experienced spontaneously and naturally in daily life, then the Vedic approach as re-clarified by Maharishi is to engage in regular practice of effortlessly settling mental activity to its ground state, the inner silence of pure consciousness, the field of unity. There is no *doing* in this process; rather, it involves less and less *doing*. If it is to be described as a path, then it is a path of *non-doing*, of allowing the mind to settle automatically and effortlessly based on its inherent nature.

Repeated experience of this transcending process naturally refines and purifies mind and body, which supports development to higher states and permanent enlightenment. Maharishi has systematized the natural process of *effortless transcending* to the state of samadhi in the Transcendental Meditation® technique. In this re-clarification of holistic Vedic science, meditation is the natural process of transcending all thought—not remaining on the level of mental activity in the ordinary waking state of consciousness.

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