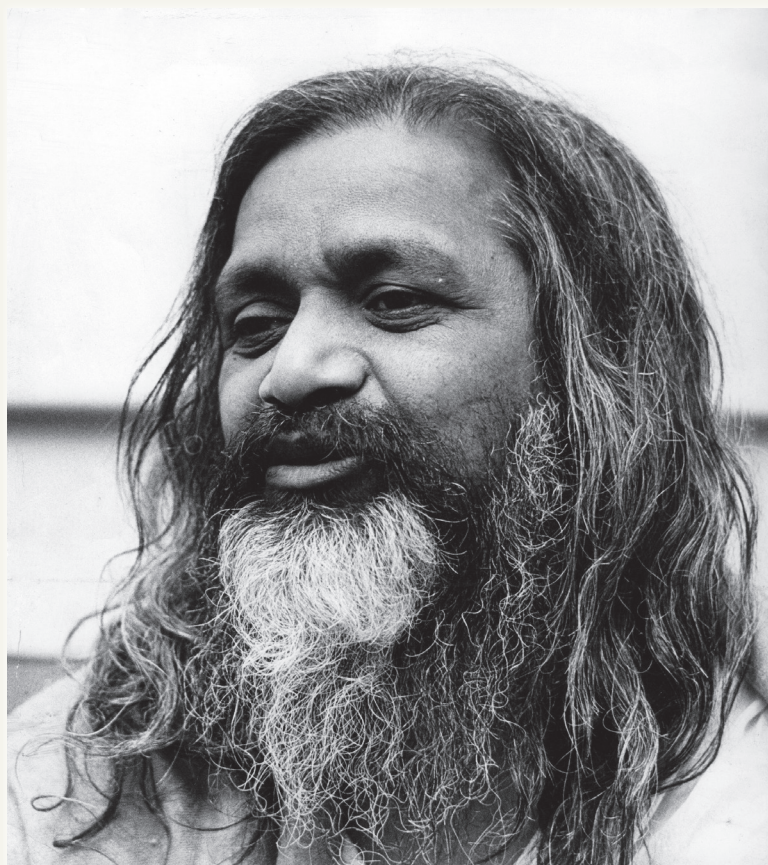


“UNITY PERVADES ALL ACTIVITY AS WATER EVERY WAVE”

Principal Teachings and Philosophy of
Maharishi Mahesh Yogi



ANDERS LINDH

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Principal Teachings and Philosophy of
Maharishi Mahesh Yogi

Malmö University, 2014
Faculty of Education and Society

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To My Family

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PREFACE

It was in the summer of 1979. I was in a meeting with Maharishi at the Academy of Transcendental Meditation in Ankarsrum, Sweden. At some point Maharishi asked what I had been studying, and when I told him that my major field of study was History of Religion he seemed pleased, and in a simple way suggested I should write books. So, here is a book, dedicated to Maharishi's philosophy and teaching.

This kind of work is certainly always a collaboration with many people involved. Therefore, I want to take the opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to those scholars, friends, and relatives who in some way have stimulated and supported me in this work and have contributed with constructive criticism and enlightening discussions.

I would especially like to convey my deep felt gratitude towards my tutor Professor Mats Greiff at Historical Studies at the Faculty of Education and Society at Malmoe University and my assistant tutor Professor Emeritus Bengt Linnér for their constant inspiration, knowledgeable comments and pedagogical guidance in the process of writing.

At Maharishi University of Management (MUM) I have been in contact with several scholars towards whom I feel indeed very grateful for their courteous help with everything from suggestions for texts to relate to regarding Maharishi's teaching to proofreading of the manuscript.

I would also like to thank Bruce Plaut, international coordinator for the Transcendental Meditation movement in Sweden, as well as the national leader Dr Thomas Nordlund, for constructive remarks and valuable help on different issues related to the thesis. Several

scholars, researchers and other experts on Maharishi's teachings and philosophy, in Sweden, England and other countries around the world, have contributed in one way or the other to the completion of this thesis in its present form. I am indeed very grateful for all these contributions, whether it was an interview, proofreading of some text part, an enlightening discussion or basic facts about some issue.

Furthermore, I would like to thank the Head of Department at my present place of work at Malmoe University, Bernt Gunnarsson, who inspired me to resume my work on the thesis and has been a considerate supporter during the work. I want also to express my sincere appreciation to my colleagues at Malmoe University for their participation and encouragement over many years of writing the thesis. In this context, I would also like to express my sincere thanks to former tutors and colleagues at the Centre for Theology and Religious Studies at Lund University.

Last but indeed not least, I want to express my deep felt gratitude towards my wife and the rest of my family for their support and for bearing with me for several summer vacations, when I have been working on my thesis, while friends and relatives travelled abroad and went swimming in some remote sunny beach.

Höör in September 2014

Anders Lindh

I. Introduction

In 1967 Maharishi¹ Mahesh Yogi (1917-2008) published a translation and commentary on the Bhagavadgītā chapters 1-6 (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 [1967]), in which he laid out his interpretation of the ancient Vedic knowledge tradition. In the West Maharishi appeared before the public in a time of great social and cultural change during the 1960s. He started teaching his Transcendental Meditation in India in 1955, came to the West in the late 1950s and today more than six million people have learnt the technique around the world. Universities as well as enterprises have been established worldwide for the advancement of this Vedic tradition of knowledge and science as understood by, and in the name of, Maharishi. Ever since the Beatles who learnt Transcendental Meditation in the late 1960s² and wrote songs about it, so-called celebrities have promoted the teachings of Maharishi. Today, one of those is David Lynch, director of films like *Blue Velvet*, *Eraserhead* and *Mulholland Drive*. David Lynch promotes Transcendental Meditation through the David Lynch Foundation. The purpose of the foundation is, according to the foundation's website, to establish "Consciousness-Based Education" (Lynch 2009).

Transcendental Meditation is also sponsored by previous Beatles members Paul McCartney and Ringo Starr who in 2009 arranged a concert in Radio City Music Hall in New York City for the benefit of the David Lynch Foundation, featuring in addition to themselves i. a. Sheryl Crow, Donovan, Moby and Paul Horn, all of whom claim

¹ "Maharishi", "Transcendental Meditation", "TM" and "Maharishi Ayur-Veda" are words used in this thesis and whose copyrights are held by Maharishi Institute of Creative Intelligence in Sweden.

² Maharishi for some time even had his headquarters in Falsterbohus in South Sweden, where the Beatles visited him in October 1967.

they meditate according to the Transcendental Meditation technique (Lynch 2009).

In the area of different scientific disciplines of the natural sciences and in social sciences considerable research on the technique of Transcendental Meditation has also been performed over the years (see e.g., Theoretical and Methodological Considerations, p. 54f below). However, in the field of History and History of Ideas very little research has been performed. One thesis, *The Place of the Veda in the Thought of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi: A Historical and Textual Analysis*, by Thomas Egenes, has been published (Egenes 1985), but nothing has been written on the historical development of the teachings of Maharishi focusing on his metaphorical language. The metaphorical language of Maharishi's commentary on the Bhagavadgītā is the source I take as my starting point and from which I go on to investigate texts from different periods over a time span of more than forty years from the early 1960s until 2006.

This thesis is written from the perspective of History of Ideas or Philosophy of Religion. It has an ideohistorical perspective, but rather from an Indian horizon than from a Western one. I am doing a content-based analysis of a selection of texts and my intention is to study the teachings and philosophy of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi over time. I am however not, as other researchers referred to below, writing from the perspective of “new religious movements” even though I will give an account of research done from this perspective.

In this context, I also want to state the conditions under which I embarked upon my undertaking.

In 1990, I wrote a licentiate's thesis on the Bhagavadgītā (Lindh 1990), which by applying models of text-analysis, considered *genre* in a broad and in a restricted sense (see e.g. Lindh 1992). I looked into the relationship between the concept of “genre” and the notions “concept of the Ultimate” and “representation of the Ultimate” which had been elucidated by Tord Olsson in a few articles on Maasai oral literature (Olsson 1977; Olsson 1984; Olsson 1985).

My investigation did not in the first place have as its purpose to give a better understanding of the content of the Bhagavadgītā, nor was it to establish the origin and history of the text. The purpose was rather to try to construct a model, that could explain the methods used for the compiling of a religious text, and to establish in what relationship concepts and representations of the Ultimate stand to genre and speech situation in a certain text.

Since my investigation then, as well as the one I have done now, touches upon the indologist's field of study I have to state that explanatory parts of the text material may appear commonplace to the initiated indologist and Sanskrit expert. However, turning myself to a broader spectrum of readers, I have found it necessary to be somewhat more explicit, explaining e.g. certain concepts and circumstances more in detail than would have been the case in a strictly indological context.

Today I work as a teacher at the Faculty of Education and Society at Malmö University, so as time has passed my field of work has also changed. Writing a thesis today, I felt motivated to change the focus of my research from my licentiate thesis. Having done a translation in the 1980s of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi's commentary on the

Bhagavadgītā chapters 1-6, my choice of research subject fell on this text for initiating a survey of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi's teaching and philosophy. Since the content of the previous investigation included only the original text of the Bhagavadgītā, and of course other main texts of the gītā and gāthā genres, it was an appealing thought to commence on the study with this commentary on the Bhagavadgītā (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 [1967]).

In view of the fact that I have myself been meditating with Transcendental Meditation since 1970 and have had the opportunity to study Maharishi Mahesh Yogi's teaching as well as listen to him on many different occasions through many years, I felt it was a sensible choice to focus this study on his principal teachings and philosophy.

Nevertheless, there are issues concerned with my long-time practice of Transcendental Meditation in this respect. One difficult issue has been to maintain the distance from my research subject that befits a scholar. Even though no scholar or researcher could ever claim to be objective, one should expect that you have the kind of detached approach you could not expect from a follower or devotee writing with the aim of promoting his or her beliefs, be it religious, philosophical, political or otherwise. In its present form the thesis has hopefully reached a point where the text is properly scientific in the sense that it is written with the purpose of looking at the texts under investigation from a scholarly perspective. I would say that my study is done from the perspective of an "insider", which means I have a personal relationship with the thoughts, ideas and philosophy that are investigated in the thesis. I am also well aware of the fact that the choices of texts to investigate and which not to investigate, what to

include and what to exclude and how to organize the material are all subjective decisions, which affect the research.³

My point of departure will be to look into the commentary on Bhagavadgītā chapters 1-6 by Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, to see how the teaching and philosophy is expressed primarily in the metaphorical language, in similes and metaphors. There is a long and comprehensive tradition in India of writing commentaries on the Bhagavadgītā. This tradition dates back at least to one of the main interpreters of Indian philosophy and religious texts, Śāṅkara, by many considered the most illustrious of India's philosophers, who also initiated four institutions of learning in four different quarters of India – north, south, east and west – (Shastri 1972 (1897); Shastri 1977; Gambhirananda transl. 1965). There is also a long tradition of using metaphorical language in texts like these, the purpose being to explain ideas, sometimes hard to comprehend. This tradition goes back at least to the dialogues of the Upaniṣads.⁴

Purpose

The main purpose of this thesis is to investigate some essential aspects of the teachings and philosophy of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi expressed during different periods of time.

I will begin with a focus on the teachings expressed in his translation and commentary on the Bhagavadgītā chapters 1-6. My intention is to initially investigate his teachings with reference to the metaphorical language of the commentary. The reason for looking into

³ This matter is widely discussed in methodological literature. In the field of study of religion Kim Knott has considered it in different texts (see e.g. Knott 2000; Knott 2009).

⁴ For a more comprehensive exposition of the metaphorical language of these texts, see Appendix on p. 387.

the metaphorical language is that I consider ideas expressed in metaphorical language essential in the philosophy or teaching of an author, educator or pedagogue, in trying to make his thoughts or philosophical ideas intelligible to the public or a wider audience. I will also look into several other recent texts, investigating how the teachings and philosophy articulated in the Bhagavadgītā come to expression later on.

Research Questions

The research questions elaborated upon and discussed in the thesis are:

1. In what way is the metaphorical language of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi expressed in the commentary on the Bhagavadgītā chapters 1-6 essential to his teachings and philosophy?
2. In what way is there a continuation and in what way are there changes in the principal thoughts expressed in the Bhagavadgītā commentary and in later publications?
3. In what way could a conceptual mainstream, or prevailing trend of opinion, be distinguished in Maharishi's teachings and philosophy and what is then its relation to the social and historical context?

Maharishi and the World around Him

Before launching on the subject of the material, method and structure of the thesis, I will try to put Maharishi's appearance before the public into a general social, historical and scientific context.

Maharishi's commentary on the Bhagavadgītā was published in the late 1960s, which was a period of social and cultural change and the rebellion of the younger generation. It was the time of the Vietnam War and the reactions to it around the world. Movements such

as the hippies, the flower power movement and the civil rights movement in America strove for peace and freedom.

The twentieth century had so far experienced two world wars and a great many conflicts in the wake of colonialism. Eric Hobsbawm⁵ coined the concept the “Age of Extremes” for the 20th century in his book of the same name (Hobsbawm 1997 [1994]). He describes the period from 1914 to the years after the end of the Second World War as the “Age of Catastrophes”. However, the period from the 1950s up until the 1970s is described as a “Golden Age”: “an amazing economical growth and social transformation that probably changed human society more fundamentally than any other equally short period.” (Hobsbawm 1997 [1994], p. 22. Cf. Bauman 1995)

In 1968 rebellion against the established order culminated around the world, and “people were rebelling over disparate issues and had in common only that desire to rebel, ideas about how to do it, a sense of alienation from the established order, and a profound distaste for authoritarianism in any form.” (Kurlansky 2004, p. xv.) The Black Power movement, a militant part of the civil rights movement, and the nonviolence advocates of the civil rights movement came together in the protest against the war in Vietnam. In Prague, Columbia University, Paris, Rome, all over the world, there was a protest against the establishment and against war. In Sweden Olof Palme was often a leading figure in demonstrations against the war in Vietnam. It was also in this context that Marshall McLuhan coined the

⁵ Eric Hobsbawm (1917-2012) was an English historian, considered one of the most influential historians on the 19th and 20th century rise of industrial capitalism, socialism and nationalism.

term “Global Village”⁶ and on TV you could for the first time follow events from around the globe (Kurlansky 2004), something that influenced opinion everywhere.

On stage we find protest singers like Bob Dylan, psychedelic rock with Jefferson Airplane and Janis Joplin. There were also several important intellectuals and significant political activists in the anti-violence, anti-war, civil rights movements in the United States in the 1960s. Two prominent representatives worth mentioning were Mario Savio of the Berkeley Free Speech Movement and Tom Hayden of Students for a Democratic Society. And, of course, Martin Luther King Jr., the leader of the civil rights movement and a Nobel laureate in 1964, at the age of 34, advocated nonviolent protest and civil disobedience in the struggle against racial segregation and discrimination against black people in the United States. (Cf. Kurlansky 2004). The anaphoric expression of Martin Luther King’s famous speech from the March on Washington in 1963 “I have a dream”, could indeed pertain also to Maharishi, but with his own formula Transcendental Meditation as the means to achieve his dream or vision (see also below p. 29). In this context, I also would like to quote the Italian historian Leo Valiani who said, commenting on the 20th century conflict situation and short-lived victories for justice and equality, but also on the human ability to start afresh: “There is no reason to despair even when the situation is most desperate” (quote in Hobsbawm 1997 [1994], p. 18).

⁶ The term appeared in McLuhan’s two books *The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man* in 1962 and *Understanding Media* in 1964. McLuhan, known for coining the expression *the medium is the message* (McLuhan 1967) as well as the *global village*, also predicted the World Wide Web almost thirty years ahead of its invention (see Levinson 1999).

So, it was in this context Maharishi entered the scene and emphasized the need for peace, the central theme of the civil rights movement and youth protest movements around the world. His entry on the world scene at that time was therefore opportune and people everywhere were attracted to Maharishi's message.

Many, especially young people, intellectuals, artists, writers and so on, were also into free love, psychedelic drugs, etc. Attempts to associate Maharishi with these trends were unsubstantiated. His core concern was and remained the establishment of peace and freedom of the spirit. While Maharishi strongly repudiated recreational drugs (cf. Kurlansky 2004, p.130f), vegetarianism, traditional in India, could be associated with his message at the time, although not as an essential part. Regarding Maharishi's position on drugs Kurlansky is correct. He is, however, incorrect in asserting that Maharishi first came to the United States in 1968. Maharishi had already visited the United States ten years earlier.⁷ Kurlansky's statement that Maharishi gave himself the title "Maharishi" is not correct according to other sources⁸, and his family name was certainly not Yogi, as Kurlansky seems to indicate, perhaps inadvertently by his way of entering it, but is also a title.⁹ (Kurlansky 2004, p.130f.)

During this period there is also a definite critique of parts of the established religion in the West. By the end of the 1960s Eastern philosophy and religion had become a trend and having a "guru" was in

⁷ Maharishi came to the United States in 1959 for the first time, as stated in the biographical book *A Hermit in the House* by Helena Olson (1967).

⁸ See e.g. Goldberg (2010, p. 362) stating that Maharishi was given the title "Maharishi" together with "Yogi" by his followers in India. Bajpai (2002, p. 554), asserts that Maharishi "received the title Maharishi, from some Indian Pundits".

⁹ See previous note.

fashion at the time (Kurlansky 2004, p. 130). Maharishi thus, with his peace message for the individual and the world, indeed attracted many people dedicated to creating a more peaceful world.

Hence, the one most important and most promulgated message of Maharishi, and probably also the most popular, was precisely his peace message. The precise relation between the time of Maharishi's appearance before the public and the trends of that time and his message as reflected in his writings in the late 1960s is of course not easy to establish. Maharishi's message of peace for the individual and for the world is closely related to his understanding of the effects of his Transcendental Meditation. Maharishi, after teaching for some time in India in the late 1950s, started his movement in Madras or, as it is now called, Chennai, in 1957 under the name of the Spiritual Regeneration Movement (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1986b). This was a name presumably inspired by the results of meditation among those practising in India and certainly by his vision of a better world. In this very same spirit, in a lecture in London in April of 1960, Maharishi stated that:

My mission in the world is spiritual regeneration; to regenerate every man everywhere into the values of spirit. The values of the spirit are pure consciousness, absolute bliss, absolute bliss-consciousness, which is the reservoir of all wisdom, the ocean of happiness, eternal life (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1961).

Since so many young people, especially in the West, had started Transcendental Meditation, a special branch of the Transcendental Meditation Movement was established for students in the mid-1960s and called the Students International Meditation Society. (Forem 1973, p. 8.)

What I have described above is mainly related to the 1960s and early 1970s. Maharishi however continued his “mission” throughout the next three decades. How did the world change and what was Maharishi’s relation to the changes during this period?

Maharishi seems to have taken a great interest not only in scientific but also in technological development and the development of communications foreseen by McLuhan (see above p. 26). From the very early days Maharishi’s lectures were, for instance, always videotaped. Maharishi founded universities, but also TV Channels, and broadcast his lectures and reports of significant events and the progress of the Transcendental Meditation movement. Early in the development of the Internet, Maharishi had web sites spreading his message, and today the Maharishi Channel (Maharishi’s TV channel) is broadcast on the Internet. I personally recall from the early 1980s, how Maharishi took interest in the latest development of computers and word processors. Two areas of global relevance, *ecology* and *science*, attracted Maharishi’s particular interest and he was to remain involved with them throughout the rest of his active life.

A. Ecology

An interest in *science* grew out of Maharishi’s own education and out of the connections between modern science and Veda, which Maharishi forged in collaboration with scientists from different disciplines. Maharishi’s interest in *ecology* is linked to his endeavour to make the world a better place to live in and his insight into the mechanics of how the world functions which in turn derives from his knowledge of Veda and particularly Ayurveda. From the 1980s on Maharishi was in different ways dedicated to the cause of preventing

experiments with GMOs (genetically modified organisms). This was apparent in his lectures and in different campaigns and actions within the Transcendental Meditation movement.¹⁰ My understanding is that Maharishi made an impact in the first place within the Transcendental Meditation movement, but through collaboration with scientists and activists against GMOs he also had a wider influence. However, his principle formula for prevention was clearly to influence the consciousness of people and the world preferably by the practice of Transcendental Meditation, but also through the Group Dynamics of Consciousness¹¹.

In the United States there is currently a debate on the GMO question, with Monsanto¹² as one party in the dispute. I would in this connection like to give one reference which could be seen as both thought-provoking and amusing, although of course not scientific. However, it indicates the influence Maharishi's position on the GMO question has in the university he started in the 1970s. On May 15th 2014 the actor Jim Carrey spoke at the graduation ceremony at the Maharishi University of Management¹³:

Funnyman Jim Carrey gave some serious advice about self-discovery, fear and happiness to students graduating from an Iowa college Saturday. He also gave them quite a few good laughs. "I'm here to plant a seed today",

¹⁰ One can read a general view of Maharishi Ayurveda, the health division started by Maharishi, at: <http://www.mapi.com/ayurvedic-knowledge/miscellaneous-ayurvedic-articles/ayurvedic-perspective-on-genetically-modified-foods.html>.

¹¹ This concept will be explained below, see e.g. p. 275ff.

¹² "Monsanto Company is a publicly traded American multinational agrochemical and agricultural biotechnology corporation headquartered in St. Louis, Missouri. It is a leading producer of genetically engineered (GE) seed and of the herbicide glyphosate, which it markets under the Roundup brand." Monsanto was also the producer of DDT and PCBs, as reported by Wikipedia (2014).

¹³ This university started under the name of Maharishi International University (MIU) in 1973 with its first small facility in Santa Barbara. In 1974 it got its own campus in Fairfield, Iowa, and at that time MIU was also accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association.

Carrey said to graduates. “A seed that will inspire you to go forward in your life with enthusiastic hearts and a clear sense of wholeness. The question is, will that seed have a chance to take root or will I be sued by Monsanto?” Carrey served as the commencement speaker at the Maharishi University of Management Saturday. More than 1,000 people, including the 285 graduates, packed into the Golden Dome on the campus in Fairfield. (Klingseis 2014)

I would say Maharishi’s association with the GMO question lives on and is quite vivid even today, not least through activists and also former genetic engineers, who collaborated with Maharishi and today work trying to stop GMOs from spreading. One of these is, “Dr. John Fagan... a former genetic engineer who in 1994 returned to the National Institutes of Health \$614,000 in grant money due to concerns about the safety and ethics of the technology.” (Antoniou et al. 2014). John Fagan has been a faculty staff member of Maharishi University of Management since 1984 and the university is, as one article online puts it, considered “a haven for opposition to genetic tinkering”. (Copple 2014.) Fagan et al., in the report *GMO Myths and Truths, An evidence-based examination of the claims made for the safety and efficacy of genetically modified crops* (Fagan et al. 2014 [2012]) gives a substantial examination of the myths of GMO and his and his colleagues’ view on those myths and the dangers of GMOs. The latest edition (Fagan, et al. 2014 [2012]) is written in simple language, as the authors explain in the foreword, so that it should be accessible to everyone, which a more technical report would not be. (Fagan, et al. 2014 [2012], p. 12.) The solution to the problems and issues of GMO is, according to Fagan, Vedic engineer-

ing, explained in his book *Genetic Engineering: the Hazards; Vedic Engineering: the Solution* (Fagan 1995).

Ecological activism, not forgetting Greenpeace, has taken new approaches as new dangers to the planet have been introduced. Fagan's books could be seen as a recent development in the tradition of popular environmental books. The genre commenced in the 1940s with Fairfield Osborn's book *Our Plundered Planet* (1948). In his book Osborn wrote that "Nature represents the sum total of conditions and principles which influence, indeed govern, the existence of all living things, man included" (1948, p. viii). According to Jamison & Eyerman, Osborn was one of the first to present "ecological" conceptions to the wider public (1994, p. 65.) Osborn was followed by Lewis Mumford, an independent social critic, who in public and in books opposed the development of atomic weapons, but also for instance the transformation of the urban landscape in his time (see Jamison and Eyerman 1994, p. 65f). Another extremely influential environmental activist was Rachel Carson, whose book *Silent Spring* (1962) is considered perhaps the most important contribution to raising the environmental awareness world-wide. Being generalists and popularisers, Osborn, Mumford and Carson, and others such as Ralph Nader, were the pioneers of a broad environmentalism in the 1960s and 1970s. (Jamison and Eyerman 1994, p. 64ff.)

Studying the introduction to the book *GMO Myths and Truths* (Fagan et al. 2014 [2012]) and Fagan's activism in the GMO question, he appears as a modern successor to the intellectual environmentalists and pioneers of the 1940s and 1950s, obviously inspired by Maharishi and Maharishi's interpretation of Veda. Fagan is a sci-

entist of genetic engineering by education and he uses his knowledge in the area to popularize it. He thereby contributes to an understanding by the public, and influences the environmental consciousness of the people (cf. e.g. Jamison and Eyerman 1994, p. 101). This endeavour has of course not been popular among other scientists or lobbyists propagating for the continued development of GMOs. As is the case with many of those who influenced the thinking from the 1960s and onwards, as well as with the GMO activists described here, according to Jamison and Eyerman, obviously “money was never the prime consideration for reaching out to wider audiences” (Jamison and Eyerman 1994, p. 213). This is also the case with the “intellectual partisans” described as having influenced post-war thinking in *Seeds of the Sixties* (Jamison and Eyerman 1994). Maharishi may or may not have been influenced by those intellectuals, but with his dedication to creating a better world he took sides in questions of importance for the progress of life on earth. It so happens that often those questions of importance have their origin in science and scientific development. This is true of the GMO question, but certainly also of the question of nuclear fission in nuclear power stations, an issue on which Maharishi also took a stand. However, I will not develop this further, but merely point to the fact that if you are truly dedicated to some cause you will probably have to take sides, which Maharishi certainly did, and there will be those opposing you. Taking sides for a cause when it involves a group also has within it the dangers of dogmatism “as a source of group identity and solidarity it often takes a programmatic form and the flexibility that it must

contain when it is at the individual level turns rigid” (Jamison and Eyerman 1994, p. 223).

Ending this short description of Maharishi’s ecological engagement it is interesting to note how Fagan independently carries on the engagement for a GMO free society. My impression is that this independence seems to be a kind of hallmark for those collaborating with Maharishi, as we will see later on with for instance Tony Nader. Is this a theme of Maharishi’s vision, to inspire and collaborate with free thinkers, engaged in the well-being of the world? Well, it is anyway interesting to put this question in relation to a quote from Jamison and Eyerman, which could also be seen as a summary description of the late 1980s and early 1990s: “In a time colored by ‘political correctness’ and the ascendancy of market liberalism, it is well to remember the partisan intellectuals of the 1950s. They took sides and dissented without becoming dogmatic.” (Jamison and Eyerman 1994, p. 223.)

B. Science

Science was, as I pointed out above, of major concern to Maharishi and he developed his Maharishi Vedic Science (see e.g. below p. 172). The tradition of science and especially natural science and physics had experienced tremendous development during the 20th century up until and including the 1960s, when Maharishi started his mission.

Before attempting to correlate Maharishi’s scientific concerns with his knowledge of the Vedic tradition I would like to quote the French philosopher and anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss (1908-2009),

when confronted with the question whether philosophy has a place in today's world:

Of course, but only if it is built on the current position and result of science... The philosophers cannot isolate themselves from science. It has not only expanded and changed our view of life and the universe enormously, it also has revolutionized the rules whereby the intellect functions. (Levi-Strauss and Eribon 1988.)

Looking at the work of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi it is obvious that he was dedicated to an integration of philosophy, in his case the Vedic philosophy in a wide sense, with modern science.

One interesting thing about scientific innovations in the 20th century was, according to Hobsbawm (1997 [1994]), that even the most “esoteric and incomprehensible”, was immediately transformed into practical technology. Examples are, *transistors* (1948, Nobel Prize in 1956), a by-product of semiconductors, and *laser* (1960, Nobel Prize in 1964) developed during experiments trying to get molecules to vibrate in resonance with an electric field. Also Peter Kapitsa received the Nobel Prize in 1978 for his work on low temperature physics resulting in *superconductors* (Nobel Prize for *super fluidity*).

An interesting observation in Hobsbawm's book is that the practical, technological applications resulting from different advanced discoveries within natural science are used by everyone without knowledge of the mechanics behind them. This is typical of the world after 1945, according to Hobsbawm.¹⁴

¹⁴ This is in a sense also typical of the practise of Transcendental Meditation, seen as a technique for development of consciousness that could be practised without extensive knowledge of any philosophy or more sophisticated knowledge of its mechanics, and which will be described in more detail below.

Within different religions and conceptions of life, there was a mistrust of science, which had its historical counterpart in the mistrust of a Galilei or of a Darwin. It was hard to “ignore the conflict between science and holy scriptures in a time when the Vatican had to communicate via satellite and test the authenticity of the shroud of Turin with the C₁₄-method...” (Hobsbawm 1997 [1994], p. 597). This was also a time when protestant fundamentalists in the United States demanded that Darwin’s teachings be complemented by a “science” called “creationism”. Mistrust in and even fear of science was, according to Hobsbawm due to four ideas: 1. that it was incomprehensible; 2. that both its practical and its moral consequences were unpredictable and supposedly disastrous; 3. that it emphasized the helplessness of the individual; 4. that it undermined authority.

This is the historical and social situation in which Maharishi started collaborating with the scientific community in the 1970s. Maharishi seems to have had a great trust in science and was not biased by his personal beliefs or any religious background. He made many parallels between Veda and modern science, and he saw the description of a “unified field” and the description of Brahman or pure consciousness in “Vedic” scriptures as descriptions of the same reality, which will be dealt with below¹⁵. (Hobsbawm 1997 [1994], p. 598.)

Maharishi elaborated extensively on the findings of physics, not least on a “unified field theory” – which Einstein tried to formulate and which was supposed to unify electromagnetism with gravity – and its relation to Veda, to Transcendental Meditation, and to higher

¹⁵ See e.g. the section on Maharishi Vedic Science, p. 172.

states of consciousness. Being born early in the 20th century Maharishi's schooling was contemporary with the development of science and in particular physics, which he also chose to study at the university. Planck, Einstein, Bohr and others were of course familiar to him, when he started his education with his master Swāmi Brahmānanda Saraswatī, the Śāṅkarācārya of Jyotir Maṭh in the Himalayas.

Later on in his endeavour to investigate a correspondence between Veda and Science he met with several leading physicists and Nobel Prize laureates of the late 20th century, one of them being Dr Brian Josephson (Nobel Prize in Physics 1973), known for the *Josephson effect*. Brian Josephson had also been a practitioner of Transcendental Meditation since the early 1970s.¹⁶ Several International Symposia on The Science of Creative Intelligence were also arranged by Maharishi during the 1970s, the first being at the University of Massachusetts in 1971. In these symposia Maharishi related his knowledge of creative intelligence or pure consciousness to the different scientists' areas of concern. Participants and speakers at these symposia were, among numerous others, biochemist Melvin Calvin (Nobel Prize in Chemistry 1961), physicist Donald Glaser (Nobel Prize in Physics 1960) and communication theorist Marshall McLuhan. (Forem 1973, p. 14f.)

This short introduction places Maharishi in the contemporary historical, social, scientific and public context from the 1950s to the first decade of the 21st century.

What then is his relationship to this period and how is it expressed in his teaching?

¹⁶ See e.g. a lecture held in 1975 with Brian Josephson (1975) and Maharishi.

This I will try to elucidate in the different chapters of the thesis, even though the relationship between certain texts which I interpret and the period in which they are published could be problematic. I consider Maharishi's teaching related to the trends in society during the different decades in which the texts are published, although the direction of influences is more difficult to determine, which of course may be a question of what comes first, the chicken or the egg. Maharishi was certainly influenced by the social trends in different respects, but he also undoubtedly influenced those trends. The publication of his translation of the commentary on the Bhagavadgītā chapters 1-6, and his book *The Science of Being and Art of Living* (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1966 [1963]) sold large editions. Maharishi's Transcendental Meditation became very popular during the late 1960s and early 1970s with nearly one hundred thousand learning it in Sweden and several millions around the world. Since the idea of peace is so essential to Maharishi and inasmuch as it permeated his educational achievement for more than 50 years, I will present it in a separate chapter below.¹⁷

Material, Method and Structure

The first chapter of this thesis deals with Maharishi's thoughts as expressed mainly in his commentary on the Bhagavadgītā chapters 1-6. Selection criteria for this and other texts presented are dealt with in the following section.

In the process of generating what I consider the principal thoughts of Maharishi as expressed in his commentary I have analysed his

¹⁷ See chapter Creating World Peace – an achievable enterprise, p. 275.

metaphorical language. The reason for using metaphorical language as a basis for the analysis is, as stated above, that principal thoughts in the teachings or philosophy in a text of this character are made intelligible in this way, the aim being to make complicated thoughts and ideas comprehensible.

The outcome of this investigation is twofold. It aims to uncover the essential features of Maharishi's principal philosophy and principal teachings at the time, as well as to give a representative account of the metaphorical language used by Maharishi in his commentary.

The words "philosophy" and "teachings" are often used together or separately as synonyms, which they certainly are, but they also can have different significations. "Philosophy" as I use it could relate to Maharishi's world of ideas in the sense of e.g. his development of a "Vedic philosophy" and "Vedic science", which takes its starting point in the ancient "Vedic" texts, in Śāṅkara's philosophy and in the Upaniṣadic philosophical discourse. Maharishi's "teachings" on the other hand could relate to the teaching of Transcendental Meditation and other methods for the development of "consciousness" in its different aspects and also the teaching of his "philosophy" in different texts, lectures etcetera.

As part of the account I will analyse patterns in Maharishi's teachings as expressed in his metaphorical language. I will primarily analyse content, but also form aspects of the metaphorical language.¹⁸

¹⁸ This part of the thesis has a complement in the appendices section containing a depiction of the metaphorical language of the main text of the Bhagavadgītā commentary with references to Upaniṣads. The purpose of that is to find, on the one hand, connections between the metaphorical language of the Bhagavadgītā and of the Upaniṣads and, on the other hand, to observe relations between the metaphorical language of Maharishi and those texts.

The next three chapters of the thesis consist of surveys of Maharishi's teachings and philosophy as expressed later on.

In the second chapter of the thesis, I have looked into Maharishi's teachings during the 1970s as it comes to expression *inter alia* in his book *Enlightenment and Invincibility, Maharishi's Supreme Offer to the World, to Every Individual and to Every Nation* (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1978b). For the 1970s and the 1980s I have studied writings published by the Transcendental Meditation movement and audio and video tape recordings, presented and analysed in a thesis by Thomas Egenes (Egenes 1985). Using Egenes could from the point of view of source criticism be problematic, since it is not a primary source. Egenes used primary sources in the form of video and audio recordings of lectures, and also written and published sources, of Maharishi. My motivation for using this material is that I considered it unnecessary to invent the wheel again; hence I chose to base my exposition on Egenes instead of redoing the work he had already done. Egenes study is comprehensive and while being aware of the problem of it being a secondary source I considered it a significant source to Maharishi's world of ideas. However, the sources in Egenes thesis, such as published material, which I could access, I have tried to verify.

In the third chapter, concentrating on writings published during the 1990s, I have looked into the book *Human Physiology: Expression of Veda and Vedic Literature: Modern Science and Ancient Vedic Science Discover the Fabrics of Immortality in Human Physiology* by Tony Nader (Nader 2000 [1994]), who worked closely with Maharishi on the publication of his book. This book deals mainly with the

relationship between Maharishi Vedic Science and human physiology as discovered by Maharishi, but has an extensive introduction to Maharishi Vedic Science (Nader 2000 [1994]). For this period I have also looked into a thesis by Ramberg, *The Effects of Reading the Vedic Literature on Personal Evolution in the Light of Maharishi Vedic Science and Technology* (Ramberg 1999), and a thesis by Finkelstein, *Universal Principles of Life Expressed in Maharishi Vedic Science and in the Scriptures and Writings of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* (Finkelstein 2005). Ramberg has parts in his thesis of interest for my purpose, even though the main aim of the thesis is the effects of reading Vedic texts. Finkelstein on his side has the main purpose of applying principles from Maharishi Vedic Science to religion, but also has a substantial part on Maharishi Vedic Science which I have found significant for my purpose. Finkelstein makes references to publications by Maharishi, which I have used in my exposition and analysis of this period. Both Ramberg's thesis and Finkelstein's are also secondary sources.

For the final chapter of the thesis, I have used a manuscript of press conferences in the form of dialogues and short lectures held by Maharishi during the years 2002-2006. I have analysed this text looking first and foremost at principal philosophical thoughts and ideas, based on my analysis of the Gītā-material and on my categories of analysis as expressed below. The interpretation of the last text considers inter alia if the principal thoughts of the Gītā commentary were still in focus after more than 35 years of teaching. Therefore, I looked for statements in this material that were related to categories of thought of the Gītā commentary. This is then in a hermeneutical

approach interpreted with focus on similarities and differences.¹⁹ All analyses and investigations are done with a focus on the so-called *Vedic* philosophy, while much of the press conference material is about other matters, which do not relate to my purpose. Material associated with other fields of Maharishi's activity was thus filtered out.

Background Issues

Selection Criteria

Dealing with selection criteria of the texts under consideration I would like to say a few words. I have endeavoured to use only texts or material that are primary sources, or secondary sources based on such primary sources, which I have considered difficult to acquire or exceptionally time-consuming to investigate. Secondary sources were chosen with the criterion that they should be acknowledged by Maharishi in some respect or at least using “texts” by Maharishi as primary sources. The reason for this is to maintain a starting point of the analysis which takes an inside perspective reflecting the views of Maharishi to the extent possible.

I will of course admit that I might have overlooked publications which could have been relevant to my purpose, but in the vast abundance of publications on the subject, it is not always evident what to consider and far from possible to consider everything. Therefore, I have made a selection, which I hope to a substantial degree will fulfil

¹⁹ An interesting approach to interpretation named reflexive methodology is found in Alvesson and Skoldberg, *Tolkning och reflektion* (2008). The thoughts of this treatise have been an inspiration in my analysis, even though it has not been a strict model.

my aspiration to do justice to the philosophy and main teachings of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi.

Choosing the commentary on the Bhagavadgītā seems to be obvious. At that time, not very much had been published by Maharishi or by others for that matter, on Maharishi's Transcendental Meditation. The sole other more widespread publication was Maharishi's book *The Science of Being and Art of Living*, first published in 1963 (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1966 [1963]). The Bhagavadgītā being a religious text of significance, commented upon by Maharishi, is a choice of analysis I have therefore considered relevant. From a source critical viewpoint this would correspond to a primary source. *The Science of Being and Art of Living* presents the same ideas and teachings in another framework with Western scientific terminology and it dates from the same period.

Maharishi's books, *Enlightenment and Invincibility* (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1978b), *Maharishi's Absolute Theory of Government: Automation in Administration* (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1995) and *Celebrating Perfection in Education: Dawn of Total Knowledge* (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1997) as well as the press conference material can be considered as primary sources. Egenes' thesis and the other books are all secondary sources. By the time those were published there was an extensive amount of material published on Maharishi's Transcendental Meditation. Nevertheless, considering the purpose of my thesis, the question of texts to use is not that complicated. Most of the published material concerns other aspects of the teachings of Maharishi than the central or principal philosophy or thinking. Most sources therefore can be excluded and the sources

that I have used, even though secondary, are as historical records, essential for my study.

A primary source would be a text having Maharishi as its author, whether it is a written or an oral text, a recorded lecture or a transcript of a press conference. Secondary sources are texts which have other authors, but have as their source material texts with Maharishi as the author. Nader has a special status in this regard, since, as I have understood it, from their close collaboration, he expresses Maharishi's thoughts in a sense. I am inclined to refer to Nader's text as a primary source to Maharishi's world of ideas, in the sense that it is a primary source to the teachings promoted by the Transcendental Meditation movement. Nader's text has originality in thought and Maharishi in his lectures very often refers to Nader's findings, for instance in the press conference material.²⁰

Thomas Egenes published his thesis on Maharishi's thought on Veda *The Place of the Veda in the Thought of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi: a Historical and Textual Analysis* in 1985 (Egenes 1985). Since it stands quite alone in giving an in-depth analysis of Maharishi's thought on the Vedic philosophy at this time, I considered it a valid choice of analysis for the period. Being a secondary source it is of course Egenes' analysis and interpretation of Maharishi's philosophy. Egenes' sources include different publications but first and foremost audio and video recordings in which Maharishi elaborates on the philosophy of Vedic Science.²¹

²⁰ See below Maharishi in Press Conferences 2002-2006, p. 241 ff.

²¹ As mentioned, I have verified those of Egenes' sources that I could access.

Maharishi's book *Enlightenment and Invincibility* (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1978b) contains different texts, including transcriptions of lectures by Maharishi and declarations from Maharishi's World Government ministries,²² lectures by scientists and presentations of scientific research on the Transcendental Meditation technique. I chose to look more closely into this book since it contains Maharishi's view at the time on the concept of consciousness with his elaboration on various individual and collective aspects of consciousness. The book was published at Maharishi European Research University, a university started by Maharishi. This book is in the category of books designated as "Maharishi's books" in the cataloguing on Global Good News (Global Good News 2011). It is a primary source of Maharishi's philosophy at the time. The books *Maharishi's Absolute Theory of Government: Automation in Administration* (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1995) and *Celebrating Perfection in Education: Dawn of Total Knowledge* (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1997) are also primary sources in this connection.

To return to Tony Nader's *Human Physiology: Expression of Veda and Vedic Literature* (2000 [1994]) it is considered within the Transcendental Meditation movement in a sense to communicate and develop aspects of the philosophy of Maharishi related to the correlation between physiology and Veda. However, since its main concern, as the title implies, is with physiology, I have only looked into parts of it. Those parts, chapters I, II and VII, I found appropriate to ana-

²² The World Government was implemented by Maharishi in the 1970s, as was stated at that time and later in lectures, not as an ordinary government, but to govern the trends of time from the level of pure consciousness or Being by promoting Transcendental Meditation and the TM-Sidhis, as well as the group practice of these techniques.

lyse after a personal discussion with Sixten Olovsson, former national leader of the Transcendental Meditation movement in Sweden, and today owner of Veda House in Stockholm, Sweden, on literature useful to the purpose of my thesis (Olovsson 2009). Therefore, mainly because of the collaboration between Nader and Maharishi, I chose this text as representing Maharishi's teaching at the time of publication. Even this book is among the books called "Maharishi's books" (Global Good News 2011).

Ramberg's treatise is a thesis submitted to the Maharishi Vedic Science faculty of Maharishi University of Management. The same is true of Finkelstein's thesis. These I have used as secondary sources and both refer to primary sources, which I have studied more in detail.

The last text or selections of texts are press conferences in the form of short lectures with Maharishi, which are, as I understand it, transcribed from video recordings. At least parts of it have also been published on the internet on Global Good News. The entire manuscript I received from Thomas Egenes, associate professor of the Vedic Science department at Maharishi University of Management.

The press conferences were held at different occasions during the years from 2002 to 2006, and amount to almost 200, the transcript covering 1459 pages. The material contains passages of in-depth discussions with Maharishi on the fundamental principles of his philosophical thoughts and teaching. I had no opportunity to access or hear part of the original recordings, so I found this transcript to be an

acceptable primary source.²³ When selecting parts of the lectures to study more in detail I have made a survey of the entire text looking for concepts that I consider essential to Maharishi's philosophy. Those concepts include inter alia *Consciousness*, *Ātmā*, *Brahman*, *Transcendental Meditation*, *Transcendental Consciousness*, *Unity*, *God*, *Veda*, *Vedic*, *Dharma*, *Absolute*. My search hits I considered in the context I found them, and those contexts I found relevant I used as a basis for my analysis of Maharishi's teaching at the time. I am aware though that a different approach to the material could have rendered a different result. Nevertheless, I found that my approach, with search concepts having an extensive content and which I consider fundamental to Maharishi's teaching in the other texts I have studied, gave a substantial basis for analysis of this text.

Origin of the Texts

Concerning the origin of the texts being analysed one might say a few words. The first text, the Bhagavadgītā chapters 1-6 with Maharishi's commentary, was done by Maharishi in close collaboration with several scholars among whom Vernon Katz²⁴ was central. Katz had at the time just finished his PhD on the Bhagavadgītā at Oxford University. One can read in a review on the Internet about the collaboration that it took five years to complete, starting in 1961. Dr Katz is cited in this review:

²³ I have also compared my manuscript to some of the material published on the internet on Global Good News, see below Chapter 4: "Silence and Dynamism both Together" – 2002-2006, p. 241.

²⁴ Dr Vernon Katz is Adjunct Professor of Maharishi Vedic Science at Maharishi University of Management. He has a PhD from Oxford University and has earned a Doctorate of World Peace from Maharishi European Research University. He is also a member of the Board of Trustees at Maharishi University of Management in Fairfield, Iowa, USA.

‘I think Maharishi wrote his commentary to emphasize the importance of direct experience,’ says Dr. Katz. ‘In this modern age, when the experience of pure consciousness had been lost, that was what was needed.’

‘Maharishi responds to the need of the time, so he naturally responded to the experiences of those practicing Transcendental Meditation by giving them the knowledge that explained their experiences,’ he says (Pardo 1998)

To obtain further details on the origin of the commentary I interviewed Dr Katz by telephone in his home in England. The discussion with Dr Katz lasted for about twenty minutes and the topic was how the commentary on chapters 1-6 took place. In response to my first question of how he worked with Maharishi on the commentary in the 1960s, Dr Katz said that it was all very natural and there was no artificiality. “Maharishi always came down to one’s own level and he was never on any high horse..., and he allowed one to ask questions and to have discussions.” Dr Katz then told me he always used to ask what Maharishi meant by that and that, and sometimes he pointed out that other commentators had said this and that, so it could not be as Maharishi said. Dr Katz then points out once more that Maharishi came down to his level and made things clear to him on his own level: “And that was useful in some way, some ignorant person could ask questions...” Dr Katz also says that he and Maharishi for the most part were discussing the translation, and to some extent the commentary. But, according to Dr Katz, Maharishi later on dictated the commentaries to other people, “who were quieter than I was (laughter: my comment)”.

Vincent Snell and Marjorie Gill, both pioneers of the Transcendental Meditation movement in England, were among those people as Dr Katz remembered, but there were many people who wrote,

when Maharishi dictated the commentary. Dr Katz also wrote down some parts as Maharishi dictated. But he was for the most part discussing with Maharishi, “and that was how the commentary came out, in some way.” Unfortunately, the discussions between Dr Katz and Maharishi were not tape-recorded, something Dr Katz did regret later. The manuscript, after it was written down from Maharishi’s dictation, then was read to Maharishi as a proof reading and after that, he gave his permission to publish.

In response to a question about the first chapters of the Bhagavadgītā, since these are designated to deal with Yoga and Sāṃkhya, Dr Katz also points out that Maharishi never had any Sāṃkhya, or dualistic, interpretation of the Bhagavadgītā as some scholars do. Dr Katz says that Maharishi never had any dualistic view. And, if there were any change in Maharishi’s view on the Bhagavadgītā later on, Dr Katz says that he thinks that change would have more to do with fighting and that Maharishi, as he could remember, later on said that killing always is wrong. The basic interpretation, Dr Katz means, never changed during the years. He also remembered how, when Maharishi commenced on the commentary in 1961, a friend of Dr Katz was with Maharishi in India, during a course. As they were sitting on the Ganges banks, reading from the Bhagavadgītā to Maharishi, he focused on some verses in chapter 2. It was verse 40, “a little of this dharma delivers of great fear”, verses 45 “be without the three gunas” and 48 “established in Yoga perform action”. Moreover, when Maharishi had acknowledged these verses he said he had done, meaning he had the essential parts or teaching of the text and

that the other parts were just commentaries to that (Katz 2011; see also Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1986b, p. 346).

The second and third texts are Maharishi's book on *Enlightenment and Invincibility* (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1978b) published by Maharishi European Research University, and the thesis by Egenes published at the University of Virginia with the title *The Place of the Veda in the Thought of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi: a Historical and Textual Analysis* (Egenes 1985). Maharishi's book is mainly based on transcribed videotapes and Egenes used published sources as well as video-recorded and audio-recorded lectures by Maharishi filed in the library at Maharishi International University (now Maharishi University of Management). Egenes' source material constitutes tapes of lectures mainly from the 1970s, but also from the beginning of the 1980s. One tape is from 1965 and one from 1969.

In chapter III, I will take into consideration two books by Maharishi, *Maharishi's Absolute Theory of Government: Automation in Administration* (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1995) and *Celebrating Perfection in Education: Dawn of Total Knowledge* (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1997). Both these books Maharishi published during the 1990s. I will also make a short survey of the thesis by Finkelstein (2005) submitted to the Graduate School of Maharishi University of Management. Referring to Finkelstein in this connection is due to his interpretation of Maharishi Vedic Science with reference to books of Maharishi from the 1990s, which I have looked into in more detail.

Tony Nader, when writing his treatise, first published in 1994,²⁵ worked in very close collaboration with Maharishi (Olovsson 2009).²⁶ The influence of Maharishi on the text cannot be judged from the information I got from Olovsson. However interpreting, among other things, my discussion with him, and Maharishi's comments on Nader's work in e.g., the press conference material, I make the assumption that Nader's and Maharishi's collaboration was very close. Nevertheless, even though Nader in his book gives expression to, in principle, thoughts identical to Maharishi's thoughts, he did original research to locate connections between physiology and Vedic literature. To my understanding, the process when creating the book was different to the process of writing the Bhagavadgītā commentary that Dr Katz reported. Maharishi was, according to Nader's dedication of the book, the "guiding light" of the discovery of Veda in physiology. Primarily, though, a quote from Maharishi in the book, where Maharishi states that Nader's book is the final disclosure of the relation of Veda and human physiology, also gives a stamp of authenticity to the text and I therefore would argue it is, if not a primary source, a highly significant secondary source to the teachings and philosophy of Maharishi.²⁷

The fact that Nader's book is represented among "*Maharishi's books*" on Global Good News (2011) on the Internet, and that Nader

²⁵ I am using the fourth edition from the year 2000 for my analysis.

²⁶ Information accessed in personal telephone communication with former national leader of the Transcendental Meditation movement in Sweden, Sixten Olovsson.

²⁷ This way of working contrasts with the way Maharishi worked with the commentary on the Gītā. Furthermore, Maharishi in Nader's book states that this study is the first and final disclosure of this matter. I think this is as far as I can get in the matter, and I would consider it a significant secondary source based on this quote and other circumstances mention in the text. Of course I am aware that some might argue that this quote from Maharishi published in the book by Nader is doubtful as a source to show its authenticity.

today is the leader of the Transcendental Meditation movement, appointed by Maharishi, can be regarded as further support for my position.²⁸ This text is comprehensive, containing mainly elaborations on the relation of physiology to Veda, a subject slightly off the main purpose of this thesis.

There are, as mentioned before, chapters in Nader's book on Maharishi's views on Veda and the Vedic literature, and on the Self, Ātmā, and experience of pure consciousness, on the intellect and diversity, and on the levels of manifestation, which have bearing on my purpose.

To complement the text material from the 1990s I have also studied the thesis by Ramberg (Ramberg 1999). As mentioned before, it deals with the effects of reading Vedic literature, which falls outside the purpose of this thesis, but it also contains elaborations on the Vedic Science of Maharishi that are of interest.

As mentioned above, the press conference material is a transcription of a videotaped oral source. A transcription of an oral source could be problematic, since there could be, and there actually are, passages that seem to have been hard to transcribe, due presumably to sound quality.²⁹ In those cases, we are left with either exclusion of words or a conscious or unconscious interpretation from the transcribers. This condition though would signify the authenticity of the text. Anyway, this is the material at hand, and I consider it a primary source of significant value for the thesis, since it has recent informa-

²⁸ See <http://www.maharishi-programmes.globalgoodnews.com/publications/books.html#human-physio>.

²⁹ There are marks in the transcript such as dots or otherwise to show problems in transcribing. When possible I have also compared to sources of the manuscript published online.

tion on the philosophy and teachings of Maharishi as it is expressed by himself.

In the next section, I will discuss considerations of the theoretical framework of the thesis.

Theoretical and Methodological Considerations

“Interpretation precedes data” (Alvesson and Sköldbberg 2008, p. 508) means that when you decide on what text to interpret you are already in a process of interpretation. Alvesson and Sköldbberg call this a primary interpretation. This primary interpretation is usually followed by second-degree hermeneutics, which is interpretation of the text or texts at hand. Alvesson and Sköldbberg discuss interpretation in an interview context, but I find it relevant to refer to them in this context as well, even though I am doing a content-based analysis of a selection of texts. Moreover, Alvesson and Sköldbberg mean “interpretation precedes data” is valid for all research. They further suggest that the extent of the texts at hand could make it hard to determine on which of the two levels you are, and these levels could tend to be confused with each other (Alvesson and Sköldbberg 2008, p. 509). For my part, it has been necessary to determine the texts to interpret and make a choice from different possible alternatives applying the selection criteria presented in the previous section.

For second-degree hermeneutics, I have decided on a few categories of analysis, presented in the following section, the choice of which is done from an interpretation that to some extent “*precedes data*”.

For the interpretation of the Bhagavadgītā commentary, my course of action has in part been inspired by grounded theory (see Alvesson

and Sköldberg 2008, p. 161; see also Glaser and Strauss 1967; and Hartman 2003), which is commonly used in the social sciences. Even though of course there are other ways of working theoretically to help the researcher see patterns in research material, I find grounded theory relevant in my work, since it takes data, in a variety of senses, as a starting point for analysis and for generating a theory. The advantage of grounded theory is that it gives the researcher the opportunity to detect data that is important, and not only, as could be the case with a deductive method, detect data that you think is important. The danger with deductive methods is that the hypothesis that you *discover* could have been generated from an established theory, and you will only complement it.

Traditionally inductive methods may have disadvantages, since the starting point is an already established theoretical framework. This could make the collection of data meaningless, while having preconceptions of what is important will entice you to collect the data you think is important, contrary to what might be important. You may obtain data that is possibly not relevant and you may miss what is actually important. Even the analysis is often made from a theoretical framework and this makes it hard to generate a new theory. The reason is that you may not see what really could be essential (see Hartman 2003, p. 35f).

Grounded theory is an inductive method, with deductive elements, an “inductive-deductive mix”, according to Glaser (1978). Grounded theory is also an *interactive* method in the sense that the phases of selection, data collection and analysis are repeated until the theory is generated. By constant comparison of the data you analyse, a theory

could be generated from the data, and it will then be grounded *in* the data.

Now, I am doing a content-based analysis of a selection of texts and I have used grounded theory as a point of departure. I have been inspired by the method of grounded theory, but have not followed to the letter all “rules” of grounded theory, developed above all by Glaser and Strauss, together and separately.³⁰ In its later development, Glaser is considered to be the one standing for a grounded theory of significance.

My way of administration has been first to decide which content to consider in the analysis. I decided on using metaphorical language as a starting point in my analysis for several reasons. First, I have noticed during many years listening to Maharishi’s lectures that he used a very rich metaphorical language. Secondly, when I wrote my licentiate thesis I investigated metaphorical language in the tradition of the Gītā genre, of which the Bhagavadgītā is a part. Thirdly, there is a tradition in a pedagogical context to use metaphorical language, and since Maharishi’s context when lecturing is mainly pedagogical or educational, he uses metaphor and simile frequently. Therefore, studying Maharishi’s translation and commentary on the Bhagavadgītā I chose the metaphorical language as a starting point, and thereby I let interpretation precede data. I had a supposition, even though well grounded in research, that metaphorical language would be significant for my investigation of Maharishi’s teaching and phi-

³⁰ Alvesson & Skoldberg (2008) even suggest that you may from your own taste and needs without considering the whole of this method pick up particular tips and techniques from the material at hand on grounded theory, provided these can be integrated in an overall interpretation awareness.

losophy as expressed in his translation and commentary on the Bhagavadgītā.

The metaphorical language I divided, as is generally done, into similes and metaphors. Similes were then divided into their figurative and factual parts and metaphors into their figurative part and what they stand for or what their meaning is in the context. I also coded similes and metaphors and generated a category of explanation with the central message or teaching of each of the similes and metaphors at hand.³¹

From the point of view of content, central ideas of the similes and metaphors were conceptualized. The concepts I categorized and assessed. The assessment constituted the basis of my selection of “important” categories. The categories I found important constitute the basis of the presentation in the chapter on the Bhagavadgītā below. Both *in vivo*-categories, from concepts found in the material, and *in vitro*-categories, from concepts constructed with a basis in the material, were developed. These categories should according to Strauss (1987) be acquired from those involved or at least be easy to understand by those involved in the research. I have developed *in vitro*-categories that are derived from the *texts* at hand.

To arrive at a more comprehensive analysis I looked into the categorization to try to find what Strauss means is a *core variable* or central category (see Strauss 1987, p. 36). I then could see not one, but a few wide-ranging categories. Of these, I decided on three categories, which I use as *categories of analysis*, and those are the categories

³¹ The basic coding with a complete rendering of all metaphors and similes used by Maharishi in the commentary is available as a chart in the appendix section.

used to analyse the texts under consideration. Hence, I could from the coding by way of the categories see which category, or in my case, categories were most central in the material I investigated and which seemed most central to Maharishi from my interpretation of the text. The categories, which are explained in more detail below, are “Practice before Theory”, “Consciousness and Experience” and “Vision and Tradition”. These categories of analysis, I have used as a basis for analysis of other material by Maharishi or on his teachings in a more deductive manner. Thus, I have from the Bhagavadgītā commentary developed the categories of analysis, which have been applied to other texts in a deductive manner, taking the categories of analysis as a starting point.

The content-based analysis of this selection of texts I have done with a perspective of development over time. The time aspect is relevant since the interpretation of the texts was done both as a horizontal or comparative analysis over the different periods, and as a vertical or in-depth analysis of the text or texts of a certain period. The analysis also to a certain degree will take into consideration the context in which the texts were published. This I consider second-degree hermeneutics, the primary interpretation being the decision about which texts to interpret.

The premises or hypotheses, which I developed in an interactive manner motivated by grounded theory I will put forward below before launching on the interpretation and analysis of the texts at hand. In grounded theory, you repeat selection, data collection and analysis again and again. You collect data and then inductively analyse it,

then you make a new selection deductively based on the analysis, etcetera, etcetera (see Hartman 2003).

When I was reading the texts by Maharishi and on Maharishi's teachings, one thought or idea seemed predominant in his vision over time, the concept of world peace. For that reason, I have dedicated a section to Maharishi's view on this concept and his practical approach to it. In that section I will also discuss the scientific studies related to this concept or rather the concept of the "Maharishi Effect", which developed in consequence of the research in this field.

I would say, as a hypothesis, that Maharishi did not develop his principal teaching in one sense. From the very start, concerning the philosophical tradition of Maharishi, I would argue that, according to usual philosophical categories, many aspects of Maharishi's teaching reflect the Advaita Vedānta tradition, although it is also clear from his writings that his knowledge wasn't limited to one particular school. That he reflects the Advaita Vedānta tradition is seen in the introduction to the commentary on the Bhagavadgītā (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 [1967]). This is also shown by the fact that Maharishi was the disciple of the Śaṅkarācārya of Jyotir Maṭh, Swāmi Brahmānanda Saraswatī, which is elaborated upon e.g. by Egenes in his thesis. (Egenes 1985, see e.g. Introduction and Chapter 7). Dr Katz, in my interview with him, states that this is so (Katz 2011). In the book on the history of the Transcendental Meditation movement, *Thirty Years around the World*, there is the following statement by Maharishi, done in 1955, which also support this viewpoint:

There are two states of the ultimate reality, Brahman – the unmanifest state

and the manifest state. In the unmanifest state, the Brahman is *anor aniyan*, the atom of the atoms, the minute of the minutae; and in this unmanifest minute state, its essential nature is *ananda*, *sat chit ananda* – eternal bliss consciousness; but in its manifest state the *ananda* becomes latent to give rise to other properties, which come on the scene of the manifest objects, **just as the fluid property of water becomes latent when water becomes ice.** (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1986b, p. 196).

Even though this is a statement made in a lecture, and is not too elaborated, by using the concept “two states of the ultimate reality, Brahman...”, and the simile of water and ice, Maharishi expresses the Advaita Vedānta viewpoint of non-duality. Non-duality means there is not a duality as in inter alia the Sāṃkhya system that separates Puruṣa and prakṛti, or the Absolute and nature. In Advaita Vedānta, Brahman is one without a second, and contains within it the manifestation of the diverse universe. Nevertheless though, of course, Maharishi also upholds a view of duality in the sense that in the state of human consciousness he denominates as Cosmic Consciousness,³² the basis for growth into Unity Consciousness,³³ there is an *experienced* duality between the Self and the non-Self.

I would say this seems to be rather a renaissance than a “new” teaching and philosophy. We will look into the texts from different periods to see if this is verified by the texts. This question, however, I find relevant in Maharishi’s teaching, and I will consider it primarily in the category of analysis entitled *Vision and Tradition*.

Even though I think there was no development of the basic teachings and philosophy, my hypothesis is that new elements were ex-

³² For a description of the concept Cosmic Consciousness according to Maharishi, see below p. 114f. and p. 178f.

³³ For a description of Unity Consciousness see p. 181f (cf. p. 123f).

pounded upon in the teachings as well as the philosophy. The *Apauruṣeya Bhāṣya*³⁴, the uncreated commentary on the *Rgveda*, which is an interpretation by Maharishi of Vedic texts, primarily the *Rgveda*, developed his teaching, and aspects which were not in focus in the early stages, came into focus later on.

In that sense there was also a development in his expounding of the teachings due to the scientific research on the Transcendental Meditation technique. This is seen in publications where Maharishi connects different research results to specific parts of his teaching of the Vedic philosophy. This is a main feature of the text by Nader, where the human body is paralleled with the different aspects of Vedic texts (2000 [1994], a chart is presented on p. 56f).³⁵ Maharishi's vision and interpretation of the Vedic texts also prepared the ground for his development of Maharishi Vedic Science, which is a systematization of Veda in a broad sense. Maharishi Vedic Science is the main objective of Egenes' (1985) thesis and certainly of interest for my purpose as well.

The commentary on the Bhagavadgītā is of importance to my objective, since it is one of Maharishi's first expositions of his thoughts during the initial period of the development of the Transcendental Meditation movement, before any research had been done and before the technique was well known to the public.

Maharishi's book *The Science of Being and Art of Living* (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1966 [1963]) also has been part of my investiga-

³⁴ *Apauruṣeya* literally means "not coming from men" *puruṣa* meaning "man" and *bhāṣya* meaning "commentary" (Monier-Williams 1976 [1899] p. 57 col. 1 and p. 755 col. 3)

³⁵ Also see online: http://is1.mum.edu/vedicreserve/table_qualities.htm and the appendices section below for this chart.

tion, but I chose the Bhagavadgītā being a traditional Indian text as my main text of investigation from this period. I also note that Maharishi in his commentary interprets the text in a new and for Maharishi unique manner.

In the commentary on the Bhagavadgītā, Maharishi lays out his teachings in a pedagogical manner using a very rich metaphorical language. In the later texts the metaphorical language is present, but not in the same significant way as in the Bhagavadgītā commentary. A reason for this might be that the public, the target group of Maharishi in the early stages of his teaching was quite unaware of the principles of thought of the text and Maharishi in that context considered it important to make clarifications and illustrations using metaphorical language. That is plausible also on the level of common sense.

Moreover, I consider it relevant to systematize the metaphorical language of the Bhagavadgītā commentary, since to my knowledge this has not been done before. Some of the similes and examples are used by Maharishi during his entire active period of teaching, as e.g. the simile of watering the root to enjoy the fruit, meaning in his analysis of the Vedic tradition that you first have to experience pure consciousness before you engage in activity if it is going to be successful. From studying the commentary on the Bhagavadgītā, I see it as a central principle of Maharishi in his teaching that he seems to put *practice before theory*. This statement now leads us to the next section in which I will introduce my different categories of analysis.

Categories of Analysis

Several questions have arisen along the way working with this vast material: what is actually Maharishi's philosophical connection with the philosophy of Śaṅkara as well as other Vedānta philosophers? What is really in focus in his teaching in different contexts and over time? What is in fact his contribution in a philosophical context in relation to his more practical approach to knowledge and teaching, often, as stated above, putting practice before theory?

To fulfil the purpose of this thesis I have by using tools from grounded theory, identified a few, which I consider, significant categories of analysis. Firstly, I decided on which text material to analyse, landing in metaphorical language, in similes and metaphors. Secondly, I conceptualized the content of these, and thirdly categorized and assessed the concepts. The assessment was the basis of important categories in the presentation, and from these categories, I derived more comprehensive categories of analysis. Therefore, the categories of analysis, I derive as described from the interpretation and analysis of the commentary on the Bhagavadgītā. I am aware though, that another interpretation of Maharishi's commentary might have generated other categories of analysis.

The fundamental ideas, which I find most significant to Maharishi's principal teaching, I will use in a deductive manner in the analysis of the different texts at hand. This is to see how these thoughts are expressed at different times, and in different contexts.

I have formulated three categories of analysis: one is *Vision and Tradition*, another is *Consciousness and Experience* and the third is *Practice before Theory*. These I will introduce below.

The concept *Vision and Tradition* I have arrived at as one category of analysis from my categorization of concepts in the Bhagavadgītā. This I see as an in vitro-category, since I have arrived at it from my categorization and analysis of the text. The reason for using this category of analysis is that Maharishi could be considered a custodian of the ancient Vedic tradition in general and is associated with the Advaita Vedānta tradition of Śaṅkara from his master Guru Dev who was the Śaṅkarācārya of Jyotir Math in the Himālayas. At the same time, Maharishi could be considered an innovator of this tradition and a visionary in his interpretation of the Vedic texts and their relation to modern science. What then is the relationship between the tradition and the interpretations of Maharishi? That I will discuss in my analysis of the texts.

Maharishi in certain texts gives expression to a vision of the establishment of permanent world peace through his simple technique of Transcendental Meditation. This obviously has been his goal since he started lecturing and teaching in India in the 1950s. Indeed, it also has its bearing on the concepts of Vision and Tradition, but irrespective of that, I will dedicate a special section to the concept of World Peace.³⁶

Consciousness and Experience I have concluded are central concepts in the teachings of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, as well as the relationship between them. Considered as a category of analysis it is an in vivo-category, i.e. the concepts are found in the text. Consciousness

³⁶ For an in-depth presentation on the topic of World Peace see inter alia *Enlightenment and Invincibility*. (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1978b)

studies on the Transcendental Meditation technique³⁷ and the advanced techniques of TM-Sidhis have been conducted within many research fields. Maharishi is also considered by some a pioneer in the field of consciousness studies.³⁸

The concept of *consciousness* has a broad connotation, but I will for the most part use it in the sense of “*pure consciousness*”, or Being, the Absolute etc., which it is often synonymous with in the texts under consideration. Maharishi also used the concept in different contexts with different meanings, which I will discuss.

As an introduction for the interested reader to the study of the concept of consciousness in Maharishi’s commentary on the Bhagavadgītā, I have written a short essay with a survey of the concept of Ātman in the Upaniṣads and the Bhagavadgītā and its relation to metaphorical language.³⁹ Devoting a separate essay to a study of the concept of Ātman, and similes explaining it, is due to the fact that this term has an essential role in denoting the ultimate reality or pure consciousness. In Maharishi’s teaching the concept or rather the experience of it is indeed essential. Maharishi considers the experience of Ātman, pure consciousness or Being, the most fundamental experience for the expansion of one’s awareness and development of higher states of consciousness. The concept of consciousness Maharishi elaborates on in every aspect of his teaching and I would suggest it is the one most used term to designate the ultimate reality in

³⁷ A short explanation of the Transcendental Meditation technique from the website of Transcendental Meditation in the United States: “It’s a simple, natural technique practiced 20 minutes twice each day while sitting comfortably with the eyes closed.” (The Transcendental Meditation technique 2014).

³⁸ See below on Robert Forman, editor of the *Journal of Consciousness Studies*. (See also e.g. Ramberg 1999).

³⁹ This essay is found in the Appendix section on page 387.

Maharishi's later lectures and publications. As I have mentioned above, it is also the basis of education at Maharishi University of Management (MUM).

In his analysis of the *development of consciousness*, which is at the very core of his teaching, Maharishi was innovative in the sense that he challenged traditional interpretations, not least in his commentary on the Bhagavadgītā. He also systematized the understanding of the development of consciousness in human awareness and presented well-defined *states of consciousness*, first laid out in his commentary on the Bhagavadgītā and in his book *The Science of Being and Art of Living*. Being central in Maharishi's teaching, I will investigate these states of consciousness in the different texts as kind of subcategories of analysis to see if, and in that case, how, they are expressed differently in different contexts. Are there any differences in the different texts and if so, what could be the reason for this?

Since the themes or categories of analysis are not clear-cut, but sometimes overlap, considerations in the *Consciousness and Experience* theme or *Practice before Theory* theme in some instances could as well have been considered in the *Vision and Tradition* category, and vice versa. The reason is that these categories are far-reaching and on a high level of abstraction, consciousness and experience being on a higher level of abstraction than the other two categories. Other categories of analysis than these of course could have been relevant looking at the texts from a different perspective.

The notion of *Practice before Theory*, which could be considered an *in vitro*-category, constructed but with a starting point in the mate-

rial, I use as one category of analysis, investigating the teachings of Maharishi. As mentioned by Dr Katz, the 45th verse of chapter 2 in the Bhagavadgītā Maharishi considered central, commencing from his commentary in 1961 (Katz 2011). This verse reads in Maharishi's translation, "the Vedas concern is with the three gunas, be without the three gunas, O Arjuna, freed from duality, ever firm in purity" (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), p. 90) meaning, according to the commentary, that one should transcend the relative existence by practising Transcendental Meditation. Obviously a central thought in Maharishi's teaching during the period, I find it relevant to use the concept of *Practice before Theory* as a category of analysis. There are certainly numerous instances in this text indicating that Maharishi considers *practice* most essential in his teaching and in the process of a person's development. It is according to Maharishi in his vision of a better society also most essential and he considers the application of a *practice* forgotten in many interpretations of the Bhagavadgītā.

One interesting feature of the concept of *Practice before Theory* is in my opinion that its application resembles or could be seen as analogous to the applications of grounded theory. Like grounded theory, the starting point is not theory, but the experience, which could be compared to the data in grounded theory. There is also reciprocity between experience and application in the functionality of *Practice before Theory* as there is an interactive element in grounded theory.

It is also interesting to notice that Maharishi emphasizes practice, considering his education and training in natural science, known to

have a positivistic approach to science, with experiment as the basis of scientific research.

So, I have arrived at the above-mentioned categories of analysis for my investigation of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi’s principal philosophical teaching as expressed in some different texts from different periods.

Expressed graphically it may look as follows. The horizontal axis represents the different periods of which the first represents texts from the 1960s, the second texts primarily from the 1970s and ’80s, the third texts from the 1990s and the final, texts from the first decade of the 21st century:

Figure 1: Horizontal Analysis (comparative analysis over the different periods) and Vertical Analysis (analysis of text of a certain period)

Categories of Analysis/Text ↓ →	Teaching TM to Everyone	Maharishi Vedic Science	“My Vedic Science is the Science of Consciousness”	“Silence and dynamism both together”
Practice before Theory	→	→	→	→
Consciousness and Experience	→	→	→	→
Vision and Tradition	→	→	→	→

We will now look into some of the extensive research that has been done on the teachings of Maharishi. We will start looking at research done by researchers primarily interested in the Transcendental Meditation movement from a sociological perspective, and from a new religious movement perspective. Then we will look into research con-

ducted by researchers associated with Maharishi University of Management in the United States, the university dedicated to Maharishi Consciousness-Based Education, and to conducting research studies, with the aim of publication in scientific journals with a peer review process. Finally, we will give a survey of previous research on Maharishi's teachings and world of ideas and primarily his place in the Vedānta tradition of Śaṅkara.

Research Review and Context

In this research review, I will start with an account of sociological studies, conducting research from the point of view of new religious movements. I will then give an account of the development of the Maharishi University of Management and the concept of "Consciousness Studies", which has a central role in the formation of the teachings of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi.

After that, I will give a review of research done on the central teachings of Maharishi. The reason I dwell much on the Maharishi University of Management is that it was the first university Maharishi started and that was accredited as a university in the United States and still is today. To me it seems that this university with its curriculum and research upholds a scientific tradition in the Transcendental Meditation movement, even though some of course would argue it is a confessional institution. Nevertheless, members of faculty at the university have established a tradition of publishing articles in reputable scientific journals.

Finally, there will be an account of research on Maharishi in the Vedānta tradition of thought in India.

Research on Transcendental Meditation

This thesis is written from the perspective of history of ideas or philosophy, but from an Indian point of departure. My field of study involves elements of Indian history of philosophy that is applicable to the study of Maharishi's contemporary teaching and philosophy. Western ideohistorical reasoning is not primarily considered, even though points of contact and similarities obviously exist. I am doing a content-based analysis of a selection of texts and my intention is, from a research perspective, to give an appropriate picture of the teachings and the philosophy of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi. Researchers writing from the perspective of new religious movements like e.g., Rothstein (see e.g. Jensen, Rothstein, and Podeman Sørensen 1996; Rothstein 1996a; Rothstein 1996b) in Denmark and Frisk (see e.g. Frisk 1993) in Sweden have published some essays and articles on the Transcendental Meditation movement from this perspective. Woodrum (see Rothstein 1996b) has been writing from the perspective of sociology of religion and Lowe (see Lowe 2011) from a similar perspective.

The concept "new religious movement" I find worth reflecting on. For instance Rothstein discusses the Transcendental Meditation movement in the framework of new religious movements, but expresses his view on this concept when he states, although in connection with ISKCON, the Hare Krishna-movement, that, "sometimes the designation 'new' is attributed to religions that are not at all new, but only unknown in the society which perceives them as new". (Rothstein in Jensen, Rothstein, and Podeman Sørensen 1996, p. 542). This I would hold in a sense true also of the Transcendental

Meditation movement with its roots in the ancient Vedic tradition and Advaita tradition of Śaṅkara. But of course even the concept “religion” in this connection could be discussed. Maharishi on his side was always keen on emphasizing that Transcendental Meditation is *only* a *technique* for the development of consciousness. To discuss whether or not the concept religion is applicable in this connection is however not the purpose of my study. The studies referred to above focus on the Transcendental Meditation movement at large and its development and this has been done in the framework of new religious movement studies. To study the Transcendental Meditation movement at large or its development is not my intention and therefore I will not go into great detail on this here, even though I find it worthwhile to give a short survey of selected parts of the studies done in that context, since it will put Maharishi into a certain context.

There are for instance in an essay by Rothstein, some references to the teachings of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, which I find relevant to refer. Rothstein means that Maharishi is classically Advaitin (Rothstein 1996b, p. 561, in Jensen et al.), when he says that the central theme of Maharishi’s teaching is the unity of everything. Rothstein further compares it to Advaita when he states that: “with the concept advaita the Shankara-tradition traditionally describes all that exists as an inseparable unity” (Rothstein 1996b, p. 561, in Jensen et al.). The purpose in the Advaita tradition as in Maharishi’s teaching is according to Rothstein the development of consciousness to a higher level, thus gaining insight into the true meaning of life and the universe. Rothstein continues to maintain that the purpose of liberation for Maharishi is twofold, 100% spiritual and 100% material life. This, in my

opinion, though not being a misapprehension, needs a clarification. It could be seen as central in the teaching of Maharishi and in accordance with his pedagogical style, since he often uses these terms to describe his teaching, saying as a kind of wordplay or quibble that Transcendental Meditation develops 200% life, 100% spiritual and 100% material. Nevertheless, Rothstein asserts that basically the idea of Advaita philosophy of the unity of Brahman and Ātman is the central conception of the Transcendental Meditation movement. Maharishi though, according to Rothstein, wants to distance himself from the conception that life is suffering. In this, I would agree with Rothstein, but in my opinion Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, when stating that life is not suffering, preferentially means that the essence of life, which is pure consciousness, is not characterized by suffering but by bliss, which is also a traditional Advaita conception. Rothstein also describes the Science of Creative Intelligence as the theoretical aspect of Transcendental Meditation, which then would be the practical aspect. In his exposition of the central teachings of Maharishi, Rothstein concludes that Transcendental Meditation could be seen as part of the Indian mystical tradition (Rothstein 1996b, p. 561f).

Rothstein also, significantly enough, discusses the circumstance that Transcendental Meditation is a technique and that it could be inappropriate to study Transcendental Meditation as a religion. He refers to the fact that in Denmark meditators of Transcendental Meditation, even in the inner circle, still are members of the Danish state church and take part of its rituals. Rothstein states that “if religion research were able to integrate the medical documentation of the effects of meditation and physics confirmation of the belief system,

one (the Transcendental Meditation movement: my comment) suggests that, the conception of Transcendental Meditation as a religious movement would be unfounded.” Rothstein also discusses the relation to modern science further, but I will not go into that here, but will discuss it in my text analysis below.

The religion sociologist Woodrum claims that Transcendental Meditation has gone through three phases since its start, first a spiritual-mystical, then one where Transcendental Meditation identifies itself with the youth culture during the late 1960s, and then a secular scientific phase from the early 1970s (see Rothstein 1996b). This seems largely to be the opinion of Lowe as well (Lowe 2011). The religion sociologist Roy Wallis states that the Transcendental Meditation movement is a typical example of what he calls a “world-affirming religious movement” wanting to make the world a better place (see Rothstein 1996b).

The description of the Transcendental Meditation movement as having gone through different phases in the way Woodrum and Lowe mean I would suggest is significant if you study the Transcendental Meditation movement from a sociological perspective, but if you take the perspective of studying the philosophy and teaching of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, the picture may be a different one. Whether or not this is so, I will try to show in my analysis of a selection of texts below.

In the framework of new religions, the philosopher Jacob Needleman also has written a chapter on Transcendental Meditation in his book *The New Religions* (Needleman 2009, p. 139-156). In this book he “describes the teachings and practices of the new, predominantly

Eastern religions that are rapidly gaining influence in America...Jacob Needleman examines the specific areas in which traditional Western religions have failed modern man, and the ways in which the Eastern religions offer their followers the practical means for improving the quality of their lives.”⁴⁰

My purpose in relation to the studies referred to could be seen as an attempt to clarify the picture of the central teachings and philosophy of Maharishi. I will try to give feasible explanations to phenomena and any development and change that are found in the empirical material, i.e. the texts under consideration.

Maharishi University of Management and Consciousness Studies

I would say that Maharishi has had a profound impact on the position and perception of the concept of meditation and the implications of practising it since he started teaching in the Western world in 1959. A reason for this, besides the fact that he was the “guru” of many celebrities from the 1960s and onwards, was that Maharishi, who himself had a bachelor’s degree in physics and mathematics from the University of Allahabad in India, encouraged scientific research on the Transcendental Meditation technique. Having studied physics Maharishi already from the beginning, lecturing in India in 1955, made connections between “modern Western science and ancient Vedic wisdom, a contribution to the field of knowledge that has continued through the years...” (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1986b, p. 196). This citation continues:

⁴⁰ Cited from the Jacob Needleman website (Needleman 2014).

To this eager Indian audience, Maharishi presented the view of modern physics that all different forms of matter are ultimately nothing but abstract energy. He proceeded to show that the Indian system of analysis parallels this description of the universe. The energy of electrons and protons is due, he said, to a certain *tattva*, or element, functioning at one level. Their motion is due to a *tattva* functioning at a subtler level. But the Indian system recognizes four more subtle levels of elementary function before the most refined level is transcended and the ultimate reality, formless wholeness, Brahman, which is *ananda*, is reached. (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1986b, p. 196).

From this review of an early text in the form of a lecture, it seems that the connection between modern sciences, physics in particular, and Vedic knowledge that Maharishi elaborates on in later publications and lectures is very basic in his teaching, reaching back to his very first lectures held in India in the middle of the 1950s.

One reason for my thorough consideration of Maharishi University of Management in this context is that Maharishi's teachings seems to have a concrete expression in this university's curriculum, applying Maharishi's theory of learning in its Consciousness-Based Education.

In the early 1970s, articles on the physiological effects of Transcendental Meditation appeared in *Science*, *American Journal of Physiology* and *Scientific American* (Wallace 1971, 221: 795-799; Wallace 1972, 226: 84-90; Wallace 1970b). Starting with a doctoral thesis on the physiological effects of Transcendental Meditation (Wallace 1970a), studies made on different effects of the techniques have multiplied over the years. According to an article published in the journal *Modern Science and Vedic Science* (Orme-Johnson 1995) more than 500 different studies at universities in 33 countries around

the world had been published by 1995. Maharishi in 1971 started the university under the name of Maharishi International University⁴¹. A discipline, which Maharishi called the Science of Creative Intelligence (SCI), developed into a course that he intended should be taught as a supplementary course at universities. Citing the historical annals of the present-day Maharishi University of Management's website we read:

In 1971, SCI was introduced at such universities as Yale and Stanford with great success. That summer, Dr. Robert Keith Wallace, a post-doctoral researcher at Harvard whose Ph.D. dissertation had included the first research on the Transcendental Meditation program, organized a large SCI symposium on the Amherst campus of the University of Massachusetts.

At that conference, in the presence of leading scientists like Buckminster Fuller, Maharishi announced his intention to create a university whose entire curriculum would incorporate the Science of Creative Intelligence. Its name would be Maharishi International University. (Maharishi University of Management: Founding and History of the University 2009)

The first president of the university was Robert Keith Wallace, who also conducted the first research on the effects of Transcendental Meditation on physiology (Maharishi University of Management: Founding and History of the University 2009).

A number of scholars in different fields, including a number of Ivy League-trained Ph.D.'s, were selected to be MIU's founding faculty. Together, they began working to establish a curriculum and move toward accreditation. The faculty then travelled to Santa Barbara, California, where, in 1973, MIU started to offer its first classes. (Maharishi University of Management: Founding and History of the University 2009).

⁴¹ In 1995 the university changed its name to Maharishi University of Management (Maharishi University of Management: Founding and History of the University 2009).

Soon after it started, the facility in Santa Barbara was too small and the university acquired its own campus in Fairfield, Iowa, where it is still situated (Maharishi University of Management: Founding and History of the University 2009). In the late 1970s Maharishi International University, MIU, was accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association (see The Higher Learning Commission 2009) and extensive research on the effects of the Transcendental Meditation and TM-Sidhi programmes, an advanced practice, was conducted at the university campus.

During the last decades undergraduate programmes in different disciplines, such as Art and Design, Business, Communications and Media, Computer Science, Elementary Education, Secondary Education, Literature, Literature with Emphasis on Writing, Maharishi Vedic Science, Mathematics, Physiology and Health with a Pre-Med Programme and Sustainable Living have been developed. Also graduate programmes for a masters degree in Business Administration, MBA, with the emphasis on Sustainable Business and an Accounting Professionals programme is offered together with a Master in Computer Science and Teaching, and also a Masters Degree programme in Maharishi Vedic Science. The university offers PhD programmes in Maharishi Vedic Science, in Management and in Physiology. The university is as mentioned before still accredited by the Higher Learning Commission and is a member of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (Maharishi University of Management 2009a; The Higher Learning Commission 2009).

There seems to be one central idea which has its origin in the teachings of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi and which connects Maharishi

University of Management to the ideas of the old tradition of the Veda, and that is the *consciousness-based form of education* at the core of all courses at the university.⁴² The concept could be seen as the basic principle of the original course in the Science of Creative Intelligence.

On the university website you could read the following concerning what Maharishi University of Management considers has been lacking in university education:

Simply stated, education has been leaving out you and your consciousness — your state of awareness. When you study something, three elements are involved:

1. the **knowledge** of the field of study;
2. the **process** of gaining knowledge;
3. and you, the **student** gaining knowledge.

Many universities are adequate or better on the first element — covering the subject of study. And the more progressive schools improve the process through innovative teaching techniques. But conventional universities fail to expand the learning ability of the student — to develop the consciousness of the knower. Without this third element, universities only provide information-based education — and the information is often forgotten once the course is over. What has been missing is a way for you to develop yourself from within — to improve your brain functioning and enliven your full potential.” (Maharishi University of Management 2009c)

To describe the Consciousness-Based Education at MUM you can say that there is study of traditional subjects which is complemented by a systematic culturing of the students’ “inner potential”. The focus is on expanding awareness of the student so that the ability to see

⁴² E.g. see Brown, *Unity and diversity in Maharishi Vedic Science, higher states of consciousness, and a study of undergraduate student development* (2008).

the big picture, or gain a holistic perspective, of the subject, is developed. The fundamental idea is that knowledge, whatever it is, emerges from consciousness. And,

At MUM each class becomes relevant, because the knowledge of that subject is connected with your own inner intelligence. Through this approach you also see how each field of study can be practically applied towards solving the world's problems — and you gain the tools to create a positive change in the world. (Maharishi University of Management 2009b).

The main tool for achieving this is Transcendental Meditation practised for twenty minutes twice daily.

You will find more than a hundred references to studies in the field of education at the Maharishi University of Management website. Of these, quite an extensive number of studies have been done at Maharishi University of Management.

One major study of students at MIU was conducted in 1980 by Rowe, *A Case Study of Maharishi International University: An Innovative Institution of Higher Education*, a PhD dissertation at University of California at Santa Barbara (Rowe 1980). Rowe studied students at MIU and compared them to students at other universities around the US, using the CIRP⁴³ characteristics.

In her study Rowe found the educational philosophy of MIU most interesting, emphasizing both theoretical and experiential aspects of gaining knowledge. This she suggests is part of the basis for the high academic aspirations of the students at MIU. These aspirations are in correspondence with very high selectivity students at other institu-

⁴³ Cooperative Institutional Research Project; The CIRP is USA's largest and oldest empirical study of higher education, involving data on about 1,800 institutions and more than 11 million students. The CIRP project is managed by the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI). (Sutherland 2002) (Accessed 2011-01-29).

tions. In addition, differences with other students of the same background she suggests are due to the MIU students' knowledge of the educational methodology of MIU.⁴⁴

In the field of consciousness research, Robert Forman, who incidentally in the spring of 2010 was awarded an honorary doctorate at the Faculty of Humanities and Theology at Lund University, Sweden, has recognized the research done on Transcendental Meditation in the scientific journal of which he is a co-editor, *Journal of Con-*

⁴⁴ In her abstract she states: "The case study of Maharishi International University (MIU) considered in depth this innovative institution which integrates a unique educational methodology for the development of human potential with a traditional liberal arts curriculum. The substantive basis for MIU's holistic educational approach is the Science of Creative Intelligence (SCI), which analyzes the phenomenon of intelligence and progressive development presumed to be common to all fields of knowledge. In addition, the experiential aspect of SCI, the Transcendental Meditation technique, systematically and cumulatively develops a wide range of psychological and physiological functions which can positively enhance the educational experience and lead to long range developmental benefits.

"MIU's guiding educational philosophy thus emphasizes the importance of both subjective and objective aspects of the process of education, in seeking to develop both the knower and knowledge through the theoretical and experiential aspects of the Science of Creative Intelligence.

"In order to provide a more comprehensive description of MIU, the characteristics of its students were examined within the context of a larger, national student population. Entering MIU students (Fall, 1976) were compared with entering student samples from 25 other private colleges, representing four academic selectivity levels. Data on entering student characteristics were provided by the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) of the American Council on Education, and the University of California, Los Angeles. The CIRP data allowed for comparisons to be made on a wide variety of student background variables, as well as student values and aspirations. The MIU students were found to have expectations for (1) their academic growth and achievements, (2) their personal development, and (3) their contribution to the welfare of society. Although MIU students had less promising academic histories than many of their peers, their academic aspirations were higher than most of the other student samples, with the exception of the very high selectivity students. In the areas of personal development and social commitment, the MIU students appeared to have greater interests and expectations than most of the other student samples studied. Because the MIU students did not differ significantly from many of the other student samples in their general background characteristics, it was suggested that the differences noted may be attributed to the influence of exposure to MIU's educational methodology prior to matriculation at MIU.

"It was noted that students chose to attend MIU largely because of its distinctive institutional image, which appears to correspond to the values, expectations and goals of its entering students. Initial expectations of entering MIU students are reinforced by the institutional values of MIU, which enhances the possibility of their fulfillment. Based on the high degree of coherence of goals and purposes at MIU, a supportive and potent educational environment is created, which is a reflection of both student and institutional characteristics". (Rowe 1980, Abstract).

consciousness Studies. Forman (1998, pp. 185-201), a scholar of philosophy of religion and himself a long-term TM-meditator, in an article in *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, brings forth thoughts analogous to and most likely influenced by those of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi. He writes on the transcendental state of consciousness – as it is called by Maharishi – that the experiences of mystics throughout the world report the characteristics of this “fourth” state, though he prefers to call it “pure consciousness event”, PCE. Implying that most mystics practise some form of meditation, Forman writes that “during meditation, one begins to slow down the thinking process, and have fewer or less intense thoughts...ultimately one may become utterly silent inside, as though in a gap between thoughts, where one becomes completely perception and thought-free. One neither thinks nor perceives any mental or sensory content.” (Forman 1998) He further says that when coming out of the state one is confident that one was awake inside and fully conscious. He then defines it as “wakeful but contentless consciousness” (Forman 1998).

Forman continues to suggest that advanced experiences occur for those who practice meditation on a regular and long-term basis. These experiences are known as “enlightenment”. Defining this state he writes that the enlightened person’s “discriminating feature is a deep shift in epistemological structure: the experienced relationship between the self and one’s perceptual objects changes profoundly.” (Forman 1998). And according to Forman this structure which is new to the enlightened person or mystic is permanent and not as James (1902/1983, p. 381, reference in Forman 1998) writes, transient. Forman considers James' standpoint, from his own evidence, “simply

wrong”, as he puts it (Forman 1998). He continues to lay out a model for different higher states of consciousness that are fundamentally identical to the model completed by Maharishi Mahesh Yogi.

So, a question that arises is how the thought of enhancing the learning ability and creativity from practising this meditation technique, the aim of Consciousness-Based Education at MUM, is related to the teachings of the Bhagavadgītā. By analysing the Bhagavadgītā, and in this case, the metaphorical language in the commentary by Maharishi, we will get an insight into the main teachings of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi at the time. Thereby we will also obtain a view of the historical annals of the application of Transcendental Meditation at MUM and of course in general.

But, first I will give a short survey of the principal teachings of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi as understood in previous studies within the field of Indian religion.

Vedānta and Vedic Science – Teachings of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi

In his commentary on the Bhagavadgītā, Maharishi brings out principles of Śaṅkara’s teaching and the Vedānta philosophy. This is seen in the interpretation of different stanzas throughout the commentary (see i.a. Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), p. 5).

As we know, the concept of Vedānta originally is a designation for the end of Veda, *anta* meaning *end*. The Upaniṣads being arranged at the end of the Veda thus was called Vedānta. This term then was used for the teachings of the Upaniṣads, and with time, those teachings were put together in a philosophic-theological system called Vedānta. This system was based on three scriptures, the Upaniṣads,

the Bhagavadgītā and the aphorisms of the Brahma Sūtra (see Egenes 1985; Gansten 2002, p. 35).

As mentioned before Maharishi developed contacts with the scientific community and encouraged scientific studies on his technique Transcendental Meditation and the advanced technique of TM-Sidhi practise. He also continually arranged conferences on the consciousness-based philosophy of his teachings.

The Vedic science of Maharishi, or Maharishi Vedic Science, was introduced first in the 1970s as Maharishi spent time with scientists from different fields. At Maharishi University of Management there is a faculty dedicated to the study of Maharishi Vedic Science and a journal published by the faculty entitled *Modern Science and Vedic Science*. The bringing together of ancient Vedic thought and modern science, with particular emphasis on physics, is a task that several Indian philosophers have endeavoured to accomplish since Vivekananda spoke at the World Parliament of Religions in Chicago in 1893.

The German indologist Paul Hacker is talking of a reformed Hinduism, which he designates “Neo-Hinduism” and which he states comes to expression from the 1870s, in the teachings of inter alia Chattopadhyaya, Vivekananda, Aurobindo, Gandhi and Radhakrishnan and also in the Arya Samaj movement. Characteristic of this so-called Neo-Hinduism is, according to Hacker, that Hinduism is a spiritual unity, that Hinduism is tolerant, and that all religions are equal. The Arya Samaj aims at a purified Hinduism expressed in the Vedic hymns. Aurobindo talks of Integral Yoga to develop mankind to higher levels of evolution and of an Eternal Religion. David Smith however is of the opinion that “the introduction of the term Neo-

Hinduism is unfortunate in that it denies what is in fact the growth and change that has always been part of Hinduism, as well as undervaluing the part played by the natural development of non-dualist Vedanta” (Smith 2009 (2001), p. 53f).

Egenes’ (1985) thesis is dedicated to documenting the relationship between the Veda and Maharishi’s thought. Ramberg (1999) has in his thesis an account of Vedic Science as developed by Maharishi, and Finkelstein (2005) studies inter alia Maharishi’s philosophy or science of consciousness. I will discuss these scholars below.

Catherine A. Robinson (2005), has made a comparison of some exponents of Vedic philosophy in the West, Swami Prabhupada, Sri Chinmoy, Krishna Prem and Maharishi, and their relation to the Bhagavadgītā, of which I will now give an account.

Maharishi in the Advaita Tradition of Śaṅkara

As a disciple of Swāmi Brahmānanda Saraswatī, the Śaṅkarācārya of Jyotir Math, Maharishi is associated with the tradition of Śaṅkara. According to Catherine A. Robinson in her *Interpretations of the Bhagavad-Gītā and Images of the Hindu Tradition* (2005, p. 136) Maharishi’s commentary is more knowledge-centered than the commentaries of other contemporary teachers, like Prabhupada, Chinmoy and Krishna Prem. He is also more critical of other commentaries, which he holds did not give a faithful account of the true meaning of the Bhagavadgītā. In his analysis he took Śaṅkara as his model and he held that Śaṅkara had been misinterpreted. Robinson (2005) further states that Maharishi in his commentary emphasizes the importance of a teacher or guru “though, reflecting his Advaitin credentials, he gave more prominence to the impersonal absolute and also

to knowledge” (p. 136). In one sense, placing the impersonal absolute over the personal deity, he was, according to Robinson, classically Advaitin, but she continues, “His understanding of knowledge and its relationship with action and devotion was markedly different from conventional readings of Śaṅkara’s philosophy” (Robinson 2005, p. 136).

Maharishi, according to Robinson, advocated the technique of Transcendental Meditation as the fulfilment of all religions, and attached little significance to the differences between religions or religious classifications with different names like “Hindu” or “Christian”. His general reference in this connection within the Hindu framework was to the Vedic knowledge or wisdom and the six systems of Indian philosophy. Maharishi considered the Bhagavadgītā a guide to the spiritual life and in calling it “Scripture of Yoga”, he saw its teaching as the solution to mankind’s spiritual crisis, if only its teaching was properly interpreted and followed. He held that past commentators had not identified its wisdom, which was linked to a simple technique of meditation, Transcendental Meditation. The purpose of his commentary was “to present that key to mankind and preserve it for generations to come” (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), p. 14; Robinson 2005, p. 136). Maharishi wrote his commentary after his technique of Transcendental Meditation had been proved beneficial to people from different backgrounds, “hence a truth accessible to all whatever their religion or culture” (Robinson 2005, p. 137). According to Robinson Maharishi saw this universal truth as predicated on Advaita teachings and Maharishi also describes his commentary as a supplement to Śaṅkara’s commentary

and dedicates it to his teacher Swami Brahmananda Saraswati who is the inspiration of the commentary and whom he considers the embodiment of Śaṅkara's "head and heart" (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), p. 9; Robinson 2005, p. 137). Swāmi Brahmānanda Saraswatī was the inspiration to the commentary and Maharishi regarded him as the reviver of Śaṅkara's true and unified teaching, which had been lost long since. And, according to Robinson, Maharishi in his commentary "reiterated the importance of lineage in the transmission of teaching and also the relationship between guru and disciple" (2005, p. 137).

When Maharishi discusses the divine and the conduct of religious life, he emphasizes the significance of Śaṅkara. He refers to Brahman both as unity and as diversity when he is exploring the spiritual development from Transcendental Consciousness, via Cosmic Consciousness to God-Consciousness. According to Robinson, Maharishi's teaching has "strong echoes of the Brahman-Ātman identity though he did hold together the personal and impersonal conceptions of godhead" (Robinson 2005, p.138).

Concerning the conduct of religious life, in Robinson's view knowledge is held central but, "just as he combined the personal and impersonal, he emphasized the complementarity of knowledge and action and the integration of knowledge with devotion" (Robinson 2005, p. 138). Maharishi teaches that there are two paths for two different kinds of people, knowledge for the contemplative and action for the active and that Cosmic Consciousness develops on the one path through thought and on the other through action. However, even knowledge could be defined as action but in that case as mental ac-

tivity. Devotion then, is the means to develop Cosmic Consciousness into Unity in God-Consciousness. Nevertheless, and this is crucial in Maharishi's teaching, and the approach he took to Śaṅkara's teaching having been misunderstood: of the two paths the path of knowledge is not superior to the path of action, and knowledge and devotion is not held as separate (Robinson 2005, p. 139f).

Maharishi also associated Transcendental Meditation with the true interpretation of Śaṅkara's Advaita Vedānta. His "frame of reference was", according to Robinson (2005, p. 140), "far wider than Hinduism since...it was the shared basis of all religions."

Discussing God-realization, Robinson refers to Maharishi's book *The Science of Being and Art of Living* (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1966). Robinson thus states: "God-realization could mean realization of either the impersonal or personal divine though there was no doubt that the impersonal was higher than the personal and, consequently, realization of the impersonal divine was at the level of Transcendental Consciousness while realization of the personal divine was at the level of ordinary consciousness. In this respect, Maharishi's debt to Śaṅkara was evident since he upheld the impersonal absolute over the personal deity" (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1966, 334; Robinson 2005, p. 141). I would say that it is only if you take "ordinary consciousness" to mean Cosmic Consciousness that this would be true of Maharishi's view, since he advocated to first establish Cosmic Consciousness before realization of the personal Divinity would be possible. In *The Science of Being and Art of Living* Maharishi mentions five different paths to achieve God-Consciousness. But, he also states that whatever path one takes, Transcendental

Meditation is central for the development of higher states of consciousness (Robinson 2005, p. 141). Later on he taught that it is only a question of one path with different aspects to it. All aspects develop simultaneously.⁴⁵

Interpreting Sāṃkhya and Yoga in the Bhagavadgītā Maharishi defines Sāṃkhya, presenting the principles of the six systems of Indian philosophy, as the theoretical formulation of reality and Yoga, presenting the practical aspects of the systems, as the method of experiencing reality, according to Robinson (2005, p. 141).

At the centre of his teaching in the Bhagavadgītā lies Maharishi's view that the Bhagavadgītā, being "Scripture of Yoga" with its relationship to the Vedas, Indian philosophy and the Transcendental Meditation technique, is "at the core of all religions" (Robinson 2005, p.141f).

I will now look in more detail at the principal teachings of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi as they come to expression in his commentary on chapters 1-6 of the Bhagavadgītā, with indepth references to metaphorical language.

⁴⁵ Cf. below section *Aspects of One Path – Karma, Bhakti and Jñāna of the Bhagavadgītā*, p. 198.

II. Historical Survey

CHAPTER 1: TEACHING TRANSCENDENTAL MEDITATION TO EVERYONE – THE 1960s AND EARLY 1970s

Principal Teachings of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi as Expressed in His Commentary on the Bhagavadgītā Chapters 1-6

In my survey of Maharishi's commentary on the Bhagavadgītā,⁴⁶ I will make two kinds of analyses: one analysis of the text in relation to the categories of analysis mentioned in the method chapter and one analysis or interpretation of patterns shown in the text concerning the similes and in some cases metaphors. I will on the one hand and primarily analyse patterns, wherever found, of the *content* of the similes and metaphors and on the other hand describe patterns of the *form aspect* of similes and metaphors and try to analyse their relationship. I will present the result in the conclusions of this chapter.

⁴⁶ A short survey of the historical development of the Bhagavadgītā research with relation to Maharishi's interpretation is found in the appendix section, which also includes a survey of the metaphorical language of the main text of the Bhagavadgītā with references to the Upaniṣads.

Similes and Metaphors

I will start by saying a few words on metaphorical language in general and on Maharishi's use of it in particular.

Metaphorical language in this kind of literature, tries, as I have mentioned before, to give concrete expression to abstract ideas and conceptions in order to make them intelligible to the reader or listener. That is why they are so frequent in religious scriptures. (af Edholm 1986, p. 57).

One reason for studying metaphorical language is that representations of God or the Ultimate often are standardized in metaphors, and could be elaborated in metaphorical language. Then the metaphors would take on a character of reality and the metaphors in turn are able to *create* a representation of God. The metaphors develop the representation, which could lead to a kind of reciprocal influence between the concept of God and the representation of God in the metaphor.⁴⁷

The signification of the word "*metaphor*" is transference, and there is a distinction between transference with an element of comparison, *simile*, and one without this element, *metaphor* (cf. the article "Metaphor" by Max Black in Black 1976 (1962); see also: Cassirer 1979, p. 85; Hallberg 1983, p. 76; Kværne 1972, p. 76; Lakoff and Johnson 2003 (1980), p. 5; Wellander 1973, p. 274f). In Sanskrit, simile is called *upamāna* (Monier-Williams 1899, p. 203) (Cf. Gonda 1949).

Metaphors sometimes can have an ambiguous meaning to those who are not familiar with the texts or the language (faded meta-

⁴⁷ Cf. e.g. the concept "heaven".

phors), and they could show in what way different concepts are conceived. What I mean is that e.g. *fire* can be used as a characteristic feature of “wisdom”: when you say “fire of wisdom” (*jñānāgni*) an image or conception of the *phenomenon* of fire would probably not appear in the mind of the initiated reader (cf. the simile of fire in Bhagavadgītā 4, 37), but only an image or the conception of the *quality* of fire.

The commentary genre is quite frequent when it comes to religious literature in general and the Bhagavadgītā in particular. One of the more widespread commentaries besides the one by Maharishi Mahesh Yogi in the world today, is the one by A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, the founder of the Hare Krishna movement. Another commentary from the *Vaiṣṇava* tradition mentioned by the Hindu scholar Catherine A. Robinson (2005) is a commentary by Sri Krishna Prem (1889-1965). And, there is of course the authoritative one written by Śaṅkara more than a thousand years ago.

We may differentiate the commentaries into those written by religious leaders and those written by scholars. In the latter category, we find those referred to in this thesis, by Radhakrishnan, Zaehner, Otto, Turner etc.

*

Unless otherwise stated, references to chapters and numbers within brackets refer to the Bhagavadgītā.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ In the section of this chapter on Maharishi’s central teaching, when I cite from the main text of the Bhagavadgītā, I use the translation by Maharishi Mahesh Yogi. This is to make it consistent with the commentary, in which Maharishi, when citing the main text, of course uses his own translation.

The categories in the following section I arrived at by way of coding metaphors and similes⁴⁹ in the way described in the chapter on theoretical considerations.

I will present the teachings of Maharishi in sections as they are expressed in the commentary on the Bhagavadgītā, trying to reflect the logical construction of his teaching. Taking metaphorical language as a starting point, my endeavour is to show how Maharishi's teaching is reflected in the commentaries. The exposition will to some extent also show the relationship between Maharishi's thoughts or teaching and the text of the Bhagavadgītā.

Cause of Suffering

This part contains an account of Maharishi's interpretation of Arjuna's dilemma concerning the cause of his suffering, and related issues.⁵⁰

In the commentary on chapter 1 verse 28, explaining his view on Arjuna's state of heart and mind as he stands before the opposing army of the Kauravas, Maharishi uses a reference to the Upaniṣads. In the reference there is a metaphor, **“born of duality”**, which Maharishi clarifies in the following way:

⁴⁹ See Appendix, p. 387.

⁵⁰ The story of the Bhagavadgītā in short is that a war is initiated between cousins of the royal family, the Kuru family. Duryodhana, the evil-minded son of the king, is cheating on his five cousins among whom Arjuna, the greatest warrior of the time and the main character of the Bhagavadgītā, is one. Arjuna has as his charioteer and advisor Lord Kṛṣṇa, the incarnation or avatar of Viṣṇu. Before the war starts, Arjuna asks his charioteer to drive out between the two large armies of the cousins, who have gathered on the battlefield, the plain of the Kurus, just outside of Delhi. The Bhagavadgītā is the text from the moment of the war signal, during the conversation between Arjuna and Lord Kṛṣṇa on whether it is right for Arjuna, belonging to the warrior caste as he does, to kill his friends, teachers and relatives in the opposing army. This is considered the dilemma of Arjuna: that he on one hand is warrior caste and therefore obliged to uphold dharma or righteousness even if it amounts to killing and on the other hand considers it a sin to kill relatives and other loved ones. Lord Kṛṣṇa, on Arjuna's refusal to fight, gives him a lesson on the fundamentals of life and even a vision of the Lord's universal form according to the text.

The heart (Arjuna's; my commentary) is full of feeling, saturated with love; the mind is completely alert, full of the sense of righteousness and the call of duty. Both are at their full stature. No suffering can possibly touch either of them taken separately, but as the Upanishad says: 'Dvitiyad vai bhayam bhavati: Certainly fear is **born of duality**'. Whenever and wherever there is a sense of two, fear or suffering can exist. - - - when there is a lack of co-ordination or a conflict between them (heart and mind; my notes), suffering automatically results. Arjuna's 'grief' is **born of**⁵¹ the basic difference between the heart and the mind. (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), p. 36).

Maharishi in his commentary uses the same metaphor when saying that "grief is **born of** the basic difference between the heart and the mind." The metaphor could be seen as a faded metaphor. It is used to point to the view of the Upanishads that duality is the cause of suffering in life. Maharishi also points out that Arjuna, though in a state of despair, has ended up there, not because he is deluded, but due to the conflict between heart and mind or feelings and thinking. Heart, of course, is also a faded metaphor that stands for feelings and emotions.

In the next paragraph, Maharishi repeats and varies his point of view seemingly for pedagogical reasons. He makes an interpretation of the "**diagnosis of suffering**" made in the Bhagavadgītā:

The Bhagavad-Gita - - -, in its **diagnosis of suffering** is not satisfied by the rejection of evil or the acceptance of virtue alone; it finds that suffering can result even from two good qualities. For a life to be free from suffering, it is not enough for heart and mind to be free from the **stain of sin** and established in righteousness.

The Bhagavad-Gita undertakes to solve the problem of suffering completely. It locates the ultimate cause of suffering and provides a means to

⁵¹ Bold type is used in quotes to highlight metaphorical language and is thus not part of the original text.

eliminate it. **The seed of suffering** in life is located in the duality inherent in the characteristic difference between the qualities of heart and mind. (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), p. 36).

In this elaboration on the origin of suffering, Maharishi uses the metaphors “**diagnosis of suffering**”, “**stain of sin**” and “**seed of suffering**”. In Maharishi’s interpretation the origin of suffering is not solely from sinful action. He means that even a person who is not committing a sin can experience suffering, due to the duality between heart and mind, if they are not in harmony, but are allowed to, so to say, work each in its own capacity.

In the commentary on verse 34, Maharishi interprets Arjuna’s enumeration of the relatives and friends in the opposing army as caused by the working of his heart filled with love for them. He sees Arjuna as governed only by his feelings and emotions, expressed in the metaphor of the heart. But it is full “**like a silent ocean**” as Arjuna becomes passive and has no line of action, when he sits down on the floor of his chariot (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), p. 41).

The use of *ocean* as a metaphor of pure consciousness or the Ultimate is very common. In this context Maharishi compares a life full of love with an ocean.

In the commentary on chapter 2 verse 1, he uses an allusion to the ocean metaphor and to the sun revolving around earth. Thereafter he uses a simile proper to explain Arjuna’s state of suspension and a metaphor describing the inner part of existence “The purity of Arjuna’s life, receiving a **wave of love** from Lord Krishna, developed into a state of suspension and prepared the ground for the divine wis-

dom to **dawn**.” Maharishi points to the pedagogical skill of Lord Kṛṣṇa in leading Arjuna forward to the experience of higher states of consciousness:

The outer structure of tears and distress serves to protect the inner glory of consciousness in a state of suspension. **It is like the bitter skin of an orange which contains sweet juice within it.** The apparent phenomenal phase of the world is not so attractive, but within it is **the altar of God whose light sustains our life.** (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), p. 57).

Maharishi’s interpretation of Arjuna thus continues with a description using a simile of an orange to depict Arjuna’s state. The simile is part of a pattern where Maharishi explains his teaching using similes from nature like inter alia orange, plants, seed etc. Arjuna is considered an altogether good person, he is only in a state of suspension due to lack of coordination between feelings and thinking. But, nevertheless he is good “inside”. It is not sinful activity that is causing his state of suspension.

In his commentary on chapter 2 verse 2, Maharishi further discusses the word “blemish” of the main text, which could be seen as a kind of metaphor:

Whence then has come this **blemish of ignorance**, which causes sorrow? Again, as the present is composed of the two ‘fulls’, the **blemish** does not belong to any present time; that is why it is “untimely” at any “hour”.⁵² (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), p.58).

⁵² “... ‘untimely’ at any ‘hour’” is a reference Maharishi makes to the main text of the Bhagavadgītā.

Maharishi again interprets the dialogue between Arjuna and Kṛṣṇa in a pedagogical manner: Kṛṣṇa uses his pedagogical skills to make Arjuna come out of his state of suspension. It is interesting to see how Maharishi in his commentary goes very profoundly into a pedagogical and to some extent psychological interpretation of the dialogue between Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, where Kṛṣṇa is depicted as the expert pedagogue. This viewpoint of Maharishi is characteristic of his interpretation and a pattern in the content of the metaphorical language in his analysis.

Maharishi gives a profound analysis of the feelings and thinking of Arjuna. He explains that Arjuna has lost the coordination between mind and senses in his state of suspension. Why is Maharishi doing this analysis of Arjuna's mind? Why is he not satisfied with stating that Arjuna is in a dilemma, which he of course is, and that he is confused, which is the more common way of interpreting his state of mind? The reason may be that Maharishi wants to put the reader's attention on the inner process of a person, when you are in a state of suspension, to show the mechanics at work and then show how one could be exempted from this condition. This is shown in the main text in chapter 2 verse 45, according to Maharishi, when Kṛṣṇa says to Arjuna to be without the three guṇas, to transcend the relative existence. This, Maharishi means, is done by practising Transcendental Meditation. The process that he describes going on in Arjuna's mind he then continues to lay out in the verses that follow.

In the commentary on chapter 2, verse 9, Maharishi compares Arjuna, who in this verse said "I will not fight" and fell silent, to a child (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), p. 64). Maharishi seems

to vary his interpretation of Arjuna's state of mind by comparing him to a child. This shows a pedagogical skill in the teacher: when you want to establish some information, show it from different angles, variation lets the listener or reader experience it from different viewpoints.

In chapter 2, verse 10, Maharishi describes how Arjuna is about to have a lesson from Lord Kṛṣṇa:

The **darkness** is on the point of being **illuminated by the celestial light**; the silence of Arjuna is about to be broken and made **melodious by the celestial song**, as his **grief is transformed into the smile of the Lord**. (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), p. 65).

Maharishi contrasts darkness to the celestial song and grief to the smile of the Lord. This is to create the picture in the reader's mind that Kṛṣṇa is in charge of the situation, and has the power to transform Arjuna's state of mind in an easy manner.

Continuing with a survey of how Maharishi interprets the concept of *saṃsāra*, his comments on chapter 2 verse 50 involve a description of how bondage to *saṃsāra* is established:

Bondage certainly lies in the field of action, but it is not born of action: it is born of the weakness of the actor. When a small business man incurs a loss, his mind is profoundly affected by it. This creates a deep impression, which comes to the surface again as a desire for gain when favourable conditions present themselves. An impression on the mind is the seed of the desire which leads to action. Action in turn produces an impression on the mind, and thus the cycle of impression, desire and action continues, keeping a man bound to the cycle of cause and effect, the cycle of birth and death. This is commonly called the binding influence of action, the bondage of karma. (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), p. 101f).

Maharishi often uses similes from the *everyday life of man*, here a business man's problems with losses in his business. He shows how the mind functions and how action arises from desire and thus he sheds light upon the functioning of the concept of *karma*. Using similes from everyday life I see as a pattern of form in Maharishi's use of metaphorical language.

In chapter 6 verse 2, the Sanskrit word *sankalpa* is explained in the commentary: “‘incentive of desire’ translates the Sanskrit word ‘sankalpa’, which conveys the idea of **a seed which sprouts into desire**” (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), p. 287). Maharishi uses the picture of a seed, a metaphor from nature, in his commentary. This is to show the nature of desire and how desires start.

The relative field of life, which is the field of life and behaviour of the “ignorant” person,⁵³ Maharishi depicts in his commentary on chapter 2 verse 45.⁵⁴ The phrase “freed from duality” from the main text, Maharishi explains with similes from the sea in his commentary:

The relative field of life is full of conflicting elements: heat and cold, pleasure and pain, gain and loss, and all the other pairs of opposites which constitute life. Under their influence **life is tossed about as a ship on the rough sea from one wave to another**. To be freed from duality is to be in the field of non-duality, the absolute state of Being. This provides smoothness and security to life in the relative field. **It is like an anchor to the ship of life in the ocean of the three gunas**. One gains steadiness and comfort. (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), p. 92).

⁵³ The ordinary man, who has not reached enlightenment or mokṣa, liberation, from the cycle of rebirth, saṃsāra. This is not what Maharishi calls a normal state of consciousness though, since he considers Cosmic Consciousness or other higher states of consciousness the normal states of consciousness of man.

⁵⁴ This is the verse, which Dr Katz (2011) was referring to in the interview with him as one of the most central to Maharishi in the whole of the Bhagavadgītā even as he started his translation and commentary (see Introduction).

Again, Maharishi is discussing duality as the origin of insecurity and suffering in life. He compares living in the relative field to a boat tossed about on the rough sea. To gain security you have to transcend the relative field and be in the Absolute Being, free from duality. That is the ship of life, anchored up. He then compares the three *guṇas*, the three forces of *creation*, *maintenance* and *destruction*, to the sea. This is to show that life for the ignorant person can be better if he or she starts to experience Being. And moreover, one experiences Being through the technique of Transcendental Meditation.

What then is the nature of the senses and the mind in Maharishi's world of ideas? Since, as indicated by Maharishi, the technique of Transcendental Meditation is understood only if one understands how the senses and the mind function, I will dedicate the next section to trying to clarify the nature of the senses and the mind according to Maharishi.

Nature of the Senses and the Mind

The relationship between the senses and the mind is essential for the understanding of Maharishi's teaching. I consider Maharishi's interpretation of the nature of the mind at the very core of his application of the technique of Transcendental Meditation.

Chapter 2 verse 67 of the main text reads, "When a man's mind is governed by any of the wandering senses, his intellect is **carried away by it as a ship by the wind on water.**" This is a common view of the senses and the mind in Hinduism, most likely influenced by text pieces like the one cited. Maharishi makes an in-depth analysis of the relationship of the senses and the mind in his commentary

on the verse and uses three similes to clarify his viewpoint in the commentary text:

If the senses draw the mind to the joys of their objects, this similarly is no discredit to the senses. They are the **machinery** through which the mind enjoys and, **like a ready servant, are waiting to serve the mind.**

As a ship is carried away by the wind, so is the mind completely carried away by the senses in the outward direction of gross creation, the direction of the objects of the senses. It loses the power of concentration, for **it travels as if in a diverging beam**, a course naturally opposed to the concentrated state of intellect. (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), p. 120).

Maharishi makes a distinction between the status of the mind when functioning in the “gross creation” and when it is silent in the “concentrated state of intellect”. This means that to have the mind to be controlled you will have to make it experience the “concentrated state of intellect”, which according to Maharishi it does through the process of Transcendental Meditation. I would interpret this as being that Maharishi intends to clarify that no force on the mind in the “gross creation” could control it, but the technique of Transcendental Meditation will take it to a controlled state in an easy and effortless manner, according to the functioning of Transcendental Meditation described in the commentary. The state of pure consciousness or Transcendental Consciousness *attracts* the mind due to its character of bliss-consciousness, and the mind will go there if set on the path, which is done by the technique of Transcendental Meditation. In his interpretation of the mind, Maharishi recognizes it as seeking for greater happiness all the time.

In chapter 3 verse 41, Maharishi further develops the relationship between the Self, the senses and desire, using the metaphors “**foun-**

tainhead from which all the streams of desire flow” and **“underground currents of desire”** in connection with an extensive simile on the **“flow of desires”**. Here Maharishi develops the relationships between desire, mind and senses, meaning that there is an “outlet” corresponding to the senses that you must control to control desires and use them to your advantage. This organizing of the senses is done by contacting the source of the senses in Being, which is done through Transcendental Meditation.

Maharishi’s interpretation of the mind, not as randomly wandering, but searching for greater happiness, becomes manifest in his interpretation of chapter 2, verse 40. On the passage “no effort is lost” in verse 40, Maharishi states that:

Any effort on this path results in the goal - - - This is so in the first place because the **flow of the mind** towards this state is natural, for it is a state of absolute bliss, and the mind is always craving for greater happiness. Therefore **as water flows down a slope in a natural way, so the mind flows naturally in the direction of bliss.** (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), p.84).

With this interpretation Maharishi gives further support to his view on the nature of the mind, not as randomly wandering – the picture of the monkey jumping from branch to branch – but as constantly seeking greater happiness – the analogy of the bee flying from flower to flower in search of nectar.

Consequently, Maharishi means it is natural for the mind to go to the state of bliss, which is a characteristic of the Transcendent, in the *process* of transcending. This is what makes Transcendental Meditation easy, according to Maharishi, and that I see as a main feature in his interpretation of the process of meditation. It is not a difficult,

hard or complicated practice, but precisely because of the nature of the mind, an easy one.

Explaining the nature of the mind Maharishi, still in verse 40, uses a different simile involving music, with the meaning that if you listen to music from one source and a more beautiful melody comes from another source, the attention goes to the more charming music. This is done automatically. In the same way the mind goes to the “field of eternal freedom” which “is absolute bliss” and “It does not stop until the experience is full, for ‘no obstacle exists’.” (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), p. 84f).

In chapter 6 verse 19, there is a simile in the main text: “**a lamp which does not flicker in a windless place** – to such is compared the yogi of subdued thought...” Maharishi interprets the main text as a development of the statements of the second chapter. Here it is, as Maharishi puts it, “thought” that stands by itself that is pictured in the simile of the main text. He uses this simile to illustrate Transcendental Consciousness, where there are no fluctuations in the mind. The senses are not functional on this level. (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), p. 311).

Citta, in another simile of this verse, is likened to water without ripples (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), p. 312). This is a distinction between two states of the mind, expressed by two different concepts in Sanskr̥t, *manas* and *citta*. *Manas* is mind as described above, wandering in the “gross creation”, but in Maharishi’s interpretation wandering in search of greater happiness. *Citta* is the mind having come to a stop, so to say, in Transcendental Consciousness, experiencing its own nature in Being or pure consciousness.

What then is absolute Being in Maharishi's interpretation and commentary on the Bhagavadgītā, and what is its relation to Ātman and pure consciousness? This I will try to make clear in the section to follow.

Non-Dual Absolute Being

In his commentary Maharishi mostly uses the term Being to designate Ātman or pure consciousness.⁵⁵

In chapter 2 verse 17, there is a clarification of the relationship between absolute Being and the spirit of man using a simile of the sun:

As the same sun appears as different when shining on different media, such as water and oil, so the same omnipresent Being, shining through different nervous systems, appears as different and forms the spirit, the subjective aspect of man's personality. When the nervous system is pure, Being reflects more and the spirit is more powerful, the mind more effective. When the nervous system is at its purest, then Being reflects in all its fullness, and the inner individuality of the spirit gains the level of unlimited eternal Being. Thus it is clear that in its essential nature the spirit is undying and omnipresent. This explains the universality of individuality. (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), p. 70).

Maharishi confirms that the individual in his or her essential nature is universal on the level of Being, i.e. when Being reflects through a pure nervous system.

The non-dual absolute state of Being is explained in the commentary on chapter 2 verse 45, as stated in the section on the cause of suffering, as "it is **like an anchor to the ship of life in the ocean of the three gunas**. One gains steadiness and comfort" (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), p. 92). Once more Maharishi emphasizes

⁵⁵ An account of the development or history of the concept of Ātman is given in Appendix F, p. 371.

the importance of experience, the experience of Being through Transcendental Meditation. That is, according to Maharishi, what gives life “steadiness and comfort”.

In the commentary on chapter 4 verse 5, there is a simile explaining the eternal nature of the self: “**as the embodied self remains unchanged when the body passes into the changing states of childhood, youth and old age**, so does the Self continue unchanged in the eternity of time.” The Self or Ātman is eternal. Maharishi uses the simile of the body of man which changes during life in different ages to illustrate the phenomenon of the Self’s eternal status.

There are more metaphors and similes in the same verse explaining the status of Lord Kṛṣṇa:

The Lord’s Being is the **playground** of the time which He creates. --- He is the ocean of life, while time rises and falls as the tide on the surface of the ocean. Though the tidal waves draw on the depths they can never fathom the unfathomable abyss. (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), p. 189).

Then Maharishi compares the status of man to the status of Lord Kṛṣṇa:

The life of man is like a wave which rises up to see – it can see so far and no more; but Lord Krishna’s stature is **like that of an ocean on which the whole of space is reflected**. (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), p. 189).

Lord Kṛṣṇa is designated as the owner of Being. This is interesting since Maharishi according to other researchers⁵⁶ puts Absolute Being over the personal God. Here the opposite seems to be the case, when Lord Kṛṣṇa is seen as the owner of Being. Maybe there is no reason to draw conclusions from this observation, but it is an interesting

⁵⁶ See above in the Research Review p. 69.

thought that Lord Kṛṣṇa is referred to as the owner of Being or Brahman and that He creates time. Maharishi develops the relation between different aspects of Brahman or pure consciousness further in his Apauruṣeya Bhāṣya when he elaborates on the togetherness of dynamism and silence in Brahman or pure consciousness (see below in Chapter III p. 221).

The relationship between Lord Kṛṣṇa and *time* Maharishi explains with the very common simile of the ocean and its waves, where the ocean is the time-less Lord Kṛṣṇa and the waves are the changes in time in the relative existence.

Maharishi uses an image of a “**surgeon**”, which he employs to illustrate the functioning of Brahman’s play-power, or with a Sanskrit term *līlāśakti*, in the commentary on chapter 4 verse 6. Maharishi in his explanation puts himself in the tradition of absolute non-dualism according to the Advaita Vedānta, when he states that the absolute manifests into creation, and yet remains in its absolute state. The manifestation is due to the play-power, *līlāśakti*, of Brahman. It is explained with the simile of a surgeon and his surgical skill, which sometimes is active like when the surgeon operates corresponding to when Brahman manifests, and sometimes is inactive like when the surgeon is at home, corresponding to Brahman in its unmanifest status. (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), p. 190).

Then, as a commentary on the reading of Kṛṣṇa’s proclamation in this verse, “remaining in my own nature I take birth” the following simile is used:

Just as the sap in a tree appears as a leaf and a flower without losing its quality as sap, so the unmanifest Being, remaining unmanifest imperish-

able and eternal, takes birth. Nothing happens to the Absolute, and yet the Incarnation of the Absolute springs up, by virtue of Its own nature. (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), p. 190).

Is this not a simile, as well as the previous one, that in its content in a way heralds the *Apauruṣeya Bhāṣya*,⁵⁷ later on expounded in detail by Maharishi? And is this not as well an explanation in the tradition of Śaṅkara's *vyavahāra* standpoint that the world and its inhabitants emanate from Brahman? But is it as a phenomenal appearance of it (*vivarta*) or as actual appearance (*pariṇāma*)? (See von Glasenapp 1980, p. 117); (cf. Hirianna 1932, p. 337f).

Interpreting this simile in those categories I would identify it as a simile expounding the *vivartavāda* or phenomenal appearance view of Advaita Vedānta, since Maharishi states that nothing happens to the Absolute, it remains unmanifest. I am well aware of the fact that this simile in this connection explains the appearance of the Incarnation of the Absolute, as Maharishi here calls the Lord. In the present interpretation it is hard to distinguish the Incarnation, Lord Kṛṣṇa, from Brahman, which He incarnates from “by virtue of its own nature”. The Absolute Brahman and Lord Kṛṣṇa seem identical here.

There is a simile in chapter 6 verse 19, cited in the chapter on the mind and the senses, which is relevant even here. Maharishi explains, excluding the simile: “The state of the pure individuality of the mind, the pure individuality of the ‘I’, expressed by this verse, directly merges into transcendental Self-consciousness; this is expressed by the Lord as ‘Union with the Self’: the mind is united with divine Being.” (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), p. 312).

⁵⁷ For the concept of *Apauruṣeya Bhāṣya* see p. 194f and p. 221f below.

The expression “divine Being” is interesting since it implies a characteristic of Being. This, though, could most likely be seen as a kind of metaphorical expression, since Maharishi in verse 28 of the same chapter clarifies the statement. In the commentary Maharishi uses a simile from the world of natural science in his philosophical reasoning on the quality of Brahman:

It should be noted that it is the ‘contact’ that is infinite joy, and not Brahman Itself. Brahman, which is an all-pervading mass of bliss, does not exhibit any quality of bliss. **It may be likened to a mass of energy – matter – which does not exhibit any quality of energy.** This verse emphasizes the glory of ‘contact’; it does not set forth the nature of Brahman. (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), p. 325).

Again Maharishi emphasizes the importance of contact with the Absolute, Brahman, and he characterizes Brahman as an “all-pervading mass of bliss”.

“**Fruit of action**” is used several times in chapter 2 verse 47 and also the metaphors “**horizontal plane of life**” for the relative part of life and “**vertical plane of life**” for the inner structure of life or the Absolute. Maharishi uses metaphors of directions in space to depict the relative and the Absolute phases of life.⁵⁸

The concept Transcendental Consciousness is often used by Maharishi. What is the meaning of this term in his interpretation, and what is its relation to other states of consciousness? This is the main theme of the next section.

⁵⁸ For linguistic research on orientational metaphors see e.g. Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Lakoff and Johnson 2003 (1980), pp. 14f).

Transcendental Consciousness

A specific term for Transcendental Consciousness, derived from its relation to the three other states of consciousness, waking, dreaming and deep sleep, is *the fourth*, or in Sanskrit *turiya*. This state is explained in a few places in Maharishi's commentaries.

In chapter 2 verse 45, Maharishi describes the fourth state of consciousness and uses an analogy of a "businessperson" to illustrate the content of the main text: the businessperson has to leave the details of the business and see it as a whole, to be able to improve it. The analogy is that if Arjuna wants to gain knowledge of the relative field he has to leave the relative field and experience the field of the transcendent thus gaining "the absolute wisdom of life, from which springs all knowledge of the relative world" (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), p. 91).

Maharishi's use of business references in similes could be seen as a recurring pattern, certainly due to the fact that the business world is an everyday experience of many people and in the context of giving his lectures most likely we would have found many in the audience from the business world.

Maharishi's contribution to the commentaries on the Bhagavadgītā I identify as his practical approach to the text and regarding this particular verse concerning the advice to leave the field of the three guṇas, he advocates the practice of Transcendental Meditation, thus experiencing Transcendental Consciousness.

Maharishi comments that this practical approach and practical wisdom is what has made the dialogue between Arjuna and Lord Kṛṣṇa immortal.

One more noteworthy feature of the commentary is that Maharishi here establishes what he later called the “principle of the highest first”. To gain knowledge of the relative world Lord Kṛṣṇa advises Arjuna to leave that field and go to the area which is the origin of the relative, the Absolute. He will as a consequence gain knowledge of the whole of relative life.

Maharishi takes his interpretation to the level of establishing this Transcendental Consciousness permanently in the mind. This I will deal with in discussing the state of Cosmic Consciousness below.⁵⁹

In chapter 2 verse 66, describing the mind of a happy person, a simile of reflection of the sun on water occurs and in this comment there is also a reference to the physiological effects of Transcendental Meditation, studied later on by e.g. Wallace (1970a). Maharishi refers to the functioning of the metabolism and the nervous system in relation to Transcendental Meditation and Transcendental Consciousness. I find it consistent with Maharishi’s view on science, that we see references in this early text to what later on became one of the main objectives of Maharishi, to welcome scientific investigation of the effects of Transcendental Meditation and the experiences of higher states of consciousness.

A simile involving the sun, which is compared to Being, is used in the commentary on chapter 5 verse 16, which also contains metaphors explaining the transcendental state of consciousness. (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), p. 261). Maharishi uses a simile where the sun is compared to the Absolute, transcendent Being when he explains gaining knowledge. He explains that “ignorance is de-

⁵⁹ See p. 114.

stroyed by gaining knowledge, and not that knowledge is gained by destroying ignorance.” (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), p. 261). This way of interpreting is common to Maharishi concerning the gaining of knowledge or wisdom or higher consciousness. He seems to mean that the usual way of interpreting has not been successful in a practical sense, since people in common, according to Maharishi, do not seem to gain enlightenment or experience higher states of consciousness. This Maharishi states is due to misinterpretation of texts like the Bhagavadgītā, and he explains that expressions like the present one should be interpreted, so to say, the other way around. It is a question of what comes first. In this case Maharishi means that first one should experience Being or pure consciousness, and then wisdom arises. This he holds to be the teaching of Lord Kṛṣṇa to Arjuna on the battlefield. And therefore he uses the simile of the sun which dispels darkness; a straightforward comparison that anyone could understand.

In chapter 2 verse 45,⁶⁰ Maharishi uses several similes and one metaphor explaining its message. The first simile concerns itself with ways of influencing effects and once more Maharishi uses the analogy of bringing light to remove darkness. Here he calls it “the principle of the second element” and illustrates it by explaining that one should take the mind to a field of happiness, which in this case is

⁶⁰ See (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), p. 55). Verse 45, in Maharishi’s translation, reads:

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. (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), p. 90).

Transcendental Consciousness, to relieve it from suffering. Maharishi also polemizes against certain psychological theories which he claims have not analysed the mind in the right way in order to eliminate the experience of suffering.

On explaining the main text passage “be without the three gunas” Maharishi uses an analogy of walking in a systematic manner, i.e. by putting one foot before the other you proceed to go somewhere, in this case you will, figuratively speaking, go out of the field of the relative existence (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), p. 92) and thereby Maharishi extends the message of the main text to encompass not only Arjuna, but everyone reading the verse. He means in his way of expression that the significance of Lord Kṛṣṇa’s teaching is universal. This is a general invitation to mankind from Lord Kṛṣṇa and it is also, according to Maharishi, the essential message of Lord Kṛṣṇa to mankind.

In chapter 3 verse 9, Maharishi illustrates the experience of the Transcendent with a simile of an offering (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), p. 141). The content of this simile may not be that familiar to the ordinary Westerner, the target group of the translation and commentary. It may rather be familiar to the tradition-bound or orthodox Hindu. Nevertheless, the simile is expressive and could be interpreted as containing many levels of understanding. Objects of oblation are compared to thoughts and desires. This indicates that thoughts and desires being sacrificed in the Transcendent, which is compared to the sacrificial fire, come to an end and are at the same time elevated.

At the end of the commentary on chapter 6 verse 12, describing the mind's status in Transcendental Consciousness, there is a metaphor in which the body is called “**a living instrument tuned to the divine nature**” (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), p. 301). The body is considered essential in the experience of Transcendental Consciousness. It is through the “instrument” of the body that the experience takes place. Ātman, or the Self, is situated in the body, and the place which is referred to as the seat of the Self is the heart.

After dealing with Transcendental Consciousness, we arrive at Cosmic Consciousness and the other states of consciousness that Maharishi considers in his interpretation of the Bhagavadgītā. Different higher states of consciousness are therefore the content of the sections to follow.

Cosmic Consciousness

Chapter 2 verse 48 describes, according to Maharishi, the state of Cosmic Consciousness, the fifth state of consciousness, and its relation to action in the world, when it says “established in Yoga... perform actions”. Maharishi in his commentary illustrates the development of this higher state of consciousness:

Part of the training for one who wishes to become a good swimmer is the art of diving. When one is able to maintain oneself successfully in deep water, then swimming on the surface becomes easy. All action is the result of the **play** of the conscious mind. If the mind is strong, then action is also strong and successful. The conscious mind becomes powerful when the deeper levels of **the ocean of mind** are activated during the process of transcendental meditation, which leads the attention from the **surface** of the conscious mind to the transcendental field of Being. The process of **diving** within is the way to become established in Yoga. (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), p. 97).

The simile of the swimmer has a very profound significance for the development of the theory as well as the practical application of Transcendental Meditation. It gives a mental picture of the practice of becoming established in “Yoga”, or union, with Transcendental Consciousness. This permanent union Maharishi designates Cosmic Consciousness. He uses the metaphor “**ocean of mind**” and gives his view on how the human mind functions. The conscious mind gains its operational skills from the “deeper levels”, and Transcendental Meditation activates “deeper levels” of the mind. Those “deeper levels” are in contact with Transcendental Consciousness, which is experienced at the deepest level, or rather beyond that level.

The directional metaphors⁶¹ here create a conception of the mind and of the process, which certainly is only a *picture* of the mind. It has its value as an educational aid for understanding the process of development of consciousness of the individual.

In chapter 2 verse 48, Maharishi uses the simile of an archer elucidating “the mechanics of successful action”. Successful action, which is a “by-product” of Cosmic Consciousness, is explained thus:

To shoot an arrow successfully it is first necessary to draw it back on the bow, thus giving it great potential energy. When it is brought back to the fullest possible extent, then it possesses the greatest dynamic power (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), p. 97).

The implications of the simile of the archer is that just as an archer has to draw the arrow back on the bow to the fullest, to have a good shot, when you are about to take action, you have to “draw” the mind

⁶¹ For more on metaphors in general and directional metaphors in particular see Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors we live by* (2003 [1980]).

to Transcendental Consciousness to make it strong and effective in its employment of activity. War metaphors are used quite frequently by Maharishi in his commentary on the Bhagavadgītā, which could be seen as obvious or expected considering the situation of war in the main text.

Maharishi's interpretation is that Arjuna through Lord Kṛṣṇa's teaching, is raised to the level of Cosmic Consciousness, and from there Lord Kṛṣṇa wants him to take action in the war. He is indeed influenced by his feelings and has thrown away his bow and arrow, unwilling to fight. Lord Kṛṣṇa leads him to Cosmic Consciousness to make him come out of his bewildered state of mind and be ready for action.

Maharishi, in chapter 2 verses 49 and 50, explains a central point in his teaching: what is wrong, or "pitiable", is not that a person wants the fruit of action or to achieve a result of his or her action, but that one does **not** achieve the goal of one's action. Maharishi means that this signification has been misinterpreted by commentators before, who have advocated that one should abolish the desire for the effects of one's actions. The meaning of the main verse is, according to Maharishi, that one has first to establish Cosmic Consciousness before engaging in activity, if one wants it to be successful. (Commentary verse 49; Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), p. 100.)

Maharishi in chapter 2 verse 58, uses the metaphor "**seed of future desires**" in the phrase: "the senses can be involved with outer experiences and yet not be totally engrossed in them to the extent that they transfer to the mind impressions deep enough to become the **seed of future desires**." The person in Cosmic Consciousness does

not accumulate impressions in the mind that will give rise to desires, which would have kept the person in the wheel of saṃsāra. In this verse, Maharishi also uses the metaphor “**taste for objects**” in the phrase: “when the senses are exposed to the unbounded grandeur of the Supreme, they lose even the **taste for their objects**” (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), p. 114). This describes the person in Cosmic Consciousness as a free person, even without a taste or slightest desire for the objects of the senses.

In the commentary on chapter 3 verse 43 Maharishi states that the Lord says:

Go to the state of enlightenment in order to come out of the **bondage** of karma, **bring the light in order to remove the darkness**. It is this which is the underlying principle of the verse; not that one should try to **remove the darkness in order to come to the light**.”

This simile is important since it gives a picture of Maharishi’s interpretation of how to reach enlightenment or mokṣa. Trying to remove what is obstructing enlightenment is pointless, that is, trying to remove karmic influences does not bring enlightenment. Infusing Being or pure consciousness is the way to do it, by which “action” the influence of “karma” disappears. He uses a simile here, which he later on often uses in his lectures and teaching in general:

The principle of maintaining the life of a tree is to go beyond the tree. If one attends to the area surrounding the root, to the transcendental field of the tree, it is easy to bring nourishment to all its parts. If one attends to the field of the Transcendent one can make the whole tree of life healthy and fruitful. (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), p. 177f).

Maharishi uses the metaphor “**tree of life**” in the factual part of the simile (which actually does not have a word of comparison). It is the

same principle expressed with a different simile. According to Maharishi you should first contact pure consciousness or Being and this will bring enlightenment and benefits in life. This is an example of the *principle of the highest first*, which Maharishi often uses in his teaching.

In chapter 4 verse 20, we find another simile, involving “**honey**” and a metaphor, “**seed of action**” that explains enlightenment or the enlightened persons experience of the transcendental state which is characterized by bliss. Then Maharishi explains that the karmic cycle of “action–impression–desire–action” is broken and no future *karma* is produced when established in the bliss of pure consciousness. (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), p. 208).

In chapter 4 verse 38, in a more detailed description of the process of gaining Cosmic Consciousness through alternation between meditation and activity, we find the simile of colouring cloth by dipping it in dye and then exposing it to the sun to fade the colour. Doing this repeatedly will infuse the cloth with the colour until it will not fade away anymore. In the same way regular meditation infuses the mind with pure consciousness through the experience of Transcendental Consciousness or *samādhi* and “when the full infusion of Being has been accomplished, then the state of Cosmic Consciousness has been gained.” (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), p. 228).

Cosmic Consciousness is also the subject matter of the commentary on chapter 5 verse 7, when Maharishi compares it to a conquest where the enemy ceases to be an enemy and uses analogies of the sun and the ocean:

A real conquest is that where the enemy ceases to be an enemy; he is

left free to do as he likes, but is not in a position to attack or do any harm. The **conquest** of the senses is so fully accomplished through the mastery of the Self that the senses are left free to function and, notwithstanding all the experiences of the relative field, life is firmly established in the eternal freedom of divine consciousness.⁶²

A parallel to this is when Maharishi later on compared the group influence of practising the advanced TM-Sidhis programme to the Meissner Effect from physics. In a piece of iron that is a superconductor the electrons are moving in a coherent collective state, so that a magnetic field cannot invade the iron. In the same way Maharishi sees the collective effect of practising the TM-Sidhi programme, known as *śamīyama* in the *Yoga Sūtras* of Patañjali. This phenomenon, called the Maharishi Effect, is a basic principle for creating a peaceful society according to Maharishi (see Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1978b).

A metaphor used in the commentary on verse 5 of chapter 5 is “**milestone**”, elucidating the nature of Cosmic Consciousness, inspiring those who have reached this state to go on to the “final goal”, the final goal being “the great Unity in God-Consciousness” (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), p. 247). This leads over to the next section, on precisely God-Consciousness.

⁶² Maharishi has made this idea, expressed as “victory before war”, the fundamental idea of his “theory of defence” expressed in his book Maharishi’s *Absolute Theory of Defence – Sovereignty in Invincibility* (1996). In that context, Maharishi explains that no military should ever need to fight if they practise the Transcendental Meditation programme and consequently influence national consciousness to make the nation “invincible”. Maharishi sees TM as a preventive measure to avoid war.

God-Consciousness

Elaborating on the systematic development of higher states of consciousness, Maharishi in chapter 4 verse 35 employs a simile on using differently “**coloured spectacles**”:

When one sees through green spectacles, then everything looks green.

When, through knowledge, the Self is realized as separate from activity and Self-consciousness becomes permanent in the state of Cosmic Consciousness, then everything is naturally experienced in the awareness of the Self; and when this permanent state of Self-consciousness, or Cosmic Consciousness, has been transformed through devotion into God-Consciousness, then everything is naturally experienced in the awareness of God, every experience is through God-Consciousness, everything is experienced and understood in the light of God, in terms of God, in God. (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), p. 223).

This simile and the context it is used in have a parallel in the concept of how Maharishi interprets knowledge, “knowledge is structured in consciousness”. The interpretation of this sentence from *R̥gveda* is central to Maharishi’s teaching and contains exactly the viewpoint that a person interprets the world in accordance with his or her level of consciousness. A person in “Cosmic Consciousness” interprets life in a certain way, a person in “God-Consciousness” in a different way and a person in “Unity Consciousness”⁶³ in a third way and of course the person in “ignorance” in a certain way. This is the meaning of the simile of different coloured spectacles.

Maharishi in the appendix to his commentary explains the concept of God according to the Vedānta system of philosophy: “under the influence of maya, Brahman appears as Ishvara, the personal God,

⁶³ For a survey of the concept Unity Consciousness see p. 123 and p. 181.

who exists on the celestial level of life in the subtlest field of creation” (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), p. 369).

In this verse, 35 of chapter 4, the content of the elucidation above is further explained with the use of a metaphor of the **ocean** and its **waves**: “the silent **ocean of bliss**, the silent **ocean of love**, begins to rise in **waves of devotion**” (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), p.224). Going into further detail on the destiny of human beings, Maharishi in this verse also uses the metaphors “**veil of prakṛti**, **light of knowledge**” and “**light of awareness**”:

Beings separate themselves from the supreme Being by means of prakṛti, but this **veil** is removed when life is dominated by the **light of knowledge**, the **light of the awareness** of life’s Unity in God-Consciousness, which establishes eternity in the ephemeral world (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), p.224).

Maharishi uses the terminology of the traditionally dualistic Sāṃkhya as he uses the term *prakṛti*, or nature, in an explanation that puts *prakṛti* on par with *āvidyā* and *māyā* from the Vedānta system. Again, in the following verse, “**fire of knowledge**” appears: “the Lord explains that all actions are **burned to ashes in the fire of knowledge**” (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), p. 225). In this verse, there is also a simile including **the sun** and a metaphor, “**raft of knowledge**”:

However dense the darkness and however long it may have existed, one ray of the rising sun is enough to dispel the darkness, though it takes time to reach the brightness of the mid-day sun. Even a momentary flash of Transcendental Consciousness is enough to dispel the delusion of ignorance, though it takes time to gain full enlightenment in God-Consciousness, where one has crossed over all evil by the raft of knowledge.” (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), p. 225).

The metaphor “**light of God**” is used twice in the commentary on chapter 6 verse 3. In addition, a simile of water is used to explain the development of consciousness from Cosmic Consciousness to God-Consciousness: “it (God-Consciousness; my note) is all the living silence of eternal life, and **Unity pervades all activity as water every wave**” (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), p. 289f). This statement is interesting since it holds the view of dynamism in silence, indicated by the words “living silence”, and the proclamation that all activity is pervaded by the unity in God-Consciousness. Later, Maharishi elaborated extensively on the idea of dynamism in silence in his *Apauruṣeya Bhāṣya*.⁶⁴

In chapter 6 verse 30, there are two images. One is on “**the thought of bread**” not filling the stomach, and in the other, God-Consciousness is compared to a child’s experience of the functioning of a clock. There is also the metaphor of God’s realm. (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), p. 328). The first simile where Maharishi emphasizes the importance of action before thought is in line with the signification of the *Practice before Theory* category of analysis. It is the action of doing something to reach God that will bring the experience of God rather than thinking about God. And, this is all done through the practice of Transcendental Meditation, the applied aspect of Maharishi’s teaching. Maharishi also explains here that there are two levels of God-realization, the personal and the impersonal. So, it is when you stop thinking of God that you can realize Him. It is, according to Maharishi, when you stop thinking all-

⁶⁴ On *Apauruṣeya Bhāṣya* see e.g., p. 221f below.

together, in Transcendental Consciousness, that you can experience God.

Then, expounding on the concept of mystical experiences Maharishi means that it is possible for everyone to experience Transcendental Consciousness and realize God-Consciousness, and that it is not mystical in the sense of obscure or hidden or difficult to accomplish.

Unity in God-Consciousness

Unity Consciousness, as a distinct higher state of consciousness, is not directly indicated in Maharishi's commentary, as it is in later sources. He often uses the expression "unity in God-Consciousness", which would suggest that the state called Unity Consciousness in later sources is comparable to the state of consciousness called God-Consciousness in the Gītā commentary. But, then Maharishi, as stated in the previous section, identifies God as "the manifested Being on the supreme level of creation", which would make God-Consciousness of the Gītā commentary correspond to God-Consciousness also of later sources. It seems as though the two states of consciousness are not clearly differentiated from each other in this early source as they are in later sources.⁶⁵

Maharishi discusses the matter of union with God in chapter 6 verse 32, where he says that union with God is the height of realization and that there is no gulf between the relative state and the Absolute state. Maharishi in this connection refers to the Upaniṣad expres-

⁶⁵ This is also suggested by Egenes in a mail correspondence: "In his commentary on the Bhagavad-Gita, he had not brought out Unity Consciousness yet, and so GC and UC are mixed..." (Egenes 2010). For further reference see volume 1 of Vernon Katz book *Conversations with Maharishi* (Katz 2001a)

sion *pūrṇamadaḥ pūrṇamidam*,”that Absolute is full, this relative is full”, meaning that the ultimate realization of Union is reached. This union Maharishi means is a more developed state of union than that described in the verse preceding this verse. However, he emphasizes that there is no reason to speculate on the differences, since both are states of union with God. Moreover, he sees it as a sin against God to dispute on differences of the principle of union with God. Maharishi ends his commentary on this verse: “Let the followers of both schools of thought aspire to achieve their respective goals and then find in that consciousness that the other standpoint is also right at its own level” (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), pp. 331-332).

Transcendental Meditation

In this section, which I consider profoundly related to the category of analysis I designated *Practice before Theory*, I will look into the principles and process of Transcendental Meditation, with references to the metaphorical language in which it comes to expression in the commentary. According to Maharishi it is this “Vedic” technique of mental development, also known as *samādhi* of the *Yoga Sūtras* (see Egenes 1985, Abstract), that is unique and that has not been acknowledged in previous interpretations of the *Bhagavadgītā*.

The process of Transcendental Meditation is explained in chapter 2 verse 51, using two metaphors, “**road of evolution**” and “**break the shackles of bondage**”, and, as an illustration, a simile on diving for pearls:

One dives into the ocean, reaches the bottom, gathers the pearls and comes out of the water to enjoy their value – the whole act is done in one dive. The technique of diving lies only in taking a correct angle and

then letting go; reaching the bottom and coming up with the pearls follows automatically. --- What a seeker of Truth has to do is only to learn how to take a correct angle for the **dive** within” (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), p. 104).

This simile I understand should be interpreted that, since the mind is seeking for more and more, just taking a correct angle in the process of meditation will bring the mind to Transcendental Consciousness, because of the attraction it exercises on the mind. This attraction is due to its character of bliss-consciousness, as explained above in the section on the mind and the senses.

Maharishi explains the necessity of systematic practice of the technique of Transcendental Meditation in the commentary on chapter 6 verse 25. In this connection he uses a simile of a man entering into a cave:

If a man standing in bright light suddenly rushes into a dark cave, his eyes may not be able to see what is there inside the cave; but if he enters slowly, his eyes become used to the lesser intensity of light, and then he is able to see. The mind, when it retires deep within, goes from the more gross to the subtler levels of experience. Therefore it is essential for the mind not to rush in suddenly but to go gradually and patiently. (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), p. 320).

The technique of Transcendental Meditation should be practiced twenty minutes twice daily on a regular basis according to Maharishi.

Maharishi elaborates on the principles of Transcendental Meditation in the commentary on chapter 6 verse 26: “it is quite right for the mind to enter a wavering state when it comes out of the field of transcendental Unity, **like waves beginning to appear on the still surface of the ocean.**” Maharishi means that one who practises Tran-

scendental Meditation should not hold on to an attitude of tranquility, when active in daily life, but follow the “wave” of activity.

In the following quotation, Maharishi objects to other commentators of the Bhagavadgītā, when he says that:

So when at times the mind is found on a foreign thought during meditation, this should be regarded – if the process of meditation is a right one – as the outward **stroke** of meditation. It should not be taken as evidence that the mind is by nature “fickle” and “unsteady”, though commentators have supposed it to be so. (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), p. 322).

The mind is not unsteady, according to Maharishi, but rather seeking for a field of greater happiness all the time. This is a key principle in the practice of Transcendental Meditation. The mind experiences greater happiness at every step in the process, since it goes inward towards pure consciousness, a field of greatest happiness, bliss or ānanda.

The mind coming out into activity is due to a natural outward phase or stroke of meditation, and not because the mind is weak (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), p. 322). This explanation is essential to Maharishi’s teaching of Transcendental Meditation and how it should be practiced. He teaches that the process should not involve any concentration or control of the mind, but only a natural flow (in Sanskr̥t *dhyāna*, the seventh limb, *aṅga*, in Patañjali’s eight-fold Yoga, *Aṣṭāṅga Yoga*) of the mind towards greater happiness in Transcendental Consciousness or Being.

The discipline of the mind is the subject matter of a kind of parable in chapter 6 verse 36, which contains Maharishi’s viewpoint as a pedagogue on control in general and self-control in particular:

It should not be thought that one has to strain in order to keep life disciplined. **There are two ways of disciplining a dog. One way is difficult, the other easy. Run after the dog, try to catch it and then tie it down at the door – this is one way of controlling the dog. Do not run after it, do not try to catch it, do not try to tie it at the door; rather, leave the dog quite free to go anywhere it wants, only put some food outside the door, just what the dog likes to eat. The dog will be found always at the door and as often as you wish. This is a simple way of gaining control over the dog without controlling it.** We want to discipline the mind, and the easy way is not to try to put restraint upon it. It is attracted by fields of greater happiness; then lead it towards some field of greater happiness in life and it will be found to stay there through its own desire to enjoy that happiness. The practice of transcendental meditation, bringing contentment through the experience of Being, naturally establishes Cosmic Consciousness and thus gives a disciplined pattern to life. This is the simple way of gaining a disciplined state of mind. (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), p. 336).

Maharishi on Patañjali's Aṣṭāṅga Yoga

In connection with this exposition of Transcendental Meditation, I find it appropriate to say a few words on Maharishi's interpretation of Patañjali's Yoga aphorisms as it comes to expression in an appendix to his commentary on the Bhagavadgītā. Maharishi relates Transcendental Meditation to Patañjali's *Aṣṭāṅga Yoga*, which he translates as the eight "limbs" of yoga.⁶⁶ Maharishi explains that each of the eight limbs "presents the principle underlying the practices that bring about the state of Yoga in the sphere of life pertaining to that limb" (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), p. 363f). Maharishi also teaches that the different limbs of Yoga for many hundreds of years have been misinterpreted and seen as different *steps* to Yoga,

⁶⁶ Monier-Williams translates *aṣṭāṅga* with a synonym of "eight limbs" as "eight parts" (Monier-Williams 1899).

suggesting that you first have to accomplish the first step before going on to the next and so on. This is a misinterpretation according to Maharishi, who maintains that, “each limb is designed to create the state of Yoga in the sphere of life to which it relates.” (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), p. 363f). With the practice of these “limbs” simultaneously, Yoga grows simultaneously in all the spheres, and it will eventually become permanent. Maharishi also points out that the eighth limb, *samādhi*, or Transcendental Consciousness, is a means to accomplish Yoga in its ultimate state, Cosmic Consciousness. Cosmic Consciousness is a state of consciousness in which Transcendental Consciousness is established permanently “in the nature of the mind or, to speak in Indian terms, kshanika (momentary) Samadhi has become nitya (perpetual) samadhi” (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), p. 363f).

Maharishi connects the seventh limb, *dhyāna*, with practice and states that Transcendental Meditation is the most precious practice in this sphere. Transcendental Meditation belongs to *dhyāna*, but transcends that sphere and gives rise to *samādhi*, or Transcendental Consciousness. With regular practice, *samādhi* becomes established in the sphere of activity, “first at a very subtle level and later in the gross activity of daily life, so that it may eventually become permanent” (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), p. 363f). He then concludes that Transcendental Meditation is an effective “working tool” for the two spheres of life designated *dhyāna* and *samādhi* (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), p. 363f). In connection with this, Maharishi in the preface to the commentary, also discusses the relationship between cause and effect, in that case in connection with the

concept of *Karma Yoga*. He states that the cause, which he means is Yoga, Union with the Divine, has for long been taken as the effect, which he means is *karma*. From this reasoning, he draws the conclusion that you first have to meditate, practice *dhyāna*, experience *samādhi* and then action or *karma* is influenced in a beneficial way. Interpreting the other way around is, according to Maharishi, simply a distortion of the understanding of Patañjali's Yoga aphorisms (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), p. 8).

The Enlightened Person – Jīvanmukta

A *jīvanmukta* is a person liberated from *saṃsara*. Speaking in the terminology of Maharishi the concept signifies a person in at least Cosmic Consciousness, and separating my survey of the two concepts of Cosmic Consciousness and the enlightened person is due to the rendering of the text at hand. There are references to both “the enlightened person” and to “Cosmic Consciousness” and therefore I have chosen to elaborate on the present category in my survey besides the one on Cosmic Consciousness. In the section on Cosmic Consciousness focus is more on the character of that state of consciousness, while this survey focuses more on the characteristics of the person in that state of consciousness.

Maharishi explains the concepts of steadfastness and immortality as characteristics of an enlightened person, using the metaphor of the **ocean**, in his commentary on chapter 2 verse 15:

The unlimited state of the ocean is not affected either by the inflow of rivers or the process of evaporation. In the same way, a man established in the understanding of the unlimited abundance of absolute existence is naturally free from influence of the relative order. This is what gives him

the status of immortal life.” (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), p. 68).⁶⁷

Maharishi in the commentary on the same verse also explains the experiential relationship between the inner state of fulfilment and the outer ever-changing phases of existence in higher states of consciousness:

When once a man knows that he is king and the state belongs to him, he immediately begins to make use of his relationship with the state, begins to behave as a king. He is not required to cultivate kingship by practice and by constant thought about his position, just as a child is not required to remember always that his mother is his mother. He just knows it once and lives the relationship at all times. So simple is the path of understanding which results in freedom from bondage. (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), p. 68).

This seems to be stated against those who propagate strain or an *attitude* of liberation on the path of reaching freedom from bondage. Maharishi adds that this “understanding does not become **ripe** as a result of mood-making” (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), p. 68). Again Maharishi emphasizes real practice before theorizing on the path to liberation from bondage or to higher states of consciousness.

Evaluating “some interpreters” of the Bhagavadgītā, Maharishi in chapter 2 verse 57, uses a simile of a poor man copying a wealthy man:

If a poor man puts up the sign of a wealthy man and tries to behave like one, this can only result in tension. By superficially copying the behavior of a rich man, he cannot possibly become rich. Similarly, the be-

⁶⁷ In Appendix section, p. 359, the interested reader finds a subjective report from a practitioner of Transcendental Meditation and the TM-Sidhis on his experiences of higher states of consciousness.

havior of a man of steady intellect provides no standard for one whose intellect is not steady. If he tries to go that way, his life will become cold, deprived of the qualities of heart and mind. This has been the destiny of many a sincere seeker of Truth down the ages. Misguided interpretations of verses like this, which are found in almost all scriptures, are responsible for the spiritual plight of innumerable generations. (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), p. 112).

It is characteristic of Maharishi that he disapproves of other interpreters in the sense that he states that they did not have a practical application to present to seekers of truth. The variance in Maharishi's method would be that investigating a verse of a scripture, in this case the Bhagavadgītā, he gives both an interpretation and a functional application for the seeker of truth to practice. He means that it is the personal experience of Being or higher states of consciousness that verifies the theoretical knowledge of the scriptures.

In chapter 2 verse 58, there is a simile in the main text which reads, “when such a man withdraws his senses from their objects, **as a tortoise draws in its limbs from all sides, his intellect is established**” (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), p. 113). Maharishi elaborates on this in his commentary. The simile pictures a tortoise, and obviously, this is a very old simile, but valid, since everyone knows the functioning of a tortoise.

The metaphor of light is used in different contrasting senses in chapter 2 verse 69:

1. Light of the Self \Leftrightarrow Light of the senses
2. Light of absolute bliss \Leftrightarrow Light of relative joys of perishable nature

This verse in the main text describes the enlightened man in contrast to the ignorant using the metaphors of day and night to describe the state of mind of those two different persons. Maharishi on his side, in the commentary, uses the metaphors of light to describe the differences between the enlightened man and the ignorant man. The enlightened person then is “awake” in the light of the Self which has the characteristic of bliss, while the ignorant person or the person who has not realized the Self is “awake” in the senses, which enjoy “relative joys of perishable nature” (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), p. 122).

The next verse, chapter 2 verse 70, reads:

He whom all desires enter as
waters enter the ever-full and
unmoved sea attains peace, and
not he who cherishes desires.

In the commentary Maharishi writes:

When a man has risen to this lasting state of consciousness, the state where his Self is detached from and not overshadowed by the relative states of life – waking, dreaming and deep sleep – then **his state is like that of an ever-full and steady ocean**. This, being the state of absolute bliss, is the goal of all desires in life. (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), p. 122f).

Maharishi expounds his interpretation of the enlightened person, the *jīvanmukti*, and also gives an indication of the character of the state of enlightenment. It is a state where the Self experiences itself along with the relative states of waking, dreaming and deep sleep. This Self-consciousness around the clock, so to say, is characteristic of enlightenment according to Maharishi and the theoretical interpretation is validated by physiological studies of brain activity, where dif-

ferent states of consciousness correspond to different wave patterns of the brain. Several studies have been conducted, but the first papers by Banquet were published in 1972 and 1973 (see Banquet 1972, p. 454; Banquet 1973, p. 143-151; see also Orme-Johnson 1995, for further references).

The state of Cosmic Consciousness seems to alter the experience of the ordinary states of consciousness. The objects of the senses are not enjoyed in the same way by the enlightened person. Experiencing the bliss of Cosmic Consciousness is described as permanently overshadowing the experiences of the senses.

In chapter 6 verse 1, commenting on the reading of the expression in the main text, “without fire”, Maharishi writes:

Therefore being without fire symbolizes the life of a sanyasi. Again, fire is that which destroys. What destroys the eternal calmness of the ocean? A wind that sets up waves. Eternal unmanifested Being appears as **waves of individual life** through the instrumentality of desire. That is why desire is considered to be **fire** for one who chooses the life of silence. (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), p. 286).

A *saṁnyāsin* is one who has abandoned the worldly life and lives by alms, who is set on enlightenment, and is traditionally considered not to use fire under any circumstances. Maharishi gives a symbolic interpretation, meaning that it is desire which is the fire for the *saṁnyāsin*.⁶⁸

⁶⁸ Egenes (1985) gives a comprehensive picture of the enlightened person according to Maharishi’s commentary on the Bhagavadgītā. I will give a short account of the main characteristics laid out by Egenes on the view of an enlightened in the Bhagavadgītā and in Maharishi’s commentary: First of all, there are no outward marks of a person in higher states of consciousness. He is absorbed in the Self and Maharishi states that the state of enlightenment gives rise to what he calls “witnessing”.

Problem-Solving – Principle of the Second Element

Problem-solving is most essential in the context of the Bhagavadgītā, since the purpose of the dialogue is to solve Arjuna’s dilemma when he sees friends and relatives in the opposing army and therefore hesitates to fight in the war although being a warrior. When expounding on the topic of problem-solving, Maharishi uses a few different similes. Chapter 2 verse 2 states:

The Blessed Lord said:

Whence has this blemish, alien to
honourable men, causing disgrace and
opposed to heaven, come upon you,
Arjuna, at this untimely hour?

(Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), p. 57).

Maharishi uses a simile from nature explaining Lord Kṛṣṇas teaching skills as expressed in this verse: “Problems are not solved on the level of problems. Analysing a problem to find its solution is **like trying to restore freshness to a leaf by treating the leaf itself, whereas the solution lies in watering the root.**” (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), p. 57).

“It is a state of pure consciousness accompanying waking, dreaming, and sleeping states of consciousness. When pure consciousness accompanies waking consciousness, one feels that he is witnessing his activity. He feels deeply established in his own awareness, while the normal activity of the waking state continues, as in watching a movie. He feels removed from his activity, as one feels removed from the film” (Egenes 1985, p. 297).

Secondly, there are three quotes from the Bhagavadgītā related to this concept which describe the characteristics of the enlightened person:

Kurvann api na lipyate - Is not involved even while he acts;

Naiva kiñcit karomi iti yukto manyeta tattva vit - One who is in union with the Divine and who knows the truth will maintain, ‘I do not act at all’;

karmaṇy abhipravṛtto 'pi naiva kiñcit karoti saḥ - Even though fully engaged in action he does not act at all (Egenes 1985, p. 297). See also the appendix section, p. 359, which has a report of a person’s experience of higher states of consciousness.

In chapter 2 verse 45, Maharishi uses a simile to explain the message of the verse. The simile concerns itself with problem-solving. In the commentary Maharishi, using what he calls the “principle of the second element”, in a sense applies the principle of “Practice before Theory”. It is more important to experience happiness than discussing and understanding happiness or for that matter understanding sorrow and the reason for it. According to Maharishi, it is not the understanding of why you are not happy that brings happiness, but the experience of happiness. The experience of happiness is brought about by practising Transcendental Meditation and experiencing the fourth state of consciousness, *turīya*, or *samādhi*, Transcendental Consciousness. (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), p. 90).

“Vedic” Concepts:

There are a few “Vedic” concepts used quite frequently by Maharishi and which are basic for the understanding of “Vedic” philosophy and thought. I have dedicated the next section to a survey of these concepts to give a picture of Maharishi’s interpretation of them in the *Bhagavadgītā*.

Dharma

Explaining the concept of *dharma*, which is indeed essential to Indian thought, Maharishi uses the metaphor “**wheel of evolution**”, in chapter 1 verse 1:

These creative and destructive forces working in harmony with one another maintain life and spin the **wheel of evolution**. Dharma maintains equilibrium between them. By maintaining equilibrium between opposing cosmic forces, dharma safeguards existence and upholds the path of evolution, the path of righteousness. (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), p. 20).

“Wheel of evolution” is a metaphor used to illustrate the Sanskrit concept *samsāra*. In the first verse Maharishi also uses the metaphor or rather parable from the Bible “as you sow, so shall you reap”, in explaining “the role of dharma in practical life” (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), p. 20f). Maharishi continues explaining the passage in this connection:

Calamities, crises and catastrophes in a community or country are caused by the increase of negative forces resulting from the evil deeds of a majority of their people. --- Similarly, a high degree of concentration of positive forces fails to maintain life in its normal state. The life of an individual under the influence of increasing positive forces enters into a field of increasing happiness and is eventually transformed into bliss-consciousness, in which state it gains the status of cosmic existence, eternal life. (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), p. 21).

This passage is central to the doctrine of different states of consciousness in the sense that it explains Maharishi’s view on the collective influence of people in a society. The situation pictured in the Bhagavadgītā is two armies facing each other on the battlefield after prolonged controversy between cousins of the ruling dynasty in northern India at the time related in the historic epic of Mahābhārata. Negative forces have accumulated resulting, according to Maharishi, in the catastrophe of war. The force of dharma is in decline, and the equilibrium between opposing forces must be established again. This is done by the force of dharma, upholding the path of evolution.

A metaphor used in the commentary on chapter 1 verse 1, is a clarification of this metaphor which is used in the main text, where it says, “Assembled on the field of Dharma, O Sanjaya, on the field of the Kurus...” Here the author uses the concept “field of Dharma” to

designate the battlefield called *Kurukṣetra* outside of Delhi. In his commentary, Maharishi declares:

The two armies of the Kauravas and Pandavas on the battlefield of Kurukshetra represent the negative and positive forces on **the field of dharma**. This is what made Dhritarashtra say: 'Assembled on the field of Dharma, on the field of the Kurus'.

Dhritarashtra, as an old experienced head of the royal family, knows that the battlefield of Kurukshetra lying within the Dharmakshetra, the land between the rivers Yamuna and Saraswati, always maintains its sanctity and brings victory to the righteous. (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), p.21).

Maharishi in the commentary on chapter 1 verse 40, in dealing with the concept of dharma, or rather the plural of dharma, *dharmas*, uses the metaphor “**stream of life**” in his analysis (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), p. 45f). Maharishi explains his view on how traditions are formed. It is balance of the different streams of life, which are handed down from generation to generation, that form traditions and keep *dharma* or the *stream of life* in harmony.

In the present and the following verse, Maharishi uses the metaphor “**current**” on several different occasions and in that connection also the metaphor “**boat of life**” to explain how evolution, or *dharma*, works:

Arjuna uses the word ‘age-old’ because the ideals of life that have withstood the test of time represent the genuine path of evolution, the upward current in nature. Nothing that is against evolution lasts long. Therefore the tradition which has survived the ages has certainly proved itself to be the right one, the one nearest to the Truth, which is Life Eternal.

‘Intermixture of castes’ is of concern to Arjuna because he understands how difficult and dangerous it is **to shift from one boat to another in a fast current**. All beings, under the tremendous influence of the mighty force of nature, are held fast in the **current** of evolution. Each has his own specific course to follow. If a man deviates from his own natural course, his own dharma, then it is **like changing boats in a fast current**. He has to struggle hard to maintain life – a struggle which is experienced as sorrow and suffering and which gives rise to all problems on the path of evolution.

The answer to every problem is that there is no problem. Let a man perceive this truth and then he is without problems. This is the strength of knowledge – the strength of Sankhya – the strength of the wisdom that offers instantaneous realization. (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), p. 46f).

Maharishi has an interesting view on the concept *problem*. He maintains that, as he puts it here in the commentary, “there is no problem”. This could of course easily be misunderstood to mean that he considers problems non-existent. The interpretation I consider more plausible is that on the level of pure consciousness and when, according to Maharishi, a person experiences this state, his experience is that there are no problems. This is in analogy with the interpretations of the relation between the relative existence and the experience of that and the Absolute existence and the experience of that as a field of pure consciousness characterized by bliss. This is described in the analogy above between children’s play and the enlightened person. It is not that Maharishi dismisses problems on the level of relative life, on the contrary he advocates Transcendental Meditation to experience the bliss-consciousness of the Absolute phase of life.

Maharishi's view on the phenomenon of caste is also interesting since he has given expression to the idea that it is the *character* of a person that determines his or her caste and not necessarily his or her birth in a certain family belonging to a certain caste. This is however the common expression as consolidated in the *varṇa* system in India today, even though it is illegal, and throughout history.

On explaining the declaration of chapter 4 verse 7, that the Lord creates himself whenever dharma is decaying, Maharishi uses a simile of a government and the head of state who has to exercise his special power in a crisis:

The equilibrium of the three gunas is maintained automatically, **just as law and order are automatically maintained by a government. But whenever a crisis arises, the head of state has to exercise his special power.** Whenever dharma is in decay, the balance of the three gunas is disturbed, the equilibrium in nature is lost, the path of evolution is distorted and chaos prevails. (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), p. 191).

Karma

Maharishi uses the concept of *Karma*, in a few different contexts, not only as a denominator for the actions a man does, the fruits of which he is supposed to reap in this or future existences. Karma is also the origin of caste, but, as I understand it, Maharishi's view is that caste is, or at least should be, formed according to one's traits of character and not primarily by birth.

In chapter 1 verse 13, Maharishi explains his view on the origin of wars in history and the law of karma on a collective level, using a metaphor of harvest. The context is the enumeration of war signals in the main text:

Wars of history have resulted from the cumulative effect of aggression on the innocent; individuals continue to oppress others, not knowing that aggression is growing in the atmosphere, eventually to break upon them as their own disaster. **One reaps the consequences of one's own actions.**

(Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), p. 26).

In further explaining his view on the concept of collective karma, Maharishi in his commentary on chapter 1 verse 23, uses the metaphor “nip in the bud” (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), p. 32). He gives his view on international conflict as the accumulated influence of many individuals’ karmic effects. He also advocates prevention. There is a sentence in Maharishi’s elaboration of his absolute theory of defence, “victory before war”, which he develops in his book *Maharishi’s Absolute Theory of Defence* (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1996). Maharishi sees the practice of Transcendental Meditation and the advanced technique of TM-Sidhis, especially practised in groups,⁶⁹ as a prevention measure to avoid the birth of war.

Maharishi uses a faded metaphor, “reap”, when he in the next paragraph of his commentary on verse 23 states that, “no generation should be allowed to leave behind an evil influence, the accumulated consequences of which will be **reaped** by future generations.” (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), p. 32).

The relationship of the concept of *karma* to the individual and the cycle of birth and death is elaborated upon e.g. in chapter 2, verse 50 (see Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), p. 101-103).

It may be appropriate to give an account of what Maharishi calls “the art of action” in this context, since the word *karma* viz., means

⁶⁹ Later on designated *Group Dynamics of Consciousness* by Maharishi.

action. In chapter 4 verse 17, he explains how to act in a way that the whole process of action becomes beneficial to the actor:

The Lord adopts a mode of instruction whereby, without knowledge of the whole field of action, one can acquire every benefit that such knowledge could bestow. He brings to light the art of action whereby, without having to gain knowledge of action, one can enjoy the blessings which such knowledge would give. **This art of action is like the art of a gardener who, by watering the root, makes the sap rise to every part of the tree without having to know anything about the mechanics of rising sap.** (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), p. 202).

The “*art of action*” thus is to first locate the transcendent within and then come out into the field of action and achieve with a strong mind, infused with Being.

The prevention of war was one of Maharishi’s primary commitments when he started to teach Transcendental Meditation. In his commentary here, he seems to justify war under certain circumstances. He seems to discuss in the same terms as the West did when trying to stop the Nazis during the 1930s. It is interesting however, that Maharishi seems to take on a more uncompromising viewpoint in this respect in later texts, as we can see below in chapter 4. In those texts, he also gives another explanation of the war in the Bhagavadgītā in the context of his interpretation of Veda.

Conclusions

Before discussing the categories of analysis, I will give a brief summary of Maharishi’s teaching positions regarding some central concepts in the commentary on the Bhagavadgītā:

Suffering

Maharishi's position concerning suffering is that it can be experienced due to different causes. As in the case of Arjuna, suffering is caused by *duality* and specifically the duality between Arjuna's feelings and his intellect or reasoning. Maharishi also mentions *sin* as a cause of suffering, but in the case of Arjuna this is not the reason for his feeling of despair.

The solution to suffering, according to Maharishi, is to experience the unity of Transcendental Consciousness within.

The Three Guṇas

Maharishi sees the working of the universe as the interplay of the three forces of nature called *guṇas* in Indian or "Vedic" thinking. These forces are *sattva*, the creative force, *rajas*, the maintenance force and *tamas*, the destructive force in nature. Maharishi also considers that the teaching of the Lord in verse 45 of chapter 2 is one of the most essential in the whole text. To experience the field where the three forces are not involved is the one most fundamental experience for establishing or creating a strong and forceful mind able to engage in the activity of the world or the relative field of life.

The Senses and the Mind

Maharishi sees the mind as searching for more and more, and not as randomly wandering from object to object in the relative world, the metaphor of the wandering monkey. This systematic force of searching for greater happiness inherent in the mind is essential and this is the force utilized during the technique of Transcendental Meditation to lead the mind to a state of Transcendental Consciousness.

Maharishi translates the *Sanskṛt* word *manas* as the mind, and understands the mind as wandering in search of greater happiness, while he sees the concept *citta* as *manas* having come to a stop, or to a state of no activity, in Transcendental Consciousness, thus experiencing or identifying itself with pure consciousness or Being.

Mokṣa

Enlightenment, liberation or *mokṣa*, Maharishi designates as Cosmic Consciousness. On the level of experience, this state of consciousness is characterized by inner freedom of the Self, while the outer world is experienced as the changing relative world. The other higher states are of course also designated as *mokṣa*, but the initial state is Cosmic Consciousness.

Body

The body Maharishi sees as the “instrument” through which the mind experiences Transcendental Consciousness or for that matter any of the higher states of consciousness taken into account by Maharishi. The nervous system he sees as essential to the experience of higher states of consciousness and it is by investigating the physiological effects during experiences of higher states of consciousness that he considers one can see correspondences between subjective experiences and the functioning of the physiology.

God and “gods”

Maharishi seems to define God on the one hand, as the celestial Being on the finest level of creation, *Brahman* appearing as *Īśvara* under the influence of *māyā*, and on the other as the Lord *Kṛṣṇa*, who is

the highest Being and in some instances in his commentary designated as the owner of Being in the possessive expression “the Lord’s Being”, referring to Brahman or pure consciousness. Furthermore, everything is based on experience, according to Maharishi. Maharishi’s opinion concerning the Absolute is that It manifests into creation and yet remains in its absolute state. The manifestation is due to Brahman’s *līlāśakti* or play-power. In addition, Maharishi is of the opinion that Brahman is an all-pervading mass of bliss, but does not exhibit this quality. It is the contact with It that has the character of infinite joy, bliss or *ānanda*. You can say that in principle Maharishi exhibits the non-dualistic view of Godhead expressed in the Advaita Vedānta philosophy.

When explaining the concept of “gods”, with a lowercase “g”, Maharishi uses an analogy in chapter 3 verse 11:

The existence of gods may be understood by an analogy: **each of the myriad cells in the human body has its own level of life, energy and intelligence; together, these innumerable lives produce human life. A human being is like a god to all these small impulses of energy and intelligence, each with its own form, tendencies, sphere of activity and influence, working for the purpose of evolution.** The ‘gods’ mentioned here are the deities presiding over the innumerable laws of nature, which are present everywhere throughout relative life. They are the powers governing different impulses of intelligence and energy, working out the evolution of everything in creation.

The idea expressed in this analogy I consider a fundamental principle in the context of Nader’s research in his book *Human physiology* (Nader 2000 [1994]), where the relationship between Veda and the human body is detailed and explained.

Higher States of Consciousness

The different higher states of consciousness I will discuss at length in the section on categories of analysis under *Consciousness and Experience* below.

Dharma and Karma

The concept *dharma* Maharishi sees as evolution in a broad sense. He often uses the metaphor “stream of life” to picture dharma. The concept *karma* Maharishi interprets in its literal meaning as action. He of course also interprets it as the law of cause and effect governing the evolution of man’s life, *dharma*. Maharishi also holds the position that bondage to the cycle of birth and death is the field of action or *karma*, but bondage is not born of action, but of the “weakness of the actor”. The cycle of impression, desire and action keeps a man bound to this cycle of cause and effect or birth and death (*samsāra*). “The art of action” is a concept used by Maharishi to depict the state where the actor has contact with Being or Brahman, and thus gains the support of nature in all actions.

Categories of Analysis

Practice before Theory

Analysing his commentary on the Bhagavadgītā, I would state that Maharishi consistently presents his views and interpretations in a way characterized by logic and practicality and that he always tries to make events and lines of thought and feelings expressed in the main text both intelligible and put on the level of common sense.

In my analysis, I have found that Maharishi in his commentary emphasizes a notion of *Practice before Theory* in a systematic manner. This notion of *Practice before Theory* I regard as a leading idea in his pedagogical work. Maharishi indeed wants to convey the idea that practice is essential for, or I would say actually is at the basis of, development of any field of life, be it spiritual or material.⁷⁰

His interpretation of e.g., Arjuna's dilemma he endeavours to make understandable using explanations involving metaphorical language of inconsistency between heart and mind. When discussing the origin of suffering and delusion, in this connection, Maharishi is methodical in his investigation: Primarily suffering is "born of duality". It is caused by "ignorance", which should be easy to "shake off". Central to the teaching is that it is easy to shake off ignorance, and it is easy to contact the Self or pure consciousness through the practice of Transcendental Meditation. Maharishi explains why: It is because of the nature of the mind, and Maharishi's view of the mind is not as a monkey jumping from here to there. The mind is according to Maharishi searching for something better, more satisfying and that makes it easy to transcend in the practice of Transcendental Meditation, since it is a process where the mind is given an opportunity to go to Itself, pure consciousness, which is completely satisfying to the mind. This I consider in this context as a novel interpretation of the mind and the process of going to its origin, or of the self experiencing the Self.

⁷⁰ Cf. Donald Schön's thoughts on the reflective teacher who wants to help her students "to become aware of their own intuitive understandings, to fall into cognitive confusions and explore new directions of understanding and action." Schön studied practitioners or professional's practice, "an approach to epistemology of practice based on a close examination of what some practitioners... actually do" (see Schön 1983, p. viii and 331ff).

In Maharishi's interpretation, this process in the past has been considered difficult, hard to practise and it was deemed hard to achieve the goal of experiencing *Ātman* or the Self. Maharishi in his teaching considers it easy, which is of course a most rewarding pedagogical approach, even though simple, when inspiring students to learn anything. If the process of learning is considered difficult and the goal almost impossible to reach, who would start on the path? Furthermore, when Maharishi wrote the commentary, his main objective was to teach the practice of Transcendental Meditation to people everywhere.

As I mentioned in the introduction the trends of the 1960s were radical social and cultural change on many different levels of society. My viewpoint is that Maharishi with his novel and I would say ingenious interpretations of old texts and old philosophical thoughts as well as old practices of the East, seems to have fitted rather well into the contemporary context, as implied by e.g. Kurlansky (2004).

In many practical theory fields of study as e.g. pedagogical research, there is a dichotomy between practice and theory. In pedagogical research, it is expressed as *practice is not applied theory*, and *theory cannot direct or guide the practice*. This means that the practice should not be considered an application of theory, but should be studied in itself. In pedagogical studies, it is often the theorists who formulate the problem of relations between theory and practice in the sense that the practitioner does not apply theory or research results in the practice. Then you see practice as applied theory. Bourdieu (1980; see also Linnér and Westerberg 2009) locates a fault in this way of thinking. The fault is that research attributes to practitioners

ways of thinking and acting that are not in correspondence with what they actually do and think about what they do. Therefore, the researcher postulates a practice by the practitioner that does not exist. Bourdieu uses the concept “practical theory” which is connected to the concept of “practical sense”. Linnér and Westerberg interpret the concept “practical sense” thus:

It is what we have in our mind and which helps us to act adequately in a specific situation, because we are familiar with the situation and have different kinds of experiences and knowledge OF it and of what is needed to act in a wise and reasonable way IN it. Practical sense is action and not theory. It is deep rooted as a disposition in the body and is not in the first place thought or idea. We do something because it has to be done just then. (Linnér and Westerberg 2009, p. 107).

Bourdieu means it is an intuitive feeling for what has to be done in a specific situation.

I would say there is a correspondence in the way Maharishi reasons when he emphasizes Practice before Theory. He means that it is by the practice of experiencing Transcendental Consciousness in Transcendental Meditation that the practitioner develops his “practical sense” to use Bourdieu’s words. Maharishi however uses the concept “skill in action” for this phenomenon. Being established in pure consciousness, you spontaneously do the right action in *any* situation, and you feel familiar with any situation, because of your inner connection with the source of action in the field of non-action or pure consciousness.

Bourdieu further means that the difference between practice and theory is not that theory is conceptions and ideas in people’s heads, and practice some kind of reality outside the head. Theories are not

ideas of reality and practice reality itself. Practice is thus not applied theory. The difference is rather related to the difference between what you think and action. “Practical theory is not a theory OF action and practice, but FOR action and practice” (Linnér and Westerberg 2009, p. 107). In a similar way Maharishi means that the practice of Transcendental Meditation is FOR action in daily life and the theory is for verification of experience but has no value in influencing action. Of course, Maharishi talks of both practice in the sense of practising Transcendental Meditation, and action in daily life corresponding more to Bourdieu’s practice concept.

Furthermore, the practical theory of Bourdieu is not theory building, but action implicit in the action of the practitioner and is not communicated in theoretical terms. In pedagogical contexts, building of theories is often secondary to practice and the “practical sense” of the practitioner or teacher. In Maharishi’s thought, practice could be verified by theory. By studying the scriptures, you would verify your experience in practice. But, there is a difference in the sense that the “Vedic” scriptures are in a sense *authentic*. They show, according to Maharishi, the workings of natural law, which have been experienced before by the seers of antiquity. Of course, hypothetically new laws of nature could be experienced by or rather revealed to practitioners and thus be incorporated in the Veda. However, as I would understand it, this has according to Maharishi been done by the great seers who are enumerated in the part of Veda, or *śruti*, designated as *Samhitā*, and therefore Veda contains the whole of “natural law”. Nevertheless, the similarity in thinking I find striking between

Bourdieu's practical sense and the skill in action that Maharishi describes the practitioner of Transcendental Meditation is developing.

Consciousness and Experience

The definition of the concept of consciousness is very extensive, and running meters have been written on the subject of consciousness.⁷¹

John Locke published his *Essay Concerning Humane Understanding* in 1690 and he made the first definition of the concept in Western philosophy. Locke's definition was "the perception of what passes in a man's own mind" (Locke 1690). The concept though is much older, but had other connotations earlier. Today consciousness studies have developed from a field of study limited to theology and philosophy to a subject within all areas of science and humanities as well. Studies of consciousness are conducted within e.g., medicine, psychology and physiology, besides philosophy.

The concept of consciousness has been extensively elaborated upon in Western philosophy, and I want to just briefly note this before discussing Maharishi's view on it. In *Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy* (Van Gulick 2011, article "consciousness": 9. Specific theories of consciousness) you can read on the subject of theories of philosophy that:

...although there are many general metaphysical/ontological theories of consciousness, the list of specific detailed theories about its nature is even longer and more diverse. No brief survey could be close to comprehensive, but six main types of theories may help to indicate the basic range of options: higher-order theories, representational theories, cognitive theories, neural theories, quantum theories and nonphysical theories.

⁷¹ Searching the concept on Google results in app. 87.100.000 hits (3rd February 2013).

As stated in the citation above that no brief survey could be close to comprehensive, a more elaborate survey would, however interesting it may be, take the attention away from our purpose. Here I just wanted to indicate the interest in the concept in Western thought.

The concept of *consciousness* and the emphasis on *experience* of it I consider indeed essential in Maharishi's teachings. Maharishi considers the experience of *consciousness*, or more precisely *pure consciousness*, as the single most fundamental experience for the expansion of one's awareness and development of higher states of consciousness. The concept of *consciousness* Maharishi elaborates on in every aspect of his teaching. I would suggest it is the most used term to designate the Ultimate reality in Maharishi's later writings and lectures.

Consciousness, being so central both as a concept and as a designation for the Absolute Being is in the Bhagavadgītā commentary mostly designated precisely as Being. The concept of Being is explained in many different connections and Maharishi in his pedagogical endeavour explains it in a rich metaphorical language, including similes and metaphors of the sun, the ocean, the sap in a tree etc.

When talking about consciousness, we find the concept "collective consciousness" used in later publications. Maharishi in the commentary uses the concept "collective karma" for the united influence of many individuals or many individual's *karma*, or consciousness. Consciousness thus has the relation to *karma* that the consciousness of an individual depends on his or her *karma* or previous actions in a sense. Every individual also has access to pure consciousness within,

in one's own Self or *Ātmā*. So individuals who establish direct access to the Self or pure consciousness will generate a more beneficial influence in society, in the collective *karma* or consciousness than those who have not established this access. The ultimate consequence of not establishing this access could be the situation depicted in the Bhagavadgītā, namely of war.

When expounding on *consciousness* or pure consciousness using the word Being, Maharishi depicts it as the Lord's Being in his commentary on one verse: "The Lord's Being is the **playground of the time** which He creates." (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), p. 189). The phrase "the Lord's Being" indicates ownership of Being due to the grammatical genitive formulation, which would indicate that Kṛṣṇa is in a sense superior to Being, and Being, as identical to Brahman or pure consciousness, is owned by Lord Kṛṣṇa. This is an interesting thought since as stated above, Robinson, and other scholars, mean that Maharishi puts Brahman or the non-personal aspect of the Ultimate above the personal. This is an ordinary view for an Advaita Vedānta adherent, and Maharishi states that his commentary is a supplement to Śaṅkara's commentary. It is not so that Maharishi regularly sets Lord Kṛṣṇa in this relation to Brahman, but nevertheless the formulation is thought provoking. It could however indicate an account of identity between Brahman and the Lord, which would be straight Advaita Vedānta. This could basically be the viewpoint of Maharishi that he develops in his *Apauruṣeya Bhāṣya* and Lord Kṛṣṇa could then represent the *dynamism* aspect in the *silence* of Brahman. Furthermore, Maharishi on the topic of Bhagavadgītā has

said that Lord Kṛṣṇa is the Absolute symbolized.⁷² He also states this explicitly in his commentary in chapter 1, verse 14: “Lord Krishna symbolizes the Self”.

I am in this context inclined to compare with Nimbārka and Vallabha, *parināma* (emanation theory) philosophers in the Advaita (*śuddhadvaita*) tradition who see Kṛṣṇa as identical to Brahman. Nimbārka means that Kṛṣṇa creates the world from His Divine Energy, so that the world both is and is not separate from God. For Vallabha Kṛṣṇa creates the world from His Essence. According to Vallabha, it is only through revelation that we can know God, and not through reasoning. Therefore, we have to accept that God or the ultimate reality is depicted in different ways, which are contradictory. “Reason cannot be used to evaluate revelation,” is a viewpoint expressed by Jacobsen (2004, p. 168) that is interesting from a researcher’s perspective, since reasoning is your main occupation when doing research. The standpoint of Maharishi seems to be the same, as he appears not to be concerned about expressing seemingly different standpoints or views on the ultimate reality in different contexts (see Jacobsen 2004, p. 168f; see also Panoli 1991).

Maharishi in his commentary expounds a systematization of higher states of consciousness including the concepts Transcendental Consciousness, Cosmic Consciousness and God-Consciousness.

Transcendental Consciousness is the experience of the Absolute, without any relative experiences. Transcendental Consciousness would also correspond to the concept and experience of *samādhi* in

⁷² This was said in a lecture held in Mallorca on 30 November 1971; reference is to my personal notes on the lecture.

Patañjali's *aṣṭāṅga yoga*. It is experienced as part of the practice of Transcendental Meditation.

The importance of experiencing Transcendental Consciousness Maharishi means is explained by Lord Kṛṣṇa to Arjuna in chapter 2 verse 45, when He states "be without the three gunas, O Arjuna, freed from duality, ever firm in purity, independent of possessions, possessed of the Self". (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), p. 90).

Cosmic Consciousness is the permanent experience of Transcendental Consciousness together with the other three states of consciousness, waking, dreaming and deep sleep. This state is also seen as the once and for all liberation, usually signified as *mokṣa*, of the soul from *samsāra*, or the cycle of birth and death.

Cosmic Consciousness is, according to Maharishi, the theme of chapter 2 verse 48, which explains the relation between *Yoga* and action in the world, when it says "established in Yoga... perform actions". Maharishi interprets the sentence so that one should first experience pure consciousness and then be active if one desires success in action. This interpretation indeed also advocates "Practice before Theory", in the sense that for success in life the method is practising *Yoga* and not to consider in your mind how to live a successful life.

God-Consciousness is the sixth state of consciousness in Maharishi's systematization. What does Maharishi mean by God in this connection? He explains it in an appendix to the commentary when clarifying the Vedānta system of philosophy, and this explanation suggests that God-Consciousness is the experience of the most subtle field of creation.

In the commentary, the state of God-Consciousness is the final goal of man's development as a human being, but there is in later sources references to a seventh state of consciousness called *Unity Consciousness*. Having studied the commentary, my opinion is that the state of Unity Consciousness is not yet distinguished from God-Consciousness in Maharishi's commentary on the Bhagavadgītā. Egenes in his thesis uses a reference to the commentary on the Bhagavadgītā that describes the seventh state of consciousness: "One realizes the prediction of Kṛṣṇa in the *Bhagavad Gītā* that he 'will see the Self in all beings, and all beings in the Self' (*sarva bhūtastham ātmānaṃ sarva bhūtāni ca ātmani*)" (Egenes 1985, p. 51. Citation from Bhagavadgītā 6, 29). Consequently the state of Unity Consciousness seems to be described in the Bhagavadgītā, even though Maharishi does not use that term. However, he often uses the formulation "unity in God-Consciousness".

Vision and Tradition

Heralding the later vision put forth in his *Apauruṣeya Bhāṣya* Maharishi in his commentary on chapter 4 verse 6 as a commentary on the reading of Kṛṣṇa's proclamation in this verse, "remaining in my own nature I take birth" uses the simile of the sap in a tree, which does not lose its quality as sap even when it appears as branches, leaves and flowers. Nothing happens to the Absolute, and yet the Incarnation of the Absolute springs up, by virtue of Its own nature. I would say that the simile of the sap is a simile explaining the idea that Maharishi later on developed in more detail as the silence and dynamism model of his *Apauruṣeya Bhāṣya*. Here you could also reflect on the connection to the view of Śaṅkara concerning the higher and

the lower truths, *vivartavāda* and *pariṇāmavāda*. Panoli (1991) gives an account meaning that *vivartavāda*...

...the tradition of Gaudapada and Shankara, asserts that ultimately Brahman alone is real and anything else that seems to exist is ultimately illusory, ir-real, the manifestation of ignorance, error and nescience. For Vivarta philosophers it is possible to say the world is identical with Brahman - but only in the very specific sense that Brahman alone is all that exists and therefore the world is simply a way of miscognising Brahman, but ultimately there is nothing save Brahman to be cognised and none save Brahman to do the cognizing.

This is evidently the viewpoint of Maharishi here, and in his elaboration of the *Apauruṣeya Bhāṣya*, as we will see below.

For *pariṇāmavāda* philosophers “the world is identical with Brahman in that Brahman becomes the world. Brahman transforms Itself and comes to be the world as well as remaining God” (Panoli 1991). This view Maharishi at times gives expression to, and as Nimbārka and Vallabha he seems to, at least in some instances, identify Kṛṣṇa with the eternal Brahman.

However, in Maharishi’s book *Celebrating Perfection in Education – Dawn of Total Knowledge* he seems to advocate the synthesis of the two concepts *vivartavāda* and *pariṇāmavāda*:

It is for the wise to realize that the teaching of these principles of *pariṇāmavād* and *vivartavād* have been the subject of exhaustive study on their own level. In general, teachers kept them contradictory to each other and did not synthesize them in the awareness of the student...the student within himself remained hanging in the air between these two contradictory principles; he did not know what was real. This is why if education is to be complete, contradictory principles have to be synthesized. (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1997, p. 40).

When explaining the difference and the synthesis of the concepts Maharishi maintains:

One can see *Pariṇāmvād* in the *Vṛittis* emerging in *Ātmā*. In principle it is *Pariṇāmvād*, even when in reality it is *Vivartvād*. Realization of this is due to the nature of reality and the perfection of the approach to it: start from anywhere in infinity and whenever you find the goal of your search, you will realize the goal is surprisingly at the same starting point – the goal of the process of transformation, the goal of the principle of *Pariṇāmvād*, is actually *Vivartvād*, which is *Pariṇāmvād* itself (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1997, p. 40)

Maharishi in his interpretation in his *Apauruṣeya Bhāṣya* seems not to adhere solely to any of these two schools, since he adopts a wider outlook in the sense that he synthesizes between the principles as shown in the elaboration in the last quote.

Nevertheless, studying these interpretations and those of the *Bhagavadgītā*, I find that Maharishi also in different contexts interprets in concordance with either one or the other. The reason, which I am aware might sound only common sense, may be pedagogical, since Maharishi seems to be more interested in making his message understandable than making philosophical distinctions that would probably only confuse the uninitiated reader. At least this seems to be true to some extent for the *Bhagavadgītā*. Later on he focuses more on philosophical interpretations of the Absolute, pure consciousness or Brahman. Another conceivable reason for different interpretations in different contexts, would be that Maharishi discusses from different perspectives, regarding different states of consciousness, i.e., sometimes he discusses from the point of view of duality in Cosmic Con-

sciousness and sometimes from the point of view of non-duality in Unity Consciousness etcetera.

Interpreting Maharishi's explanation of Brahman illustrated by the similes of *the surgeon*, and *the tree and the sap*, I would say that using these similes, Maharishi seems to give expression to the view of the *vivartavāda* (phenomenal appearance) of the Advaita Vedānta tradition. This could, as I stated before, be interpreted as heralding the vision of the *Apauruṣeya Bhāṣya*'s dynamism and silence model, which seems to be in focus of Maharishi's teaching later on, and which will be elaborated on in the next chapters.

Patterns of Form and Content in the Similes and Metaphors

When explaining different higher states of consciousness Maharishi inter alia uses the similes of an archer shooting an arrow and of a businessperson enhancing his business. The purpose of these similes is to point to the process of transcending and of establishing Transcendental Consciousness permanently in one's awareness both in Cosmic Consciousness and in God-Consciousness. The simile from the Upaniṣads of desires and roasted seeds is also used by Maharishi. He explains how the process of meditation gradually develops into higher states of consciousness using different similes in this context. Also different Vedic concepts such as *dharma* and *karma* are explained using a very rich metaphorical language. If you analyse Maharishi's teaching with reference to his metaphorical language and try to see some kind of pattern the following picture appears.

Initially, I should say that you could see patterns primarily but not exclusively in the similes. I have distinguished five different patterns

of form in the similes and metaphors. These patterns of form, which you also could call areas of life, are:

1. Everyday human life,
2. Nature,
3. Natural phenomena,
4. Traditional from Vedic texts, like the Upaniṣads etc.
5. Science related.

The categories are not clear-cut, but overlap in some instances like e.g. “traditional” motifs, which can also belong to “everyday life” and the water metaphors and sun metaphors, which can be seen as “traditional”, but also as “natural phenomena”.

From *everyday human life*, I have found similes including the motif of a “surgeon” illustrating the play-power of Brahman, a “businessperson” in several different contexts, “diving” and a “swimmer” illustrating the process of transcending in Transcendental Meditation. Furthermore, we find “walking” illustrating the process of coming out of the relative field and entering into the transcendent and “musical instruments” illustrating the body. Maharishi uses an “archer” to illustrate skill in action, viz., to first meditate and then come out into activity, and “colouring cloth” to illustrate the process of developing Cosmic Consciousness or higher states of consciousness in general. The simile of a “gardener” illustrates the process of enriching all aspects of life by experiencing pure consciousness through Transcendental Meditation.

These similes mostly concern the practice and process of Transcendental Meditation, higher states of consciousness, or in some instances consciousness in itself or Brahman. In some instances, they illustrate some other processes, like how desires arise in the mind.

So, there seems to be some kind of pattern here, where similes of everyday life are used to illustrate ideas pertaining to Maharishi's central teachings with respect to different aspects of development of consciousness.

From *nature* I found similes and metaphors involving "fruit" in general and one simile with an "orange" illustrating Arjuna's condition in his dilemma. A "plant without nourishment" illustrates the relation between Arjuna's mind and senses. "Seeds" illustrate how desires come out or "sprout" when explaining the Sanskrit word *sankalpa*.

These similes and metaphors concern Arjuna's state in different senses and the sense's relation to desire.

Maharishi quite often uses *natural phenomena* like the "sun" etcetera, in similes and metaphors. One category is metaphorical language including "water" in one sense or the other. It could be "the ocean", "the sea", "waves on the ocean", a "current", a "ship on the sea", etc. These similes and metaphors illustrate some aspect of the Absolute, Being or pure consciousness, or the state of a person in higher consciousness. Those metaphors and similes could also be seen as traditional since metaphorical language pertaining to the ocean or water, and the sun etc. are common in many traditional texts, like e.g., the Upaniṣads.

In these metaphors and similes it is easy to see a connection between the content of the metaphor or simile and the central thought expressed or illustrated by the metaphor or simile. Moreover, the pattern suggested is that Maharishi uses these kinds of metaphors and similes when discussing thoughts concerning the Absolute, pure con-

sciousness etc. It is, needless to say, the quality or character of the natural phenomena that corresponds to the phenomenon to be explained.

A *traditional* motif I have found is the simile of the “lamp in a windless place”, which does not flicker, illustrating the mind as it experiences pure consciousness. Traditional motifs of course could illustrate different things, since they are traditional, and Maharishi uses them in different contexts, which signifies his familiarity with traditional texts.

Some metaphors and similes Maharishi derives from the *world of science*. Of course, the world of science is familiar to many readers and Maharishi has his own background in an academic context having a university degree in physics and mathematics. In these metaphors and similes, I cannot see any particular pattern, but Maharishi uses them to explain and illustrate different thoughts and principles.

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Maharishi’s use of metaphorical language and the frequency of its use in this text are certainly in line with his pedagogical side, but indeed also with his poetic side (see Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1965). Maharishi in his variation of the metaphorical language shows his ability as a wordsmith and his *licentia poetica*. The content especially of certain similes also show his philosophical side, like the simile of the tree and the sap explaining the nature of the Absolute or Brahman as both dynamic and silent, both manifesting and unmanifest at the same time. Maharishi used this particular simile very often in lectures later on in his teaching.

Figure 2. Patterns of Metaphorical Language⁷³

Pat- terns of form	Every- day hu- man life:	Nature:	Natural phenom- ena:	Tradi- tional:	World of Science:
	Servant; children; business man etc.	Fruit; or- ange; plant – nourish- ment; seed etc.	Sun; Sea, ocean, (ocean also tradi- tional) water (ship on water) etc.	Lamp in windless place; sea, ocean; tor- toise etc.	Psychologi- cal theories; surgeon; physics etc.

Form categories which Maharishi’s metaphors and similes could be divided into with examples from each category.

In the next chapter, I will investigate some texts from the 1970s and 1980s and how they reflect the categories of analysis derived from the analysis of the main text of this chapter. I will look into Maharishi’s development of his Vedic Science and the characteristics of it. I will also try to clarify Maharishi’s view on the concept of Veda and Vedic scriptures and there will be an in-depth survey of the seven states of consciousness systematized by Maharishi and the relationship between earlier and later texts concerning these different states of consciousness. It seems that it was during this period that the systematization of the different states of consciousness was finalized. I will eventually discuss the relationship between “Veda” and “Consciousness” in Maharishi’s philosophy or world of ideas.

However, initially in the next chapter I will give a survey of the concept “Veda” as perceived by research on Indian thought and philosophy from the scholar’s point of view. I will do this to give the reader a background against which to appreciate Maharishi’s conception of “Veda”.

⁷³ A complete concordance over the metaphorical language in Maharishi’s commentary is found in Appendix I, p. 413.

CHAPTER 2: MAHARISHI VEDIC SCIENCE – THE 1970S AND 1980S

In this second chapter, I will initially give a short account of the concept *Veda* as some researchers of the Indian world of thought perceive it. After that, I will go into detail of Maharishi Vedic Science and the signification of this concept according to Maharishi.

Implications of the Concept of Veda

Veda (from the root *vid*=to know) is a concept used at least for a language, a text collection and a period of development of the Indian society corresponding to the period when the text collection is considered to have been written down.⁷⁴ The text collection consists of the four Vedas, *R̥gveda*, *Sāmaveda*, *Yajurveda* and *Atharvaveda*, which are the most archaic texts, written in an archaic form of the Vedic language.⁷⁵ In addition to these texts, which are referred to as the *Mantra* or hymn part, there are three other collections of texts, the *Brāhmaṇas*, the *Āraṇyakas* and the *Upaniṣads*, and finally the

⁷⁴ The Vedic period is according to at least some scholars considered as the period from about 1200-500 BC. (Schalk 1996, p. 353). Research on the societal period I will not discuss here, but the interested reader is referred to other sources, which are plentiful. (See e.g. Hirianna 1932; Jacobsen 2004; Schalk 1996; Smith 2009 (2001); Zaehner 1962.)

⁷⁵ The Vedic language is in turn an archaic and original form of Sanskr̥t.

Sūtra texts. All of these are considered as revelation texts or *śruti* (=the heard), and therefore authoritative. Other texts are considered to belong to the *smārta* tradition (from *smṛti*=the remembered), which are texts considered to be composed by humans. (Schalk 1996, p. 350f).

The oldest text of the *Mantra* part is the *Ṛgveda*, which is *saṃhitā* (a collection of texts) together with the other three Vedic texts *Sāmaveda*, *Yajurveda* and *Atharvaveda*. These *Vedas* were traditionally handed down orally within certain priest families, using a very sophisticated method of learning how to memorize by heart the often very long texts. (Schalk 1996, p. 350f).

Different attempts to explain the religion of these Vedic texts have been completed. It has been explained as “nature-worship”, which, according to Zaehner, was early dismissed because “the evidence obstinately refused to fit into this narrow frame” (Zaehner 1962, p. 22). Another attempt was to explain it using a philological method (Paul Thieme and others), which also, according to some scholars, failed because etymology often is doubtful and the gods seemed to grow and develop like man does. The ethnological approach which “tends to emphasize social trends existing in societies and to explain the divine society portrayed in myth by analogy with the social structure of the human society of the god’s devotees”, was more fruitful (Zaehner 1962, p. 22). This seems to be the view of former as well as contemporary scholars.⁷⁶

⁷⁶ At least this seems to be the view of Zaehner and Schalk, who suggest that the descriptions in the texts of societal circumstances of the gods describe and sanction circumstances in the society of man at that time. (Schalk 1996; Zaehner 1962).

The Vedic texts express a view of a threefold partition of society in the three classes of priests (*Brāhman*), warriors (*Kṣatriya*) and common people, peasants and artisans (*Vaiśya*). These classes were declared as identical respectively to the fire-god *Agni*, the warrior-god *Indra*, and the “all-gods” *viśve devāḥ*. (Zaehner 1962, p. 23).

Agni, the *Vedic* fire-god, Zaehner (Zaehner 1962, see also Hiri-yanna 1932, p. 35f) explains is the god in which the divine and the human world coalesce most closely. This is because *Agni*, as the fire, consumes the sacrifice and offers it, as priest/mediator, to the gods in heaven. Zaehner sees *Agni* as both a priest who binds together gods and men and the element that binds the three worlds together. He is born as the sun in heaven anew every day, he is kindled in the waters of the storm-cloud and appears as lightning and on earth human hands kindle him. This corresponds according to Zaehner to the threefold structure of the universe. *Agni* is omnipresent and he is eternal. He symbolizes the renewal of things and their interrelatedness. He unites opposites within him in a manner that later becomes “utterly characteristic of Hindu thought” (Zaehner 1962, p. 25f). The nature of *Agni* is significant since Maharishi, as we will see below, in his interpretation of Veda in general and the *R̥gveda* in particular, emphasizes the importance of the word *Agnim*, the first word or rather sound, of *R̥gveda*. This word actually is the starting point and endpoint of his interpretation of *R̥gveda*, the concept from which he by analogy interprets the whole of *R̥gveda*, and Veda as a whole for that matter. It is by that word he shows his view of the signification of the verses of *R̥gveda* and the rest of the Vedic texts as ritual texts.

Even researchers suggest that the hymns of *Ṛgveda* have been central to Hinduism in their capacity as ritual sounds rather than carriers of meaning (Jacobsen 2004, p. 81). This fact has caused disagreement among researchers of the signification or meaning of the hymns of *Ṛgveda*. Jacobsen refers to an early interpretation tradition referring to *Yāska*, who in turn refers to *Kautsa*, who said it was a hopeless enterprise to try to interpret the hymns. Other traditions like the *pūrva-mīmāṃsā*, interpreting the ritual decrees had a more unproblematic task. Subsequently we find interpretations in the *Upaniṣads* and in the *Vedānta*-system, and even later in the commentary on *Ṛgveda* by *Sāyaṇa* (Jacobsen 2004, p. 81).

Some resent researchers claim there was a living interpretation tradition from *Yāska* to *Sāyaṇa*. Jacobsen states that Max Müller for his part, said that the gods were personifications of the powers of nature, and in his interpretation otherwise relied on *Sāyaṇa*. In India a greater interest for the interpretation of *Ṛgveda* emerged in the nineteenth century and Dayananda Saraswati⁷⁷ stated that “*Ṛgveda* comprises all modern scientific innovations and discoveries as well as the most deep religious insights” (Jacobsen 2004, p. 82. My translation).

Beyond doubt the Vedic texts are liturgical or ritual texts recited during the sacrificial rituals like the *homa* and *yajña* and they have been memorized and handed down by the priestly families for millennia. There is also a connection to the concept of Brahman in the texts. Brahman was the power permeating the universe. It was also the name of the prayer, the words uttered during the ritual. The *brāhmaṇa*, the priest, was the person who owned this power of the

⁷⁷ 1824-1883, founder of the Arya Samaj.

universe. Jacobsen asserts that the fact “that the word Brahman in its different forms was used both of the power in the offering, the prayer, the priest and the substrate of the universe, expresses a desire for unity and the tendency to construct correlations between man, the offering, the world and the divine reality” (Jacobsen 2004, p. 85. My translation).

The priests, possessing the power of Brahman, were at this point considered as more powerful than the gods and the sounds from the recitation were seen as a creative vibration, the basis of reality, maintaining the entire universe (Jacobsen 2004, p. 85). In the *Ṛgveda* hymn 10.90, the offering of Puruṣa, we find an idea that is continued in the later Brāhmaṇa and Upaniṣad texts. It is the ritual that causes creation, and sound and speech are considered as the creative power. Pronunciation of a name creates the thing or object that the name refers to (Jacobsen 2004, p. 88).

In the second group categorized as Vedic texts, we find the Brāhmaṇas, which are tied to the *Mantra* part explained above. They consist of commentaries with explanations of the older *Vedic* texts. The different parts have in the same way as the *Mantra* part different priests specialized in reciting them (Schalk 1996, p. 352).

The Brāhmaṇas are, according to Schalk, based on two intellectual assumptions: 1) “That a certain collection of imagined categories are identical with reality, and that it is possible to modify reality by manipulating those imagined categories in the symbolic acts we call rites”, and 2) “there was an analogy between the individual and the universe.” (Schalk 1996, p. 360. My translation).

In the third group, we have the texts called Āraṇyaka, which means “forest” books. They are seen as a continuation of the Brāhmaṇas and precursors to the Upaniṣads, which are also considered part of the third group of Vedic texts. Their content was considered secret; thus it was to be dealt with in the forest. The Upaniṣads were texts often in the form of dialogues between a teacher and a pupil. The word *Upaniṣad* means, “sitting near or close to.” (Schalk 1996, p. 352).

Jacobsen postulates that it was by influences from groups of ascetics along the Ganges River that the Vedic religion developed in the direction of thought expressed in the Upaniṣads. These groups, the *śramaṇa* movement, were ascetics with no connection to society, they were celibates without permanent housing, and vegetarians. (Jacobsen 2004, p. 90).

These ascetics were critical of the privileges of the Vedic priests, even though many in these groups came from the Vedic priest class. The concepts of *saṃsāra* and *karma* were central and thus thoughts of reincarnation and of course, most central, the concept of *mokṣa*, or liberation from *saṃsāra*, the cycle of rebirths. The way to achieve liberation was through *asceticism*, *meditation* and *knowledge*. (Jacobsen 2004, p. 91).

The influence of this movement is expressed in the Upaniṣads, which were compiled from the seventh century B.C. and incorporated in the Vedic tradition. Central themes of the Upaniṣads were meditation and *Yoga*, which were means to a mystical experience and liberation from rebirth. (Jacobsen 2004, p. 92). In the Upaniṣads we also find a correspondence between man and the universe e.g., in

the *Aitareya Upaniṣad* 1.4-2.4, which includes a description of how the universe comes into existence from the universal person *Puruṣa*.⁷⁸ In this Upaniṣad, we also find a reversal of the creation of the universe from man, as man is created from the Self.⁷⁹ “The creation of the cosmos is at the same time the creation of man... the material substance common to micro and macro cosmos goes back and forth between cosmogony and antropogony” (Jacobsen 2004, p. 94f. My translation).

It is also in the Upaniṣads that the concept of *Brahman* as the common denominator of the universe is developed, as well as the concept of *Ātman* and its identity with *Brahman*, and also methods of how to contact It. (Jacobsen 2004, p. 95).

The forth group of texts are the *Sūtra* texts containing two parts, *śrautasūtra* and *grhasūtra* of which the former is part of the revelation texts, “the heard” or *śruti*. The later part deals with rites performed by the father of the family (*grha* meaning “house”) under the guidance of a *purohita*, a priest (Schalk 1996, p. 352). The *śrautasūtras* are considered to systematize the sacrificial teachings of the *Brāhmaṇas* (Hiriyanna 1932, p. 89).

This was a short survey of how the concept of *Veda* has been perceived in earlier and present research. There are, as shortly mentioned above other positions expressed by different scholars. However, my purpose here was not to give a complete account, but to present a view on the subject from the perspective of research, to

⁷⁸ Cf. *Rgveda* 10.90.

⁷⁹ For an account of the Self or *Ātman* see Appendix F on p. 371.

give the reader an idea of how the texts are interpreted by scholars, as I continue to consider Maharishi Vedic Science, expressing Maharishi's view on *Veda*.

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For this second chapter on Maharishi's teaching and philosophy, I have used mainly two sources. The first is Maharishi's book *Enlightenment and Invincibility, Maharishi's Supreme Offer to the World, to Every Individual and to Every Nation* (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1978b). The second source is Thomas Egenes' thesis *The Place of the Veda in the Thought of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi: A Historical and Textual Analysis* (Egenes 1985). An extensive part of my account is based on Egenes' rendering, so I will needless to say refer to Egenes, when I give an account of his conclusions on the philosophy of Maharishi.

The thesis by Egenes was published at the University of Virginia. Egenes used published sources as well as video-taped and audio-taped lectures by Maharishi, stored in the library at Maharishi International University (now Maharishi University of Management). Egenes' source material constitutes tapes of lectures mainly from the 1970s, but also from the beginning of the 1980s.

Egenes' thesis, even though a secondary source, I find relevant to use, since his primary sources would have been hard to review within a reasonable period of time. Of course, I am aware that making another analysis of the material could have resulted in a different interpretation, since the material is certainly analysed, categorized and systematized by Egenes.

There is also a part in Egenes' thesis where he discusses the philosophy and teaching of Maharishi's Bhagavadgītā commentary from a different perspective than I do in the previous chapter. I will consider this elaboration as reference material to my interpretation in the previous chapter on Maharishi's commentary on the Bhagavadgītā.⁸⁰

Even though I did it in chapter 1, I will also in this chapter make a brief analysis of the different states of consciousness. This I consider necessary, and the reason is that Maharishi during this period systematized them in a somewhat different way as indicated by my sources.

In the conclusions section of this chapter, I will analyse the texts with the three categories of analysis in focus, which I generated from the coding and categorization of the metaphorical language of the commentary on the Bhagavadgītā. The three categories are *Practice before Theory*, *Consciousness and Experience* and *Vision and Tradition*.

⁸⁰ See below p. 197.

Maharishi Vedic Science

One of Maharishi's central conceptions of Veda⁸¹ is that *Veda* exists in consciousness or according to a quote from Maharishi, *Veda* is: "the unified field whispering to itself". He also states that if you know consciousness or your inner *Ātmā*, you know *Veda*. In the following section, there will be an elaboration of different aspects of this viewpoint. There will also be a consideration of the different states of consciousness as they are expressed in the texts under consideration in this chapter. What, if any, are the differences from the commentary on the Bhagavadgītā?

I will also discuss the three paths of *karma*, *bhakti* and *jñāna* and their transcendental foundation as expressed in Maharishi's commentary on the Bhagavadgītā, since there seems to be a relationship to the concept of "Practice before Theory".

Maharishi recurrently refers to the Vedic scriptures. It is a well-known fact that the Veda is traditionally divided into two sections called *Śruti* and *Smṛti*. *Śruti* is the *Samhitā* (the four Vedas), *Brāhmaṇas*, *Āraṇyakas* and *Upaniṣads*. The rest is called *Smṛti*. So, the Bhagavadgītā, which is attributed to a compiler named *Vyasa*, is in the category of *Smṛti*.⁸² Two important *Smṛti* texts other than the Bhagavadgītā are the *Yoga Sūtras* by Patañjali and the *Brahma Sūtras* by Bādarāyaṇa. Three of the texts, *the Upaniṣads*, *the Bhagavadgītā* and *the Brahma Sūtras* were commented upon by Śaṅkara and are known as *prasthāna traya* or the threefold foundation of *Vedānta*, and more particularly the branch of *Vedānta* known as *Ad-*

⁸¹ Charts explaining Maharishi's view on the concept of Veda are found in the Appendix section.

⁸² See also above p. 164.

vaita Vedānta, which is the one that Śaṅkara is most closely associated with.

Maharishi teaches that the different approaches to Yoga or union laid out in the Bhagavadgītā have their foundation in the simplest form of one's own awareness, *svabhava*.⁸³ That means one has to experience Transcendental Consciousness or Ātmā within oneself to follow or adhere to one or the other of the approaches to Yoga. And, generally speaking, Maharishi in his elaborations on, for instance, the Brahma Sūtras and other texts has discussed parts that are significant to his philosophy and to his own position. And his position, I would say is substantially the same as Śaṅkara's and the one expressed as Advaita Vedānta. In his philosophy, Maharishi integrates both practice and theory finding a common foundation for the various texts of the "Veda" in "consciousness".

I find it note-worthy that Maharishi, with a background in mathematics and physics, spent 13 years with the Śaṅkarācārya of Jyotir Math in the Himālayas, Swāmi Brahmānanda Saraswatī. Being around the Śaṅkarācārya, he was, as stated by Egenes (1985), educated in the philosophy of Śaṅkara and the categories or concepts of *nirguna Brahman*, *saguna Brahman*, *Ātman*, *mokṣa*, *jīvan mukti*, *sat cit ānanda*, *vyāvahārika*, *āvidya*, *sakṣin*, *upadhi*, *jñāna*, etc.⁸⁴ Maharishi was particularly inspired by the concept and experience of the fourth state of consciousness, of *turīya*, as it was called by Śaṅkara and others. Maharishi then equates *turīya* with *samādhi* (from the

⁸³ A short translation of the concept: *svabhava* is "being in the Self".

⁸⁴ A short translation of the concepts: *nirguna Brahman*=Brahman without attributes, *saguna Brahman*=Brahman with attributes, *ātman*= the Self, *mokṣa*= liberation, *jīvan mukti*=a liberated soul, *sat cit ānanda*=Being, Consciousness Bliss, *vyāvahārika*=practical existence, *āvidya*=ignorance, *sakṣin*=witnessing, *upādhi*=appearance, *jñāna*=knowledge.

Yoga Sūtras) and *svabhava* (from the Bhagavadgītā) (see Egenes 1985).

One thing that may be said about the purpose of the Transcendental Meditation movement in this connection is that when Maharishi started it in Madras or Chennai in 1958 and subsequently, his global initiative was to revive the main teachings of the “Veda”. This he meant was leading to enlightenment of the individual and the uplifting of society and eventually to world peace.

Maharishi has a strong soteriological approach in his teaching and emphasizes the importance of Practice before Theory to develop enlightenment, and he teaches that the practice of the Transcendental Meditation technique will lead to spiritual liberation known as *mokṣa* in the “Vedas”. Maharishi also teaches that to understand the Vedic literature in a correct way, you have to practise techniques continually to develop higher levels of consciousness. Mere learning and a long study of the Veda, he means, is insufficient, or even pointless (Egenes 1985).

Maharishi is very clear on this, but he does not discourage study of the Veda. He only means that intellectual studies will not develop one’s consciousness, but will rather *verify* one’s experiences during the practice of techniques. Moreover, he means that, once consciousness is developed, it only needs a little study of the Veda to understand the totality of Veda, since, and in this connection Maharishi uses a simile: “...one would need only a few rays of sunshine to know that the sun exists” (Egenes 1985, p. 5f). Of all the Vedic texts Maharishi holds that *Ṛgveda* is the most important and that all the other texts are rooted in it. However, the two main techniques taught

by Maharishi come from the Yoga Sūtras of Patañjali and those are *samādhi* and *saṁnyama* corresponding respectively to the Transcendental Meditation and the TM-Sidhi programmes (see Egenes 1985).

Seven States of Consciousness

One of the main features of Maharishi's philosophy, which I find most significant in the study of consciousness, is his systematic outline of seven states of consciousness. There is an exposition of different states of consciousness in chapter 1, relating Maharishi's view in his commentary on the Bhagavadgītā where he mentions six states of consciousness. I will complement that exposition with the present one, based on later sources, where he suggests seven states of consciousness. Besides the ordinary waking, dreaming and deep sleep states of consciousness, we find "Transcendental", "Cosmic", "God", and "Unity" consciousness. He states that "knowledge is different in different states of consciousness", a fundamental idea in the philosophy of Maharishi. He also used to express it as, "knowledge is structured in consciousness", which is a rendition into English of the first part of the *R̥gveda* verse 1.164.39:

*ṛco akṣare parame vyoman yasmin devā adhi viśve niṣeduh
yas tan na veda kim ṛcā kariṣyati ya it tad vidus ta ime sam
āsate*⁸⁵

⁸⁵ In Griffiths (1973 [1889], p. 113) translation: "Upon what syllable of holy praise-song, as 'twere their highest heaven, the Gods repose them, - Who knows not this what will he do with praise-song? But they who know it well sit here assembled", and in Maharishi's more recent rendition: "Knowledge is structured in consciousness, the field in which reside all the impulses of intelligence responsible for the creation of the entire universe. He who does not know this field, what can knowledge accomplish for him? He who knows it is established in all possibilities in life".

What then are the characteristics of the different states of consciousness according to Maharishi? Here follows an account principally derived from audio and video tapes from the 1970s and 1980s with Maharishi (see Egenes 1985).

Waking, dreaming and sleeping states are all familiar to everyone, so an explanation of those would be unnecessary. One statement I find justified to mention though is how the ancient sage Vasiṣṭha regarded the waking state of consciousness, when he “called the waking state a long dream” (Egenes 1985, p. 30). Of course, he is not alone in his interpretation. There are many philosophers as well as authors and dramatists who considered life a dream. Pedro Calderón de la Barca wrote a stage play, named “La Vida es Sueño”, *Life is a dream*, the Swedish author August Strindberg wrote a stage play named “Drömspelet”, *A Dream Play*, and Shakespeare wrote his *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Nevertheless, it is an interpretation characteristic of the Vedic or more specifically the Vedānta tradition. Maharishi was of the opinion that man was quite misled in his account of reality only considering the waking, dreaming and sleeping states of consciousness. As Maharishi puts it: “the whole human race has been exhausting itself from ignorance of other states of consciousness” (see Egenes 1985, p. 30).

Maharishi's outlook or approach and his endeavour to teach the technique of Transcendental Meditation to everyone could very well be described as a *democratization* of the old Vedic teaching, being previously a hidden teaching for a few selected people.

The Fourth

The fourth state of consciousness, even called just “*the fourth*”, in Sanskrit *turīya*, is characterized by a certain subjective experience, but also, just as the three relative states, has identifiable physiological characteristics, as seen from different studies of physiological effects on Transcendental Meditation.

From the point of view of the experiencer there is no awareness external to awareness itself, no involvement in any activity whatsoever, not even mental activity in the form of thoughts. It is characterized as a complete *silence*, and cannot be described in terms used to describe relative existence. It is, paraphrasing a passage in Bhagavadgītā 2, 45, “*nistraiguṇyo*”, without the three *guṇas*. This means it is not a part of the relative world, which consists of the interplay of the three *guṇas* or forces of nature, *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* (see Egenes 1985). Citing paragraphs of Vedic texts used by Maharishi to describe the fourth state of consciousness, one can characterize it as:

- *Neti neti* meaning “not this, not this” which depicts It negating everything in relative existence (from Brhadāranyaka Upaniṣad 4.5.15).
- *Aṇoraṇīyān mahatomahiyān*, which means that it is “smaller than the smallest and bigger than the biggest” (from Kaṭha Upaniṣad 1.2.20).
- *Yogaś citta vṛtti nirodha*, which, rendered into English, is “absence of excitations of the mind” (from Yoga Sūtras 1.2).
- *Prajñānaṁ brahma* denoting “pure knowledge” (from Aitareya Upaniṣad 3.1.3).
- *Sat cit ānanda*, finally, signifying “eternal bliss consciousness” or literally “being, consciousness, bliss” (see Egenes 1985, p. 31).

Maharishi also describes Transcendental Consciousness as the *junction-point* between the relative states of consciousness, waking, dreaming and sleep. In transiting from one of those to another, one

must pass through the Transcendental Consciousness. Maharishi maintains that consciousness is the origin of intelligence and energy and hence it is a field of greatest intelligence and energy. Experiencing this field would yield more intelligence and energy, according to Maharishi. It is the basis of all activity in the universe, but is itself experienced as separate from activity. The pure consciousness experienced in Transcendental Consciousness is not abstract but concrete, since when it is experienced, it becomes concrete. Therefore Egenes (1985) asserts that, “according to Maharishi, philosophical convictions do not arise from intellectual understanding; they arise from experience”. The most concrete character of his teaching is pointed out by an analogy from Maharishi explaining that he thinks it necessary to *experience* Transcendental Consciousness and not just to have an intellectual understanding of it: “it is not enough that the doctor tells his patient about some medicine. He must make the medicine available to the patient” (cited in Egenes 1985, p. 33f).

The Fifth

The fifth state of consciousness is “*Cosmic Consciousness*”. This state of consciousness is, according to Maharishi, described in the Bhagavadgītā chapter 2 verse 48, with the phrase: “Yogastah kuru karmāṇi.”⁸⁶ In this state, “Transcendental Consciousness ‘can accept activity without losing its own structure’.” This state also has a specific mode of functioning of the physiology. When Maharishi speaks of this state he uses the concept “support of nature”, meaning that, since the doer in this state is not bound by the law of karma, i.e. the

⁸⁶ “Established in Yoga, perform action” in Maharishi’s translation.

effects of his actions, he is converting his thoughts into activity with very little amount of resistance, and even small desires meet with success, since they are “desires of nature”. The person in Cosmic Consciousness, the enlightened person, is not reincarnated any more. When he dies, nothing happens. In the words of Maharishi: “There is no question of going for him who is already fixed in Brahman, who has risen to the omnipresent reality. He remains what he was – Brahman – but without the individual body” (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), p. 292).

The description of these higher states of consciousness is, according to Maharishi, either as distinct, independent states, with a difference of kind, or as relatively different states but more with a difference of degree. According to Egenes, Maharishi describes Cosmic Consciousness as “just a brighter state of the waking state, and life in enlightenment is in no way different from what we see around us. The main difference is that in enlightenment, a man enjoys everything.” (Egenes 1985, p. 47). The reason one enjoys everything is that this is a state of *ānanda* or bliss. To complement this view I would like to refer to the view of Maharishi that this is also a state of consciousness, in which the Self or Ātman is a “witness” to activity. The “witnessing” agent, or consciousness,⁸⁷ often mentioned by Maharishi in connection with Cosmic Consciousness, refers to the inner Self, in its ever-silent status, as a witness to all relative existence or

⁸⁷ This witnessing consciousness is also referred to by other scholars of Indian philosophy. Timalisina (2009, p. 19) e.g. means the witnessing consciousness is “found everywhere”, and “is identified with the self” in the doctrine of *Dr̥ṣṭisr̥ṣṭi*, which also “holds that the singular self-manifesting and self-validating awareness is the only reality”.

outer activity. The silence of this state coexists with activity or dynamism of the relative existence.

An interesting observation that Egenes makes is that Maharishi sometimes describes the different states of consciousness as independent of each other, but also describes an experiential *slide* from one state to another (Egenes 1985, p. 47). I think that, when categorizing the states in a systematic manner as ends in a development, they could be described as independent, but when explaining the process of development it would be appropriate to describe them as sliding one into the other. Maharishi also mentioned that one state may come and go, before becoming permanently established.⁸⁸

The Sixth

For the sixth state of consciousness Maharishi also uses the concept God Consciousness. In this state the emphasis is on the experience and expansion of happiness. In each of the different states of consciousness, there is a different relationship between the knower and the known. In God Consciousness, more subtle states of the material existence are perceived by the knower. They are therefore appreciated more. This is due to a more refined nervous system of the knower. Refinement takes place in time with the practice of Transcendental Meditation. In Maharishi's words from *The Science of Being and Art of Living* (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1966): "Every perception, the hearing of every word, the touch of every little particle, and the smell of whatever it may be, brings a **tidal wave of the**

⁸⁸ This I have heard in lectures from the 1970s or early 1980s but have no reference to date or place.

ocean of eternal bliss” (see also SCI for Secondary Education 1975, p. 80).

This sixth state of consciousness, as well as the fifth, is characterized by duality, which is not the case of the fourth. This means there is a duality between the inner experience of pure consciousness, the witnessing consciousness, and the experience of the outer world, which is experienced as before enlightenment or the state of Cosmic Consciousness is reached. In the state of God-Consciousness there is a duality between the inner silence and the outer world even though the outer world is characterized by experiencing the subtlest state of the relative existence.

The next state consequently is called the seventh state of consciousness.

The Seventh

The seventh state is characterized by unity and is hence called Unity Consciousness. In this state, the Self appreciates relative existence in terms of Itself. Unity is described as perceiving the Self in all objects, from the perspective of the relative existence. From the point of view of the Absolute existence it could be described as “all objects moving within myself,” or “wholeness moving within itself” (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1977). In the Bhagavadgītā there is a description of the seventh state of consciousness when Lord Kṛṣṇa says that the enlightened “will see the Self in all beings, and all beings in the Self” (*sarva bhūtastham ātmānam sarva bhūtāni ca ātmani*) (Bhagavadgita 6, 29). Nevertheless, life must, according to Maharishi, be lived in the relative and there is, in the seventh state of consciousness, what could be called an *experienced duality*, which he calls

“remains of ignorance” or in Sanskr̥t *leśāvidyā*. For the individual this state of Unity Consciousness is described with a simile from Indian cookery saying it is like the greasy surface of the palm, after you have made a butterball. Other metaphorical expressions used by Maharishi are that *leśāvidyā* is like a little salt in the food enlivening it, also from cookery, or like the reported presence of the enemy, which keep the soldiers lively, from warfare (Egenes 1985, p. 51f).

Regarding the state of Unity Consciousness Maharishi also describes a development or shift from perceiving the primary objects of perception in terms of the Self to perceiving even background objects, or virtually everything, in terms of the Self. The final state of this development he calls *Brahman consciousness*. In this state, there is really no duality: “Here the Self has permeated everything, so that diversity and unity have equal values” (Egenes 1985, p. 52). So the question of duality here is an interesting one, since there seems to be a duality not only in the state of Cosmic Consciousness and God-Consciousness, but also in Unity Consciousness. The difference seems to be that in Unity Consciousness it is a duality more in the category of faint memories or remainders of a relative existence. The experience of the relative existence is in terms of the Self. It is a duality, but not a duality on the level of perception as it is in the other states of consciousness.

Concluding this elucidation of the higher states of consciousness according to Maharishi, I would say that they are all a consequence of cultivating Transcendental Consciousness through the practice of Transcendental Meditation. This is in my opinion, and here I concur

with Egenes, the foundation of Maharishi's philosophy. Consciousness, and the development of consciousness is at the very basis of human knowledge and experience of everything in creation, and the various expressions and fields of activity in the relative existence are nothing but expressions of consciousness. Later on, as we will see below, Maharishi also identifies his "Vedic Science", as the "Science of Consciousness".

All the higher states of consciousness, from cosmic consciousness to *brahman* consciousness, are a result of the cultivation of Transcendental Consciousness. The development and stabilization of Transcendental Consciousness is the foundation of Maharishi's philosophy. Indeed, Maharishi would observe that the development of consciousness is the only focus of his philosophy. He does not expound a philosophy of culture, education, science, arts, etc. Consciousness lies at the basis of all avenues of life: arts, science, business, education, culture, etc. The whole is consciousness, and the parts are the various fields of activity: they are the expressions of consciousness. (Egenes 1985, p. 53).

Various fields of life, like education, science, arts, music, and medicine etc., Maharishi developed over the years, but they all have their common basis in *Consciousness*. One example is the Consciousness-Based Education mentioned in connection with Maharishi University of Management, MUM. This university has courses in e.g. business administration, physics and physiology based on "consciousness". Maharishi also developed the ancient *Vedic* disciplines of *ayurveda* (medicine), *sthapathyaveda* (architecture), *gandharvaveda* (music) etc. These are all branches of *Veda* based on consciousness, and what

Maharishi did was to revive and emphasize their *practical* application, within Maharishi Vedic Science.

Character of Consciousness

In his book *Enlightenment and Invincibility* Maharishi comments on the concept of consciousness:

We have found that what has been lacking is the knowledge of the fundamental of life, the field of consciousness. --- Fortunately, with the grace of Guru Dev (Maharishi's master; my note), we have the knowledge for enlivening consciousness. The Science of Creative Intelligence and its practical aspect, the Transcendental Meditation technique, have been found both to enrich all levels of individual life and also, through their effect on collective consciousness, to make the trends of life of society more evolutionary. (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1978b, p. 246).

This quote is from an address by Maharishi on the 12th of January 1976 in Switzerland, when he inaugurated the World Government, whose sole aim, according to Maharishi, is governing from the domain of consciousness and whose purpose is "fully enlivening the field of consciousness, which is the field of pure intelligence and the field of all possibilities." (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1978b, p. 246).

From the exposition of the Ministry of Consciousness of the World Government, you can read on the concept of consciousness that...:

...consciousness has two values, active and silent, relative and absolute. The silent, absolute value is the state of least excitation of consciousness, which underlies all excited states. To enliven this state in the awareness is the necessary condition for the development of higher states of consciousness and the use of one's full creative potential in daily life. (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1978b, p. 302).

And further:

The human nervous system has the ability to maintain permanently the state of least excitation of consciousness in daily life, so that its infinite potential can enrich all thought and action. When it is never lost during waking, dream, and sleep, this state is known as Cosmic Consciousness.

Once the least excited state of consciousness dominates all thought and action, everything is appreciated in terms of its infinite value. Life in Unity Consciousness is life in enlightenment.

The development of higher states of consciousness in the individual enriches all levels of collective consciousness – family consciousness, community Consciousness, national consciousness and world consciousness. Even a small number of people in higher states of consciousness will suffice to purify the trends of life in any community.

Enriched collective consciousness further enriches individual consciousness. It is through the mutual enrichment of individual and collective consciousness that an ideal society is born. (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1978b, p. 303f).

Here Maharishi develops further the concept of consciousness. He elaborates on the concepts of individual consciousness, collective consciousness, different higher states of consciousness, including Cosmic Consciousness and Unity Consciousness. The concept of God-Consciousness⁸⁹ from the commentary on the Bhagavadgītā is not mentioned in this context. The reason for this might be that during this time he focused on the relationship between his “Vedic science” and modern science, or more particularly modern physics. During this period, it seems that he placed less emphasis on associations between his “Vedic science” and religion.

⁸⁹ However, Maharishi always mentioned a sixth state, even if he used the term “Glorified Cosmic Consciousness” or just the sixth state.

Maharishi makes a distinction between diverse kinds of collective consciousnesses, like family consciousness, community consciousness, national consciousness and world consciousness. There is according to Maharishi a mutual influence between the individual consciousness and those other collective consciousnesses. As stated above there are principally two different values of consciousness, the active or relative, which would correspond to the different expressed levels of individual and collective consciousness, and the silent or Absolute, which corresponds to pure consciousness of transcendent Being. In this context Maharishi also develops his view on how to achieve his main purpose of an ideal society and world peace, by teaching the theory and practice of consciousness. Due to the mutual influence between pure consciousness and individual and collective consciousness, this could be achieved by a few enlightened people in each community. Most likely Maharishi was also inspired by the studies done in the 1970s on the effect of group practice of Transcendental Meditation and the TM-Sidhi programme.⁹⁰

In the 1970s, the concept “group dynamics of consciousness”, as well as the application of it, emerged. As stated below in the chapter on World Peace (p. 275) research studies on the effect of Transcendental Meditation on city life were performed in several cities in the U.S. in the beginning of the 1970s. According to the studies a decrease in e.g., crime rate was seen when about 1% of the population had started Transcendental Meditation. (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1978b, pp. 424ff; for reference see also Orme-Johnson and Farrow 1976). The effect is, according to Maharishi, reported in the Yoga

⁹⁰ See below p. 275.

Sūtras of Patañjali in verse II, 35 which says: “non-killing being established, in his presence all enmities cease.” (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1978b, p. 46).⁹¹ The meaning is that hostility ceases when pure consciousness, referred to as non-killing, is established in a society. This interpretation of the phenomenon of reduction of so-called negative trends and the promotion of ditto positive ones in a society of course could be questioned from the standpoint of causality by scientists of social science. However, for the purpose of Maharishi’s aim to create a more peaceful world it would certainly be a major finding, and Maharishi at the time proclaimed that this was an extremely important discovery, and that his efforts could be reduced. He meant that he could now be content with learning a fraction of the population of the world his Transcendental Meditation.

Maharishi as a traditionalist seeks correlations to phenomena in the scriptures, but he also seeks correlations in modern science. At this time during the 1970s and 1980s, Maharishi was working closely with physicists and this collaboration, on finding parallels in physical systems, resulted inter alia in an analogy with the *Meissner Effect*. The *Meissner Effect* in quantum physics of superconductivity says that a system, a metal, with a high coherence cannot be affected by outside influences from magnetic fields (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1978b, p. 43f and p. 552f for further explanation). In the case of a superconductor the state of highly ordered electron flow acts as an armour deflecting external magnetic fields. In comparison to an ordinary conductor, which can be penetrated by external magnetic fields,

⁹¹ For reference see also Maharishi’s translation in *Maharishi’s Absolute Theory of Defence: Sovereignty in invincibility* (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1996, p. 11): “In the vicinity of coherence (Yoga), hostile tendencies are eliminated”.

a superconductor is, according to Maharishi, *invincible*. This phenomenon Maharishi uses as analogous to societal systems, indicating that life may improve considerably if Transcendental Meditation is applied on a large scale. A societal system with at least 1% practitioners of Transcendental Meditation would then become a “social superconductor”. These studies are the onset of Maharishi's endeavour to create groups of advanced practitioners of Transcendental Meditation and the TM-Sidhi programmes.⁹²

The relationship between individual and collective consciousness is at the basis of Maharishi's analysis of a better, *invincible*, society. And according to Maharishi “this phenomenon was known in ancient India during Vedic times as the Rashtriya Kavach, national armour, which would keep the nation impenetrable from outside forces at all times. Internally, the Rashtriya Kavach was characterized by behaviour according to the laws of nature.” (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1978b, p. 49f). Individuals experiencing higher states of consciousness create a harmonious influence in the whole of society, according to Maharishi, who says that:

Integrated individuals bring integration to the nation and, from the nation, to the world. We are now offering invincibility to every nation on the basis

⁹² The phenomenon of the Maharishi Effect and other phenomena in this context could be studied further in different books and research papers (see e.g. Hagelin et al 1999; Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1978b, p. 31-37.; Orme-Johnson and Farrow 1976; Orme-Johnson et al 1988; Orme-Johnson 1995).

An interesting observation I made when studying Egenes thesis is that he refers to two different incidents that he proposes possibly influenced Maharishi concerning his view on group practice of the TM and TM-Sidhi programmes. One was when Maharishi visited Thailand in 1978 and he viewed Theravāda Buddhist monks practising meditation together. Another influence came from Maharishi's understanding of how the spiritual development comes about and the influence from the environment on it. In the beginning and advanced stages the person is not that much affected, but in the intermediate stages one may be affected. It is like a seed which is safe until it grows into a small plant, when animals can eat it. When it has grown further into a tree there is no danger again. Maharishi thought that “group practice” could eliminate adverse influences from the environment in the intermediate stages, and a group could as well have a very beneficiary influence in society as a whole (Egenes 1985).

of rising purity in world consciousness. This purity is being contributed by those few, fortunate individuals who are practising Transcendental Meditation and the TM-Sidhi programme in all parts of the world. Every practitioner of Transcendental Meditation enlivens the unbounded field of pure awareness. The influence which he creates goes far beyond the limits of his own body to the community, the nation, the whole world, and to the limitless universe. (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1978b, p. 104.)

Maharishi regards “world consciousness” as the sum total of every individual consciousness. When individuals experience pure consciousness, since that is a common source of the entire creation on the level of Being or the Absolute, there is an enlivenment of that level, which penetrates through and through the whole of creation, and thus influences every other individual. Maharishi refers to the different collective states of consciousness he considers in his theory of invincibility to every nation. These are “commUnity Consciousness”, national consciousness, world consciousness and here also universal consciousness.

At this time Maharishi held that when one percent of the population practiced Transcendental Meditation there would be a shift in that society to a more harmonious life. Later on he maintained that if groups of meditators and practioners of the TM-Sidhi programme practised together, the influence was multiplied by far. When these groups were practising together it would suffice to have the square root of $\sqrt{1\%}$ to achieve the same effect as when 1% of the population of a society practised Transcendental Meditation each by themselves.

Moreover, Maharishi gives three principal characteristics of pure consciousness, as separate from the functioning of consciousness. These are *self-sufficiency*, *self-referral*, and *infinite dynamism*. *Self-*

sufficiency means that consciousness is not dependent on anything but itself, being axiomatic. The concept “*Self-referral*” means that consciousness knows itself, is self-reflective, and a field of awareness. “*Infinite dynamism*” means that pure consciousness has a creative property. It means everything emerges out of consciousness and must therefore be a field of enormous energy (Egenes 1985, p 53f).

I would say that Maharishi makes comprehensive systematizations of his knowledge over the years after the commentary on the Bhagavadgītā. He characterizes his philosophy as a science in the concept “Vedic Science”, even though he certainly already made the connection to science in his book *The Science of Being and Art of Living* (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1966) and in *The Science of Creative Intelligence*. He makes very elaborate descriptions of his Vedic Science in different areas of life, and gives characteristics of the pure consciousness underlying all creation. He develops his philosophy, but also various other fields, from architecture to medicine.

One interesting feature of Maharishi’s philosophy is his ethics, which is developed e.g., in his commentary on the Bhagavadgītā. For Maharishi it is fundamental to ethics to develop pure consciousness in one’s life. Maharishi maintains that the purpose of action is evolution and expansion of happiness, and that action should not only *bring* happiness, but also “promote the cause of happiness”. Moreover, action should be in accordance with natural law (the Sanskrit term *dharma*). According to Maharishi “a fundamental principle of action is that it does not stray from the invincible power of **dharma**. Right action helps life to evolve and does not in any way cause

stress.” (Egenes 1985, pp. 54f.; Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), p. 69).

This view could cause some problem as to how one is to determine if an action is in accord with dharma. How can one know that the action one performs is right? Maharishi takes his stand on the teachings of the Bhagavadgītā which states that the course of action is unfathomable. This means that a merely intellectual approach to determine right action is not enough. The course of action is so complex and diversified it is “unfathomable”. Maharishi maintains that if you have contact with pure consciousness you will act naturally in a right way, since consciousness is the foundation of the laws of nature and of your thinking, which lies at the basis of your action. Therefore, the enlightened, one who has developed higher states of consciousness, spontaneously acts in accord with natural law and therefore performs right action. And the action is measured by its result: right action causes happiness, wrong action the opposite, suffering. This of course is the law of karma in Maharishi’s words. (Egenes 1985, p. 55ff).

Maharishi has not developed any *detailed* ethics since he teaches that development of consciousness in itself will lead to an action in accord with natural law. Therefore, it is not necessary to give detailed instructions as to how one should live one’s life.⁹³ In time, by practising meditation, you will develop right action whether you believe you will or not.

⁹³ However, there is a chapter in Maharishi’s book *The Science of Being and Art of Living* (1966, pp 224ff) on “Right and Wrong”, where Maharishi gives kind of ethical advice, referring e.g., to the scriptures of different religions as ethical guides.

Further, Maharishi has suggested six valid means for verification of the knowledge he has given:

1. direct experience
2. Vedic testimony
3. scientific theory (especially as found in physics)
4. testimony from the entire history of literature, religion, and philosophy
5. analogy from science (analysing patterns of orderliness and comparing them to orderliness in higher states of consciousness)
6. objective validation of direct experience (Egenes 1985, p. 63)

Of these six valid means the first is experience through practice, while the other have more theoretical means of verification. These have some similarities to the means of valid knowledge found in the first of sixteen points to test the procedure of gaining knowledge in the *Nyaya* system of philosophy by *Gautama*, expounded by Maharishi in his commentary on the *Bhagavadgītā*. There are four valid means, *perception*, *inference*, *comparison* and *verbal testimony*. Of these *perception* and *direct experience* concur. Also between *Vedic testimony*, *testimony from history* and *verbal testimony* there is a similarity. *Comparison* seems to be the means in number 3 and 5 above. Here Maharishi creates categories of means for valid knowledge adapted to modern science, but with a foundation in the tradition of the six systems of Indian philosophy.

One area of interest for Maharishi obviously was the development within physics and the parallels between his philosophy of consciousness and quantum physics. Egenes (1985, p. 63f) gives an account of the relationship of these *pramāṇas* or means of valid knowledge and quantum physics as Maharishi saw it. The hypothesis of

quantum physics is that all forces were included in the four basic forces of electro-magnetism, weak and strong interaction, and gravity. Later on, it was suggested that all these four forces are parts of one underlying *super-symmetry*, the *unified field*.⁹⁴ The various force fields, called bosons, and matter fields, called fermions, are included in this unified field. Maharishi's view on the unified field theory is that the unified field is a field of consciousness. The description of *Brahman* as the source of creation and the description from quantum mechanics of the unified field as the source of all phenomena are the same description from two separate fields of study, according to Maharishi. There is only one universe, and each discipline describes it in much the same way, since they are describing the same reality. Because *brahman* is considered to be the same as *ātman*, Maharishi suggests that the unified field is the same as consciousness. "Maharishi does not consider the theory of the unified field from physics to be an analogy with its Vedic counterpart, but an actual description of the same reality." (Egenes 1985, p. 64). This I find important in Maharishi's teaching, that he does not consider the theory of the unified field as an analogy to the Vedic counterpart that he considers to be *Consciousness* or *Ātman*, but he sees it as an "actual description of the same reality". Maharishi indicates other theories in physics as analogies to explain or illustrate his teaching. One is the *third law of thermodynamics*, which is compared to a decrease in "mental temperature" during meditation. Moreover, the Meissner Effect, which is an effect created by a metal that has been brought into a superconducting state, is compared to the enlightened person creating a kind

⁹⁴ For a graphic rendering developed by Maharishi of this principle, see Appendix C, p. 357.

of “armour” in his vicinity, and in particular to “collective consciousness” where a few individuals practising Transcendental Meditation and the TM-Sidhi programme create invincibility in the collective consciousness of a society. In addition, the “orderliness” of a laser Maharishi has used as analogous to the “orderliness” of consciousness. Concluding this discourse on consciousness I would like to quote Maharishi when he proposes, “that all of science is eventually directed towards the study of consciousness, or ‘creative intelligence.’” This, he suggests, should be studied in a science of consciousness he called the Science of Creative Intelligence (Egenes 1985, p. 65f).

Relationship between Veda and Consciousness in Maharishi’s Teachings

Veda is itself consciousness, according to Maharishi. It is the “unified field whispering to itself” (Maharishi Vedic University Inauguration 1985, p. 57). Maharishi maintains that the more familiar a person is with consciousness, the more familiar he is with Veda. The systematizing of the Veda according to ancient *r̥ṣis*, or seers, is complemented by Maharishi’s interpretation of the division of the Veda in two sections: one is expressing pure knowledge, the *Mantra* section, and one is expressing infinite organizing power, the *Brāhmaṇa* section (cf. the first section of this chapter).

Veda also is described as an “eternal continuum” and “not of human origin”, *apauruṣeya*, and this Maharishi says is its state of self-sufficiency. He also uses an analogy in describing Veda. He says it is the “blueprint of creation”, meaning that creation exists in Veda before it manifests. Completing the exposition of Maharishi’s view of

the Veda, Egenes gives in my opinion a concise and clear picture of the “uncreated commentary”, *apauruṣeya bhāṣya*, and the relationship of Veda to the individual and to society:

The *Ṛg Veda* begins with *agnim īle*, or “I adore Agni”. Maharishi interprets this to mean the act of associating or combining with the transcendent. The *Ṛg Veda* ends with *samitiḥ samānī*, or “the assemblage in evenness.” Maharishi explains that the *Ṛg Veda* starts with the transcending of one individual and ends with the whole society established in harmony, or in enlightenment. (Egenes 1985, pp. 71f).

In his interpretation of Veda, preferably Ṛgveda, Maharishi holds the position that it should be interpreted sequentially. He is of the opinion that Ṛgveda, and the whole of the Vedic literature, comments on itself. This commentary is continually unfolding and the subsequent hymn, passage, word or letter is an elaboration of what precedes it. This view would of course be questioned by those who consider Ṛgveda as poetry, but Maharishi maintains there is a systematic order in Ṛgveda. He describes it as “all the laws of nature”, and consequently systematic and orderly in itself. “Maharishi attempts to locate a deep, hidden symmetry not apparent even to the traditional scholar of the Veda.” (Egenes 1985, p. 354). In Maharishi’s vision the whole of Ṛgveda is contained in the first word of Ṛgveda, thus representing all the laws of nature. *Agnim* is the first word of Ṛgveda and Maharishi analyses that the first letter *A* contains or is *fullness*, which collapses in the second letter *Ga* containing or being *emptiness*, and this first word also contains the interplay between *fullness* and *emptiness*. According to Egenes (1985, p. 354) this “fundamental binary operation has been shown by Hegel, Levi-Strauss and others to underlie many diverse fields, such as language, computers,

thought processes, etc.” However, Maharishi’s description is not that *Agnim* is “analogous” to an underlying binary opposition, but it is “homologous”. This means that Maharishi sees the word *Agnim* as actually the first manifestation of natural law. The word *Agnim* and its concrete manifestations are linked in time and space. In this sense, Maharishi upholds the *nama-rupa*, name and form, relationship between Vedic words and the form which corresponds to them in the tradition of *Śikṣā* (science of pronunciation or phonetics) and *Vyākaraṇa* (science of grammar). (Egenes, p. 355).

The letters of the first word of Ṛgveda, “Agnim”, unfold sequentially from the pronunciation of *A*, which represents “fullness of fullness”, to pronunciation of *Ga*, representing “fullness of emptiness”. Then *Ga* is stopped by *na*, which means to “negate”; and so there is a progression back to the fullness of *A*, achieved by *i*, the root form of progression. Moreover, “Maharishi says that the unmanifest dynamics of nature is really a singularity...represented by the ‘m’ at the end of *agnim*, which can be written in the script as a dot...the sound of ‘m’ Maharishi calls the ‘hum at the basis of creation’ (*praṇava*); he says that creation has a ‘hum’ at the finest level of its relative structure” (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1975) (See Egenes 1985, p. 155-156).

One very interesting point in Maharishi’s interpretation in the *Bhagavadgītā* commentary is that he interprets *Sāṃkhya* and *Yoga* in the light of *Vedānta*, “which is most favourable to his position” (Robinson 2005, 192). He does so maintaining that different systems of philosophy can be interpreted differently according to the state of consciousness of the interpreter. The *Puruṣa* and *prakṛti* principles Maharishi thus interprets as respectively “pure knowledge” and “in-

finite organizing power of pure knowledge” making *prakṛti* an aspect of *Puruṣa*. As mentioned above, the ordinarily dualistic view of Sāṃkhya could in Maharishi’s vision be due to an interpretation from the state of Cosmic Consciousness, whereas an interpretation from the state of Unity Consciousness would create a non-dualistic, *Advaita Vedānta*, interpretation.

The Bhagavadgītā and the Three Paths of Karma, Bhakti and Jñāna

In Maharishi’s commentary on the Bhagavadgītā the emphasis is, as put forward by Egenes, on the transcendental foundation of *karma*, *bhakti* and *jñāna*. His exposition of the three paths starts with a description of the origin of the text in the Mahābhārata, where it constitutes chapters 23-40 of the *Bhīṣmaparvan*. Of the most well-known Indian commentaries, or *bhāṣyas*, on the Bhagavadgītā, we first have the one by Śaṅkara. Others are those by Ānandagiri, Śrīdhara, Madhusūdana, Yāmunācārya, Rāmānuja, Madhva, Nimbārka and Vallabha. In Egenes’ interpretation of Maharishi’s teaching, Maharishi considers the most illustrious of these commentators to be Śaṅkara, but also Rāmānuja and Madhva, who are all defined by Maharishi as *ācāryas*, or exponents of understanding, teaching and practise of the Vedic knowledge (Egenes 1985, p. 271f).

The most central teaching of the Bhagavadgītā according to Maharishi, is Kṛṣṇa’s response to Arjuna’s dilemma expressed in verse 45 of the second chapter: “Be without the three *gunas*, O Arjuna” (*nistraigunyo bhavārjuna*). Since the three *guṇas* constitute the entire relative, changing, creation, Arjuna is instructed to be without the relative part of creation and take his standpoint in the Absolute,

never-changing part of life. This is because in the transcendent there is no duality, and hence no fear, since “fear means to be afraid of something ‘other’”. This state also has a few other characteristics, it is *nitya sattvastah*, meaning “ever firm in purity” and this makes it in accord with *dharma*. It is the state of fulfilment, so nothing wrong can come out of it. It is also the state of *niryogakṣema*, “independent of possessions”, thus fulfilling the desire of Arjuna neither to be victorious nor to gain a kingdom or pleasures, or any material things for that matter. It transcends all material objects. Furthermore, it is a state which is *ātmavān*, “possessed of the Self”, Ātman. (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967); see also Egenes 1985). To quote Maharishi:

It is within himself (Arjuna’s) and therefore always within his reach...Once you are possessed by your Self, the purpose of all wisdom has been achieved. There the Vedas end. That is the end of the journey of life, that is the state of fulfilment. (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), p. 93; see also Egenes 1985, p. 277).

There are two similes to describe the action based on transcending recommended in Maharishi’s commentary:

Entering deep within one’s consciousness is the preparation for the creation of successful activity, much **like swinging a pendulum to the left will also make it move to the right. It is like pulling the arrow back on the bow to give it the greatest potential energy** (Egenes 1985, p. 277f).

Aspects of One Path – Karma, Bhakti and Jñāna of the Bhagavadgītā

Maharishi’s position is that the Bhagavadgītā is not organized as a single philosophical system. It is based on many different branches of thought. And, all these branches have at their basis Transcendental

Consciousness. Each and every commentator has been able to find justification for his path, but Maharishi argues that there are not different paths described in the Bhagavadgītā, but just different aspects of one path:

There are commentaries to extol the wisdom of the paths of knowledge, devotion, and action in the Bhagavad-Gita, but none to show that it provides a master key to open the gates of all these different highways of human evolution simultaneously. No commentary has yet shown that through one simple technique proclaimed in the Bhagavad-Gita, any man, without having to renounce his way of life, can enjoy the blessings of all these paths (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), p. 13f).

The interpretation that *karmayoga* is life free from action, Maharishi maintains, is a misinterpretation. The phrase or concept of *niṣkāma karma yoga* should mean renunciation *in* action, not *of* action. This I consider also a crucial viewpoint in Maharishi's interpretation of the Bhagavadgītā. Action is necessary according to Bhagavadgītā, you cannot abstain from it, "*na hi kaścit kṣaṇam api jātu tiṣṭhaty akarmakṛt*", meaning "no one, indeed, can exist even for an instant without performing action" (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 [1967], p. 137). Karmayoga then is not to be without activity, but to perform actions not being *attached to its fruits*. This in turn does not mean a *mood* of detachment in the mind, but something quite different. There is a method of performing action without attachment to the fruits of action just for the welfare of the world: "Established in Yoga, perform action" (*Yogasthaḥ kuru karmāṇi*). (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 [1967], pp. 101f.; see also Egenes 1985, pp. 282f).

Yoga in this context, Maharishi defines as Transcendental Consciousness. The sequence of the words in the stanza he finds has a special significance. First, you should establish Transcendental Consciousness, *Yoga*, and then, *perform action*. As mentioned before “many features of correct ethical behaviour are included within the phrase, ‘established in Yoga, perform action’”. You could also say that “It is not a matter of learning how to behave, but learning how to be, and then behaviour follows **as the cart follows the horse.**” Action is based on consciousness, and the action of the doer is dependent on the consciousness of the doer. You are not able to find the path of right action by logical reasoning, “one could spend his whole life studying ethics and still not intellectually arrive at the correct action for a single situation, not to mention the endless variety of situations faced by every individual in daily life...knowledge of the law does not structure law-abiding action.” (Egenes 1985, p. 286).

However, this does not mean, according to Maharishi, that reason is not there when a person who is established in pure consciousness or Yoga performs action. The point is only that it is built on profound levels of feeling and on pure awareness. Then it takes a life-supporting course (Egenes 1985, p. 285f).

Bhaktiyoga is *Yoga* of devotion to God, which in the context of the Bhagavadgītā, means to Kṛṣṇa. And, Kṛṣṇa promises deliverance from suffering and a straight path to enlightenment for the devotee. Maharishi in his commentary describes devotion to God as the most enriching, sublime, rewarding, and nourishing aspect of all human conduct. It starts with the experience of Transcendental Consciousness, and Self-realization or Cosmic Consciousness serves as the

foundation for realization of God. Maharishi has a different opinion than interpreters who see bhakti as the first stage in the path of the devotee. He states taking his stand in the philosophy of Śaṅkara: “But Śaṅkara’s principle of devotion is founded on Transcendental Consciousness from the beginning. The first step for Śaṅkara is the last step for these devotional sects” (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), p. 7). So devotion is not a path of searching for God, “but the overflow of a full heart”. Nevertheless, Maharishi thinks it is helpful to devotion to have something that serves as a point of focus (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 [1967], p. 221). In chapter 4, verse 34, he discusses the advantage of surrender to an enlightened person, serving as this point of focus, since “having no concrete point of focus...does not crystallize into concrete results” (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 [1967], p. 221). When the devotee develops his consciousness from God Consciousness to Unity Consciousness he becomes one with his God, which Maharishi means is a teaching in accordance with Śaṅkara’s tradition. In addition, of course Maharishi maintains that the matter not can be “decided by metaphysical speculation or theological understanding.” (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), p. 332). It is the direct experience of it that is relevant (Egenes 1985, p. 287-291).

Jñānayoga means Yoga of knowledge. Referring to Śaṅkara that which changes is *asat*, unreal, and that which never changes is *sat*, real. Since the Self or Ātman is unchanging, indestructible etc. it is *sat*, and when someone can perceive the difference between the Self and the non-Self he has achieved *Jñānayoga*. But it is not the discrimination between the Self and the non-Self which is the way to

reach enlightenment in *Jñānayoga*. When one has reached enlightenment through the experience of Transcendental Consciousness while practising Transcendental Meditation, one can truly discriminate between the real and the non-real, between the Self and the non-Self. Then experience and understanding coincide, which is necessary, according to Maharishi. The fire of knowledge, *jñānāgni*, burns up ignorance and bondage to actions. Maharishi's position, as maintained by Egenes, is thus:

Just as loans are a mirage of gaining wealth, books are a mirage of gaining knowledge. Real knowledge comes when the process of knowing ends. In the state of least excitation, the infinite correlation of all aspects of knowledge allows the individual to connect any item of knowledge with any other item. Thus the intellect of a yogi becomes flexible... Then knowledge is not a painstaking absorption of information, but a joyful expression of oneself. (From a tape-recorded lecture with Maharishi *The Role of the Master and Scripture in Enlivening the State of Enlightenment*; citation from Egenes 1985, p. 295).

Conclusions

An analysis of this chapter would tell us that Maharishi during the 1970s and 1980s systematized the philosophy he gave expression to in his commentary on the Bhagavadgītā. He developed his scientific interpretation of the Vedic tradition and its relation to modern science and conveyed his vision of the functioning of creation expressed in the hymns of the Ṛgveda, in his Apauruṣeya Bhāṣya. Maharishi also made distinctions in his interpretation of different higher states of consciousness, now describing the seventh state or Unity

state of consciousness as distinct from God-Consciousness, and he even brought out that there are different aspects of Unity Consciousness.

Practice before Theory

From the very beginning of Maharishi's teaching there has been a strong soteriological approach in it. It could be characterized as a strong democratization of the teaching of the ancient Vedic knowledge. Maharishi has emphasized, ever since he started the Transcendental Meditation movement in Madras or Chennai in 1958, the importance of *Practice before Theory*, since he considered the *experience* of pure consciousness as the principal method leading to enlightenment, liberation, or *mokṣa*, of the individual, as well as to a better society. It is *not* that Maharishi *discourage* study or theoretical knowledge. He only emphasizes that intellectual study will not develop one's consciousness. It will rather *verify* one's experiences from the practice of techniques. A person experiencing a higher state of consciousness, only needs a little study of the Veda to understand the totality of Veda.

The pure consciousness experienced in Transcendental Consciousness is not abstract but concrete, according to Maharishi, since in the very experience of it, it becomes concrete. Therefore, in Maharishi's world of ideas, philosophical convictions do not come from intellectual understanding, but from experience.

I find it interesting and consistent with the philosophy and teachings of Maharishi that he has not developed any ethics⁹⁵, since he teaches that right action comes from development of consciousness. The question of how one can know that one's actions are right, Maharishi would answer taking his standpoint in the teachings of the Bhagavadgītā. The Bhagavadgītā says that the course of action is unfathomable. But, if you have first contacted pure consciousness you will act in a right way, since pure consciousness is the foundation of the "laws of nature" and of your thinking, which Maharishi means is the basis of your action. Of six valid means for right action that Maharishi enumerates, the first one is *direct experience*, the rest being more or less theoretical, even though they are related to both modern physics and to the Nyāya system of philosophy, expounded on by Maharishi in his commentary on the Bhagavadgītā.

The most central teaching of the Bhagavadgītā according to Maharishi, is Kṛṣṇa's response to Arjuna's dilemma expressed in verse 45 of the second chapter: "Be without the three guṇas, O Arjuna" (*nistraiguṇyo bhavārjuna*). Having left the field of the three guṇas, having experienced pure consciousness in Transcendental Consciousness, through the practice of Transcendental Meditation, Arjuna can act, since in the transcendent there is no duality, and hence no fear as "fear means to be afraid of something 'other'". The 48th verse of chapter 2, "established in Yoga, perform action" (*yogastah kuru karmani*), contains important features of a correct ethical behaviour that is based on experience before action. When you have ex-

⁹⁵ However, there is a section e.g. in Maharishi's book *Science of Being and Art of Living* on "Right Action", where he develops standards for ethical behaviour for those who do not yet uphold spontaneous right action. Maharishi always upheld the value of ethical behaviour under all circumstances.

perienced pure consciousness, or achieved *Yoga*, union, between the self and the Self, *Ātman*, your actions will be spontaneously in accord with *natural law* and therefore successful.

Maharishi's view on *Karmayoga*, *Bhaktiyoga* and *Jñānayoga* in the Bhagavadgītā, is quite different from other interpreters who see karma, bhakti and jñāna as means on the path of the practitioner, whereas Maharishi sees them as the goal. Maharishi means that *Karmayoga*, *Bhaktiyoga* and *Jñānayoga* starts with Yoga or union, the experience of Transcendental Consciousness, and that Cosmic Consciousness is the foundation for realization of renunciation in action, realization of God, and of discrimination between the Self and the non-self.

Consciousness and Experience

One of the main features of Maharishi's philosophy is his systematic outline of different states of consciousness. In the texts under consideration in this chapter you can see that he has differentiated, as I would interpret it, the sixth state of consciousness described in the Bhagavadgītā into two different states, "God" Consciousness and "Unity" Consciousness.

One fundamental idea in the philosophy of Maharishi, which comes to expression in the texts analysed in this chapter, is that "knowledge is different in different states of consciousness". He used to express it as, "knowledge is structured in consciousness", a rendition into English of the first part of the R̥gveda verse 1.164.39.

Summarizing the characteristics of the higher states of consciousness as expressed in the texts under consideration, one could say that the *fourth state of consciousness* is characterized by a certain subjec-

tive experience, but also “has different identifiable physiological responses, just as the other three states do”. With reference to the Upaniṣads and the Yoga Sūtras, Maharishi characterizes the fourth state as, “*Neti neti*” meaning “not this, not this” depicting It by negating the relative existence (Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 4.5.15). He also characterizes it as “*aṇoraṇīyān mahatomahiyān*”, meaning it is “smaller than the smallest and bigger than the biggest” (Kāṭha Upaniṣad 1.2.20), and as “*Yogaś citta vṛtti nirodha*”, which means “absence of excitations of the mind” (Yoga Sūtras 1.2), and “*prajñānam brahma*” denoting “pure knowledge” (Aitareya Upaniṣad 3.1.3). He also states that it is “*sat cit ānanda*”, which signifies “eternal bliss consciousness”. These allusions are found in Maharishi’s lectures and publications from the 1950s to the twenty-first century.

Transcendental Consciousness or the fourth state of consciousness, Maharishi has described as the *junction-point* between the relative states of consciousness, waking, dreaming and deep sleep. In transitioning from one of those to another, one passes through Transcendental Consciousness according to Maharishi. This state of consciousness is thus put on a common basis in everyone’s life. Everyone does already experience it, because it is the innermost nature of everyone, but one is not *aware* of it. In the systematic way you experience it through the technique of Transcendental Meditation, the experience will become aware and concrete.

In the *fifth state of consciousness*, Cosmic Consciousness, described in the Bhagavadgītā, chapter 2 verse 48, as “*Yogasthaḥ kuru karmāṇi*”, “Transcendental Consciousness ‘can accept activity with-

out losing its own structure””. This state also has a certain style of functioning of the physiology, which has been investigated in many studies on higher states of consciousness (see Banquet 1972; Banquet 1973; Hagelin et al 1999; Orme-Johnson 1995; Wallace 1971; Wallace 1972; Wallace 1970a; Wallace 1971).

In each of the different states of consciousness, there is also a different relationship between the knower and the known. In God Consciousness, the sixth state, due to a more refined nervous system of the knower he or she experiences more refined states of creation. Refinement takes place with the practice of Transcendental Meditation. One thing worth mentioning is that the sixth state of consciousness as well as the fifth is characterized by duality, which is not the case of the fourth, and only in a limited sense, of the seventh, Unity Consciousness.

In the *seventh state of consciousness* you realize there is nothing other than your Self. In “unity” one perceives the Self in all objects. This is described as “all objects moving within myself”, or “wholeness moving within itself,” and thus “Unity is marked by consciousness being in command of its own expressions.” With a reference to Bhagavadgītā, 6, 29, describing the seventh state of consciousness: “One realizes the prediction of Kṛṣṇa in the Bhagavad Gītā that he ‘will see the Self in all beings, and all beings in the Self’.” Maharishi, in his commentary on the verse, says that:

When the mind becomes filled with divine Being, the vision is naturally full and even. It is steady and undistorted by the diversity of life in the world. This is the vision of a man who has gained ‘contact’ with Brahman.

This I take as a description of the seventh state of consciousness, even though Maharishi does not use the word *Unity Consciousness* in this context, but rather *God-Consciousness*. Maharishi, in later sources, comments that there is, in the seventh state of consciousness, a faint *experienced* duality, which he calls “remains of ignorance” or in Sanskrit *leśāvidyā*.

For the state of Unity Consciousness, Maharishi also describes a development or shift from perceiving the primary objects of perception in terms of the Self to perceiving even background objects in terms of the Self. The final stage of this development he calls *Brahman Consciousness*. In this state, there is no duality. “Here the Self has permeated everything, so that diversity and unity have equal values”. This development of the state of Unity Consciousness, is more like a variation of degree, rather than of the nature of Unity Consciousness. Maharishi does not distinguish Brahman Consciousness as another state of consciousness, but puts it in the category of the fully matured seventh state.

The development of consciousness, appears to be the only focus of Maharishi’s philosophy, and consequently he does not develop a separate philosophy of anything else, like education, science etc. He sees all these avenues of activity as *expressions* of consciousness. These various avenues of life Maharishi develops over the years with their common basis in “consciousness” and Maharishi in his book *Enlightenment and Invincibility* also develops the concept of consciousness. Here he talks about *individual consciousness*, *collective consciousness*, and different *higher states of consciousness*, including *Cosmic Consciousness* and *Unity Consciousness*. The name of

God-Consciousness from the commentary on the Bhagavadgītā is not mentioned in this context.⁹⁶

In *Enlightenment and Invincibility* Maharishi differentiates various kinds of collective consciousness, like family consciousness, “commUnity” Consciousness, national consciousness and world consciousness. He sees a mutual influence between the individual consciousness and the collective consciousness.

There are two different values of consciousness, the *active* or *relative*, which would correspond to the expressed value of *individual* and *collective* consciousness, and the *silent* or *Absolute*, which equals *pure consciousness*.

Creating an ideal society and world peace Maharishi maintains could be achieved by a few enlightened people in each community. This he explains is due to the influence between *pure consciousness* and *individual* and *collective consciousness*, by means of the effect of group practice of the Transcendental Meditation and the TM-Sidhi programmes, the so called Group Dynamics of Consciousness resulting in the *Maharishi Effect*.

One feature I find most interesting and important in Maharishi’s teaching, concerning the relationship between modern science and Vedic science or philosophy, is that he does not consider the quantum mechanical description of the “unified field”⁹⁷ as the source of all phenomena, and the description of *Brahman* or *pure conscious-*

⁹⁶ At this time he uses the term “refined cosmic consciousness” instead and a reason for this may be that, during the period under consideration, starting in the 1970s Maharishi collaborated with prominent scientist of different fields like e.g. Nobel Laureate in physics Brian Josephson (Josephson 2009) and Buckminster Fuller, who developed and popularized the geodesic dome, to just mention two. Maybe Maharishi wanted to downplay any conceptual connection to religion as opposed to science for that reason.

⁹⁷ See my discussion on Maharishi’s relation to science in the introduction.

ness as *analogous*, which could be expected. He sees them as **actual descriptions of the same reality**. Other theories in physics he sees as analogous, but not the relation between the unified field and pure consciousness or Brahman. That would most probably be the reason why he uses the concept *unified field* for Brahman, pure consciousness etcetera, in many of his lectures and publications in later years. This interpretation of the connection between physics and *Veda* would be one of the main thoughts expressed by Maharishi in his collaboration with scientists.

Could this be his view on the unified field issue, that the description of Brahman or pure consciousness in Veda is the “noble, beautiful and general ‘theory for everything’” that scientists were searching for according to Hobsbawm, *hoping for* in the 1960s and also *discerning* in the 1990s? (Hobsbawm 1997 [1994], p. 610.)

Vision and Tradition

Maharishi frequently refers to Vedic scriptures in his lectures and publications. Those scriptures are, as mentioned in the first section of this chapter, traditionally divided into two sections called *Śruti* and *Smṛti*. The Bhagavadgītā is a *Smṛti* text. Two other important *Smṛti* texts are the *Yoga Sūtras* by Patañjali and the *Brahma Sūtras* by Bādarāyaṇa. Three texts, the Bhagavadgītā, the Upaniṣads and the *Brahma Sūtras*, commented upon by Śaṅkara are known as *prasthāna traya*, the threefold foundation of Advaita Vedānta, which is the branch of Vedānta that Śaṅkara is associated with. Maharishi comments that the approaches to Yoga laid out in the Bhagavadgītā have a common foundation in the simplest form of awareness, *svabhava*.

Maharishi could certainly be regarded as a visionary in his own respect. In his endeavour to create a peaceful society he makes connections between Veda and physics. For instance, Maharishi points out that the functioning of a superconductor is analogous to societal systems, indicating that life may improve considerably even if Transcendental Meditation is practiced only by a small percentage of the population. The relationship between individual and collective consciousness is at the basis of Maharishi's analysis of a better, "invincible", society. Maharishi derives parallels between the finding that a small percentage of TM-meditators create a more peaceful society and the ancient Vedic phenomena of *Rashtriya Kavach*, which is described as national armour, keeping a nation impenetrable by hostile forces.

Maharishi's vision of Vedic knowledge is that he maintains that there is a sequential unfolding of the Veda and that the whole of Ṛgveda is contained in the first word of it. Ṛgveda thus represents all the laws of nature. *Agnim* is the first word of Ṛgveda and the first letter *A* contains *fullness*, which collapses in the second letter *Ga* containing *emptiness*. The first word also contains the interplay between *fullness* and *emptiness*. Maharishi sees the word or rather sound "Agnim" as *actually* the first manifestation of *natural law*. The word or sound "Agnim" and its concrete manifestations are *linked* in time and space. In this sense, Maharishi advocates the *nama-rupa*, name and form, conception of the relationship between Vedic words and the form which they correspond to. This means, taking an example, that if you pronounce a Sanskr̥t word like *Agnim* for the enlightened person with his or her awareness established in

pure consciousness, the actual form of Agni would appear, or the natural laws which the word Agni represent would appear in the awareness. So, according to this view words of the Sanskr̥t or Vedic alphabet are not conventional, but grounded in the laws of nature, and corresponding to the form they represent on the level of pure consciousness. Maharishi's view on Veda differs somewhat from the traditional view surveyed in the first section. He defines Veda in a wider sense and interprets the sequential text as a successively unfolding commentary on the preceding text.

Egenes makes a connection between the system Maharishi develops in his interpretation of Ṛgveda and how computers function. He observes that the binary system of computers finds a parallel in the interpretation of the mechanics of creation in nature that Maharishi develops. There is an on/off coding system in computers and Maharishi sees a binary on/off relation between the letters *a* and *ga* in his interpretation of *Agnim*, the first word of the Ṛgveda. Maharishi comments that the *a* represents the fullness of the manifest and the unmanifest. Since *a* must be pronounced with the throat wide open and *ga* with the throat closed Maharishi gives them opposite values. *Ga* thus has a value of emptiness or "fullness of emptiness" and the binary operation between *a* and *ga* is there. This could also be compared to positive and negative electrical charges, or to white and black light.

In his interpretation of the verses of the whole of Ṛgveda, Maharishi also argues that there is a perfect symmetry between the different parts. In his interpretation he holds that each following syllable,

word, verse, part etc., contains a commentary on the previous in sequential order of appearance.

Finally, a very interesting position in Maharishi's interpretation of the Bhagavadgītā is that he interprets dualistic *Sāṃkhya* and *Yoga* in the light of *Vedānta*, meaning that the *Puruṣa* and *prakṛti* are respectively "pure knowledge" and "infinite organizing power of pure knowledge". *Prakṛti* thus becomes an *aspect* of *Puruṣa*. Maharishi in this manner uses tradition and interprets it in his own vision.

This period I consider as a period of profound further systematization of Maharishi's philosophy and teachings with respect to the relationship between Veda, science and consciousness.

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In the next chapter, I will take into consideration Maharishi's development of his Vedic Science during the 1990s, and I will discuss *Maharishi Vedic Science* in relation to the concept of consciousness. I will also in particular interpret the development of Maharishi's philosophy in his commentary on Ṛgveda, the *Apauruṣeya Bhāṣya*, which is an integral part of Maharishi Vedic Science.

CHAPTER 3: “MY VEDIC SCIENCE IS THE SCIENCE OF CONSCIOUSNESS” – THE 1990s

In this chapter I will initially take into consideration two books by Maharishi, *Maharishi’s Absolute Theory of Government: Automation in Administration* (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1995) and *Celebrating Perfection in Education: Dawn of Total Knowledge* (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1997). These books were published during the 1990s. Furthermore, I have studied a thesis by Evan Finkelstein, *Universal Principles of Life Expressed in Maharishi Vedic Science and in the Scriptures and Writings of Judaism, Christianity and Islam* (Finkelstein 2005) submitted to the Graduate School of Maharishi University of Management. The contribution of Finkelstein in this connection is his presentation and analysis of Maharishi Vedic Science as expounded by Maharishi during the 1990s.

Maharishi in his book *Celebrating Perfection in Education* defines his “*Vedic Science*” as “*the Science of Consciousness*” (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1997, p. 176f). The title of the present chapter I quoted from Maharishi’s definition due to the relationship between the concepts of *consciousness* and *Veda*. The quote is not connected to the

period, in the sense that Maharishi developed his Vedic Science into a Science of Consciousness, or anything like that during this time. He just gives expression to the relationship in a book published during the period. Maharishi makes his definition in a context of clarification of the fourth state of consciousness, which I consider relevant to present here:

Knowing itself only, Transcendental Consciousness is the knower, it is the process of knowing, and also it is the known – it is all three in itself – it is the togetherness of the knower, knowing, and the known. It is the Saṃhitā of Rishi, Devatā, Chhandas; therefore,

My Vedic Science, the science of the Saṃhitā of Rishi, Devatā, Chhandas, is the science of Transcendental Consciousness, which is self-referral consciousness, or pure consciousness; therefore

My Vedic Science is the Science of Consciousness.

My Vedic Science is the science of the three-in-one structure of the most basic element in Nature – the prime mover of life, the field of consciousness, or intelligence.

My Vedic Science is the science of Unity and diversity at the same time. It is the science of Unity because of Saṃhitā – togetherness, or the Unified Field – and it is the science of diversity due to the three qualities of Rishi, Devatā, Chhandas within the structure of Saṃhitā.

My Vedic Science, being the science of Unity and diversity at the same time, is the science of everything. It is the science of singularity, the science of self-referral subjectivity, and also it is the science of objectivity, which is nothing other than the expression of subjectivity; at the same time it is the science of transformation, it is the science of the self-referral dynamics of creation. It is the science of eternal silence coexisting with eternal dynamism at the basis of creation. (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1997, p. 176f).

In this statement, consciousness is defined as self-referral, which means that Transcendental Consciousness knows itself or refers back to itself. The concept pure consciousness in this context would mean that consciousness knows itself alone (Finkelstein 2005, p. 6). Maharishi furthermore talks of the “*Vedic scientist*”, obviously meaning the person practising Transcendental Meditation and experiencing higher states of consciousness, and of all the possibilities which lies open to him or her.⁹⁸ “*Eternal silence*” then refers to *saṃhitā*, the togetherness of the three values of *ṛṣi*, *devatā* and *chandas*⁹⁹ – whereas “*eternal dynamism*” refers to the continual interaction between these three values of consciousness (Finkelstein 2005, p. 7). Maharishi further defines his *Vedic Science* as a science of “*anything and everything*” and concludes his definition with the indescribable nature of his Vedic Science: “The definition of my Vedic Science is really beyond words because of the limitations of language, and the limitless, all-encompassing nature of pure knowledge, the Veda, with its infinite organizing power.”

“Every expression in creation offers, from its own angle, a unique definition of Veda and a beautiful demonstration of my Vedic Science and Technology.” (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1997, p. 177). His definition of “Vedic Science” and of “Veda” is so to say all-encompassing in this context, meaning that Maharishi defines the whole of creation as Veda. Maharishi seems to elaborate with different definitions of Veda. He defines it in one sense in a traditional

⁹⁸ For a description of an experience of higher states of consciousness see the appendices.

⁹⁹ These three, *ṛṣi*, *devatā* and *chandas*, are “... at the same time knower, the process of knowing and the known, observer, process of observation, and observed, or subject, object and the process of linking subject and object... There is also a term *Samhitā*, representing the togetherness of these three-in-one.” All these concepts or terms are explained more in detail below on p. 223.

way as the śruti scriptures, but in another, he defines it as everything in creation. He furthermore uses it in the literal meaning of the word. This gives a general definition as “knowledge”, which Maharishi then defines as pure knowledge or pure consciousness.

Maharishi often uses the term “*Natural Law*” which “refers to the totality of all the laws of nature that govern the universe” (Finkelstein 2005, p. 9). He also uses the term “Constitution of the universe”, which has a relationship with the concept of “Natural Law”. In his book *Maharishi’s Absolute Theory of Government: Automation in Administration* Maharishi defines his view of the Constitution of the universe as identical with the “total potential of Natural Law”, which in turn is synonymous with ‘pure intelligence in its unmanifest state’ (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1995). The unmanifest pure intelligence is identical to the state of Transcendental Consciousness, something Maharishi indicates by using the phrase “consciousness in its unstructured state”. The unstructured state of consciousness then is that value of consciousness, which is “aware of itself alone”. Maharishi also identifies the Constitution of the Universe with *Rgveda*, which he means is the self-referral and self-interacting source of the universe. Moreover, it expresses itself as the diversity of creation at the same time, as it remains unified and self-referral. (Finkelstein 2005, p. 9f).

Maharishi Vedic Science is accessible to everyone on the level of their own consciousness in pure consciousness experienced in Transcendental Meditation and the TM-Sidhi programme. “It is important to emphasize that Maharishi Vedic Science is not merely a philosophy, but is rather a practical science of consciousness that applies

technologies of consciousness to validate its principles on the basis of direct and repeatable experience.” (Finkelstein 2005, p. 11).

I find Finkelstein’s formulation interesting in the perspective of my category of analysis Practice before Theory, since we have seen that Maharishi emphasized practice and experience in his teaching before theoretical knowledge. Here Finkelstein mentions there is a practical side to Maharishi Vedic Science. Finkelstein wrote his thesis ten years after Maharishi wrote the books he is referring to, and there may have been a shift of focus from the early days, when Maharishi was very conscientious to emphasize strongly the importance of practice. Here, in the books referred to, Maharishi seems primarily to be expounding his philosophy and vision of creation. Of course the foundation of understanding his philosophy is still the experience of pure consciousness, but at this time so many had learnt Transcendental Meditation and were “*experiencing*” through Transcendental Meditation and the TM-Sidhi programme that it is likely, he did not find it as relevant to make the heavy emphasis on practise that he did in his first books.¹⁰⁰

On his view of the relationship between his Vedic Science and the seven states of consciousness Maharishi declares: “As knowledge is different in different states of consciousness, and as there are seven states of consciousness, and each state of consciousness has its own world, the scope of my Vedic Science covers all knowledge of all

¹⁰⁰ Noteworthy is, however, that “all academic programs in Maharishi Vedic Science at M.U.M. strongly emphasize direct experience, with opportunities for rounding, reciting Vedic literature in Sanskrit etc.” (Brown 2011)

these seven worlds of the seven states of consciousness.” (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1997, p. 178-179).¹⁰¹

To investigate Maharishi’s philosophy further as it comes to expression mainly during the 1990s, there is a comprehensive account on Maharishi Vedic Science written by Tony Nader in his book *Human Physiology - Expression of Veda and Vedic Literature* (Nader 2000 [1994]). Nader has a profound description of Maharishi’s commentary on *R̥gveda*, the *Apauruṣeya Bhāṣya*. This study I take as the basis for my analysis of precisely Maharishi’s *Apauruṣeya Bhāṣya*. As I wrote in the method chapter (p. 39f), there was a very close collaboration between Nader and Maharishi in the creation of this book, as pointed out by inter alia Olovsson (2009). Nader’s book, though, should be considered his own publication and not the result of a collaboration in the same way as the commentary on the *Bhagavadgītā* was between Maharishi and Katz. With this in mind, taking into account the circumstance that Nader was appointed by Maharishi as the leader of the Transcendental Meditation movement, and being aware that you can discuss the adequacy of this from the point of view of source criticism, I will refer Nader’s viewpoints as corresponding closely to Maharishi’s world of ideas.

I have complemented this treatise with a study of a thesis by Ramberg, *The Effects of Reading the Vedic Literature on Personal Evolu-*

¹⁰¹ Finkelstein also enumerates the seven states of consciousness with their corresponding names in Sanskrit:
Waking state of consciousness – *Jāgrat Avastha* or *Jāgrat Cetana*
Dreaming state of consciousness – *Svapna Avastha* or *Svapna Cetana*
Deep sleep state of consciousness – *Suṣupti Avastha* or *Suṣupti Cetana*
Transcendental Consciousness – *Turiya Avastha* or *Turiya Cetana*
Cosmic Consciousness – *Turiyāṭīt Avastha* or *Turiyāṭīt Cetana*
God Consciousness – *Bhagavad Cetana*
Unity Consciousness – *Brāhmī Sthiti* or *Brāhmī Cetana* (Finkelstein 2005, p. 8f).

tion in the Light of Maharishi Vedic Science and Technology, submitted at Maharishi University of Management in 1999, since I think it contains note-worthy issues for my purpose (Ramberg 1999).

Maharishi's Commentary on *Ṛgveda*, the *Apauruṣeya Bhāṣya*

In “Vedic Science” as put forward by Maharishi, the fundamental laws of nature reside in the unmanifest, absolute, pure Being. “Being” is the concept used in the commentary on the *Bhagavadgītā* for the ultimate reality and thus denotes a universal source of all laws of nature and is referred to as self-referral and self-sufficient. “Self-referral”, according to Maharishi, means that it “does not have any reference outside itself – it does not need any other element to justify its existence, its position, its size, or its *raison d’être*. It is absolute and self-sufficient – it needs nothing outside itself.” (Nader 2000 [1994], p. 4 note 7). As indicated by Maharishi Vedic Science the dynamics of self-referral consciousness, which is consciousness knowing itself, is embodied in the structure of *Ṛgveda* and the whole of the Vedic literature (Nader 2000 [1994], p. 5). Maharishi in his *Apauruṣeya Bhāṣya* recognizes Veda as both “pure knowledge” and “organizing power” of this pure knowledge, extending from a smallest point value to an infinite value in the constantly expanding universe.

Furthermore, the unfolding of the whole range of the universe is expressed in *Veda* in sequential order of expression, so that the whole universe is presented as the fundamental “structure” of *Veda*.

This is the record given by Nader, whose principal subject matter is to develop a theory of correspondence between the universe as expressed in *Veda* and *human physiology*. This correspondence¹⁰² is an important element in Maharishi's central teaching in the later years, and part of his elaboration of the relationship between *Veda* and *the expressions of Veda*. Dealing with physiology, I nevertheless consider it somewhat apart from the theme of this thesis, even though it is indeed interesting not least in the sense that there are descriptions in the Vedic texts of a correspondence between a cosmic person, Puruṣa, and the universe. However, I will not go into that matter, but only present the *Apauruṣeya Bhāṣya* of Maharishi. Maharishi maintains that *Veda* is the *blueprint of creation*, and even *creation itself*, as its structure corresponds to the structure of creation. In his analysis, Nader explains the relationship between the diversity of the universe and its never-changing absolute fundament of pure Being or pure consciousness. (Nader 2000 [1994], p. 13f).

The concept *pure consciousness* represents the non-changing, unbounded field of Being. It is self-referral, without reference outside itself, and pure intelligence. As intelligence has the ability to discriminate, diversity emerges due to the self-referral quality of intelligence. The question then arises what the Absolute in its capacity of pure consciousness is conscious *of*. The answer is that it is conscious of *itself*, since it is the only existing entity as singularity. (Nader 2000 [1994], p. 14).

¹⁰² Note that a correspondence between man and the universe was an intellectual postulate of the Brahmana texts according to Schalk as described above on page 167.

Being conscious of itself there are two aspects of this awareness, *observer* and *observed*. However, the observer and the observed are one and the same, or there are actually “three values, inherent in any process of conscious experience or any process of observation: 1) the observer, 2) the observed, and 3) the process linking the observer to the observed...” (Nader 2000 [1994], p. 14). Thus, although nothing but pure consciousness exists, *the principle of three* emerges. This comes forth since pure consciousness is awake to itself and thus experiences itself. It is at the same time *knower*, the *process of knowing* and the *known*, *observer*, *process of observation*, and *observed*, or *subject*, *object* and the *process of linking subject and object*. In Maharishi Vedic Science these three are called *Ṛṣi*, which stands for the knower or observer, *Devatā*, standing for the process of knowing or observation, and *Chandas*, representing the known or object of observation. The concept *Samhitā*, used in this context, represents the togetherness of these *three-in-one*. (Nader 2000 [1994], p. 14).

The relationship between the three, and their interaction “leads to an infinite number of ever-expanding possibilities” (Nader 2000 [1994], p. 14). This is how the universe evolves, so to say, within itself as it were, since “all these possibilities, all these forces of interaction and relation, exist in the Absolute – one, unmanifest, pure Being, pure consciousness” (Nader 2000 [1994], p. 14). Therefore, the Absolute does not change and there is no actual duality. The opposites, “the **virtual** pull and push, rise and fall, vibration and stillness, dynamism and silence, leads to the formation of structure within the unmanifest. Structure is the result of the **apparent** breaking of infinite symmetry” (Nader 2000 [1994], p. 15. My bold). In the Maha-

rishi Vedic Science there are often references to modern physics, especially to the concept *Unified Field* in the quantum field theory.¹⁰³

This concept corresponds to, or represents, the same reality as the Absolute, Being, pure consciousness, and Ātman and Brahman of the Bhagavadgītā and the Upaniṣads. Another concept used is *symmetry breaking*. The manifestation of the unmanifest is explained thus: “the unmanifest structure of Natural Law becomes, through the breaking of infinite symmetry, progressively more expressed – more manifest.” (Nader 2000 [1994], p. 15). According to Maharishi Vedic Science, there are four levels of consciousness, which also correspond to four main levels of manifestation. These levels are:

1. *Parā*: The totally unmanifest level of life, pure Being, transcendental level of structuring dynamics of natural law.
2. *Paśyantī*: finest level of intellect, intuition, being the finest level of manifestation.
3. *Madhyamā*: thinking level, structuring dynamics of thought, speech and action – a more expressed level of creation.
4. *Baikharī*: speech level, most manifest level of natural law. Available on sensory level in the structure of the universe. (See Nader 2000 [1994], p. 14-15).

In Maharishi Vedic Science, the term *Natural Law* is equivalent to the concept *Veda*, and the *structural dynamics of natural law* corresponds to the *Vedic Literature*. Veda ranges from *Parā* level to *Baikharī* level where the unmanifest is represented by “cells, tissues, organs, organ systems, the entire human physiology, and the whole universe.” (Nader 2000 [1994], p. 15).

¹⁰³ See Appendices.

Veda is considered as fluctuations of pure consciousness or Ātmā. This is described as "a state of pure Being, an unmanifest reality of pure existence, unboundedness, and singularity...infinite silence and infinite dynamism, unboundedness and point values. It is a self-sufficient and self-referral state...All manifestations in creation emerge from it and submerge into it." (Nader 2000 [1994], p. 49).

The universe develops and collapses in the sound *Ṛg* or *Ṛk*. The *Ṛgveda* is the knowledge of *Ṛg* or *Ṛk*. These sounds display the dynamism from infinity to a point. This is explained in two variations, from infinity to point as collapse of dynamism, and as collapse of silence from point to infinity. *Ṛrrrrrrrr* is maximum value of dynamism and *K/G* is maximum silence. So, *Ṛk* or *Ṛg* means that the unmanifest is dynamic. The whole of *Ṛgveda* is knowledge of the dynamism in silence.

According to Nader, Maharishi further draws a parallel to *Yoga* as silence and *Karma Mīmāṃsā* as dynamism in his interpretation of the structure of the Absolute, of Veda. The *Ṛk* is called "the one-syllable expression of the science and technology of the Ultimate Reality—pure wakefulness, pure consciousness—the Self". (Nader 2000 [1994], p. 50f). It is then possible to enliven the full value of *Ṛk* in the individual consciousness, making the individual embody all knowledge and the organizing power of pure knowledge as well. In connection with establishing that the knower of *Ṛk* is a knower of *Brahman*, there is a citation from the *Bhagavadgītā*:

Eśa brāhmī sthitiḥ Pārtha nainām prāpya vimuhyati (Bhagavadgītā 2,72)

This is Brahman Consciousness – Unity Consciousness. Once achieved it is never lost – life in enlightenment – Life of the individual a lively field of all possibilities – achievement of anything through mere desiring. (Nader 2000 [1994], p. 52).

This is a translation or interpretation of the first line of verse 72 in chapter 2, and presents the main intent according to the translator. It is not literal as the translation Maharishi did in his translation and commentary on the Bhagavadgītā. It is interesting, however, to see the difference: When he wrote his translation and commentary on the Bhagavadgītā, he translated “his is the state of Brahman, O Partha, Having attained it, a man is not deluded...” Then, in his commentary, Maharishi refers to the state of Cosmic Consciousness, whereas here there is reference to Brahman Consciousness and Unity Consciousness (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), p. 124f). The last part of the sentence is obviously not part of the translation, but an interpretation, putting the passage into a new context. This I would say indicates Maharishi’s view expressed in his translation and commentary on the Bhagavadgītā, that the text could be translated and interpreted differently according to the state of consciousness from which the translation is executed.

Maharishi consequently describes *Ṛk* as identical with Transcendental Consciousness open to experience by everyone. This reality of *Ṛk* is a field of pure knowledge “where knower, process of knowing, and known are in their unified state – *Samhitā* (togetherness or unified state) of *Ṛṣi* (knower), *Devatā* (process of knowing), *Chandas* (known) – *Ṛk Veda*.” (Nader 2000 [1994], p. 52). When the awareness experiences this state through Transcendental Meditation it becomes identical with the *Ṛgveda* and then is aware of the coexistence

of silence and dynamism and of these partaking with each other. That means there are creativity within the singularity of the Absolute, pure consciousness, and this is the basis of all evolutionary processes in the diverse universe. Accordingly, there is dynamism and silence at the same time, “the structure of singularity in terms of duality...The interchange of silence and dynamism within the nature of pure wakefulness demonstrates the mechanics of creation - it explains how Unity is duality and how the process of evolution is sustained within it” (Nader 2000 [1994], p. 53). In this way, the structure of Veda is explained as existing in the structure of Transcendental Consciousness (Nader 2000 [1994], p. 53f).

There is according to Maharishi’s *Apauruṣeya Bhāṣya* a commentary on Veda in Veda itself, thus providing its own commentary. Moreover, the total knowledge of Veda is contained in Ṛgveda. I find the viewpoint of Maharishi in this context significant, that the intellectual meaning of the Vedic text is not of primary importance, but it is in “the sequential progression of sound and silence that the true meaning and content of Veda reside” (Nader 2000 [1994], p. 54). (For reference see also above p. 163f). There is, in this regard, an illustration from the first verse of the *Ṛgveda*. The letters *A* and *K(a)* or *G(a)* of the first word *Agnim* contain the whole Veda on the level of pure consciousness. The rest of the Veda is an elaboration of these letters. Moreover, it is according to Maharishi, from the dynamics of the gaps, *sandhi*, that the fundamental significance of the *Veda* and the whole of the Vedic literature emerge. This is so because the laws of nature transforming one state to another reside in

the gaps between syllables. According to Nader, Maharishi considers four different values of the gaps of Vedic letters:

1. **Atyantābhāva**, a silent point value, which has all possibilities for manifestation;
2. **Anyonyābhāva**, structuring dynamics of the gap;
3. **Pradhvaṁsābhāva**, the sound or syllable collapse onto the point value, sound becomes silence;
4. **Prāgabha**, emergence of sound from point value into new sound and following syllable. (Nader 2000 [1994], p. 54).

Maharishi also has made a classification of the Veda and Vedic literature in 40 branches,¹⁰⁴ which unfold sequentially from the structure of pure consciousness in Veda (Nader 2000 [1994], p. 58f).

Ramberg (1999, p. 1) maintains that the most extraordinary achievement of Maharishi is the organizing of the vast knowledge tradition of the Vedic literature and the application of its benefits for people in daily life. This has been elaborated upon in other treatises on the philosophy of Maharishi, which I interpret in this thesis, which is why I choose not to go into detail on these topics in Ramberg's thesis (Ramberg 1999, p. 1. Cf. Egenes 1985, and Nader 2000 [1994]). I will only deal with topics from Ramberg that are in some way exclusive or which I have not taken into account from the other treatises. Therefore, I will continue the exposition and look into some ideas and concepts of Maharishi Vedic Science as it comes to expression in Ramberg's thesis and which I find in some way complementary to the elaborate surveys above.

Ramberg (1999) gives a definition of the concept of Maharishi Vedic Science (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1985; Maharishi Mahesh

¹⁰⁴ See online: http://is1.mum.edu/vedicreserve/table_qualities.htm and Appendix B, p. 353.

Yogi 1994). He writes that it “explains that pure consciousness manifests as creation through a process of self-interaction or self-referral” and that it gives rise to *sound*, the main topic of Ramberg’s thesis, through the process of interacting with itself (Ramberg 1999, p. 3). Through the...

...same self-referral process that gives rise to the Vedic sounds, the various forms evolve into particles of matter which later group together into congregations of particles, forming more and more concrete expressions of matter until the universe has emerged. In this way, consciousness and its inherent Vedic sounds manifest as all the forms and phenomena of physical creation (Ramberg 1999, p. 3).

This theory is complemented by an account of the evolution of individual consciousness in terms of higher states of consciousness which, as a result of practising Transcendental Meditation, develop beyond the ordinary states of waking, dreaming and sleeping (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi (1972 and 1994, p. 351); see Ramberg 1999, p. 4). The higher states of consciousness are main concepts also in Maharishi’s first publications, but I have elaborated on this in great detail above (cf. Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1966 [1963]; Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 [1967]).

Defining consciousness,¹⁰⁵ Ramberg makes a classification from the *Science of Being and Art of Living* by Maharishi (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1966 [1963]) where he states that consciousness is at the basis of the subjective existence. Maharishi maintains that “subjective creation is structured in layers from subtle to gross”, where the major levels of existence, from subtle to gross, are *Being* (later

¹⁰⁵ Cf. Timalisina’s *Consciousness in Indian Philosophy – the Advaita doctrine of ‘awareness only’* (2009).

Maharishi uses the term *consciousness*), *ego*, *emotions*, *intellect*, *mind*, *senses*, *body* and *environment*. The term consciousness is identical to Self, or Ātman. And, since this Self, Being or consciousness is the basis of individual existence Maharishi identifies other levels of subjective life as fluctuations of consciousness (Ramberg 1999, p. 8 f; cf. Egenes more elaborate description).

According to Maharishi (1980) there are two different directions of consciousness, outward towards phenomenal creation, *object-referral consciousness*, and inward towards itself, *self-referral consciousness*. Concerning the outward direction Maharishi says that: “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” (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1986a, p. 25). Maharishi uses a metaphor of a rose to illustrate this process of object-referral consciousness:

To illustrate this self-referral mode of consciousness, Maharishi (1980, p. 73) uses the example of seeing a rose. The image of the rose travels through the retina of the eye and becomes imprinted in the consciousness of the viewer. This is how the viewer becomes conscious of the object. Thus, through the medium of conscious attention, or the flow of consciousness, the viewer, the subject, comes in contact with the object of attention, which in this case is the rose. The coming together of the subject and the object in this way results in knowledge of the object. This, Maharishi explains, is the basic mechanics for how knowledge is gained and experience takes place through the object-referral mode of consciousness, which is the direction consciousness usually has in daily life. (Ramberg 1999, p. 10).

Self-referral consciousness could be perceived as the opposite of *object-referral consciousness*. *Self-referral consciousness* is experi-

enced during the Transcendental Meditation and TM-Sidhi programmes. This state is in the terminology of Maharishi Vedic Science known as Transcendental Consciousness. To understand Vedic Science it is necessary to take into account the practical aspect of it, Transcendental Meditation. The concept of *knowledge* is in Maharishi Vedic Science identical and synonymous to *consciousness*, since the state of *self-referral consciousness*, according to Maharishi, is a state of *knowledge*, uniting the knower, the known and the process of knowing. Thus, Maharishi states that “consciousness equates with knowledge” (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1994, p. 60).

A statement in R̥gveda 1.164.39, often referred to by Maharishi, applies to the acquisition of knowledge in the *object-referral* state of *consciousness*: “Knowledge is structured in consciousness” (*R̥co akṣare parama vyoman*). This principle applies also to self-referral consciousness, “which is a state of knowledge in itself without any input from physical creation” (Ramberg 1999, p. 14). When Maharishi elaborates on the consciousness principle of Veda he does so using Sanskr̥t terminology: “...this three-in-one structure of consciousness is called Sam̥hitā of R̥ṣi, Devatā and Chhandas”, meaning that knower, *R̥ṣi*, process of knowing, *Devatā*, and the known, *Chandas*, is *Sam̥hitā* being unity (see Egenes 1985, p. 144 f; and Ramberg 1999, p. 14 f). Since this has been elaborated upon above in great detail, and will also be dealt with in the next chapter, I leave it at that.

Conclusions

Practice before Theory

In the texts dealt with in this chapter, there is not that much reference to considerations of the practice of Transcendental Meditation and the TM-Sidhi programmes or for that matter experience of Transcendental Consciousness. I would suggest they are implied in the theoretical expositions. The techniques of Transcendental Meditation and the TM-Sidhis are, by the time these texts were published, so well-known and practised by so many that Maharishi may have considered theoretical exploits more essential for practitioners of the techniques, many of whom have practised for decades and have the experience of Transcendental Consciousness on a daily basis. For the practitioner, the exposition of theoretical investigations of the Veda would be more appropriate, since it, according to Maharishi, serves as a verification of the experience. It seems that Maharishi by now focuses more on this verification and development of his vision of the *Apauruṣeya Bhāṣya* of the R̥gveda. This I will consider in the categories below of *Consciousness and Experience* and of *Vision and Tradition*.

The principle of *Practice before Theory* certainly still applies, even though Maharishi seems to have another focus as seen in the text of e.g., Nader.

Nevertheless, there are of course references to practice in the texts under consideration, (see e.g., Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1997 p. 18-20, 50, 64.) since the individual experience of pure consciousness is the basis of knowledge of the Veda, or according to Maharishi actually identical with Veda. Nader, in the analysis of Maharishi's

Apauruṣeya Bhāṣya from the first letters of the term *Ṛgveda*, states that it is possible to enliven the full value of *Ṛk* in individual consciousness. It means that through Transcendental Meditation and the TM-Sidhi programmes, the *practice*, it is possible to experience and verify the knowledge of “Veda”.

There is a quote from the Bhagavadgītā in Nader’s book when he is explaining that the knower of *Ṛk* is a knower of *Brahman*. This is an interpretation of Bhagavadgītā 2, 72, presenting the main intent. Maharishi’s interpretation in his translation and commentary on the Bhagavadgītā was different, and in the commentary on the verse, Maharishi refers to the state of *Cosmic Consciousness*, whereas in Nader there is reference to *Brahman Consciousness* and *Unity Consciousness*. The reason for this would be that the purposes in the different contexts are different. In the 1960s, it was essential to establish the understanding of *Cosmic Consciousness* or *mokṣa*, but in the present context, there is an elaborate discussion of the state of *Brahman* or *Unity Consciousness* and the implications of it in relation to Veda and its correlation to human physiology. Furthermore, Maharishi had not yet begun using the concept of *Unity Consciousness* in the Bhagavadgītā commentary.

When the awareness experiences the state of Transcendental Consciousness through Transcendental Meditation it becomes identical with the *Ṛgveda* and then is aware of the coexistence of both silence and dynamism and of these partaking of each other. That means there is creativity within the singularity of the Absolute, pure consciousness, and this creativity is the basis of all evolutionary processes in

the diverse universe. This is, according to Maharishi, experienced by the awareness in Transcendental Consciousness.

Nader describes the syllable *Ṛk* as identical with Transcendental Consciousness and thus it is “open to experience”. He also states that the reality of *Ṛk* is a field of pure knowledge “where knower, process of knowing, and known are in their unified state—Samhitā (togetherness or unified state) of Ṛṣi (knower), Devatā (process of knowing), Chandas (known)—*Ṛk* Veda.” He then states that when the awareness experiences this state through Transcendental Meditation it becomes identical with the *Ṛgveda* and is aware of the coexistence of silence and dynamism and the togetherness of the two in one.

In the context of *Practice before Theory* it seems that practice is definitely fundamental to the experience of the relation between the syllables *Ṛk* and Transcendental Consciousness and consequently to the theoretical exposition of it. However, there seems to be a greater focus on the elaboration of the knowledge aspect or theory in this text. The reason for that would be that the very purpose of the text is to explain the relation between Veda and human physiology.

Ramberg indirectly refers to practice when he states that the greatest discovery of Maharishi “is that Veda and the Vedic Literature can be located in the Transcendental Consciousness of everyone, the simplest form of human awareness, and in human physiology”, since experiencing Transcendental Consciousness is a result of the practice of Transcendental Meditation.

If you say that in the early texts like the translation and commentary on the *Bhagavadgītā* there is a focus on Practice before Theory, in the later texts, you could say there is a focus on theory *before*

practice, but in a different sense, namely that theory is expounded on more than practice. This is indicated in Finkelstein's thesis, when he mentions that the theory he expounds has its basis in the practice or experience of pure consciousness. We find it with the commentary on the R̥gveda, which is expounded upon in great theoretical detail in Nader's book, but which also has its basis in the experience of pure consciousness. We also find it in Ramberg's thesis when he states that Veda and the Vedic literature are located in the Transcendental Consciousness within everyone and also in the human physiology.

Consciousness and Experience

Veda in Maharishi's vision is the blueprint of creation, or creation itself. The purpose of Nader's treatise is to show the correspondence between the expressions in Veda and the human physiology on the level of pure consciousness. In Maharishi Vedic Science, the concept of pure consciousness represents the non-changing, unbounded field of Being. As it is self-referral and pure intelligence, and as intelligence has the ability to discriminate, diversity emerges due to the self-referral quality of intelligence. The question of what the Absolute in its capacity of pure consciousness is conscious of, receives the answer that it is conscious of itself, since, as singularity, it is the only existing entity.

Pertaining to the nature of pure consciousness there are two aspects of this awareness, observer and observed, being one and the same. But then, there are "three values, inherent in any process of conscious experience or any process of observation: 1) the observer,

2) the observed, and 3) the process linking the observer to the observed...” (Nader 2000 [1994], p. 14). Therefore, even though this seems to be a contradiction, the principle of three emerges although there is nothing else but the one pure consciousness. The reason is that pure consciousness is awake to itself and consequently experiences itself. It is at the same time knower, the process of knowing and the known, observer, process of observation, and observed, or subject, object and the process of linking subject and object. The relation of the three and their interaction is the cause of an “infinite number of ever-expanding possibilities” (Nader 2000 [1994], p. 14). This Maharishi maintains is how the universe evolves. There is, however, no change of the Absolute, pure consciousness, *no real duality*.

In Nader’s text, we find a description of the dynamism and silence concept from the first letters of the name of Ṛgveda. In Egenes exposition we found a description from the first word of the Ṛgveda, *Agnim*, and in the press conference material as we will see below, there is a description of the same phenomenon from the first letters, the vowels, of the Sanskrit alphabet, *a, i, u*. Nader presents the interpretation laid out here in great detail in a chart in his book (Nader 2000 [1994], p. 56-57). In the chart there is an elaborate description of how the different aspects of Veda as expounded and interpreted by Maharishi are related to the letters, sounds and gaps of the first verse of Ṛgveda.

Vision and Tradition

The concept *Unified Field* from quantum field theory, Maharishi uses as synonymous to the Absolute, Being, pure consciousness, and

Ātman and Brahman.¹⁰⁶ Another concept he uses is *symmetry breaking*, when explaining the manifestation of the unmanifest. In that context, four levels of consciousness are specified, corresponding to four main levels of manifestation, the unmanifest (*Parā*), the finest level of the intellect (*Paśyantī*), thinking level (*Madhyamā*) and speech level or sensory level (*Baikhārī*).

The term *Natural Law* is equivalent to the concept *Veda*, and the structuring dynamics of natural law correspond to the Vedic Literature. *Veda* ranges from *Parā* level to *Baikhārī* level where the unmanifest is *represented* by “cells, tissues, organs, organ systems, the entire human physiology, and the whole universe.”

The syllable *Ṛg* or *Ṛk* is important in the context of the *Apauruṣeya Bhāṣya*. It is the first letters of the concept or word *Ṛgveda* and *Ṛgveda* is the knowledge of *Ṛg* or *Ṛk*. In these sounds, the dynamism from infinity to a point is displayed. This is explained in two variations, *from infinity to point as collapse of dynamism*, and *as collapse of silence from point to infinity*. *Ṛṛṛṛṛṛṛṛ* is maximum value of dynamism and *Ka/Ga* is maximum silence. *Ṛgveda* as a whole is knowledge of the *dynamism in silence*.

The connection between the different parts of the *Veda* and the sequential unfoldment of *Ṛgveda* as described by Maharishi in his *Apauruṣeya Bhāṣya* is a novel interpretation of *Veda*. In this respect, Maharishi could simultaneously be regarded as a visionary and as a custodian of the ancient Vedic knowledge with his interpretation.

¹⁰⁶ See Appendix C, p. 357, for an offprint of a chart on the theory of physics and the practice of Transcendental Meditation.

According to Maharishi, Veda is fluctuations of pure consciousness or *Ātmā*.¹⁰⁷ There is according to Maharishi's *Apauruṣeya Bhāṣya* a commentary on Veda in Veda itself, thus providing its own commentary. In addition, the total knowledge of Veda is contained in *Rgveda*.

According to Nader, Maharishi maintains, and this I find most essential and fundamental to his teaching, that it is *not* the intellectual meaning of the *Vedic* text that is of any significance in this regard, but it is in “the sequential progression of sound and silence that the true meaning and content of Veda reside” (Nader 2000 [1994], p. 54). If you do not take this interpretation into account it would be very difficult to understand Maharishi's interpretation of Veda and his philosophy expounding on it. This means that if you interpret Veda as poetry, expounding various feats of the Vedic *devas* or gods, you would not understand the significance that Maharishi allots to the Vedic texts. I would say that you have to understand Veda on the *Parā* level and not on the *Baikharī* level to understand Maharishi's interpretation.

The letters *A* and *Ka* from the first word of *Rgveda* contains the whole Veda on the level of pure consciousness, according to Maharishi. The rest of the Veda is an elaboration of these letters. Moreover, it is from the dynamics of the gaps, *sandhi*, that the fundamental significance of the Veda and the whole of the Vedic Literature comes. This is so because the laws of nature transforming one state to another reside in the gaps between syllables. Maharishi analyses

¹⁰⁷ Cf. Patañjali's *Yoga Sūtras*, which state that Yoga is the cessation of the modifications of the mind (see Āranya (1977 [1963])).

four different values of the gaps of Vedic letters. The notion of the gaps, and taking these into his analysis, is in my opinion very significant, since Maharishi means that the transformation of one sound into the next lies in the gap between the sounds or letters. Attaching importance to the gaps is vital to Maharishi's interpretation of Veda. It is in the silence of the gap that the dynamic aspect of the next sound emerges, which is parallel to his interpretation of the structural dynamics of pure consciousness. And, *pure consciousness* and *Veda* are in Maharishi's view *identical*.

Besides his development of Maharishi Vedic Science and his vision of the Apauruṣeya Bhāṣya, Maharishi also during this period cultivated his engagement for the well-being and peace of the world. He inspired and supported on a large scale the establishment of groups practising Transcendental Meditation and the TM-Sidhis together. Projects were started all over the world, not least in India and the United States, with the planning of Peace Palaces and Vedic Cities intended to be the basis for the Group Dynamics of Consciousness. Founded on the ancient principles of sthāpatyaveda, the buildings should be constructed according to certain standards described in these texts, which were revived by Maharishi. Even a Global Country of World Peace was planned in this connection, designated as a "country without borders".¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁸ E.g. see Hamill (2008) in *The New York Times*, p. A.14: "So, in 2000 he (Maharishi; my note) created the Global Country of World Peace, a 'country without borders,' to build at least one so-called peace palace in or near the 3,000 largest cities in the world as places to train people in TM."

The next chapter is an account of Maharishi's teachings and philosophy during his last years, mainly built on a press conference transcription I received from Thomas Egenes (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 2002-2006). The press conferences have a character of dialogue where Maharishi at times has lecture-like expositions of his philosophy. Maharishi elaborates on different topics of which I have chosen a few that I consider have significance in this thesis. There is e.g., one lecture on the war of the Mahābhārata. I will take into consideration the relationship of Maharishi's philosophy and teaching expressed in this text to the philosophy and teaching expressed in the earlier texts. The relation to my categories of analysis will also be addressed.

CHAPTER 4: "SILENCE AND DYNAMISM BOTH TOGETHER" – 2002-2006

Maharishi in Press Conferences 2002-2006

To get an idea of the philosophy of Maharishi in the first decade of the twenty-first century, I have been able to study the contents of transcriptions of press conferences with Maharishi held between 2002 and 2006. In this vast material, put at my disposal by Thomas Egenes at the faculty of Vedic Science at Maharishi University of Management, Maharishi clarifies his view on Vedic philosophy from several different angles (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 2002-2006).

In the material, which is quite extensive, I have selected discussions which formulate the standpoint of Maharishi in relation to the issues discussed before in this treatise with a focus on Practice before Theory, the concepts of Consciousness and Experience, and Vision and Tradition. The division in the categories of analysis I will, as in the other parts of the thesis, make in the conclusions section. In the main discourse, I have divided the text into topics related to Maharishi's principal teaching.

As I have stated above on page 48, the press conferences comprises the years from 2002 to 2006, and amount to almost 200. The transcript covers 1,459 pages. My selection criteria were to make a survey of the entire text and look for concepts that I considered essential to Maharishi's philosophy. The concepts include inter alia *Consciousness, Ātma, Brahman, Transcendental Meditation, Transcendental Consciousness, Unity, God, Veda, Vedic, Dharma, Absolute*. The search results I considered in their context. Those I found relevant I used as a basis for the analysis of Maharishi's philosophy and teaching at that time. I am aware that a different approach to the material could have rendered a different result. However, I found that my approach, using search concepts with an extensive content and which I consider fundamental to Maharishi's teaching in the other texts I have studied, gave a substantial basis for analysis of the period.

All citations, as the entire text, are of course transcriptions of conversations or lectures in press conferences and thus originally oral text.¹⁰⁹

On Vedic Literature

As an answer to a question on July 17, 2002, concerning the role of people from ancient civilizations, and native people, when Vedic civilization is growing, Maharishi states, with reference to the "Vedic Literature".¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁹ In this connection I would like to acknowledge that I am aware these are not exact transcriptions, and I have endeavoured to confirm them to the best of your ability, since some of the texts are published on websites on the internet and on YouTube. The syntax is, as is common for oral texts, more appropriate for spoken English than for written English.

¹¹⁰ This press conference was at the time of America's intervention in Afghanistan and in Iraq.

In this Vedic Literature, there are 40 values of the Veda, which detail the 40 values of Total Knowledge.¹¹¹ All 40 values become lively in Transcendental Consciousness. The awareness of a man during student age is to enliven that field of intelligence which is Total Natural Law, total brain functioning. Total brain functioning is not a gossip. The world press should see that the use of total brain functioning through Transcendental Meditation is not gossip, a children's story to be cast aside. It is on this basis that we are creating lively world consciousness. (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 2002-2006, July 17, 2002)

Maharishi uses the concept *world consciousness*, which he means develops when numerous individuals practise Transcendental Meditation and experience Transcendental Consciousness. When Transcendental Consciousness becomes lively, all the 40 values of Veda become lively in the world consciousness. These different kinds of consciousness, which he takes into account, Maharishi discussed already in his book *Enlightenment and Invincibility* from 1978 (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1978b). Maharishi explains that it is because Transcendental Meditation creates total brain functioning, acknowledged by scientific studies, which he refers to, that transformation in the world will take place. He also emphasizes that his message is not “gossip”, meaning that he does not speak flowery words nor has only a utopian vision, but that his vision is realistic, since it involves practical elements like Transcendental Meditation, which has shown its effect in scientific research. His pragmatic, practical approach is again evident.

¹¹¹ See online: http://is1.mum.edu/vedicreserve/table_qualities.htm (Nader 2014) and Appendix B, p. 353.

Maharishi in the present lecture also discusses his opinion that university studies do not encourage development of the brain, and that no education creates cosmic intelligence in man. He says:

This is due to lack of Total Knowledge in education, that's all. As you sow, so shall you reap. When you educate your children in a haphazard way and don't train them to use their full brain, then when they get older they shoot this and this, and you say, "What is happening?" It's your own doing. How you culture the students is how you put them on behavior in society. Total Knowledge is in the Veda through such systematic unfoldment of pure consciousness, the field of Total Knowledge, the field of Vedic education. That will create the effect. I am emphasizing on creating the effect.
(Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 2002-2006, July 17, 2002)

Maharishi in this quote literally emphasizes the effect, the theme that has been central for his whole teaching and which e.g., Egenes (see above) highlighted as a hallmark of Maharishi's teachings and which he meant was really important in the interpretation of his commentary on the Bhagavadgītā. Maharishi also uses the concept *Veda* in a general way to denominate knowledge of pure consciousness, which will create Total Knowledge in students, both knowledge of different disciplines and knowledge of life itself and how to live it.

On War in the Mahābhārata and Rāmāyaṇa

On a question of the value of Mahābhārata and Rāmāyaṇa Maharishi answers in concurrence with his interpretation of the Veda expressed in his Apauruṣeya Bhāṣya:

Question: The spiritual writing of India, including the Mahabharata and Ramayana, seem to suggest that killing is part of defending society. Is this a wrong interpretation of the scripture?

Maharishi: Very wrong interpretation of scripture. Mahabharat, Ramayan,

are a description of how intelligence functions within the physiology. It is not a story. It is written like a story, but that is the story of bodily functioning. Every little Vedic hymn has a corresponding physiological status in the body. (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 2002-2006, July 24, 2002).

Maharishi suggests that the text of the Bhagavadgītā, a part of the Mahābhārata, should be interpreted in a symbolic way, in the sense that it should not be seen as actual historical events, but as the functioning of intelligence within physiology. Maharishi then continues by referring to the correspondence between Veda and human physiology, which is the main subject of Nader's study (Nader 2000 [1994]). He emphasizes that these ancient texts are not stories, even though they are written as stories, but they show the functioning of intelligence in the physiology, which gives another status to the texts. Here Maharishi seems to confer a status to *smṛti* texts, which traditionally the *śruti* texts have. We will see below how he develops this thought. However, the texts are written in *Sanskṛt*, the language where name and form, *nama – rupa*, correspond. He refers to Nader and the state of war of America and his view on *Vedic physiology* and *Vedic medicine*:

He (Nader; my comment) details how intelligence functions within the body. But those who don't know, don't know. A man in ignorance can say anything. The Vedic literature is the account of the creative process in creation. The whole Veda is present in the seed. The whole Veda is being shown in human structures. This will be Vedic physiology—Vedic medicine, which will not create side effects and will not allow chronic disease. “Chronic” and “side effects” will soon be out of the medical literature. In the same way, crime will be out of the political field. Poverty will be out of the world economy. The transformation we've begun. How much time it takes depends on us, but the knowledge is ready for everyone to become a perfect human being, spiritual being, cosmic being. The knowledge is very

profound, easy to do, and we are going to create that effect from small groups that will create coherent national consciousness and improve positivity throughout the world. Physiologically, [all men are] almost the same. The fight is not a religious fight: it's the fight of absurd people.¹¹² There is nothing of wisdom. But very soon the press will have all nice things to report. (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 2002-2006, July 24, 2002).

Here as well his vision of a better world becomes apparent. You could however notice a shift of focus from the commentary on the Bhagavadgītā. In the commentary, chapter 1 verse 23, he means that war is unavoidable once the negativity of the wrongdoers has accumulated, but that context, constituting comments on the actual narration of the Bhagavadgītā, was quite different. The notion that “war” is a function of consciousness within physiology is not elaborated on in the commentary. This way of expression may have evolved out of the collaboration with scientists in general, and Nader in particular.

Maharishi refers to the group dynamics of consciousness, which was elaborated on above. Group dynamics of consciousness is the way to eliminate negativity and create a better world. Maharishi's view on those fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan is that it is not a religious fight, but a fight of “absurd people”. In his vision, though, there will be a change of the world scene.

In a press conference on June 18, 2003, Maharishi talks on the nature of life:

The nature of life is such that it should not be problem-ridden. The nature of life is such that it should be a grand display of harmony, unity, fullness, bliss. Life is bliss. This we have been teaching and not only we have been teaching, because neither life is new in the world nor the talks about the re-

¹¹² This is obviously a reference to the Iraq and Afghanistan wars.

ality of life is new in the world. All time throughout the ages, endless times, life has been such that it is a lively field of all possibilities. (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 2002-2006, June 18, 2003).

That *life is bliss* or *ānanda* has been Maharishi's message since he started giving lectures in the 1950s in India. In the book commemorating the early days of the Transcendental Meditation movement you can read that when he started lecturing in 1955 "everywhere Maharishi's message was the same – the suffering and misery so common to human existence are unnecessary. Life in its essential nature is bliss, and every person can experience unbounded bliss consciousness and integrate it into daily life through the effortless technique of Transcendental Meditation" (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1986b, p. 193). He means that the knowledge of life's essential nature as bliss has always been there from times immemorial. He also gives expression to the fact that he is not alone in this endeavour. Others before him have been talking about the same basics of life, that it is eternal, and bliss consciousness. Maharishi places himself in the same line as many before him.

On the Concept of Consciousness or Ātman

Maharishi often uses the concept *Unified Field*, and attributes the use of the term to John Hagelin, a nuclear physicist and former researcher at CERN,¹¹³ collaborating with Maharishi for many years. In this lecture, Maharishi goes into the nature of life as a field of all possibilities. Maharishi emphasizes in his philosophy the principle

¹¹³ Originally the acronym CERN stood for *Conseil Européen pour la Recherche Nucléaire* (European Council for Nuclear Research) an organisation that started in 1952. Today the name is *Organisation Européenne pour la Recherche Nucléaire*, even though the acronym is still the same.

that life should be easy, and that the life of everyone has a common ground in *Ātmā*. Maharishi extends this to every living creature, not only man:

At the basis of all life is what Dr. Hagelin has translated in terms of modern expressions – Unified Field, Unity Consciousness. Because the life is like this, by nature, it should be easy for everyone. Not only it should be possible, but it should be easy. It should be spontaneous for everyone to live that quality of life – harmony, bliss, problem-free atmosphere, harmless behavior, helpful attitudes. Life is such. There is one thing that is such a beautiful field to talk about, to contemplate, to experience, and to display in our behavior everyday, fullness of life because one thing is common in everyone. And what is common in everyone is Atma. Atma means the Self. Self-referral consciousness. Self-referral consciousness is the same in everyone. And Self-referral consciousness is self-sufficient field, self-sufficient lively field of all possibility. This is the nature of life. The nature of life is a lively field of all possibility. And this is a common feature of everyone. This is the basis of everyone. Transcendental reality, that means reality beyond boundaries of space and time. One thing that is common in everyone is that thing, which is beyond the space/time boundaries. It is Transcendental Consciousness. Transcendental Consciousness is a common basis of all life and in our religious books everywhere, throughout the ages, ancient writings and modern writings, and ancient speakers and modern speakers, have been saying the same thing in terms of the light of God within. Light of God within everyone is a common heritage of everyone. Doesn't matter who is there. If life is there, then the transcendental value of the individual, whether the individual is a man or an animal or a bird or an insect, whatever, the basis of life is the same in everyone. (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 2002-2006, June 18, 2003).

Maharishi's worldview is the same here as it is in the commentary on the *Bhagavadgītā*. It is Transcendental Consciousness, the fourth state of consciousness, *Ātman*, which is the common basis of everything, every living being and life in itself. Here Maharishi refers to religious books, ancient texts and modern texts, which he says ex-

press the same philosophy. Noteworthy is that he talks about God and the light of God, just like in the Bhagavadgītā commentary and other early writings, such as his collection of poems from the 1960s, *Love and God* (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1965).

During the 1970s, the mention of God was not that prominent and one plausible reason could have been the close collaboration with scientists and the establishing of the technique of Transcendental Meditation as a scientific technique, verifiable by scientific study in different fields. With the effects of Transcendental Meditation established, Maharishi obviously feels free to talk on the subject of religion and God, of course without meaning that the Transcendental Meditation and TM-Sidhi programmes are not scientific. After all, Maharishi considers that his Vedic Science or Science of Consciousness is precisely that, a science. Does this mean that religion is science in Maharishi's teaching? In a sense it seems so, since he considers it a scientific process to contact Transcendental Consciousness and to experience the ultimate reality of Ātman, Brahman or pure consciousness, or "God". In the literature I have studied, Maharishi seems to be very clear that his Transcendental Meditation technique and the advanced TM-Sidhi programme are systematic techniques with a corresponding functioning of the physiology, verified by research.

The Simile of Sap in a Tree Explained

With a simile Maharishi used already in the Bhagavadgītā commentary (see e.g. Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), chapter 4, 6, p. 190) he describes the nature of physiology in terms of fluctuations or

reverberations of consciousness, in the same way as Nader does in his exposition:

Like the sap in a tree, is the consciousness of everyone within oneself.

And one is made of that consciousness, the whole physiology is cast in terms of those reverberations of consciousness, which we say speech or language or sound, vibrations, frequencies, frequencies (Cf. Ramberg 1999). So, there is a frequency also inherent in the nature of unity. When unity flows, unity is unified wholeness. And when unified wholeness is a reality of all times, then unified wholeness is in terms of flowing. Flow means activity. Unified wholeness, which is a solid mass of silence, is in the nature of dynamism. Silence and dynamism both together. Now you see the marvel of the Creator, marvel of the will of God. These two things, silence and activity, they are the same thing, and being the same thing means two opposite qualities in the state of unity. And two different qualities together they cover each other. So this covering quality is the third basic quality. One quality is silence. The other is dynamism. Both together cover each other. So, silence, dynamism, in themselves unfolding, but together they unfold unmanifest quality, unmanifest quality. So, the inner nature of man, the will of God, the light of God, total Natural Law, is both together. That means the Self of everyone is a field of all possibilities. The only one thing is that it is two different qualities in togetherness, and, therefore, they neutralize each other. They hide each other's qualities. This is unity in diversity. This is diversity in unity. In the Vedic terms, this is Samhita of rishi, devata and chhandas. Same unity is diversified in three values – silence, dynamism and hiding quality. This is the inner nature of life. (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 2002-2006, June 18, 2003).

Maharishi is referring to God, and we have the description of dynamism in silence and the togetherness, the Samhītā, of Ṛṣi, Devatā and Chandas, silence, dynamism and hiding quality. The experience of it one attains, according to Maharishi, through the technique of Transcendental Meditation. He continues explaining the process of meditation. This message is the same as in the commentary on the

Bhagavadgītā, some 40 years earlier. Repeating the simile of **sap in a tree**, Maharishi goes on with his message to this press conference:

Like the sap in a tree is a self-referral thing, its expressions are multiple in nature, multiple in quality. Consciousness within everyone is the same. So we say because the nature of life is so fully rich and completely at the basis of everyone, at the basis of everyone's breath, at the basis of everyone's thought, at the basis of everyone's behavior. That thing is there. It's a matter of opening our awareness through meditation and knowing about its nature on the intellectual level and applying it to the field of behavior through the mind, through the senses, through the behavior. It's a beautiful, beautiful design of life and there is nothing secret about it. Throughout the ages, all religions, no matter what religion, no matter in what language the religion got taught, this light of God. God is the same light of God. All possibilities. (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 2002-2006, June 18, 2003).

Maharishi again refers to religion, putting all religions on the same level in this respect, as equals concerning the message of God. His universal outlook is common to modern Hindu thought¹¹⁴ and Maharishi consolidates the tradition. He continues:

And everyone has this common phrase in some expression or in some language or the other: Man is made in the image of God. It's a very real expression. It's a very real expression, only this reality has to become a conscious reality of the thought, speech, action, behavior. And, fortunately, we are proud of having this total knowledge at our disposal given to us by the great masters of the Vedic tradition. Vedic tradition, the tradition of total knowledge, but it doesn't matter what we call it. Whether we call it Vedic tradition or we call it silence or we call it prayer or we call it meditation, contemplation, anything, as long as the process that we adopt takes our awareness to the field which transcends boundaries, as long as our awareness transcends boundaries, so long that unbounded, infinite creativity, all possibilities, become a habit of ours in our thinking, in our speaking, in our behavior. So the world is so fortunate forever. And every generation of life

¹¹⁴ Cf. for instance Vivekananda's writings on his teacher Ramakrishna.

on earth so fortunate, absolutely so fortunate, only we have to make use of the gift of life that we have from our heritage. It's a heritage of man, it's heritage of man. The principle, the theory of it is so perfect, the experience of it is so very profoundly simple and complete because it's our own reality. One doesn't have to go out. One doesn't have to go out. One doesn't have to go out. It's the knowledge of the Self, knowledge of the Ātma. Knowledge of Ātma, total knowledge of Ātma, is the knowledge of Ved. (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 2002-2006, June 18, 2003).

Here Maharishi emphasizes the common ground of consciousness for every human being. It has the character of a visionary lecture. Maharishi emphasizes the importance of transcending boundaries, of taking the individual awareness to the unbounded, to the knowledge of the Ātma, which is the Self, "one doesn't have to go out", it's all within everyone, as the Upaniṣads declare. In the *mahāvākyas* or *great sayings* of the Upaniṣads the identity of the small self and the big Self is declared as e.g. *aham brahmāsmi*, meaning that *I am Brahman* (see e.g. the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 1.4.10). Significantly, Maharishi emphasizes the common heritage of man and that we have to make use of this heritage in contacting the Self or Ātma, which is the term used in the Hindu tradition.

It is in essence the same message as in the commentary on the Bhagavadgītā. Furthermore, it is in essence the same message as in every religious scripture throughout time, something Maharishi is careful to emphasize. This knowledge is the *heritage of man*. He continues bringing together different traditions in the realm of religion and emphasizes that whatever tradition, the important thing is the *practice*, and that this practice should have the ability to allow the practitioner to transcend boundaries and make it a habit of his think-

ing, speaking and behaving to express “unbounded, infinite creativity” and “all possibilities”.

On the Sanskr̥t Language and its Relation to Pure Consciousness

Maharishi in the press conference from June 18, 2003, explains the nature of the Sanskr̥t language according to his vision:

And it's such a beautiful, beautiful total expression available in one single syllable of the Sanskrit language – *a, i, u*. These are the vowels of the Vedic language. These are the swaras. Swara means the syllable, Self-referral reverberation of the total field of intelligence, or the field of the Self, field of consciousness. Total field of consciousness. Total field of consciousness. Swara means Atma, swara means the Self, the soul and *ma* means the point of it and *a* means the infinity of it. The soul, its infinite nature, its point nature and between infinity and point, all these waves of different fields of knowledge and different performances. They're all there within the awareness of everyone. And knowledge should be given to everyone in his early student age. (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 2002-2006, June 18, 2003).

Maharishi begins an elaboration, in the context of his Apauruṣeya Bhāṣya, of the vowels of the Sanskr̥t language. I have referred to analogous interpretations above, concerning the first word of *Ṛgveda*, *Agnim*, from the text of Egenes, and from the first letters of *Ṛgveda*, *Rg*, meaning *hymn*, from the text of Nader. This elaboration seems to be an extension of those I have previously referred to. In another quote from the same lecture, Maharishi further elaborates on the vowels of the Sanskr̥t language. Maharishi equates *swara*, syllable, and *Ātma*, Self, as the total field of consciousness. He further means that the syllable *ma* of *Ātma*, corresponds to the “point value”, elaborated in his Apauruṣeya Bhāṣya, while the *a* refers to the “infinity value”. Maharishi often refers to infinity and point and that

which is between are “waves of different fields of knowledge and different performances”.

The importance of education is also emphasized and Maharishi’s vision of a society free from many of the problems seen today, if only knowledge of contacting the Self or Ātman were given in schools and universities (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 2002-2006, June 18, 2003).

The Simile of the Seed Explained

Another question (November 12, 2003), brings forth a description of Maharishi’s view on how memory, *smṛti*, functions in relation to the sounds of Veda, using the simile of a banyan seed:

Question: My question is, in the context of Maharishi’s recent discussions of *smṛti* or memory, is there a direct connection between Vedic sounds and memory? Do Vedic sounds somehow awaken the memory in the body of its proper functioning?

Maharishi: Just exactly. The example will be the memory within the hollowness of a banyan seed. The seed is hollow. In that hollowness, all the memory of thousands of branches, of thousands of leaves, thousands of flowers and fruits—all memory is there, and that memory is the unmanifest tree inside the hollowness of the seed.

So inside the Transcendental Consciousness is the world of memory that expresses itself in all the various sentiments, various thoughts, various desires, various aspirations, various behaviors. But all that is there in the unmanifest manner in the form of a memory inside Transcendental Consciousness. That’s why we familiarize ourselves with that storehouse of all memory, all possibilities. And then whatever we want comes out from that lively awareness of all possibility. This is the theme of Transcendental Meditation and gaining access to the storehouse of all creativity and making all creativity blossom into different fields of behavior and expressions and different bodies and all that, all that. (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 2002-

2006, November 12, 2003).

The simile of the seed is important in Maharishi's principal teachings. When he is talking of the silence and dynamism of pure consciousness or Ātman, the simile of the seed is often used. A seed contains within it the structure of the whole plant, of which it is a seed, whether it is a tree or a flower or whatever. It is still a seed and when it is planted in the soil and starts growing, the whole structure of the plant is displayed in the manifest creation. Similarly, Maharishi states that the whole structure of the universe is contained in pure consciousness and that there is an unmanifest dynamism in the silent non-active state of pure consciousness. Then, of course, he also states that the manifestation takes place within the unmanifest structure.

On Education

Maharishi's vision of a better world through education is expressed as follows in a lecture from November 12, 2003:

So to make any nation, to make any individual invincible is within the range of our education. Experience of Transcendental Meditation is to familiarize that field of treasury of all impulses, treasury of all memories, so that whatever we would ever want, that memory will come up and hit the target, that's all. So the theme of living perfection in life is a very simple theme. Only, whatever is the education, to that one has to add the knowledge of memory and the knowledge of the transcendence and the experience of it in a regular manner. And everyone would come out to be conversant with that procedure which will put the total Natural Law to act for him. The picture is so beautiful. (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 2002-2006, November 12, 2003).

Here Maharishi puts forth his view on the role of education to create a better society. The only thing that has to be added to education is the ability of everyone to experience the field where all memory is located, which is on a fine or subtle level of creation, and this level should be experienced in a regular manner. Maharishi advocates the same thing as he did in his commentary on Bhagavadgītā. That is, practice Transcendental Meditation for a better life. The only difference here is that he talks about the field of memory, *smṛti*, which is enlivened through Transcendental Meditation and the advanced TM-Sidhi techniques, and which primarily means remembering the Self.

On Ṛṣi Madhucchandas, Cognizer of the First Verse of Ṛgveda
On the question whether everyone is a potential ṛṣi or seer (in this case *Madhucchandas*, the *ṛṣi* or seer of the first verse of Ṛgveda¹¹⁵), Maharishi develops the relationship between silence and dynamism, between the letter *A* and the letter *Ka* or *Ga* in Sanskrit and elaborates on the first verse of the Ṛgveda, which starts with the phrase “agnim ile purohitam”. He also elaborates on the first letters, the vowels, of the Sanskrit alphabet *a*, *i*, and *u*, and equates them with the values of respectively, *ṛṣi*, *devatā* and *chandas* or knower or fullness, known or unfolding quality and process of knowing or hiding quality, which brings about the mechanics of transformation:

Maharishi: Potentially Madhucchandas. What we have drawn (?)¹¹⁶ is:

¹¹⁵ For every verse of the Veda there is a specification of the *ṛṣi*, the seer, or cognizer of the verse, together with a specification of the god or *devatā* to which it is dedicated and the metre or *chandas* of the verse.

¹¹⁶ Since this is a manuscript from press conferences occasionally the original recorded oral utterances probably have been faint, thus the question mark. On the website Global Good News the transcript could also be found (Global Good News 2014) where it has the following wording: “Potentially Madhuchchandas. The conclusion we have drawn is that everyone is Madhuchchandas”.

everyone is Madhucchandas.

Maharishi in this context first makes a thought-provoking statement that everyone is Madhucchandas, which he then analyses and explains as follows; a text I render in full because of the detailed description:

There are three values: together, they bring the cognition of the Veda. One is the Rishi, the other is Devata, and the third is Chhandas. Rishi is the seer; Devata is the dynamism, dynamic element, in the Rishi quality that makes it see. So Devata: Devata of the Rishi. The Rishi's name is Madhucchandas. And what Devata makes (the) (Madhuch)Chhandas¹¹⁷ see the Veda? It is Agni Devata. Agni is the name of the Devata, as Madhucchandas is the name of the seer. So name of the seer, Madhucchandas: name of the internal dynamic quality is this Devata—Devata means dynamism. And Chhandas is another companion of the two, which maintains eternally the existence or the reality of Rishi and Devata.

So Rishi, Devata, and Chhandas: these are the three values which always remain together. And these form total “A”—total “A.” And when “A” expands into many values which are within it, then the “A” expands into—this Rishi of “A” expands into Devata of “i”¹¹⁸ and Chhandas of “u”¹¹⁹—“A,” “i,” “u.” These are the three sounds — “A,” “i,” and “u”—which are within this flow of “A.” When we say “Aaaaah,” it’s a flow of totality. And within the three, within “A,” are “i” and “u.”

So this is the nature of “A.” In terms of that dynamism, one quality of dynamism unfolds “i.” And when “i” is being unfolded, “A” gets submerged. So submergence of “A” into “i” is brought about by the syllable “u.” “U” is that which hides. So “u” hides “A,” and this hiding of “A,” along with the process of unfolding of “A” into “i,” create these three syllables: “A,” “i,” “u.” This is how the expansion of “A” is cognized within the structure of

¹¹⁷ On Global Good News the wording is “And what Devata makes Madhuchchhandas see the Veda”, which probably is correct in the context. (Global Good News 2014)

¹¹⁸ Note that this is the sound [i] and not [ai].

¹¹⁹ This is the sound [u].

“A.”

And this cognition was from the Rishi Madhucchandas. So Madhucchandas saw “i” within “A.” He saw “u” within “A.” And “u” came out to be hiding; “i” came out to be unfolding. So this hiding and unfolding, opposite values: these are just like opposite values of attraction and repulsion—attraction and repulsion.

So this syllable “A” has within it the power of attraction, the power of repulsion. These are the internal constituents of the total flow of the reality—total flow of reality “A.” And within it are two values of dynamism together. One is unfolding dynamism; the other is hiding dynamism. This is just the mechanics of transformation. And the mechanics of transformation are where? They are within “A.”

That is why “A” is the totality, and in this totality, these two opposite values are there. Now these two opposite values we know to be manifesting property and unmanifesting property. Unmanifesting property has the syllable “u”; manifesting property has the syllable “i”; and both are within “A.” And this is how unity is within duality, or duality is within unity.

This unity has duality in it, and duality has unity in it: this is the first cognition of Madhucchandas. This is the first cognition of the Veda: unity in duality, duality in unity—first cognition of the Veda. And then, following this cognition, is: it’s expressed in some other word—the collapse of “A”: the collapse of “A” into “i,” collapse of “A” into “u,” collapse of “A” into “i,” coming to a point value of consciousness—collapse of “u” coming to a point of—this point value of the—what you call it?—non-consciousness, you can say. One is the field of consciousness, flowing; the other is the point of consciousness. And within the point of consciousness is the point of inertia, from where the physiology begins. It ceases to be consciousness; it begins physiology. But physiology, to expand, consciousness has to be within it. So unity continues, and diversity flows. Through all the transformations of diversity, underneath, unity continues—unity continues. (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 2002-2006, October 19, 2005).

This address is an exemplification from the Ṛgveda and from the vowels of the Sanskr̥t alphabet of the Apauruṣeya Bhāṣya explaining the relationship between unity and diversity in the universe and the process of creation. Maharishi does his interpretation from the understanding that the text of Madhucchandās is not intelligible or comprehensible on the level of the apparent meaning, but only on the level of pure consciousness.

Maharishi continues to explain the sequential unfoldment of Veda thus:

This is the conclusion—this is the conclusion vision of Madhucchandās. And the expanded vision of Madhucchandās puts the details. What we say in this? For the total perspective of the Vedic sequential flow, what we say? We say that what comes as the following syllable is a commentary on the previous syllable. What comes forth is a commentary. It explains what the previous was. And as it goes ahead, the new one explains what the previous was.

The conclusion is: Veda is known by the Veda itself. This is nonhuman cognition of a nonhuman creation. Veda—pure field of knowledge—is a field of uncreated reality. Reality creates itself. It creates itself; there is no creator of it. Nitya and apauruṣeya: these are the two words which signify the Veda—that it is eternal and it is uncreated, because it is within itself: it is unity, it is diversity.

And when it is unity and diversity, the flow of unity into diversity creates all that sequential evolvment, sequential evolvment. And in this sequence is “A” into “i”—one manifest, and within manifest is unmanifest. Within manifest is unmanifest, and also the process of manifesting. So within “A” is the manifest “i” and the process of transformation of “A” into “i,” the process of manifestation. That is why it becomes “i,” not by anyone else, but by its own nature. “A,” from within itself, is “i.” (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 2002-2006, October 19, 2005).

The term *non-human* in the concept “non-human creation” is a rendering into English of the Sanskrit *Apauruṣeya*. Maharishi explains the Veda as being both non-human, *Apauruṣeya*, and eternal, *nitya*. Creation then is both uncreated and eternal, since it is “within itself” and it is both unity and diversity.

Maharishi explains the crucial issue of the relationship between unity and diversity and the non-existent transformation of one into the other:

So this is that enormous, enormous secret unfolded, so to say. What is the enormous secret unfolded? How unity is diversity. It doesn't *become* diversity—or if we can say how unity becomes diversity, the secret of it is that it does not become. It *is* diversity and whenever it is unity, at the same time it is diversity. So it's not a transformation actually; it is its own nature. Unity is diversity, — so there is no transformation.

Any transformation is a quality of vision. What you see, is what you are. You see what you are. Your world is as you are — as you can see, as you can know it. **Yatha drishti tatha srishti** is the Sanskrit expression — “Your creation is on the basis of what you are.”

Madhucchandas is the total cognizer. When we analyze the word Ma-dhu-chchhan-das, like that, like that: each letter, you analyze each letter, you analyze. And in the end, the sum total of all these different letters is: totality, totality, totality, totality—Madhuchchandas.

In this sense, what Dr. Morris has described is that everyone has within himself what is indicated by the word Madhucchandas—the seer of totality. And this is the quality of Atma, the Self of everyone, or Brahm, the totality of everything. This is the cognition of Madhucchandas Rishi, and Agni Devata, Gayatri Chhandas: three values in one cognition—total Veda expanded in one cognition, in one syllable “A”—total, total, total.

It's such a joy to look into the different aspects of the Constitution.¹²⁰ And all are found with "A"; all are found within "A": how the galaxies are administered, how the solar systems are administered, how the nations are administered, how the family is administered, how the man, administers himself. They are all there, available in the cognition of "A."

It is the most enjoyable area of knowing, thinking, pausing. It is actually Being — to Be. It is very good. Beautiful. It is very beautiful pondering over one's own Self, realizing one's own Self, gaining expressions of one's Self.

Madhucchandas, the first seer of Rig Veda, the first seer of Veda—and what he saw is: within "A," the whole Rig Veda; within Rig Veda, whole Sama Veda; within Rig Veda, whole Yajur Veda; within Rig Veda, whole Atharva Veda; and the whole Vedic literature within all these three Vedas. That means the whole Vedic literature — all this Ayurveda, the Gandharva Veda, Dhanur Veda, Sthapatya Veda — all these different fields of knowledge is within Rig Veda, within "A," within Atma, within aham, within Brahm. So it expands, and then it contracts: analysis and synthesis. It analyses itself; it synthesizes itself; it remains itself, total – beautiful vision of totality.

The Vedic exhortation about knowledge and gaining knowledge is: "Know that by knowing which everything gets known." "Know that by knowing which everything gets known." Know the Veda, by knowing which everything is known. Know the totality, by knowing which everything gets known. Know your Self, the Veda, the Brahm, by knowing which everything gets known. (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 2002-2006, October 19, 2005).

Maharishi states that the totality of creation is in the Self, the Ātma, Brahman. All the Vedas are within the Self or pure consciousness and could be cognized when the awareness experiences Transcendental Consciousness or the Ātmā. Then it also can have the total knowledge of Veda in seed-form, because Veda is *the blueprint of*

¹²⁰ Meaning *Constitution of the Universe*, which in Maharishi's vision is the Veda.

creation. Consequently, he means that by knowing yourself, everything is known, because all knowledge is in the Self or the Ātmā.

Maharishi's interpretation is in principle identical with Śāṅkara's vivartavāda philosophy, when explaining that there is no transformation of unity into diversity. Unity is diversity and vice versa. This is what Radhakrishnan in his exposition of Indian Philosophy means is "the one truth...seen in the form of a world through the force of avidyā" (Radhakrishnan 1923, vol. 1, p. 641). *Avidyā* means ignorance as opposed to *Vidyā*, knowledge. Moreover, as Panoli (1991) means, for vivārta philosophers the world is identical to Brahman, and only Brahman exists. The world is just a miscognizing of Brahman, and it is only Brahman that could be cognized and only Brahman that could do the cognizing.

What is unique to Maharishi is his interpretation of the vowels of the Sanskr̥t alphabet and his interpretation of the cognizer or ṛṣi of the first verse of Ṛgveda, and also the parallel he draws between the knower, ṛṣi, the known, devatā, and the process of knowledge, chandas.

On the Relation between Different Levels of Consciousness when Understanding the War in the Bhagavadgītā

From a press conference on February 11, 2004, there is a question on the war of the Bhagavadgītā. The question concerns why Arjuna and the other warriors of the Mahābhārata did not advocate groups of meditators (*Group Dynamics of Consciousness*), as Maharishi does:

Maharishi: Lord Krishna's fighting was opening Arjuna's awareness to that level in the field of the unmanifest where the unmanifest manifests. It can be called a fight, but it is by nature—by nature. (Maharishi Mahesh

Yogi 2002-2006, February 11, 2004).

Maharishi initiates a more symbolic interpretation of the events of the Bhagavadgītā. He continues by referring to the Brahma Sūtras, when stating that Lord Kṛṣṇa does not favour fighting, but only wants to justify the two values of silence and dynamism together:

And all the Brahma Sutras, if you go to Brahma Sutras, you'll realize that the teaching of Lord Krishna is not for fighting. It is for justifying the two values together — the two values, silence and dynamism together — that the silence and dynamism, they are not fighting with each other, because they are essentially not two values. It's the same one value; it's the same one value. And that is the value devoid of fighting. But from a distance, one could say, "This is silence, this is dynamism, and the dynamism is fighting with silence, silence fighting with dynamism." This is a very immature vision of reality.

Bhagavad Gita, the song of the Creator, the song of the Lord — the song of the Lord is on his own level of lordship. And what is the lordship level of Krishna? The two things together: infinite silence, infinite dynamism, together. There is a Brahma Sutra: tat tu samanvayat. The Brahma Sutra — and what is the reality? Lord Krishna is Brahm himself, Brahm — totality, totality. And what is the totality? This and that together. (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 2002-2006, February 11, 2004).

In this quote, Maharishi says that Lord Kṛṣṇa and Brahman are one and the same and that He is silence and dynamism together. This interpretation of the relation of Lord Kṛṣṇa and Brahman, is in accordance with Maharishi's interpretation of reality in his Apauruṣeya Bhāṣya. In his Apauruṣeya Bhāṣya Maharishi sees creation as silence and dynamism together.

The exposition of the Brahma Sūtras continues:

Brahma Sutras explain it so beautifully—that there is no cause and effect

relationship in the relationship of silence and dynamism being together. One is not the cause; there is not the effect. It's by nature. It is the nature of the Self to be totality, to be this and this at the same time, in their unified state. This is the ultimate reality—ultimate reality. (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 2002-2006, February 11, 2004).

Is this the answer to the question raised before when commenting on Maharishi's formulation in the Bhagavadgītā, "Krishna's Being", denoting ownership?

In the next citation, Maharishi eliminates the principle of cause and effect in the relationship between silence and dynamism in the process of creation:

Interpretations can be from any level one would understand this thing, this thing, this thing. But the reality is that the two are not two in the end. Two are one; two are one. Silence is dynamic; dynamic is silence. Smriti is shruti; shruti is smriti. That means, that which is heard is from what was the memory. It is the memory that came to be heard. Nothing new is heard. Nothing new is heard. It's the old thing is heard. In Sanskrit, it is said, **yatah purvam akalpayat; yatah purvam akalpayat**: "As it was before, so it was brought about — so it was imagined, or so it was put forward, as it was before." So this cycle of creation, time after time and time after time and time after time, is the same as it was before; it's the same as it was before; it's the same. In one expression, we say: infinity, same infinity, same unity.

Now you want me to go to the end of it? It will be too much to go into the end of it. It's good enough to understand that it is the same thing. And this union of the two, this unity of the two — "two" means this silence and dynamism, this gyana and kriya shakti, gyana shakti and kriya shakti, the knowledge part of it and the technology part of it — they are not two different things. Knowledge is technology; technology is knowledge, on that level.

That is why I said — you have heard from Dr. Hagelin repeatedly saying,

“Unified Field, Unified Field, Unified Field.” It’s a Unified Field. For understanding, we say, “Oh, unity of what? Unity of diversity.” But for understanding we can have any amount of logic here and there and there. But on its own level, it is what the Sanskrit expression says: **purnat purnamudachyate**—“fullness moves, fullness emerges from fullness.” Same thing: silence full, dynamism full, one emerges from the other, because both are full, both are full. They are not two; **they are not two; they are not two.**

It’s a very beautiful area for the enlightened to roam about and gossip about it. It’s very good; it’s very good. (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 2002-2006, February 11, 2004).

Maharishi once again redirects the attention from the level of intellectual understanding of the text to the level of understanding of the transcendental state of consciousness. This view is related to his understanding of the sentence “knowledge is structured in consciousness” of the R̥gveda verse 1.164.39, explained above.¹²¹

What is especially interesting, and which was indicated in a previous quote where Maharishi discussed the relevance of the Mahābhārata and the Rāmāyaṇa, is that he maintains that in principle *śruti* and *smṛti* are one and the same on the level of pure consciousness. This I would say is a unique interpretation of these concepts, even though it is wholly in accord with his main teaching on the nature of life and of pure consciousness.

In addition, the relation between silence and dynamism is one not two, he even uses the words “they are not two” several times, maybe paraphrasing the concept *advaita* meaning literally “destitute of duality” or *advaya* meaning literally “not two” (Monier-Williams 1899, p. 19).

¹²¹ See e.g., p. 231.

Conclusions

In this chapter presenting the press conference material from 2002-2006 we almost have a sample card of the principal philosophy of Maharishi. However, I will review his philosophy and his teaching in the categories of analysis outlined before and applied to the other texts of interpretation.

Practice before Theory

Maharishi's main interest in the press conference material presented is the question of how to create a more peaceful world. His ambition could be accomplished by the group dynamics of consciousness discussed in detail in previous chapters of the thesis. There is not that much focus on the techniques in the press conference material that I have analysed, but Maharishi is focused on his interpretation of creation in the *Apauruṣeya Bhāṣya*, which he applies to different categories of understanding.

However, there is a reference to the 40 values of Veda, which will become lively when one experiences Transcendental Consciousness and Maharishi also emphasizes the effect, which is related to practice, when he discusses his vision of education that develops total knowledge or *Veda* in students. When Maharishi talks on the common ground of different religions, he also emphasizes the importance of practice for experience of the Self, or pure consciousness. He states that it does not matter what it is called as long as it takes the awareness to pure consciousness. This is valid for my selection of text material, even though in other parts, there may be references to

practice. It seems that Maharishi is often connecting the practice to improvement of brain functioning, that is to the physiological expression of experiences of higher states of consciousness. Maharishi is also, as stated, very dedicated to the purpose of establishing groups of practitioners all around the world. He says that: “A few hundred or thousand people in every country that will maintain harmony in the world” would be enough.¹²²

In the text you can also discern Maharishi’s strong position against the “warmongers” of different nations in the first decade of the 21st century, at that time concerning the Afghanistan and Iraq wars.

Consciousness and Experience

The concept of consciousness is discussed in great detail in the lectures of these press conferences. Maharishi expounds his vision of his *Apauruṣeya Bhāṣya*, developing his view from the perspective of both the first word of the *R̥gveda*, the letters *R̥g* in *R̥gveda*, and the vowels being the first letters of the Sanskrit or *Devanāgarī* alphabet, *a*, *i*, and *u*. The interpretations of these various sounds have as their basis the interpretation that everything is the interplay between silence and dynamism in self-referral consciousness. Therefore, consciousness is referring to itself and there is not a real creation but

¹²² This I discuss more in detail in the chapter *Creating World Peace – An Achievable Enterprise* below p. 275. Maharishi developed this viewpoint in the 1970s, when several studies reported positive trends in societies with a certain proportion of meditators. In collaboration with scientists, he further developed this view and arrived at the conclusion that only a few people practising Transcendental Meditation or, better yet, also the TM-Sidhi programme, could change the trends of life in any society and for that matter in the world at large. Research in this area has continued over the years (see Assimakis and Dillbeck 1995; Davis. and Alexander 2005; Dillbeck 1981; Dillbeck 1987a; Dillbeck 1987b; Dillbeck 1988; Dillbeck 1990; Gelderloos 1988; Orme-Johnson and Gelderloos 1988; Orme-Johnson 1988; Orme-Johnson 1990; Orme-Johnson 2003). A methodological critique has been levelled at Orme-Johnson et al. for their article “International peace project in the Middle East...” (1988), and the critique was answered by Orme-Johnson et al. (Orme-Johnson 1990).

only pure consciousness. Pure consciousness, however, is not only silence but both silence and dynamism together, and these are in the self-referral state of consciousness. Being that, consciousness refers to itself and attains the role of *ṛṣi*, *devatā* and *chandas*, or knower, object of knowledge and process of knowing. Maharishi emphasizes that there are not two entities or values of consciousness, but it is unity, silence in dynamism and vice versa.

Maharishi also refers to consciousness as both *Apauruṣeya*, non-human or uncreated and *Nitya*, eternal. He underlines that opposite values co-exist in pure consciousness.

In this text material, Maharishi again makes many references to religion and to God. This has not been done so much in the material from the 1970s and 1980s, the reason most likely being collaboration with scientists. He is however clear to emphasize the similarity of religions and their common message. Is this a return to the teachings of the 1960s with the commentary on the Bhagavadgītā?

Maharishi also makes a symbolic interpretation of the Bhagavadgītā, and interprets the war referred to in the text in terms of his *Apauruṣeya Bhāṣya*, meaning that it should be seen as a war between *silence* and *dynamism* within consciousness.

Timalsina (2009) has done a recent study of the concept of consciousness in relation to the Advaita school of thought. In his book *Consciousness in Indian Philosophy – the Advaita doctrine of ‘awareness only’* (Timalsina 2009), he maintains the view that consciousness according to Advaita is self-awareness or *svaprakāśa* and he means there are differences in the interpretation as early as Śaṅkara himself. He also states that in Advaita, consciousness “is not

endowed with the property of consciousness, but rather, consciousness itself somehow assumes selfhood”. Reality then is consciousness alone. It is also the reflexive nature of consciousness that makes it given to itself. In the same way as Patañjali the Advaitins interpret *nirvikalpaka* as consciousness being without mental modifications. As is the ordinary interpretation of Advaita, Timalšina means that the self-aware consciousness, which is identical to Brahman, becomes manifold due to ignorance or *avidyā*. As Maharishi often does, Timalšina also mentions the concept of witnessing, or *sākṣin*, consciousness, which becomes aware of itself, without involvement in events of perception. This is similar to Maharishi’s definition of the state of Cosmic Consciousness, in which he states that the Self witnesses the ordinary states of consciousness, waking, dream and deep sleep. Maintaining the absolute nature of awareness, according to Timalšina, Advaitins deal with *phenomenality*, and it is due to *prajñana* or awareness as Brahman that perception occurs. Moreover, to avoid establishment of duality, the Advaita doctrine does not “accept anything other than the self being confirmed on its own”. Timalšina summarizes the view of the Dṛṣṭisṛṣṭī doctrine in the Advaita school, meaning there are different doctrines within the school, this being the most “radical”:

- Knowledge is *svaprakāśa*. In other words, the essential nature of knowledge does not require another category of knowledge in order to exist or to be experienced.
- Except for consciousness, nothing else exists.
- Difference is not perceived in reality because it is not *svaprakāśa*. The argument is that consciousness, while being cognized, does not manifest anything other than itself, as the objective world or mental construction is due to ignorance, and difference, which is not known, can-

not be established.

- Mental modifications are caused by ignorance and so are false.
- This self-revealing awareness manifests these mental modifications (*vṛttis*), which are, in reality, only the appearance of objects conditioned by ignorance (Timalsina 2009, p. 19).

Referring to Śaṅkara's position, Timalsina states that Śaṅkara advocates consciousness-in-itself as self-manifest, and concepts or *pratyayas* as being products of ignorance as “appearance”.

According to Timalsina, Śaṅkara holds that knowledge of an object is not *svapṛakāśa* or self-awareness, as it is manifested by witnessing consciousness. The nature of awareness is recognized as the non-dual self, “and its appearance in the form of *pratyayas* (concepts) that presuppose subjective consciousness, described in the Advaita literature as *pramāṭṛ* or cognizer”. Śaṅkara holds that the self-nature is manifest unceasingly also when cognized as “momentary instances of mental modification” (Timalsina 2009). The correspondence with Maharishi's philosophy as it comes to expression in the press conference material is evident.

Vision and Tradition

When Maharishi in a press conference speaks of “silence and dynamism both together”, he refers and explains the togetherness in terms of the *saṃhitā* of ṛṣi, devatā and chandās: “The only one thing is that it is two different qualities in togetherness, and, therefore, they neutralize each other. They hide each other's qualities. This is unity in diversity. This is diversity in unity. In the Vedic terms, this is *Samhita* of rishi, devata and chhandas. Same unity is diversified in three

values – silence, dynamism and hiding quality.” He explains the nature of Veda or of Vedānta as envisioned by him.

His vision of the universe as fluctuations of consciousness is explained in this sentence. In this regard, he also sees the different parts of the Veda, *Śruti* and *Smṛti*, as one and the same. In addition, he elaborates on the sequential unfoldment of the Veda in the inherent commentary on it, the *Apauruṣeya Bhāṣya*. His interpretation of Veda in general and the one verse of the *Bhagavadgītā* that we have access to in particular, points to a more strict Advaita Vedānta view in these later texts. Moreover, one can see Maharishi clarifying the ultimate reality in terms of the *vivartavāda* explanation of Śaṅkara’s Advaita philosophy.

One remarkable interpretation Maharishi gives in this material is, as stated above, that he sees *śruti* and *smṛti* as equal, “*Smṛiti* is *shruti*; *shruti* is *smṛiti*. That means, that which is heard is from what was the memory.” What he means is that memory comes from what is heard on the level of the pure consciousness or *Ātma*, and nothing that *was not* before comes into being; “it is said, **yatah purvam akalpayat; yatah purvam akalpayat**: ‘As it was before, so it was brought about — so it was imagined, or so it was put forward, as it was before’”, meaning it is the same infinity now as before, *memory* is what is *heard* before.

Maharishi also sees *Lord Kṛṣṇa* and *Brahman* as identical in a reference to *Brahma Sūtra*. As stated above, Maharishi already in the *Bhagavadgītā* equates *Lord Kṛṣṇa* and *Brahman*, or he even puts *Kṛṣṇa* as the owner or manager of *Brahman*. Even though this is of pedagogical interest mainly, it also has a philosophical significance,

since Maharishi places himself in the tradition of Śaṅkara's Advaita Vedānta, holding the position that Brahman is the ultimate reality and nothing else exists.

I would say that Maharishi stands out as a visionary in a prominent way in the press conference material I have interpreted. It is shown in his responses, taking on the character of lectures *inter alia* on world peace, on religion, on philosophy, on pure consciousness.

One issue I consider significant to discuss is whether Maharishi in the different texts from different periods gives expression to different or even contradictory viewpoints on the same matter. I would argue that he seems to do so. One example is his interpretation of war in the Bhagavadgītā and in the press conference material. What then could be the reason for this?

I believe one reason could be that at different times and in different contexts different interpretations are possible. Maharishi, obviously being a practical, pragmatic interpreter, does not hesitate to give interpretations adapted to or set in the situation at hand. Furthermore, Maharishi's view in the commentary on the Bhagavadgītā is that interpretations differ according to the level of consciousness one is performing the interpretation from. In the same manner I would say that interpretations could differ according to the level of consciousness of the recipient of the message, which would mean that Maharishi's interpretations would differ according to the audience he is addressing. As he talks on different issues and to different audiences at different times I mean that he gives expression to his teachings and philosophy from different perspectives. These perspectives would include his capability as a poet, as a pedagogue, as a phi-

osopher, as a visionary, and as a reviver as well as a custodian of the Vedic knowledge handed down to him from his teacher Swāmi Brahmānanda Saraswatī.

I would finally like to state that there is also a contradictory element built into the basic philosophy as such, representing as it is contradictory aspects of life, as e.g., pure consciousness and expressed consciousness, absolute existence and relative existence, never-changing phase of life and the ever-changing phases of life, eternal time and constantly changing time, silence and dynamism.

*

I will now examine some research on the so-called Maharishi Effect, developed during the 1970s, which in all probability influenced the way Maharishi looked on his mission to bring peace to the world.

CREATING WORLD PEACE – AN ACHIEVABLE ENTERPRISE

World Peace – The Beginning

In this chapter, which could be considered an excursus, I will to begin with give a short outline of Maharishi's thoughts on creating peace for the world. His main thought could be expressed in metaphorical language: *A green forest consists of green trees*. Maharishi's idea in this connection is that if you create peace in the mind of everyone, you will have a peaceful world, devoid of suffering, shortcomings, and stress etc., on the individual level, and peace on the global level. Maharishi gives expression to this in a lecture held in London in April of 1960. The lecture is published in a small pamphlet called *The Treasury and the Market* (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1961). The title page contains a subtitle, "Introducing his simple system of transcendental meditation, to bring **natural peace and harmony into the lives of all men**" (my bold). The title page also contains an interesting kind of dedication, the Biblical words of Matthew 6.33 "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added unto you". The quote is in line with Maharishi's very practical approach to spiritual life. He was of the opinion that you should first

meditate and then be active and all good things in life would come to you. In the pamphlet, he equates Self-realization and “entry into the Kingdom of Heaven within” (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1961, p. 16). The pamphlet is structured as a dialogue with questions and answers. On a question about what value this work of teaching Transcendental Meditation has to humanity as a whole, Maharishi answers that it will rob humanity of negative things like “tensions, worries, confusion, disharmony, hatred, anger...” Instead, the values of “peace, happiness, prosperity, wisdom, creativity, fullness of life...” will grow. (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1961, p. 24). He specifies the purpose of his message and says that by bringing this to the West it will infuse natural peace and harmony in every single individual everywhere and raise the level of humanity to a divine level (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1961, p. 24).

Maharishi in his lectures, books and teaching frequently comes back to his purpose of creating world peace. The sources are too numerous to mention all, but I will give one other example. In the book *Celebrating the Dawn* by Robert Oates Jr. (1976) there is a chapter on the Transcendental Meditation Technique and World Peace. Oates had the opportunity in 1975 to accompany Maharishi on a world tour, during which he recorded interviews with Maharishi, published in this book. Maharishi in one interview gives a detailed explanation of his thoughts concerning world peace and the ideological motivations of it. Maharishi points out that differences make up the world – economical, political, religious – and the question he formulates is, how will it be possible to accomplish world peace if the world is made up of all these differences? He also gives the answer to the

question. Cultural differences, which make up life in a country, cannot be eliminated, “all men can’t be made alike”. Maharishi means that cultural values are “valuable” since, as he puts it, “the function of culture is in the name”. He also means that there is a fear among many in the world today, with rapid communication and scientific and technological progress, that traditions of a country will be disrupted and imbalance in nature result. However, since it is not possible to get away from this progress by any nation in today’s world, Maharishi has a suggestion: “the only way to make people more friendly is to raise their level of consciousness” (Oates 1976, p. 122-123).

Maharishi means that since individuals are restricted to their own interest, and focus too much on themselves, they are blind to other areas of concern. Stubbornness, rigidity and arrogance are qualities that Maharishi means are the causes of non-peace in the world. The remedy is to raise the consciousness of everyone by the practice of the Transcendental Meditation Technique. Then the qualities of adaptability, but at the same time stability, purification and integration will grow in everyone and the increase in these qualities is “the formula for world peace”. If these qualities grow in the individuals of every nation, the national consciousness will grow in these values and “one country will not be a poison to another, but each country will be necessary to all the others for their own growth and evolution. Only on this basis can permanent peace come to the world.” (Oates 1976, p. 123-124).

Here Maharishi’s approach is characterized by his ambition to teach Transcendental Meditation to literally everyone. This will

change with findings made in the 1970s by a few scientists and with those surveys made later on by other scientists.

In the next section, I will give a review of the so-called “Maharishi Effect” and studies conducted on this phenomenon. My purpose is to show how Maharishi’s view on the prospect of world peace developed, and not to discuss or comment on the papers I review in this connection.

The Maharishi Effect

The *Maharishi Effect*, as a concept, was coined when a few scientists in the early 1970s through the study of city life in some cities of the United States came to the conclusion that when the number of practitioners of Transcendental Meditation grew to a certain number in a city, negative trends, in this case crime rate, decreased. The earliest study is the one by Borland and Landrith, *Improved Quality of City Life through the Transcendental Meditation Program: Decreased Crime Rate*. (Borland and Landrith III 1977). In this particular study, Borland and Landrith focused on the relationship between the number of people practising Transcendental Meditation in a city and change in crime rate. They studied crime rate for two reasons. One was that serious crimes known to police are readily available in the *Uniform Crime Reports*, which are compiled by the FBI and issued annually by the U.S. Department of Justice. The other reason was that as crime rate fluctuates with several variables, such as economic status of the citizens, unemployment levels, change in weather conditions and density of population, Borland and Landrith considered crime rate a reasonable indicator of tension in a society. With further analysis, Borland and Landrith reach the conclusion that other factors

were unlikely to account for the subsequent change in crime rate in the cities reaching one percent of the population practising the Transcendental Meditation technique. The phenomenon was called “the Maharishi Effect” according to Borland and Landrith, since it was predicted by Maharishi that if one percent was practising Transcendental Meditation in a society positive trends were likely to happen in that society.

What then is the connection to the concept of world peace? As reported by Borland and Landrith, and other studies, which I will refer to below, negative trends seemed to diminish in a society when one percent practised the Transcendental Meditation technique. By analogy, the same thing should happen if the number of people practising the Transcendental Meditation technique for the whole world would reach one percent. Then the negative trends of the world were predicted to decrease and peaceful conditions in the world occur.

I will now go through some studies on the practice of the Transcendental Meditation and TM-Sidhi programmes when performed by a certain number of a population or by a certain number practising in a group in one place. I will render the papers in chronological order as they were published from 1988 to 2003. The selection criterion was that the studies should have been published in renowned scientific journals. I will only briefly render the outcome of the studies and refer the interested reader to the original papers for details on methods, results, analysis and discussion.

The first paper, “Test of a Field Model of Consciousness and Social Change: The Transcendental Meditation and TM-Sidhi Program

and Decreased Urban Crime”, was published in *The Journal of Mind and Behavior*¹²³ in 1988 (Dillbeck et al. 1988). It tests a prediction that participation in the Transcendental Meditation and TM-Sidhi programmes by a small number of the population of a society influences the trends of that society in a positive manner, as measured by reduced crime rate. The authors suggest that consciousness has a field character, which causes the change rather than other principles of behavioural interactions. This is according to the authors a hypothesized new mechanism of social change, which they propose. Referring to Maharishi’s so-called Vedic Psychology and modern psychological theory, they develop a conception of a “collective consciousness”, whose quality depends on the contribution of the behaviour of each individual in society. In their hypothesis, collective consciousness and individual consciousness are reciprocally influenced by each other, “from the perspective of Maharishi’s Vedic Psychology, social problems thus have their basis in both the quality of individual life and in the quality of the whole society.” (Dillbeck et al. 1988, pp. 457-459).

The hypothesis of Maharishi that a small fraction of a society practising Transcendental Meditation is enough to influence the whole of society in a positive way is tested with reference to three studies from the 1970s on crime rate in cities and metropolitan areas of the U.S. The authors also discuss another hypothesis of Maharishi, that if the practitioners of Transcendental Meditation also practise the TM-Sidhi programme, an even smaller fraction of the population

¹²³ *The Journal of Mind and Behavior* is a refereed journal, published by The Institute of Mind and Behavior at the Departement of Psychology, University of Maine.

of a society is required to influence the trends of that society in a positive direction. The number in the first place would be one percent according to the hypothesis and in the second place the square root of one percent. The implications of these hypotheses are suggested to parallel field-theoretic models from physics, which I will not go into detail of here. (Dillbeck 1988, pp. 460-462).

The authors finally discuss two issues raised by the results of the studies they analysed. One is theoretical and the other is practical. The theoretical question is what mechanisms might be responsible for the changes. Here they come to the conclusion, eliminating other possible causes that it is due to a field character of consciousness, and thus a field effect in society. The practical implication of their findings suggests the possibility of “reducing crime and improving the quality of life in society without disrupting the social system and without great expense”. (Dillbeck et al. 1988, pp. 480-482).

The next paper, “International Peace Project in the Middle East - The Effects of the Maharishi Technology of the Unified Field”, was published in the *Journal of Conflict Resolution*¹²⁴ also in 1988 (Orme-Johnson et al). In this article the same theory that was examined in the previous paper is tested in a peace project in Israel and Lebanon in 1983 using the group practice of the Transcendental Meditation and TM-Sidhi programmes (hereinafter “the group practice”). The hypothesis is that it is possible to reduce societal stress in an underlying field of “collective consciousness”. The prediction was that the group practice during a few months in 1983 in Jerusalem

¹²⁴ The *Journal of Conflict Resolution* is a peer-reviewed, bi-monthly journal started in 1957, published in association with the Peace Science Society (International) and distributed by SAGE Journals online.

would reduce the stress of collective consciousness and behaviour in Israel and in Lebanon. The scientific investigation tools used were Box-Jenkins ARIMA impact assessment, cross-correlation and transfer function analyses applied to “study the effects of changes in the size of the group on several variables and composite indices reflecting” quality of life in Jerusalem like accidents, fires, and crime, and quality of life in Israel as a whole like stock market, crime and news, from news content analysis. Furthermore, the war in Lebanon was investigated concerning war deaths and war intensity derived from news content analyses. The result shown and reported in this paper was that the group practice had a “statistically significant effect in the predicted direction on the individual variables and on all composite quality-of-life indices”. The conclusion was that the group practice relation to quality-of-life indicators supported a causal interpretation. (Orme-Johnson et al. 1988, p. 776).

The authors maintain that the group practice of a small group influenced overall life quality in Israel and Lebanon. They furthermore argue that “action-at-a-distance and coherent amplification effects would seem to require mediation through an underlying field characterized by or capable of interacting with consciousness”. They interpret the data so as to support that an underlying unifying influence is produced on many diverse systems at the same time. (Orme-Johnson et al. 1988, pp. 805-806).

A methodological critique was directed towards this paper in an article by Duval (1988), who argued that because of the theoretical commitments of the authors of the paper (Orme-Johnson et al 1988) they would see results where they do not exist. Duval states that “the

human brain is quite adept at seeing patterns where they do not exist” and that the time-series analysis by Box-Jenkins system magnifies the problem (Duval 1988). Orme-Johnson et al., answered the critique in a paper published also in *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, in 1990. They argue that the major results of their study are “obvious from the raw data and do not need to be teased out with esoteric statistical techniques” (Orme-Johnson et al. 1990). They further argue that there have been forty studies in this area and that the square root of 1% formula which they applied “has been consistently applied based on quantification of the surrounding population in terms of political units—cities, states, nations—rather than purely geographical distances which ignore these community boundaries.” Furthermore, they argue that their “results were consistently significant using several different methods of analysis...” I will not go into the entire argumentation here, but according to the authors reanalysis of the data was done and showed “that our original study not only exceeded the standards for field research in international conflict but that reanalysis actually strengthen our original findings.” They conclude: “consistent confirmation of the $\sqrt{1\%}$ effect would provide an empirical basis for developing a new field-theoretical model of international relations consistent with the major advances in the physical sciences during the last fifty years. It would also make available a noninvasive, highly cost-effective technology for promoting conflict resolution and improving quality of life on an international scale.” (Orme-Johnson et al. 1990, pp. 766-767).

A few other studies are noteworthy in this context. One is a paper in *Psychological Reports*¹²⁵ 1995, “Time Series Analysis of Improved Quality of Life in Canada: Social Change, Collective Consciousness, and the TM-Sidhi Program” (Assimakis and Dillbeck 1995). In the paper there are two studies described which are replication tests in Canada for a field theory of social change. We find the same theoretical framework as in the previous papers. The theory implies that there is a relationship between subjective experience and objective social indicators and it does according to the authors “contain practical implications for improving the quality of life”. (Assimakis and Dillbeck 1995, p. 1171). It also implies that consciousness is a field and that there is a reciprocal relationship between individual and collective consciousness. They influence each other. This paper studies the influence on life in Canada as a consequence of variation in the group practice of the TM-Sidhi programme at Maharishi International University campus in Iowa, USA. The independent variable in one of the studies was the average weekly attendance at the afternoon group practice at the university campus. This variable was used both as a discrete variable (intervention analysis) and as a continuous variable (transfer function analysis) with procedures of time series analysis. (Assimakis and Dillbeck 1995, p. 1176).

The results of both studies support the hypothesis of positive influences in social life in Canada during certain periods. Discussing threats to the validity of the studies the authors point at a major threat, when employing an interrupted time series design. It is that

¹²⁵ *Psychological Reports* is a peer-reviewed, bimonthly journal established in 1955 and distributed online by AmSci, Ammons Scientific.

other historical events or trends may account for the results, including periodic shifts in time series. The threat is met in these studies by “time series analysis controls for seasonality, cyclical trends, or an ongoing long-term trend. In both studies, the presence of an ongoing trend would have been reflected in the need for a constant in the model after required seasonal differencing, but this was not the case.” (Assimakis and Dillbeck 1995, pp. 1188-1189). Interaction of testing and the experimental intervention also could be a potential threat, but in those studies, data were public and collected by independent sources. The authors also mention other possible threats to the validity, but these I consider would not add to the understanding of the implementation of the paper and the discussion of its implications.

The authors conclude that even though it may be theoretically unsatisfying to some that the Maharishi Effect does not offer any typical social behavioural mechanism, this objection “does not reflect the most important theoretical assumptions, namely, that consciousness is viewed as having causal impact on the quality of behaviour at both the individual and collective levels and that pure consciousness has a field character which mediates the effects reported”. It is also implied that group practice by a small group is able to improve life in a nation without the group interacting directly with all or even any member of that society. (Assimakis and Dillbeck 1995, pp. 1190-1191).

Another paper, “The Maharishi Effect: A Model for Social Improvement. Time Series Analysis of a Phase Transition to Reduced Crime in Merseyside Metropolitan Area”, was published in *Psychol-*

ogy, *Crime and Law*¹²⁶ in 1996 (Hatchard 1996). In this paper, the authors have made a time series analysis of Merseyside Metropolitan Area crime rate to test the hypothesis that it would decrease as a result of the group practice of Transcendental Meditation and TM-Sidhi program. The result reported is that, when analysing crime rate in the area, as supplied monthly by the Merseyside Police, correlated to the size of the group practising, from 1978 to 1991, a so-called “phase transition” was evident in March 1988, when a certain number was practising together in one place. That was the time when the number of group practitioners at Maharishi European Sidhland in nearby Skelmersdale reached the square root of 1% and the so-called Maharishi Effect was reached. At that particular time, there was a drop of 13.4% in the crime rate of the area. This level of crime rate was, according to the authors, stable up until 1992 when the paper was written. In the rest of the country, crime rate increased during the same period by 45%. The author also reports that the crime rate in the Merseyside area in 1987 was the highest in the country and by 1992 the lowest (Hatchard 1996, p. 165). Discussing other factors that might influence the outcome of crime rate and relating it to the group practice as causal, the authors finally ask, “despite highly statistically significant results, could this be an improbable coincidence? Inevitable scepticism should not fly in the face of repeated demonstrations of effectiveness – the essence of the scientific method. We should remind those who find the field theory of consciousness lies outside their present theoretical framework that our

¹²⁶ *Psychology, Crime and Law* is a Journal published by Harwood Academic Publishers and distributed online by Taylor & Francis Online.

study is the 41st replication of the Maharishi Effect findings.” (Hatchard 1996, p. 173).

As mentioned there are a lot of studies performed to test the Maharishi Effect in different areas of the world and with somewhat different perspective. I will not reproduce a review of all of these studies, but a few more I find relevant to render here. One of them is a paper published in *Social Indicators Research*¹²⁷ in 1999, “Effects of Group Practice of the Transcendental Meditation Program on Preventing Violent Crime in Washington D.C.: Results of the National Demonstration Project, June-July 1993” (Hagelin 1999).

Here I will quote the abstract which I find sufficient for reviewing this article:

This paper reports the results of a prospective experiment in which a group of approximately 4,000 participants in the Transcendental Meditation and TM-Sidhi programs of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi assembled in Washington, D.C., from June 7 to July 30, 1993. It was hypothesized that levels of violent crime in the District of Columbia would fall substantially during the Demonstration Project, as a result of the group’s effect of increasing coherence and reducing stress in the collective consciousness of the District. A 27-member Project Review Board comprising independent scientists and leading citizens approved the research protocol and monitored the research process. Weekly crime data was derived from database records provided by the District of Columbia Metropolitan Police Department (DCMPD), which are used in the FBI Uniform Crime Reports. Statistical analysis considered the effect of weather variables, daylight, historical crime trends and annual patterns in the District of Columbia, as well as trends in neighboring cities. Consistent with previous research, levels of homicides, rapes and assaults (HRA crimes) correlated with average weekly temperature. Rob-

¹²⁷ *Social Indicators Research* is a journal established in 1974, and it is a leading journal for research on measurement of the quality of life. It is published by Kluwer Academic Publishers and distributed online by Springer Link.

beries approximately followed an annually recurring cycle. Time series analysis of 1993 data, controlling for temperature, showed that HRA crimes dropped significantly during the Demonstration Project, corresponding with increases in the size of the group; the maximum decrease was 23.3% ($p < 2 \times 10^{-9}$) [24.6% using a longer baseline, with 1988--1993 data ($p < 3 \times 10^{-5}$)], coincident with the peak number of participants in the group during the final week of the assembly. When the same period in each of the five previous years was examined, no significant decreases in HRA crimes were found. Robberies did not decrease significantly. However, a model that jointly estimated the effect of the Demonstration Project on both HRA crimes and robberies showed a significant reduction in violent crimes overall of 15.6% ($p = 0.0008$). Further analysis showed that the effect of the coherence-creating group on reducing HRA crimes could not be accounted for by additional police staffing. The time series analysis for HRA crimes gave results that are highly robust to alternative model specifications, and showed that the effect of the group size was cumulative and persisted after the Demonstration Project ended. Also, calculation of the steady state gain based on the time series model predicted that a permanent group of 4,000 coherence-creating experts in the District would have a long-term effect of reducing HRA crimes by 48%. (Hagelin 1999, p. 153).

The final paper I will take into account was published in *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation*¹²⁸. The article, "Preventing Terrorism and International Conflict: Effects of Large Assemblies of Participants in the Transcendental Meditation and TM-Sidhi Programs" by Orme-Johnson, Dillbeck and Alexander, takes the hypotheses of the previous papers one step further and tests the hypothesis that the group practice of the square root of 1% of the world's population "globally reduces terrorism and international conflict". The empirical data was

¹²⁸ *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation*, is a peer-reviewed journal, which is the property of Haworth Press, published by Routledge and distributed online by Taylor and Francis Online, with 8 issues per year and published since 1976.

collected from three periods during 1983-1985, extending from 8-11 days. During these periods practitioners of the Transcendental Meditation and TM-Sidhi programmes gathered in one place in groups of at least the mentioned size for group practice. Data on casualties and fatalities due to terrorism were obtained from the Rand Corporation, and data on international conflict were gathered from date-blind ratings of news events in the two newspapers *London Times* and the *New York Times*. This would give comparable blocks for time series analysis before, during, and after the gatherings. The analyses found a 72% drop in terrorism ($p < .025$) and an average drop in international conflict of 32% (p from $< .005$ to $< .025$) during the gatherings. The result was somewhat different from the different gatherings, which were held in Iowa in the U.S.A., in Holland and in Washington D.C. in the U.S.A. (Orme-Johnson 2003, p. 283).

The result for international conflict, assembled through content analysis of news in the before mentioned newspapers was that it decreased by 36%, 24%, and 35% respectively. There was a sudden permanent effect from the Iowa, and Washington gatherings, but a gradual permanent effect from the Holland gathering, which the authors assume could be caused by different source material and manner of article selection for content analysis. They assert that “*The London Times*, the source for this assembly (Holland), has a somewhat different coverage of international events than the *New York Times*, which was the source for the other two assemblies”. They also mention other possible causes in their discussion, of which one is that the abrupt permanent effect of the Iowa gathering could be

due to the fact that this was a by far larger gathering. (Orme-Johnson 2003, p. 300).

Finally, the authors discuss the underlying causes in terms of consciousness and maintain the same viewpoint that has been the basic theory in the other papers reviewed here, namely that, “it appears that the only tenable explanation for an immediate global influence of group practice of the subjective techniques is that this influence is propagated through an underlying field characterized by or capable of interacting with consciousness.” (Orme-Johnson 2003, p. 301).

Conclusions

By reviewing a few papers published from 1988-2003 on the so-called Maharishi Effect, I have tried to give a perception of a theory that considers a relationship between individual and collective consciousness, and that considers consciousness having field properties. In the papers reviewed the authors hold the position that application of the Maharishi Effect on different levels of a society and on a global scale has the ability to reduce stress and tension in the collective consciousness, and thus promote positive trends and ultimately world peace.

The application of the group practice on different levels of society and the results conveyed in the papers reviewed above I find highly significant in the perspective of Maharishi’s view on the relation between consciousness and science. Maharishi considers that the description of reality in the so-called Vedic tradition, described in e.g. the Upaniṣads and the Brahma Sūtras, is a description of the same reality as in quantum physics of modern science, particularly the unified field theory. This view is also common to other modern expo-

nents of the Ādvaita Vedānta school of philosophy in India. What Maharishi and the authors of the abovementioned papers do, is to take the theory of a correspondence between the philosophy expressed in the Vedic literature and particularly in Advaita Vedānta and modern science, especially the theories of physics in general and quantum physics in particular, to test practically. The basic theory of the authors of all the papers reviewed is that there is a field correspondence between the individual consciousness and a collective consciousness, which can influence each other on a field level. As the present thesis is interested mainly in the philosophy and world of ideas of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, I will not discuss the validity of the papers reviewed here. Furthermore, I am not in a position from the point of view of my scientific background to comment on the results presented in the papers.

As a result of the findings of the reviewed and other studies, there are today, as proposed in the papers, groups established on a global scale practising the Transcendental Meditation and TM-Sidhi programmes on a daily basis and continually. Groups have long been established in Iowa, U.S.A. and also in India, Holland, England and other places. The concept used by Maharishi in this context and for this phenomenon is *Group Dynamics of Consciousness*, which I interpret as an application of the field theory of consciousness.

Dillbeck et al. (1988, p. 460) suggest that Maharishi already in 1960 proposed a theory that if one percent of a population practised his technique of Transcendental Meditation and thus experienced

pure consciousness, this would influence the whole of that society. Maharishi also in a lecture on a course in Austria in 1962¹²⁹ said:

My calculation is that the day one-tenth of the adult population of the world begins to meditate a half-hour morning and evening and begins to emit an influence of peace and harmony from the deepest level of consciousness – from that day, the atmosphere of the world, this negative atmosphere of the world, will be neutralized, and from that day will dawn the chance of no war for centuries to come ...Even one per cent of the adult population of the world will be able to neutralize this influence in the atmosphere, but for safety factor I've taken ten per cent. (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1986, p. 430)

Maharishi doing this early prediction can be due to his background as a physicist and mathematician, and thus his familiarity with the laws of physics from which the idea is derived. That it was put into practice at this time and that the practice of the advanced TM-Sidhi programme had its own implications in the context, I would suggest consolidated the theory in Maharishi's mind and had consequences for his future development of the Transcendental Meditation movement and thus the application of his vision. This was therefore reflected in his from now on greater focus on the Group Dynamics of Consciousness and the establishment of large groups practising the Transcendental Meditation and the TM-Sidhi programme together on a permanent basis.

Finally, regarding the Maharishi Effect, *practice comes before theory*, since practice is the basis of the phenomenon, though in a *theoretical* framework. It is intimately related to conceptions of *consciousness* and the application of consciousness-based *experience*. Essentially it is a synthesis of Maharishi's *vision* and Vedic *tradition*.

¹²⁹ This may be the occasion Dillbeck et al. is referring to, but in that case it actually was in 1962.

III. Summary and Discussion

This study of the principal teaching and philosophy of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi takes as its starting point the commentary on the Bhagavadgītā published in 1966. A research question I formulated initially was how Maharishi Mahesh Yogi expresses his principal thoughts in the commentary on the Bhagavadgītā chapters 1-6 using metaphorical language, i.e. how his teaching is expressed through the specifically image-rich language and in what way the metaphorical language is essential to his teachings and philosophy. This question I have considered mainly in Chapter 1 of the thesis. A second research question involved what the relation is between the principal thoughts of the gītā commentary and the principal thoughts expressed in the later publications. Is there a continuation of the teachings of this commentary in later publications? Or can you see changes or new ideas? The second question I have dealt with mainly in chapters 2-4 of the thesis, but also in the chapter Creating World Peace – an achievable enterprise. The third research question was whether a conceptual mainstream, or prevailing trend of opinion, could be distinguished in Maharishi's teachings and philosophy and what its relation was to the social and historical context. This question I have examined in the introduction in the section called Maharishi and the World around Him, but also in all chapters of the thesis, e.g. in the discussion of the different categories of analysis.

I would however initially like to elaborate on my last research question and discuss certain issues pertaining to the situation in the world during Maharishi's final active decades and his position regarding those issues. In this context I would also like to take account of the

ideas about *Science* and *Genetic Engineering* expressed by the renowned English historian Eric Hobsbawm and of his final words on the future of our planet in his book *Age of Extremes* (Hobsbawm 1997 [1994]).

In the *hard* sciences during the 1970s a new situation developed, since now one could “not draw a sharp dividing line between research and the social consequences of the technology research now almost immediately generated.” (Hobsbawm 1997 [1994], p. 625). It was, according to Hobsbawm, the risk of *Genetic Engineering* that started the debate on whether to put limits on scientific research. That critique undermined the principle in science that researchers should seek the truth, wherever it took them and that they had no responsibility for what non-researchers did with the results. However, the fact that possibly the majority of “researchers” at least in such fields as molecular biology had financial interests in the biotechnology industry prompted ethical consequences. Where had the purity of science and research gone? (Hobsbawm 1997 [1994], p. 625f).

Hobsbawm’s book was written a few years before the end of the millennium and Hobsbawm is reluctant to make any predictions, since he had done so in his book on “the long 19th century”, stating that the 21st century “*could* be a better world” (Hobsbawm 1997 [1994], p. 657). Hobsbawm remains optimistic if only we can manage not to destroy ourselves in a nuclear war. He believes that the world that has been fundamentally changed by “the gigantic economic and technical-scientific consequences of the development of capitalism” cannot continue to change in the same way “ad infinitum” (Hobsbawm 1997 [1994], p. 658). He maintains that a historic

turning point had been reached, for we now possess the power to destroy our environment, i.e. the material basis for our existence. We are, according to Hobsbawm, at risk unless we change our world. We cannot have a future that is an extension of the past or the present¹³⁰. And he concludes that the alternative to a failure in this respect “...is darkness”. (Hobsbawm 1997 [1994], p. 658.)

Maharishi, for his part, was in the position to comment and take a stand on issues arising from events taking place almost a decade after Hobsbawm published his book, and he did so, on various issues. Two of these are the effects of September 11 on the one hand and the GMO debate on the other. In the press conference material (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 2002-2006) Maharishi comments on the war in Afghanistan and in Iraq and he comments inter alia on an offer by the government of the United States to supply Zambia with free GMO grain, an offer that Zambia refused, even though there was starvation in the country. On September 4, 2002 the Ottumwa Courier and Associated Press pointed out that people in poor countries starve and farmers in the United States cannot sell their GMO grain (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 2002-2006). Maharishi’s response, based on ethics, is that it is important to follow what you think is right and not go by what is wrong, and that one will face the consequences of one’s actions. On a similar question a few days later about overpopulation in the world and the threat to world peace that lies in this, Maharishi answers that the solution is, besides Vedic Education, Vedic Health Care, Vedic Defence, also Vedic Agriculture and Vedic food including organically grown food, which is like “nectar and not poi-

¹³⁰ That means in 1994, when his book was written.

son” in Maharishi’s words. Maharishi in several discussions on GMO refers to it as “poison” and asserts that one should avoid it and he praises Zambia for not taking the GMO gift from the United States’ government. Maharishi actually had plans for growing organic food in poor countries, which could be sold in wealthy countries, so that people in wealthy countries would not have to eat GMO food. At the same time the poorer countries would benefit from growing organic food.

Obviously Maharishi took a stand on issues he considered essential to the well-being of the world. Maharishi’s view of GMO is that it will have far-reaching detrimental consequences for life on earth. This viewpoint he of course shares with independent scientists¹³¹ and probably most people around the world, his solution lying in the application of Maharishi Vedic Science in a wide sense.

Maharishi also took a stand on September 11 and its consequences in different parts of the world. (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 2002-2006). On the one hand Maharishi is optimistic about the future of the world, but at the same time expresses certain caveats. He believes that the future is dependent on his plan to create groups practising Transcendental Meditation and the TM-Sidhis together. In an answer to the newspaper *As-Safeer* in Lebanon, asking how long it will take to implement Maharishi’s plan for making the world free from negativity, he says that: “It can be overnight, or it can take a hundred years, depending on how soon we can have resources to engage these groups.” (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 2002-2006, September 4, 2002).

¹³¹ For instance see above, Maharishi and the World around Him, p. 25f, where I refer to the work of John Fagan.

Maharishi states that “from my side, I’d like to have it overnight...”, but it may take some time and it is dependent on the destiny of the world and whether the “warmongers” are allowed to dominate the world’s destiny. (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 2002-2006, September 4, 2002).¹³²

The fact that Maharishi regularly had press conferences shows his concern for and indeed participation in what was taking place in the world, a commitment that followed him through all his activity over the years. His comments on world events and on different issues in questions put to him in the first decade of the 21st century are made in the same manner as in e.g., the symposia on The Science of Creative Intelligence in the 1970s. He is relating world events as well as scientific findings to his knowledge of Vedic Science in its different aspects. He means that solutions to global problems as well as correspondences to modern science are offered in Maharishi Vedic Science and its applications.

Whether his *teachings* and his *philosophy* are influenced by world events is of course difficult to determine. From the 1950s onwards his *philosophy* is in my view characterized by a central idea or way of thinking based on his understanding of the Vedic tradition. However, his *teachings* are influenced by world events, since he reacts in different ways, the most important being the following:

He uses press conferences etc. to persuade the public to listen to his answers to world problems such as war or issues of the environ-

¹³² Certainly more could be said in this question, since the press conference material is very extensive and extends over five years, but I think the issue on Maharishi’s position is made clear by referring to those few instances.

ment. In several places in the press conference material Maharishi obviously sees the press as the fourth estate, making them responsible for influencing opinion in favour of the war in Iraq and Afghanistan.

His collaboration with scientists of different disciplines relates to his teaching or his “mission” in that collaboration promotes creative thinking and by extension the concrete application of thoughts, concepts and ideas.

His endeavour to create groups practising the Group Dynamics of Consciousness is increasingly emphasised in his answers to questions, or actually often short lectures, as exemplified in the press conference material.

Obviously there were other issues on which Maharishi took a definite position. The examples cited do, however, illustrate how Maharishi actively took part in the destiny of the world, with the aim of creating a peaceful and environmentally sustainable future.

I will now summarize and discuss my findings concerning the three categories of analysis that I have worked with through the thesis, *Practice before Theory, Consciousness and Experience* and *Vision and Tradition*.

Practice before Theory

One leading idea in Maharishi's teaching, philosophy and in his pedagogical work as it comes to expression in his commentary on the Bhagavadgītā is that he puts practice before theory. At the very core of his philosophy is thus Maharishi's view that experience of Transcendental Consciousness is the most essential experience for the development of any field of life, whether spiritual or material.

Maharishi applies a logical reasoning when he states that the mind is searching for more and more all the time and that is what makes it easy to experience Transcendental Consciousness in the practice of Transcendental Meditation, since Transcendental Consciousness is a field of experience characterized by bliss or ānanda. In this context Maharishi stands out as a pedagogue, meaning that anyone can practice this technique and step out of suffering.

Maharishi also emphasizes the pedagogical skill of Lord Kṛṣṇa in his interpretation and commentary on the didactic poem Bhagavadgītā. He means it is the skill in teaching of Lord Kṛṣṇa that guides Arjuna through different states in his development, from his state of suspension, via his state of receptivity to Lord Kṛṣṇa's teaching and the experience of Transcendental Consciousness, to his resolution to finally fight in the battle having attained a higher level of consciousness.

With a growing number of people starting the practice of Transcendental Meditation in the Western world during the 1960s Maharishi's emphasis was on having people to start the practice and experience Transcendental Consciousness in the practice. This was the focus of

Maharishi even when he was travelling around India in the 1950s, to have people to experience the bliss or ānanda of pure consciousness or Being. It is noteworthy that, with his background in physics and mathematics, Maharishi already in the lectures in India drew parallels between the Vedic knowledge he acquired from his master Swāmi Brahmānanda Saraswatī and modern science.

The focus on the relation between ancient Vedic knowledge or science and modern science I consider a hallmark for Maharishi's teaching over the years. But, without the experience of the Self or Ātman, Maharishi considers it futile and pointless to study scriptures, religion or for that matter any field of investigation, since that study would only concern the object of knowledge and miss the knower, and the process of knowledge, which Maharishi considers so important for a full understanding of life and oneself.

Even though Maharishi emphasizes practice, he does not discourage study of theoretical knowledge or study of the scriptures. He only means that study does not develop one's consciousness as does the practice of techniques. The reason for studying then would be to verify one's experiences from practice of techniques. This seems to be more in focus during the 1970s and the 1980s from the texts I have studied. During this period there was a significant development of research on physiological, psychological, etcetera, effects of the Transcendental Meditation technique and this led to many contacts between Maharishi and leading scientists, not least in several symposia on The Science of Creative Intelligence in the United States and elsewhere. It was also during this period that Maharishi developed and systematized his teaching in Maharishi Vedic Science. He never-

theless maintains that philosophical convictions do not come from intellectual understanding, but from direct experience.

In this context it is interesting to notice that Maharishi has not developed any ethics.¹³³ The reason I consider to be his emphasis on the significance of practice. By practising the Transcendental Meditation technique and thereby experiencing Transcendental Consciousness all fields of life become enriched and so even morality based on ethics. Maharishi also is of the opinion that it is not by doing good deeds that you reach enlightenment or God, but by experience of pure consciousness that you reach enlightenment and consequently perform good deeds.

Nevertheless, knowledge is the basis of action and thus right action, and Maharishi has developed six means for valid knowledge. Of these the first one is “direct experience”, while the other five are more or less theoretical, related to both modern physics and inter alia the Nyāya system of philosophy.

In his commentary on the Bhagavadgītā concerning Karmayoga, Bhaktiyoga and Jñānayoga Maharishi maintains that his interpretation is quite different from other interpreters who see karma, bhakti and jñāna as means, while Maharishi sees them as ends. Maharishi considers, according to my interpretation, that the start of all these paths is Transcendental Consciousness and that e.g., the talk of renunciation concerning Karmayoga in the Bhagavadgītā should be in-

¹³³ But, as I have mentioned before, there is a section in Maharishi’s book *Science of Being and Art of Living* on “Right Action”, where he develops standards for ethical behaviour for those who do not yet uphold spontaneous right action.

interpreted as renunciation *in* action and not renunciation *of* action as other interpreters understand it. So, all three paths start with Transcendental Consciousness, and end in renunciation in action, realization of God and discrimination between the Self and the non-Self.

In the texts I have studied from the 1990s references to practice are less prominent. I suggest they are presumed in the theoretical expositions. Maharishi by now focuses more on the development of his uncreated commentary on Veda, the Apauruṣeya Bhāṣya of the Ṛgveda. The investigation of the scriptures Maharishi means verifies the experience and that seems to be a reason for more theoretical investigations of the Veda. Nader, however, states that it is through practice one can experience and verify the knowledge of Veda expounded in the Apauruṣeya Bhāṣya of Ṛgveda.

Since theory in Maharishi's interpretation is for verification and validation, so there seems to be a reciprocal dependence between theory and practice. This is pointed out in Finkelstein's thesis, when he mentions that the theory he expounds on has its basis in the practice or experience of pure consciousness. You will find it in the commentary on the Ṛgveda, the Apauruṣeya Bhāṣya of Ṛgveda, expounded upon in great theoretical detail by Maharishi and Nader, which also has its basis in the experience of pure consciousness. This is also found in Ramberg's thesis.

Comparing Maharishi's thoughts on the relationship between practice and theory with the ideas of the French sociologist and philosopher Bourdieu, I have found some interesting analogies. Bourdieu

holds that practice is not applied theory. He rather considers that there is a difference related to the difference between what you think and action. He also means that practical theory is not a theory **of** action and practice, but a theory **for** action and practice. Maharishi considers that Transcendental Meditation is **for** action in daily life while theory is for verification of experience. By studying the scriptures, which could be considered as theory, you would, according to Maharishi, verify your experience in practice. I would say that there is an apparent similarity between Bourdieu's practical sense and the skill in action that the practitioner of Transcendental Meditation, according to Maharishi, develops. This relationship between practice and theory in Maharishi's philosophy and in Bourdieu's, and for that matter in other philosopher's thought, I also consider an intriguing possible future field of research.

In those parts that I have looked into of the most recent text, the press conference material from 2002-2006, there are rather few references to Transcendental Meditation or the TM-Sidhi programme, but more to the "Group Dynamics of Consciousness". Maharishi also seems to be focused on his interpretation of creation in the Apauruṣeya Bhāṣya of Ṛgveda, which he applies to different areas of life. Of course other parts of the text, which I have not looked into, may give a different picture of the text as a whole. I have found, though, that when discussing theoretical implications of his philosophy, Maharishi does not refer to practice in the same way as he does in the early texts like the Bhagavadgītā commentary, where metaphorical language is so prominent.

Nevertheless, in conclusion I would say that even though there is a focus on theory in later publications, Maharishi always considers practice and experience as the basis of theory. The basis is in practice in all of Maharishi's expositions, the one on the different higher states of consciousness, the one on the group dynamics of consciousness, those related to different areas of Vedic knowledge and the *Apauruṣeya Bhāṣya* of *Ṛgveda*, and also on the relationship between Maharishi Vedic Science and modern science. This applies to the early as well as the later texts, while the difference found in the texts is only a focus shift from practice to theory. And if you look at the concept of Practice before Theory in an overall consideration over time you will find that in the beginning, in the 1960s, practice was more important and thus more in focus. Later on as theory became more in focus, the earlier focus on practice had led to a considerable number of meditators experiencing pure consciousness or Being. Was it this that led Maharishi to another focus in his teaching? Was it the long time meditators who required more theoretical insight? Or was it the collaboration with scientists that got Maharishi into a more theoretical framework? Or, was it a combination of different reasons? At least it was in this context that Maharishi discovered his commentary on the *Ṛgveda*, the *Apauruṣeya Bhāṣya*, and Maharishi Vedic Science was formulated. It was also in this historical context Maharishi could witness how his position in for instance the GMO debate developed by engaged scientists like John Fagan at Maharishi University of Management.

In the following, I will consider the concept of Consciousness and Experience being one of the categories of analysis.

Consciousness and Experience

In his commentary on the Bhagavadgītā, Maharishi elaborates on his systematization of different states of consciousness, including, besides waking, dream and deep sleep, also Transcendental Consciousness, Cosmic Consciousness and God-Consciousness.

With focus on the concept of God-Consciousness in the Bhagavadgītā commentary, there is a development of Cosmic Consciousness into *God-Consciousness* on the level of experience. According to Maharishi, in God-Consciousness one experiences the subtlest field in creation. In his interpretation in Bhagavadgītā Maharishi considers that God-Consciousness is the final stage of development of consciousness. My opinion is that the state of Unity Consciousness, developed in later texts, is not yet distinguished from God-Consciousness in the commentary. The state of Unity Consciousness is described in the commentary, but it is not designated Unity Consciousness.

In the texts from the 1970s and 1980s when Maharishi develops his Vedic Science he also specifies *Unity Consciousness* in great detail. Maharishi describes it as a state where all objective reality is moving within the Self. In those sources, he considers that there is, in Unity Consciousness, a faint *experienced* duality. However, in the state of Transcendental Consciousness there is not an experience of duality, which there is in Cosmic Consciousness and in God-Consciousness besides in Unity Consciousness.

Concerning *Unity Consciousness* Maharishi also describes a development or shift from perceiving the primary objects of perception in terms of the Self to perceiving even background objects in terms of the Self. The final stage of this development he designates *Brahman consciousness*. In that state, there is not any experienced duality. Brahman consciousness is, in Maharishi's systematization, not considered another state of consciousness, but an aspect of Unity Consciousness.

In his book *Enlightenment and Invincibility* (1978) Maharishi develops the concept of consciousness. He talks about individual consciousness, collective consciousness and the different higher states of consciousness including Cosmic Consciousness and Unity Consciousness. God-Consciousness is not explicitly mentioned here. In this context Maharishi in lectures frequently refer to God-Consciousness as a "refined" Cosmic Consciousness. In a context such as, for instance, when lecturing to meditators with a long experience of meditation I could imagine that Maharishi might use the concept of God-Consciousness.

Maharishi differentiates various kinds of *collective consciousness*, as *family, community, national* and *world consciousness*. He sees a mutual influence between the *individual consciousness* and *collective consciousness*. Maharishi also applies two different values of consciousness, the *active* or *relative*, which would correspond to the different *individual* and *collective* consciousnesses and the *silent* or *Absolute*, which equals *pure consciousness*.

In *Enlightenment and Invincibility* (1978) Maharishi also develops his thoughts on how an ideal society and a peaceful world could be achieved by a few enlightened people in each society. He considers it is due to the influence between pure consciousness, individual consciousness and collective consciousness. When an individual experiences Transcendental Consciousness or pure consciousness in Transcendental Meditation, there is an effect in the whole of collective consciousness. To achieve a permanent effect on collective consciousness Maharishi advocates group practice of Transcendental Meditation and the TM-Sidhi programme. The group practice or group dynamics of consciousness as he named it will influence society with the so-called Maharishi Effect on collective consciousness (cf. The Maharishi Effect on p. 278 above).

In the Bhagavadgītā commentary, Maharishi often uses the concept of *Being* for pure consciousness. The concept *Being* Maharishi explains in many different connections and in his pedagogical effort uses a very rich metaphorical language describing It. Mostly he refers to It with similes and metaphors of the sun and especially the ocean or water in some connection.

Robinson (2005) considers that Maharishi puts Brahman or the non-personal aspect of the Ultimate above the personal. There are, however, instances where this seems not to be the case. One of these I consider indicates an account of identity though, between Brahman and the Lord Kṛṣṇa. This could basically be the viewpoint of Maharishi that he develops in his Apauruṣeya Bhāṣya and Lord Kṛṣṇa then would represent the *dynamism* aspect in the *silence* of Brahman. This

theory is verified by the press conference material, where Maharishi sees *Lord Kṛṣṇa* and *Brahman* as identical. There are also instances where Maharishi considers *Lord Kṛṣṇa* as a symbol for *Brahman*.

In this context it is interesting to note that Maharishi also in the *Bhagavadgītā*, as a commentary on the reading of Kṛṣṇa's proclamation in one verse, uses the simile of "the sap in a tree" which appears as leaves and flowers without losing its quality as sap (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), p. 190). My theory is that this simile in its content heralds the *Apauruṣeya Bhāṣya*. And I interpret it also as an explanation in the tradition of Śaṅkara's *vyavahāra* standpoint that the world and its inhabitants emanate from Brahman, but expounding the *vivartavāda* or phenomenal appearance view of Advaita Vedānta, since Maharishi states that nothing happens to the Absolute, it remains unmanifest.

The fact that this simile in this context explains the appearance of the Incarnation of the Absolute, as Maharishi here calls the Lord, is interesting. Here it is hard to distinguish the Incarnation, Lord Kṛṣṇa, from Brahman, from which He incarnates. So my interpretation is that there seems to be a kind of reciprocity between the Absolute Brahman and Lord Kṛṣṇa in this context.

One more interesting piece of information in this context is that Maharishi considers consciousness is both non-human, uncreated or *Apauruṣeya*, and eternal or *nitya*. Opposite values co-exist in pure consciousness.

This also validates my hypothesis that Maharishi does not really develop his philosophy, but only focuses on different parts of it at

different times. At least it seems to be true for this conceptual content of the simile of “sap in a tree”.

Nimbārka and Vallabha, pariṇāma philosophers in the Advaita (*śuddhadvaita*) tradition, also see Kṛṣṇa as identical to Brahman. According to Vallabha it is only through revelation that we can know God and not through reasoning and reason cannot evaluate revelation. Therefore, we have to accept that God or the ultimate reality is depicted in different ways, which are contradictory. Maharishi gives expression to a similar viewpoint as, in chapter 6 verse 32 of his commentary, he states that one should not raise differences over questions of Union with God.

In a recent study of the concept of consciousness in the Advaita School of Śaṅkara, Timalisina holds that consciousness is svaprakāśa or self-awareness and consciousness assumes selfhood and is not endowed with a property of consciousness. Thus, reality is consciousness alone. Timalisina often mentions the witnessing consciousness (*sākṣin*) as does Maharishi when describing higher states of consciousness. Timalisina gives a summary of, according to him, the most radical doctrine of the Dṛṣṭiṣṭi doctrines within the Advaita School which in my opinion comes close to the views of Maharishi expressed in different contexts in the texts under consideration (Timalisina 2009).

In Maharishi’s teaching there is inter alia one aspect I find important and it is that he considers the quantum mechanical description of a *unified field*, an **actual description of the same reality** as pure con-

sciousness or Brahman. He does not see it as an analogy. Most likely, this is the reason why Maharishi often uses the concept *unified field* as a designation for the ultimate reality in his lectures and books in the later years.

According to Maharishi, the universe evolves in the following way: The nature of pure consciousness has two aspects, observer and observed, being one and the same. But then, there are at the same time observer, process of observation, and observed, knower, the process of knowing and the known. Therefore, and this seems to be a contradiction, the principle of three emerges although there is nothing else but the one pure consciousness. According to Maharishi, the reason is that pure consciousness is awake to itself and consequently experiences itself. The relation of the three and their interaction is the cause as Maharishi puts it, to an “infinite number of ever-expanding possibilities.” There is however no change of pure consciousness, there is “no real duality”.

In Nader’s text, we find a description of the dynamism and silence concept from the first letters of the name of *Ṛgveda*.¹³⁴ In Egenes exposition we find a description from the first word of the *Ṛgveda*, *Ag-nim*, and in the press conference material, there is a description of the same phenomenon from the first letters, the vowels, of the Sanskrit alphabet, *a*, *i*, *u*. There is an open sound and a closed sound in each example, and the gap, the *sandhi* is there between every sound, whichever you choose. Maharishi’s notion of the gaps, and taking these into his analysis, is in my opinion most significant, because of

¹³⁴ See Appendices on Maharishi’s commentary on the first verse of the *Ṛgveda Samhitā*, reprinted from Nader (2000 [1994], p. 56-57).

the transcendental, non-expressed, value of the gap. It is, according to Maharishi, in the silent value of the gap that the laws of nature, which transform one state to another, reside, whether it is the transformation of a letter, a sound, a word, a sentence or a verse. Attaching importance to the gaps is therefore vital to Maharishi's interpretation of *Veda*.

One interesting observation I have done in the press conference material is that Maharishi often refers to religion and to God, as he did in the Bhagavadgītā. He then emphasizes the likeness of religions and the common message of religions.

Another interesting discovery is that Maharishi also makes a symbolic interpretation of the Bhagavadgītā, and interprets the war referred to in the text in terms of his Apauruṣeya Bhāṣya, meaning that the war in the Bhagavadgītā should be considered as a war between *silence* and *dynamism* within pure consciousness.

There seems to be a growing interest in consciousness studies in the West, seen not least in the presence of publications like the *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, and accordingly in articles by scholars like Forman. A field of future study I would suggest in this context is to look more into detail at the different consciousness concepts as expressed by Maharishi in different texts, including books, audio-tapes, and videotapes.

Vision and Tradition

In the texts at hand by Maharishi, you can discern an oscillation between tradition and vision in his teachings and philosophy. Maharishi is on the one hand established in the Śāṅkarācārya tradition from his master and in his world of ideas. Nevertheless, he is a vi-

sionary with new interpretations and analyses of the Vedic knowledge. He regards himself as definitely traditional in his views, but also an innovator in the field of Vedic knowledge. A more apt description would be *reviver* who, as he would put it himself, was guided and inspired by his own teacher to restore the original truth and meaning of the Veda and of the interpretations by first and foremost Śaṅkara. In his endeavour to revive the Vedic knowledge, his *vision* could be considered to **establish** him in the *tradition*. Since Śaṅkara is also considered as both traditional or a custodian, and a reviver – in his case a reviver of the Vedic tradition in argument with the Buddhist philosophers of his own time and earlier – Maharishi could be considered as traditional in his revival of the Vedic knowledge.

In his interpretation of Veda and preferably Rgveda, Maharishi holds the position that there is a systematic order in it and that it should be interpreted sequentially. He is of the opinion that Rgveda, and the whole of the Vedic literature, comments on itself. This commentary is continually unfolding and the subsequent hymn, passage, word or letter is an elaboration of what precedes it. In addition, e.g. Egenes comments that “Maharishi attempts to locate a deep, hidden symmetry not apparent even to the traditional scholar of the Veda.” (Egenes 1985).

It is in the silence of the gap that the dynamic aspect of the next sound emerges, which is parallel to Maharishi’s interpretation of the structuring dynamics of pure consciousness. Furthermore, pure consciousness and Veda are in Maharishi’s view identical.

Maharishi's description of the first word of Ṛgveda, *Agnim*, is not that *Agnim* is analogous to an underlying binary opposition, but it is homologous, meaning that Maharishi sees *Agnim* as actually the first manifestation of natural law. The word *Agnim* and its concrete manifestations are thus linked in time and space.¹³⁵

An interpretation I find most fascinating and an expression of Maharishi's visionary analysis of traditional content is that he is of the opinion that when you interpret any of the systems of Indian philosophy your interpretation is dependent on the state of consciousness you are in. When Maharishi interprets the systems of *Sāṃkhya* and *Yoga*, which are traditionally considered as dualistic systems, he does so in the light of *Vedānta*. A dualistic interpretation then would suggest it is done from the point of view of a dualistic state of consciousness, such as Cosmic Consciousness. Maharishi consequently sees the principles of *Puruṣa* and *prakṛti* as *pure knowledge* and *infinite organizing power of pure knowledge*. In this way, *prakṛti* becomes an aspect of *Puruṣa*. This would be an *Advaita Vedānta*, non-dualistic, interpretation, executed from the state of Unity Consciousness.

Maharishi in his commentary on the Bhagavadgītā emphasizes more on pedagogical issues than in his later discourse in for instance the press conference material from 2002-2006. In the Bhagavadgītā commentary the teachings are of course related to the main text of

¹³⁵ This is an example of the notion of Maharishi that name and form (*nama-rupa*), correspond in Vedic words. This correspondence is in the tradition of *Śikṣā* (*science of phonetics or pronunciation*) and *Vyākaraṇa* (*science of grammar*). Ramberg (1999) in his thesis explores the effect of reading different Vedic texts.

the Bhagavadgītā, which could be designated as pedagogical. But, Maharishi states that his interpretation is different and new, and has the purpose of bringing forth the original meaning of Lord Kṛṣṇa's teaching.

In his early philosophy, Maharishi does not focus on anything besides development of consciousness. However, later on you can see that Maharishi actually develops different philosophies of culture, education, science, arts etc. It is of course all in the framework of Vedic Science, and the basis is the experience of pure consciousness; the different sciences are “**consciousness-based**”. He is emphasizing the importance of tradition in his vision, so to speak. This would mean that, when he develops the philosophy and practice of *āyurveda*, *sthāpatyaveda*, *dhanurveda*, *gandharvaveda* etc., he considers that he is reviving the Vedic knowledge.

In his exposition of Maharishi's view of the Veda, Egenes describes the *uncreated commentary*, Apauruṣeya Bhāṣya, of Maharishi as Maharishi's explanation of how the **R̥g Veda** begins with the transcending of one individual and ends with the whole of society in harmony or enlightenment. (Egenes 1985, pp. 71f). In the press conference manuscript, Maharishi sees the Vedic scriptures as symbolic renderings of physiological expressions and functions. (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 2002-2006, July 24, 2002). Maharishi refers to Nader's studies of human physiology (Nader 2000 [1994]) and continues referring to Nader, but also to the war of America in explaining how the whole of the Vedic literature is an account of the creative process in nature and that the whole of Veda is shown in the human structure

using the analogy with a seed. It is here that his vision of a better world emerges.

In the commentary on the Bhagavadgītā, chapter 1 verse 23, he means that war could be unavoidable once the negativity of wrongdoers has accumulated, and then he comments on the actual narration of the Bhagavadgītā. The notion that it is a function of consciousness within physiology he does not elaborate on in the commentary, as he does in a press conference of 2002.

The view of Maharishi that he sees both dynamism and silence in pure consciousness can be compared to the idea of production of the changing world from Ātman as Keith renders it when he states that according to Gauḍapāda, the master of Śaṅkara's master Govinda, in Vedānta emphasis is laid on the fact that ultimately visions in a dream and those of the waking state cannot be absolutely distinguished. If the apparitions in a dream are really produced by the activity of Ātman, so in the case of waking states the objects are equally produced by the Ātman. The thing and its representation condition each other, each separately has no existence, but they exist in Ātman only (Keith 1976, p. 558).¹³⁶

When the awareness experiences the state of pure consciousness through Transcendental Meditation it becomes identical with *R̥gveda* and is aware of the coexistence of silence and dynamism and their participating with each other. This means there are creativity within

¹³⁶ Gauḍapādas view from Māṇḍūkya-kārikā 2,1-18; 4,67; cf. Aitareya-Upaniṣad 1,3,12; See also Frauwallner, p. 57: "When a man sinks into sleep, the soul withdraws from the organs of the body which consequently become bereft of consciousness and suspend their activity. During the dream-state, the soul tarries in transitional state between this existence and beyond and creates, by virtue of his creative power his dream-world. When the dream-sleep goes over into deep sleep, the soul temporarily withdraws completely out of this existence and unites himself with the *Brahma*. In this condition he is without consciousness because knowledge alone without something knowable cannot be known."

the singularity of the Absolute, pure consciousness, and this is the basis of all evolutionary processes in the diverse universe. In this way, the structure of Veda is explained as existing in the structure of Transcendental Consciousness (Nader 2000 [1994], p. 53f).

This view is consistent with the view of Gauḍapāda in his *Māṇḍūkya-kārikā* as well.¹³⁷ With a simile also used in the Bhagavadgītā commentary Maharishi describes the nature of physiology in terms of fluctuations or reverberations of consciousness, in the same way as Nader in his exposition and Gauḍapāda in his *kārikā* for that matter.

Again, there is the description of dynamism in silence and the togetherness, the Saṃhitā of Ṛṣi, Devatā and Chandas, silence, dynamism and hiding quality. Maharishi here uses the concept *hiding quality*, and, as I construe it, this equals *chandas* in the togetherness of three in one. In this context, he does not mention the *māyā* concept, which is often used to define the quality of illusion or delusion when it comes to explaining creation in relation to Ātman in Advaita philosophy. It seems that the hiding quality would correspond to *māyā*, since *māyā* has exactly the purpose of hiding the true reality of Ātman or pure consciousness to the observer. The message is the same as in the commentary on the Bhagavadgītā, some 40 years earlier and with the simile of sap in a tree, frequently used in the commentary, Maharishi continues his message to this press conference (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 2002-2006, June 18, 2003).

¹³⁷ See Appendix H, p. 411.

I would consider from my reading of the texts that Maharishi in accordance with the tradition of the Advaita Vedānta School of philosophy in his analysis and vision of the nature of existence is putting the rendering of Gauḍapāda and for that matter Śaṅkara in a new context and with a vocabulary that is often different.

Robinson regards Maharishi as critical to other commentaries of the Bhagavadgītā, which he stated did not give a faithful account of the true meaning of it. She considers Maharishi classically Advaitin, but concerning knowledge and its relation to action and devotion different from conventional interpretations of Śaṅkara. This is of course to be expected as Maharishi considered conventional interpretations as not giving a significant view of Śaṅkara's philosophy.

Since, according to Robinson in her interpretation of Maharishi's commentary on Bhagavadgītā, the technique of Transcendental Meditation had proven beneficial to people from different backgrounds, Maharishi considered this truth accessible to all regardless of culture or religion. Robinson thus states that Maharishi's "frame of reference was far wider than Hinduism since...it was the shared basis of all religions". This viewpoint is confirmed in Maharishi's discourses in the press conference material, which is dated 40 years after the commentary on the Bhagavadgītā.

I consider Robinson's interpretation valid, but would again like to reflect briefly on the view that Maharishi's interpretation of knowledge and its relation to action and devotion is different than conventional readings of Śaṅkara's philosophy. Maharishi's view on this would be that his interpretation is *more* in accord with Śaṅkara's in-

tentions. Maharishi sees traditional interpreters of Śaṅkara as misguided, when they did not have a practical application and thus did not give the seeker a practical path to enlightenment.

Maharishi in his commentary on chapter 4 verse 6 as a commentary on the reading of Kṛṣṇa's proclamation in this verse, "remaining in my own nature I take birth" uses the simile of the *sap in a tree*. This I would compare to the theology of Rāmānuja who holds that the final meaning of Vedānta is that only Brahman exists and everything existing constitutes a form of Brahman as his body (Ramanuja's *Vedārthaasamgraha* 85, in Gansten 2002, p. 42).

Also in the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad commentary by Śaṅkara, one can see the correspondence to Maharishi's view of silence and dynamism as coexisting in the pure consciousness. As an example, in the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 1,4,7 with Śaṅkara's analysis, the word *praviṣṭa* "entered", in this text, presents the picture of the Self entering into creation and giving spirit to it. According to Śaṅkara "The Supreme Self did **not** enter into the universe in its own form, but while in it, appeared under a different feature; hence it is metaphorically spoken of as having entered it." (Madhavananda and Śaṅkarācārya 1965 (1935), p. 115). In his commentary Śaṅkara interprets the text using the *superimposition-theory*, *vivartavāda*, which reflects Śaṅkara's concept of the Ultimate. His view on the Self is that the differences of agent, action and result have been *superimposed* by primordial ignorance (*avidyā*). That is the cause of the universe consisting of name and form.

Relating Maharishi's metaphorical language to tradition, there are both established similes and metaphors from mainly the Upaniṣads, and also innovative metaphorical language, principally concerning similes. Traditional similes are e.g., the one of seeds being roasted, which then cannot germinate, that is compared to the enlightened person, whose accumulated karma does not give rise to future action. Other similes are those using sap in a tree for the relationship between the Absolute and the relative fields of life; and, the archer pulling the bowstring back on the bow for being able to act in a skilful manner. The intent of the similes in Maharishi's commentary is closely related to the ones in the Upaniṣads, e.g., those of the caterpillar and the goldsmith in the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 4, 4, 3-4. This of course also could be an interesting future field of study, making a more literary analysis of Maharishi's metaphorical language both in the commentary and other texts from different periods.

One could say, using a metaphor, that Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, being anchored to the tradition of his master Guru Dev, Swāmi Brahmānanda Saraswatī, in his own style has revived the Vedic knowledge. This revival Maharishi of course attributes to his master, but Maharishi has put it into an intelligible language. His Apauruṣeya Bhāṣya is an innovative way of looking at the old Vedic literature, with the inherent interpretation of Veda in its own structure. In his Vedic Science we can see the tradition of Śaṅkara revived or renewed with a vision of the fundamental understanding of the ultimate reality in his recognition of the saṃhitā of ṛṣi, devatā and chandas or the coexistence of silence and dynamism and its hiding quality in pure con-

sciousness. Then Maharishi's vision in the commentary on the Bhagavadgītā would be the introduction of a technique to develop pure consciousness and to develop higher states of consciousness by practising Transcendental Meditation, thus realizing through practice the theory, tradition and philosophy of Vedānta. This is Practice before Theory. In the recent publications the vision would be the unfoldment and description of Veda in pure consciousness through development of higher states of consciousness, thus realizing an interpretation of Veda also through practice, and for that matter from revelation. Here the philosophy of Vedānta is developed and the interpretation is put into application in different avenues of life. It is still Practice before Theory, but theory is extensively elaborated as well.

Formulating in some final words a kind of *theory* of Maharishi's in many respects multifaceted teachings and philosophy is a challenge. However, there are certain distinguishable *patterns*, of which I have presented some above. At this point, I would still like to put forward a few concluding thoughts, starting with the part of his teachings that pertains to *practice*. Both the technique of Transcendental Meditation and of the TM-Sidhis Maharishi gave a new interpretation concerning their application, since he considered that they were misinterpreted. The techniques are old Yoga-techniques traditionally called *dhyāna* and *saṃyama*, according to Patañjali's Yoga Sūtras. In the *practice* area, we could also put *the Group Dynamics of Consciousness*, which is the group practice of the Transcendental Meditation and TM-Sidhi programmes together.

The group practice in turn is dependent on or related to a theory that considers consciousness as a field, and which is derived from both old Advaita philosophy and quantum physics, or more precisely the unified field theory. In the theory area, we also have the systematization of the *seven states of consciousness*, Maharishi's *consciousness theories* and his theory of the development of creation described in "Veda" in the *Apauruṣeya Bhāṣya*. Further, in the theory area, there is Maharishi's general formulation of the "Vedic" philosophy in the terminology of science in Maharishi Vedic Science and his endeavour to encourage the practical applications to be examined in scientific studies.

The sources I have studied point to a development of different focuses at different times. The different focus of Maharishi's teachings and philosophy at different times I consider is due to the development of his movement and to the course of events and trends in society. In the 1960s, the trends of society seem to have coincided with the message of Maharishi of peace to the individual and peace to the world. I would however say that Maharishi seemed to be more focused on his "plan" than sensitive to trends in society, as e.g., during the decades from the 1980s there was an individualistic current in society¹³⁸ in the West, but Maharishi was during this time focused on creating groups of meditators practising together in the Group Dynamics of Consciousness. Therefore, he had a more group-oriented approach in his teachings concerning the practical side ever since the 1980s, which seems not to have been the case during the earliest

¹³⁸ Cf. e.g., the works of Max Weber (1968) who in *Economy and Society* discusses the concept "methodological individualism" from a sociological and philosophical starting point and Hermansson (2006), who discusses the concept of individualism in a context of identity, which she reflects on in a literary framework.

stages of development of his teaching. Is this a kind of counterforce or intentional opposition? Is Maharishi working against these individualistic trends in society? Well, yes, this seems to be the case in a sense, viewed from an outside perspective. However, whether it is so as seen from an inside perspective, as an intentional opposition, I can only speculate on. I would say that Maharishi is traditional in his endeavour in a sense, since there are descriptions in the Vedic literature of how to accomplish peaceful societies and by extension world peace through group dynamics of consciousness. You could say that in his vision of world peace Maharishi is focusing on group activity as described in tradition (cf. the concept of *Rashtriya Kavach* above). From an inside perspective there is most likely no intentional opposition from Maharishi's side. His ambition is founded on the tradition of the Vedas and the research on the Maharishi Effect. Generally speaking Maharishi advocated togetherness in many contexts, and would often suggest working together in any kind of endeavour. Togetherness would furthermore be essential to his general philosophy viewed from the perspective of higher states of consciousness, since everything and "everyone" is identical to your "Self" on the level of understanding corresponding to e.g., Unity Consciousness. This idea comes to expression in the final hymns of Ṛgveda, 10:191, 3-4:

3. samāno mantraḥ **samitiḥ samānī** samānaṃ manah saha cittameṣām
samānaṃ mantramabhi mantraye vaḥ samānena vohaviṣā juhomi
4. samānī va ākūtiḥ samānā hṛdayāni vaḥ
samānamastu vomano yathā vaḥ susahāsati¹³⁹

¹³⁹ In Griffith's (1973 [1889], p. 651) translation: "3. The place is common, **common the assembly**, common the mind, so be their thought united. A common purpose do I lay before you, and worship with your

“*Samitiḥ samānī*” Maharishi interprets as “the assemblage in evenness” when he says that Ṛgveda starts with the transcending of one individual and ends with the whole society established in harmony, or in enlightenment.

In this context I would also like to bring forward a few comments on the notion of world peace and the Maharishi Effect, which I have elaborated on in the chapter called *Creating World Peace – an achievable enterprise* (see p. 275). I tried to clarify a theory that considers consciousness to have field properties, by reviewing a few papers on the so-called Maharishi Effect published from 1988-2003. The authors consider that application of the Maharishi Effect in a society as well as globally can reduce stress and tension in the collective consciousness, promoting positive trends in society and eventually world peace.¹⁴⁰

What the authors of the papers did was to take a theory built on a correspondence between the philosophy of Maharishi¹⁴¹ and the theories of quantum physics, to test in practice. The basic theory is that there is a field correspondence between individual consciousness and collective consciousness and that they influence each other on the field level.

My impression is that at least in part owing to these studies, there are today groups established in different places around the world practising Transcendental Meditation and the TM-Sidhi programme

general oblation. 4. One and the same be your resolve, and be your minds in one accord. United be the thoughts of all that all may happily agree.”

¹⁴⁰ In this context, I also want to mention that Maharishi arranged several World Peace Conferences during many years inviting scientists from different fields.

¹⁴¹ This could be considered in many respects, and as described in many texts, similar to the Advaita Vedānta.

daily and recurrently. The concept for the group practice is *Group Dynamics of Consciousness*, which should be considered an application of a field theory of consciousness.

According to some scholars, Maharishi already in 1960 had a theory that if one percent of a population practised his technique of Transcendental Meditation and thus experienced pure consciousness, it would influence that society as a whole. The fact that the theory was put into practice at a later time and that the practice of the advanced TM-Sidhi programme had its own implications, I suggest would have consolidated the theory in the mind of Maharishi. This most certainly had consequences for his future development of the Transcendental Meditation movement and for his vision. From now on, the Group Dynamics of Consciousness was in Maharishi's focus in terms of practice and he established large groups practising Transcendental Meditation and the TM-Sidhi programme together on a permanent basis.

To look into the development of Maharishi's teachings in an in-depth study of his ideas of world peace and its relation to science I would consider contains intriguing future research tasks. What were Maharishi's earliest expressed thoughts on the matter of world peace and its relation to science and in particular quantum physics? What consequences did his collaboration with scientists have on his ideas of world peace? What implications did the studies on the Maharishi Effect have on his teachings in this context? How did the establishment of groups practising the Group Dynamics of Consciousness influence the development of Maharishi's teachings and philosophy?

How did *theory* develop in relation to *practice* and vice versa concerning the question of world peace?

When it comes to the Group Dynamics of Consciousness, we find that Maharishi applies his practical sense, putting practice in the high seat. The theory, derived from both quantum physics and Advaita philosophy, without its application, in Maharishi's world of ideas, is of no avail when it comes to establishing a better society or world peace. I would suggest, based on my sources, that the promotion of the Group Dynamics of Consciousness, Maharishi considered maybe his most important contribution, as his endeavour from the start of his teaching was to create a more peaceful world.

Finally, I would like to state, using another metaphor, that there is an ocean of text material including books, articles, audiotapes, videotapes, papers and research studies, primary sources as well as secondary sources expounding the wealth of wisdom expressed by Maharishi during his teaching for more than fifty years. In my mind, as a "Maharishi" and a "Yogi", he stands out as a reviver of "Veda" and its practical application, as a philosopher of "Vedic Knowledge" with a universal point of view, as a scientist in his own right, as well as an educator, a lecturer, an author, and a poet. All these avenues of activity could indeed be inspiring fields of future study when it comes to the accomplishments of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi.

After having looked at more than 50 years of Maharishi's activities I find it tempting to end where Maharishi started, quoting a lecture from November 7, 1960, in the Guildhall in Cambridge, U.K.:

This meditation is a simple process of fathoming the deeper levels of con-

sciousness, eventually getting to this transcendental Being, the state of pure absolute consciousness, and having gone to that field of the being which is blissful in nature, mind becomes contented, becomes full with wisdom, becomes full with creativity, because that is the source of all creation, that transcendental divine nature in man that is fathomed through this meditation. The word meditation is not new. The gains from meditation are not new to be counted. But the information that it is easy for everyone to meditate, and experience the inner glories of life, this seems to be a new message. Although the message is centuries, centuries old message, the same age-old message of Buddha, the same age-old message of Christ, the same age-old message of Krishna; get within, experience the kingdom of heaven, experience Nirvana, experience eternal freedom. Come out with that freedom, live a life of freedom in the world – the same age-old message. (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, 1960).

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APPENDICES

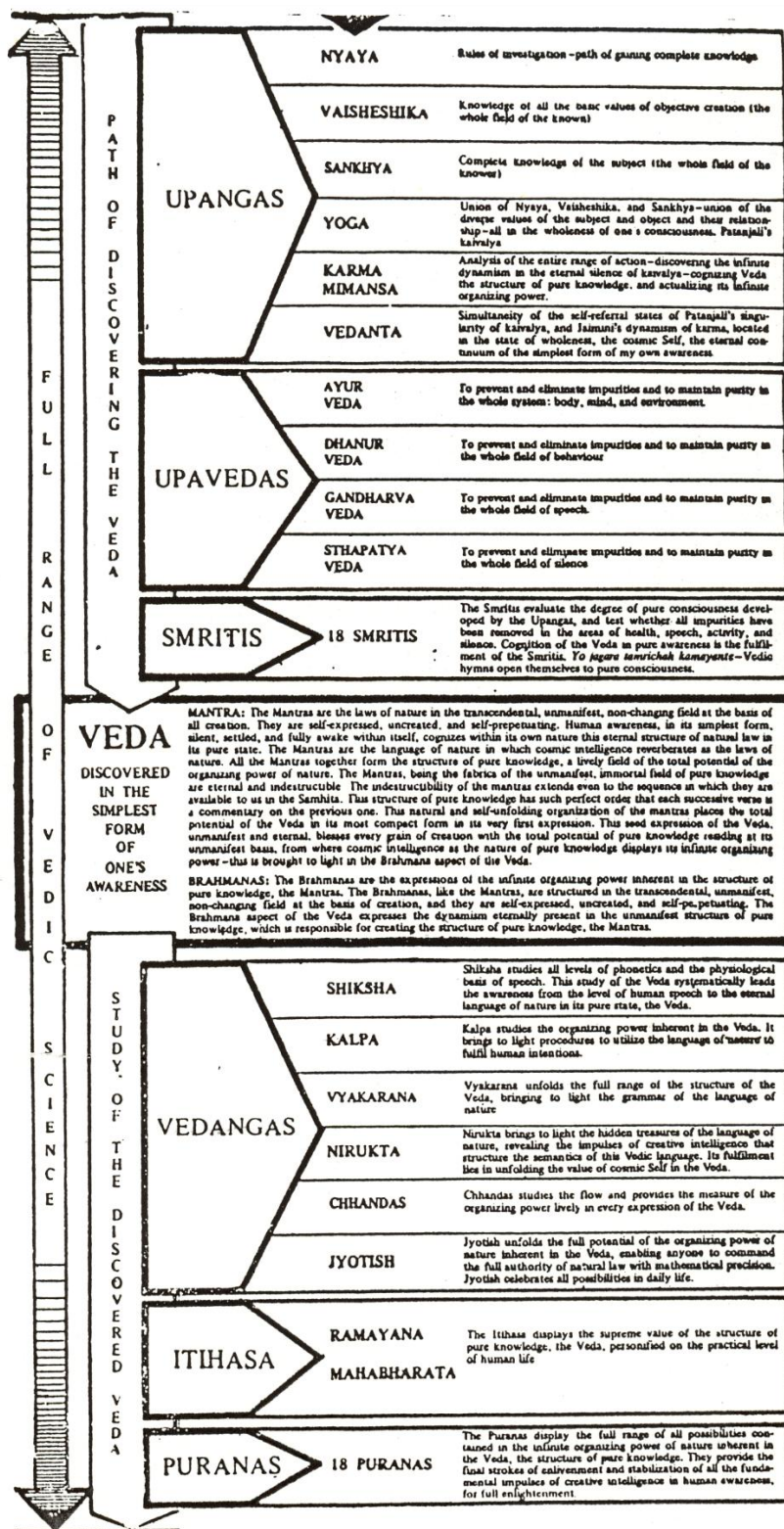
Abbreviations in Appendices

BAU =	Brhadāranyaka Upaniṣad
BhG =	Bhagavadgītā
ChU =	Chāndogya Upaniṣad
KU =	Kaṭha Upaniṣad
Śv.U. =	Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad

Appendix A

Outline of the Vedic Literature according to Maharishi in 1980.
Offprint from The Sunday Standard: Maharishi's World Assembly on
Vedic Science, New Delhi, November 30, 1980

To be compared with Appendix B, a later development of the *40 Aspects of Vedic Literature and Corresponding Qualities of Consciousness and Areas of Human Physiology*.



Appendix B

Chart of the 40 Aspects of Vedic Literature with Corresponding Qualities of Consciousness and Areas of Human Physiology

Online: http://isl.mum.edu/vedicreserve/table_qualities.htm. Accessed March 20, 2014.

ऋक् वेद	R̥k Veda	Holistic (Dynamic Silence)	Whole Physiology
Veda			
सामवेद	Sāma Veda	Flowing Wakefulness	Sensory Systems
यजुर्वेद	Yajur Veda	Offering and Creating	Processing Systems
अथर्ववेद	Atharva Veda	Reverberating Wholeness	Motor Systems
Vedāṅga			
शिक्षा	Shikshā	Expressing	Autonomic Ganglia
कल्प	Kalp	Transforming	Limbic System
व्याकरण	Vyākaraṇ	Expanding	Hypothalamus
निरुक्त	Nirukt	Self-Referral	Pituitary gland
छन्द	Chhand	Measuring and Quantifying	Neurotransmitters, Neurohormones
ज्योतिष	Jyotish	All-Knowing	Basal ganglia, cerebral cortex, cranial nerve, brain stem

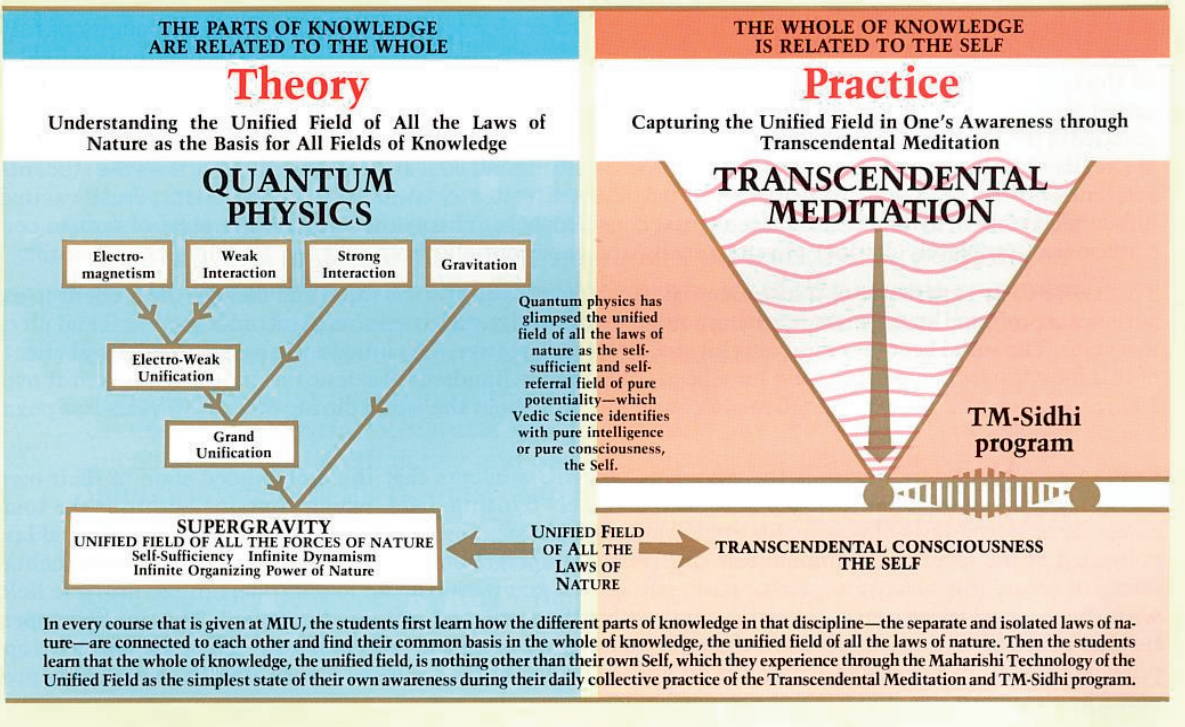
Upāṅga			
न्याय	Nyāya	Distinguishing and Deciding	Thalamus
वैशेषिक	Vaisheshik	Specifying	Cerebellum
संख्य	Sāṅkhya	Enumerating	Cells, tissues, organs: types and categories
योग	Yoga	Unifying	Association fibres of the Cerebral Cortex
कर्ममीमांसा	Karma Mīmāṃsā	Analyzing	The central nervous system
वेदान्त	Vedānt	Lively Absolute (I-ness or Being)	Integrated functioning of the central nervous system
Upa-Veda			
गन्धर्ववेद	Gandharva Veda	Integrating and Harmonizing	Cycles and rhythms, pacemaker cells
धनुर्वेद	Dhanur Veda	Invincible and Progressive	Immune system, biochemistry
स्थापत्यवेद	Sthāpatya Veda	Establishing	Anatomy
हारीत संहिता	Hārīta Saṁhitā	Nourishing	Venous and biliary systems
भेल संहिता	Bhel Saṁhitā	Differentiating	Lymphatic system and glial cells
काश्यप संहिता	Kāshyap Saṁhitā	Equivalency	Arterial system
Āyur-Veda			
चरक संहिता	Charak Saṁhitā	Balancing-Holding Together and Supporting	Cell Nucleus
सुश्रुत संहिता	Sushruta	Separating	Cytoplasm and cell organelles
वाग्भट्ट संहिता	Vāgbhatt	Communication and Eloquence	Cytoskeleton and cell membrane
माधवनिदान संहिता	Mādhav Nidān Saṁhitā	Diagnosing	Mesodermal cells
शार्ङ्गधर संहिता	Shārngadhar Saṁhitā	Synthesizing	Endodermal cells
भावप्रकाश संहिता	Bhāva Prakāśh Saṁhitā	Enlightening	Ectodermal cells
Brāhmaṇa			
उपनिषद्	Upanishad	Transcending	Ascending tracts of the central nervous system
आरण्यक	Āraṇyak	Stirring	Fasciculi proprii
ब्राह्मण	Brāhmaṇa	Structuring	Descending tracts of the central nervous system
इतिहास	Itihās	Blossoming of Totality	Voluntary motor and sensory projections
पुराण	Purāṇ	Ancient and Eternal	Great intermediate net
स्मृति	Smṛiti	Memory	Memory systems and reflexes

Prātishākhya			
ऋक वेद प्रातिशाख्य	Rk Veda Prātishākhya	All-Pervading Wholeness	Cerebral Cortex Layer I
शुक्लयजुर्वेद प्रातिशाख्य	Shukl-Yajur-Veda Prātishākhya	Silencing, Sharing and Spreading	Cerebral Cortex Layer II
अथर्ववेद प्रातिशाख्य	Atharva Veda Prātishākhya	Unfolding	Cerebral Cortex Layer V
चतुरध्यायी	Chaturadhyāyī	Dissolving	Cerebral Cortex Layer VI
कृष्णयजुर्वेद प्रातिशाख्य	Krishṇ-Yajur-Veda Prātishākhya	Omnipresent	Cerebral Cortex Layer III
सामवेद प्रातिशाख्य	Sāma Veda Prātishākhya	Unmanifesting The Parts, But Manifesting The Whole	Cerebral Cortex Layer IV

Appendix C

Unified Field of Quantum Physics related to Transcendental Meditation.

Offprint from Maharishi International University pamphlet on Maharishi's Integrated System of Education, USA.



Appendix D

An Experience of Cosmic Consciousness and Unity Consciousness

E-mail from a teacher of Transcendental Meditation to meditators 2011-05-05, with a personal experience from a Transcendental Meditation meditator of the state of Cosmic Consciousness and Unity Consciousness.

Please enjoy this inspiring experience, presented last week during the Invincible America Assembly's daily experience meeting.

This is from a very humble and modest Invincible America Assembly participant (from the Maharishi Patanjali Golden Dome) who apparently has been witnessing his sleep, dreaming, waking--everything--all nonstop without a single break--for two years. He is also experiencing some of the things Maharishi said would be present in the state of Cosmic Consciousness--including an unbroken sense of eternal freedom, eternal liberation. Asked to share his experience with our group, he wrote:

Cosmic Consciousness arrived, softly and unexpectedly, as I exited the Dome one morning in November 2008. I was 64 years old. I had been doing Transcendental Meditation since 1973 and the TM-Sidhi Program since 1978.

How did I know Cosmic Consciousness had come? All I can say is it was clear that pure consciousness (pure "being") was with me as I exited the Dome. It was clear that soft transcendence, that feeling of unboundedness I had become accustomed to in meditation all those years ... was now with me in activity. Everything was different - yet the same. This new element was with me as if dogging my footsteps--this new soft sweetness, this new purity, this new feeling of lightness, this new utter clarity.

As with most of us, I had a career to manage during all those years, and a family, with children, to support. But I made time for my program twice a day no matter what, even if it meant, as it often did, meditating in a bus, an airplane, a library or even more unlikely locations.

It never occurred to me to stop meditating, or even miss a meditation. I knew before my intro lecture was half over, that I would do this TM thing, and would never stop.

Over the years, I waited expectantly and patiently for "Cosmic Consciousness" to arrive. Always feeling it must be just around the corner.

As decades of practice elapsed and I grew older, I began to abandon any notion that I would reach Cosmic Consciousness in this life. I never stopped believing it was a reality, nor that Maharishi's TM and TM-Sidhi program could lead one there. I just stopped believing that it was going to happen to me.

While I usually enjoyed my programs, there was never anything "flashy" going on. As years passed, it even seemed that the multitude of changes I had noticed in myself when I first began meditating ... had dwindled significantly or even disappeared. I felt like I was on a plateau. Like I was walking in place.

My general attitude was, "OK, it's not going to happen in this life. But I know TM is a good thing. I've always known that, from my very first meditation. So, I'll just keep doing it because I should go as far as I can in this life. Who knows Š maybe next time around ..."

So, when Cosmic Consciousness tiptoed up to me that November day, just after I turned 64, I was absolutely astounded and delighted. It seemed so delicate, fragile, almost shy. I did not expect it to last. As days and weeks went by, the experience not only endured but grew in strength. I finally came to accept without any doubt -- it was here to stay. With that, I began to relax into it and just let it be what it was...without any expectations or preconceived notions.

I was as surprised as anyone that such a thing could happen to me. As far as I or anyone could tell from my life, I was as unlikely and undeserving a candidate for this as anyone I could think of. Even after years of meditating I still had flaws you could drive a truck through. I was nowhere near as well studied in the Vedic literature as so many around me. One might call my daily routine marginally ayurvedic, I suppose. But even that would be a stretch. Given all my responsibilities, I figured I was doing the best I could.

Yet here IT was and IT was undeniable. I thought perhaps it was one of those 1% chances of a cosmic mistake I heard Maharishi talk about once. And for quite a while was sure that as soon as the mistake was discovered by the Cosmic computer, it would be rectified.

Two and half years later, to my increasing delight, the experience of Cosmic Consciousness has matured into something even grander. Being shines at me from all things and all people. My own Self is everywhere, in everything and everyone. The burdens, troubles and vicissitudes of life seem all but gone or, at least, drastically mitigated. In their place, is a lightness, delight, sweetness and ease ... that is absolutely indescribable.

Believe me, I know this is no accomplishment of mine. Any kudos for this are due to Maharishi and Guru Dev alone. This is not false modesty. This is the truth.

The only thing I ever did was to follow the simple (thank goodness) instructions Maharishi gave for the practice of the TM and TM-Sidhi program. Really, that's all I ever did. That it resulted in this experience for me ... is as miraculous as anything I can think of. Yet it's utterly real, utterly simple, and utterly available to all. That I know for certain.

If my life serves no other purpose, it is to demonstrate that, if this can happen to someone like me, it can happen to anyone. It can happen to everyone. That it did happen to me... reveals the immensity of Maharishi's knowledge and remarkable power of his techniques--and of course the unfathomable silence, bliss, and sanctity of our beloved Guru Dev.

Jai Guru Dev

Appendix E

Historical Development and Features of the Bhagavadgītā with References to Maharishi Mahesh Yogi's Commentary Chapters 1-6

Revised and extended version of a chapter in my licentiates thesis, *The Gita Pattern – Development of Genre-Analytical Methods in Relation to Indian Religious Literature* (Lindh, 1990).

Research History of the Bhagavadgītā

In the thesis on Maharishi Mahesh Yogi's teaching and philosophy, *"Unity Pervades all Activity as Water Every Wave"-Principal Teachings and Philosophy of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi* (Lindh 2014), I am for the period of the 1960s, using Maharishi's translation and commentary on the Bhagavadgītā chapters 1-6 (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 [1967]) as a source to his world of ideas. This article is meant to give a short background of the research history of the original text of the Bhagavadgītā and its relation to some extent to Maharishi Mahesh Yogi's commentary.

What is the context of Bhagavadgītā in a research historical perspective? When shortly describing the research history of the Bhagavadgītā I will look into the research done from the time the scripture became known in Europe until today. This section will only serve the purpose of briefly putting the text in its research history. To shorten the section in this respect I have chosen to follow the account in Angelica Malinars *The Bhagavadgītā, Doctrines and Contexts* (2007).

Malinar makes a chronological survey of previous research and puts it into the context of its relation to the epic Mahābhārata of which it is considered a part. She states, “while agreeing with most scholars that the BhG¹⁴² was not an integral part of the oldest version of the epic, I nonetheless argue that it was not composed independently of the epic tradition, but in relation to and even for the epic. The BhG became part of the epic in the course of its own textual history.” (Malinar 2007, p. 33). Malinar distinguishes a few different interpretations made by researchers over time. The interpretations I consider should be looked upon as complementary, even though they in certain respects contradict each other:

The first interpretation is that the Bhagavadgītā is an Indian Bible for the Bhāgavata religion. It was included in the epic to promote their religion, Kṛṣṇaism. In this tradition of scholars Malinar puts R. G. Bhandarkar, Dandekar, Hill, Lamotte and Markovich. (See Bhandarkar 1874; Bhandarkar 1910; Bhandarkar 1913; Dandekar 1963; Dandekar 1975-76; Hill 1928; Lamotte 1929; Markovich 1958)

There are a number of scholars claiming that “the BhG is a philosophical text aimed at producing a synthesis of different schools” (Malinar 2007, p. 33). These scholars are Kosambi, Dandekar, Hill, Lamotte and Markovich. (Dandekar 1963; Dandekar 1975-76; Hill 1928; Kosambi 1978; see Kosambi 1962; Lamotte 1929; Markovich 1958)

The next category of interpretations considers that the mystical and hence irrational character of the Bhagavadgītā is the cause of its unity. Edgerton, Otto, Hauer and Zaehner is of this opinion. (See e.g.

¹⁴² Abbreviation for *Bhagavadgītā*.

Edgerton 1925; Edgerton 1946; Hauer 1934, 75; Otto 1934, 46; Zaehner 1969,).

Then there is the opinion that the Bhagavadgītā gives an expression to the interests and the ideology of the ruling classes. This opinion is represented by researchers such as Kosambi, Ruben and Thakur. (See e. g. Kosambi 1962; Ruben 1951; Thakur 1982)

The last category of opinion represented by Malinar is the one considering the Bhagavadgītā as a genuine part of the Mahābhārata and that it cannot be understood to its full extent without taking the context of the whole epic into consideration. This is because “it offers solutions to important issues brought up in the epic narrative (Biardeau, van Buitenen) or provides an apologetic justification for the moral tricks used by the Pāṇḍavas and Kṛṣṇa to win victory (Holzmann, Lévi, von Simson)” (Malinar 2007, p. 33)¹⁴³

The different interpretations and positions that different researchers take are in my opinion interesting. Often researchers claim their position in disagreement with other researchers, but I am inclined to see different standpoints in this respect more as complementary opinions and not as excluding. To me it is obvious that seeing the Bhagavadgītā as a philosophical text synthesizing different schools of thought is not in contradiction to the standpoint that it gives expression to the interests of the ruling class. Nor is it incongruous that it is both a “Bible” to the Bhavagata religion and that it may be a genuine part of the Mahābhārata epic.

¹⁴³ (See also e.g. Biardeau 1976; Biardeau 1981; Biardeau 1997; and Holzmann 1892-95; Lévi 1917; Simson 1968-69; van Buitenen 1981).

Situation of the Bhagavadgītā – Conditions of Origin and Development

The Unity of the Bhagavadgītā

Maharishi Mahesh Yogi's focus in his commentary on the Bhagavadgītā I consider in more detail elsewhere in my thesis, but it seems to have its basis in promoting the view that knowledge is different in different states of consciousness and that it has a functional implication in the practice of the technique of Transcendental Meditation. He also puts his commentary into the tradition of commentaries, which has developed into a specific genre, by stating that there has been something lacking in the commentaries for a long period of time, namely the practicality of the teaching of the gītā. Focus is on Self-realization, he asserts, and makes references to the historic commentary of Śaṅkara (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), preface; see also Robinson 2005, p. 136ff).¹⁴⁴

The Bhagavadgītā is traditionally considered to be *saṃgraha*, or a compilation, giving expression to different views on and manifestations of the concept of God.¹⁴⁵ Lamotte on his side, supported by Zaehner, is of the opinion that "Kṛishṇa who has supplanted the Brahman both in theodicy and in cosmology now surpasses it in eschatology too..." (Lamotte cited in Zaehner 1969, 480, p. 3). Zaehner who claims the unity of the Bhagavadgītā,¹⁴⁶ nevertheless, and this is a major concern of his, has to "concede that transitions from one topic to another are often disconcertingly abrupt." (Zaehner 1969,

¹⁴⁴ Robinson's account is found above in the chapter "From Vedānta to Vedic Science – Teachings of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi".

¹⁴⁵ For the discussion on the concept of the Ultimate in the gītā see e.g., Lamotte, pp. 3ff.

¹⁴⁶ See Zaehner, p. 2, "It was only after teaching the Gita for a number of years that it appeared to me, with each re-reading, to be a far more unitary work than most modern scholars had been prepared to concede..."

480, p. 5)¹⁴⁷. My own position is that I would join the group of scholars who believe in the unity of the text, for reasons accounted for below.

The viewpoint of inter alia Garbe and Otto, of an "original Gītā" I find, like Edgerton, Zaehner, and other scholars, obsolete. I would rather agree with von Glasenapp, whose view is that reconstructing an original text "never will have any objective weight, since the contradictions and leaps of thought, which for the European scholar, indicates that the text has been extended not necessarily have been conceived as such by an Indian 2000 years ago" (von Glasenapp 1980, 317, p. 108). In addition Edgerton says, and here I concur, that "...the fact that a given verse or passage is logically inconsistent with other passages in the Gītā constitutes, in my opinion, absolutely no reason for suspecting that it is unoriginal." (Edgerton 1946, p. xiv).

Moreover, the non-variant readings of the manuscripts available support the view of the unity of the text, as Edgerton states:

My own interpretation tacitly assumes the unity of the Gītā. There seems to me to be no definite reason for any other assumption. It is certain, at any rate, that for many centuries the Gītā has been handed down as a unit, in practically the form in which it now exists. The sanctity which it acquired in the eyes of the Hindus has protected it to an extraordinary degree from changes and from textual corruptions. Important variant readings in the very numerous manuscripts of the vulgate version are virtually non-existent, and no far-reaching divergences occur in them. (Edgerton 1946, 190, p. xiii).

The discussion of the conception that the Bhagavadgītā, and for that matter the entire Mahābhārata, is attributed to a particular author,

¹⁴⁷ Cf. the viewpoint of Koch below on the reason for doing a form-critical analysis of a text.

Vyasa, I think in some regards has a parallel in the “Homeric question”.

Indeed, most of the rest of the Indian religious literature is also attributed to Vyasa, which has made scholars suggest that Vyasa be either a title, or a mythological figure (von Glasenapp 1980, 317, p. 68). However, the question remains whether this poem could have been composed by one single author or poet. Maharishi on his side in the preface to his commentary simply states that “Veda Vyasa, the sage of enlightened vision and greatest among the historians of antiquity, records the growth of unrighteousness in the families of those who ruled the people about five thousand years ago” (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), p. 3). He obviously sees both Vyasa and the tidings of the Mahābhārata and hence the Bhagavadgītā at least in a sense as historical events, uninteresting to discuss or question. His viewpoint is pedagogical, in the sense that he is interested in the content of the text and what applications and understanding it can give to the modern man of the world today, and what has been missing in its interpretation before.

The Homeric question in a way started already in antiquity with some Alexandrian grammarians who proclaimed that the Iliad and the Odyssey, due to inner criteria could not have had the same author. In 1795, F.A. Wolf claimed that the Homeric poems were derived from a number of smaller poems, couched by different poets, and after a long oral tradition, written down in the 6th century in Athens (Wolf 1795).

The unity of the poems was discussed vividly during the 19th century, and just like the question of the origin of the Bhagavadgītā,

some scholars argued that an original Iliad with time expanded to its present size. Others considered it a unified product, made by a great poet. These hypotheses were varied in different ways.

Later the Homeric question rather was, whether or not the poems were written down at the same time they were produced, or if they had an oral tradition behind them. The discovery of Milman Parry (see Parry and Parry 1987 [1971]), that practically every distinctive feature in Homers poetry is dependent on the economy of oral methods of composition, revolutionized literary circles and had a great impact on cultural history and the history of thought in general (Ong 1991, p. 34).

In our time Homer's achievements are seen as innovative. He connected on to a collective public poetry, giving the elements of oral tradition new form and function with his individual skills and genius (See Hastings 1937, p. 762).¹⁴⁸

Like Homer, the author of the Bhagavadgītā, synthesized different beliefs. And, he conveys a specific concept of the Ultimate¹⁴⁹ to the readers or listeners.

Final Remarks

Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, in his commentary on the Bhagavadgītā, explicitly puts himself in the line of interpreters who consider “Veda” as an ultimate authority. Also in the commentary on chapter one he states that Vyasa is the author of the Bhagavadgītā: “It is the glory of Vyasa, the sage of enlightened vision who wrote down the

¹⁴⁸ (Cf. The New encyclopædia Britannica in 32 volumes 1988, , article "The Homeric Epics").

¹⁴⁹ I would rather use the phrase "concept of the Ultimate", than the term "concept of God" used by Olsson (see e.g. Olsson 1984) since that term may have connotations which are not appropriate in this context where the terms Brahman, Atman, Purusha, Ishvara etc. all represent the thought of an ultimate reality.

Bhagavad-Gita, that the implications of any one word in it are inexhaustible” (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 [1967]). The question of the researcher, who wants to analyse who actually wrote down the text, is irrelevant to the commentator whose only interest is to convey the central teaching of the text and promote in this case a method of development of consciousness for the common person to practice. And, referring to Śaṅkara, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi states: “missing the essence of his wisdom, they (the interpreters of the Gītā) have been unable to save the world from falling ever deeper into ignorance and suffering” (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 (1967), p. 8). However, Maharishi asserts that the practice of Transcendental Meditation is the method to fulfil Śaṅkara’s vision. This is Maharishi’s main teaching in his commentary on Bhagavadgītā chapters 1-6 and what he sees has been missing in the interpretations of the text for a very long time.

Appendix F

The Concept of Ātman in the Upaniṣads and the Bhagavadgītā

Revised and extended version of a chapter in my licentiates thesis, *The Gita Pattern – Development of Genre-Analytical Methods in Relation to Indian Religious Literature* (Lindh, 1990).

In Maharishi Mahesh Yogi's philosophy the concept of *Ātman* could be considered the single most important concept (see Egenes 1985), which everything is built on. Egenes (1985) states that the experience of *Ātman* is the basis of all the higher states of consciousness defined by Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, and actually the basis of his entire teaching.

In this article I will consider certain similes from the Bṛhad-āraṇyaka-Upaniṣad (BAU) to show how the concept was made intelligible in the Upaniṣads. This study is done from a research perspective.

In the BAU, and also in other Upaniṣads, similes are used to explain the concept of Ātman. This is, however, not the case in the Bhagavadgītā. The main reason for this I would consider to be the familiarity with the term in the period of the origin of the Bhagavadgītā. A well-known term does not need making it intelligible by way of using similes. This is further evidenced by the fact that the term "Ātman" is by far the most frequent term used in the Bhagavadgītā to designate the ultimate reality or pure consciousness, whereas "Brahman" is used only half as often, and terms like *Puruṣa*,

Īśvara etcetera are scarcer.¹⁵⁰ What is interesting here is to see how the concept of Ātman has developed in the Upaniṣads through looking primarily on similes. I will as well see how the concept is understood in the Bhagavadgītā. Śaṅkara's view will be discussed in detail from his bhāṣya on the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad. The concept Ātman's connection to Maharishi's teaching will be dealt with below in relation to the concept of consciousness or pure consciousness.

In the present analysis there is a focus on the concept of Ātman, but also on other concepts denoting the universal Being: Brahman, Puruṣa, Īśvara etc.¹⁵¹

History and Development of the Concept of Ātman

When reflecting on the concept of Ātman, it would be appropriate first to consider the origin of the notion.

The perception of unity, which the term Ātman denotes was first expressed in the Ṛgveda (1,164; 10,129). The eternal unity which underlies all the phenomena of nature has Ṛgveda 10,121 as its chief example. On the question of whom the sacrifice should be offered to, the tenth verse replies: "Prajāpati! It is thou and no other, who holdest in thy embrace all that has come to be." (Deussen 1966, pp. 85f). Prajāpati was later displaced by "Brahman" and in the words of Deussen, "...finally the most definite expression for the object of man's search was found in the conception of the Ātman. Ātman is the Indian expression for that which we are accustomed to call 'first

¹⁵⁰ The term ātman is used more than 80 times in the text, Brahman app. 40, Puruṣa 25 times, Īśvara only three times and Bhagavan two.

¹⁵¹ In some text-parts prāṇa, ākāśa etc. denotes the Ultimate reality or Pure consciousness according to Śaṅkara: see e.g. his Brahmasūtra-bhāṣya.

principle' ...it invites us to lay hold of the individual self of man, the self of the universe, and to strip off from man and from nature everything which does not approve itself as this self, as the peculiar, most profound, and ultimate essence of things." (Deussen 1966, p. 86).

In the Upaniṣads, the macrocosm is compared to the human microcosm and this parallelism becomes an identity, which results in an equation between the *Ātman* or self of man and the universe (Edgerton 1946, p. 139).

Both the term *Ātman* and the term *Brahman* denote the first principle of the universe and are usually synonymous in the Upaniṣads. They are often interchangeable with one another in the same text and are even found side by side. Deussen considers that "by *Brahman* the limitation implied in *ātman* is removed, and by *ātman* the conception of *Brahman* as a divinity to be worshipped is condemned." (Edgerton 1946, pp. 86f).

One of the oldest texts expressing the thought of *Ātman* is Śaṇḍilyas speech in Śatapatha-brāhmaṇa 10,6,3 and the Chāndogya-Upaniṣad 3,14:

"One should adore the *ātmā*. Thinking is his stuff, the Breath-force is his body, Light is his form, the world-space his self. His will is true. He is all-doing, all-wishing, all smelling, all-tasting, all-penetrating, wordless, care-free. This my *ātmā* in the interior of the heart is small like a rice-seed, or a barley-seed...That is my *ātmā* in the interior of the heart, that is the *Brahma*. I shall enter into him when I depart from this life. For him who has come to this certainty, there is no more any doubt left. Thus spoke Śaṇḍilya." (Frauwallner 1973, p. 94).

The word Ātman in these texts is actually used in several different senses.¹⁵² Deussen refers to three different Ātmans *and* five different Ātmans. The word, he says, signifies only "the self" (Deussen 1966, p. 94):

Three positions are here possible...(1) the corporeal self, the body; (2) the individual soul, free from the body, which as knowing subject is contrasted with and distinct from the object; or (3) the supreme soul, in which subject and object are no longer distinguished from one another, or which, according to the Indian conception, is the objectless knowing subject.

Further there is in the Taittirīya-Upaniṣad chapter two, an assumption of five different Ātmans, by a division of the intermediate Ātman "into the principles of life, of will, and of knowledge" (Deussen 1966, p. 97). These Ātmans are *annamaya*, *prāṇamaya*, *manomaya*, *viññānamaya*, and *ānandamaya*. They manifest similarly both in humankind and in nature as a whole. The first four, like sheaths (later termed *kośas*), surround the fifth as the true kernel. (Deussen 1966, p. 97).

Of these Ātmans we will concern ourselves only with the first distinction of Ātman in the three positions, since the aim is rather to identify the concept of Ātman as the supreme soul. Besides, these three Ātmans are the only ones to be found in the Bhagavadgītā.

Ātman in the Upaniṣads

Ātman seems to take on a creative aspect in the Upaniṣads and according to Keith,

¹⁵² It is i.e. the reflexive pronoun for all three persons and all three genders, Monier-Williams, p. 135, col. 1.

The general attitude of the Upaniṣads must be described as realistic and not incompatible with a rejection of the subjective idealism of the Vi-jñānavādins. It is expressly made clear that the ātman is the real active force in seeing, in smelling, in speaking, in hearing, in thinking, and the senses are but means, or again the ātman is pictured like the ocean as the abode of all the sense activities (Keith 1976, p. 558. Cf. ChU. 8,12,4 BAU 2,4,11). In addition, ātman is after death not in possession of empirical consciousness, due to its non-connection with matter. Keith sees this as a materialistic view (Keith 1976, p. 558).

Deussen says in a note to the passage BAU 2,4,11, that

The passage does not deal with the question as to how the Ātman is entangled in the saṃsāra but how it is possible that after death, knowledge or consciousness ceases and still the knower remains or abides. The knower is imperishable, states our passage, but nevertheless it knows no longer anything after death, because 'no contact of the same with matter takes place any more' (it dissolves in *mātrāsamsarga*) (Deussen 1966, p. 504, note 1).¹⁵³

This matter is further demonstrated in Śvetaketu's instruction in ChU chapter six, where the elements are created in a series out of the Ātman. These primal elements arise out of one another and can be merged in one another again. The whole sphere of the phenomenal world outside Ātman is said to arise out of these elements (Frauwallner 1973, p. 71f). Ātman is here described as the fine subtle entity, which penetrates and animates everything (Frauwallner 1973, p. 69).

Frequently recurring is the identification of Ātman in the dreamless sleep state. Ātman is, according to Keith, that which knows without possessing any empiric object in dreamless sleep. This Ātman one will then easily identify with Brahman (Keith 1976, p. 568).

¹⁵³ *Mātrāsamsarga* = the mutual connection between the several parts (of a whole).

The idea of production of the changing world from Ātman is developed by Keith: In Vedānta, according to Gauḍapāda, the teacher of Śaṅkara, emphasis is laid on the fact that ultimately visions in a dream and those of the waking state cannot be absolutely distinguished. If the apparitions in a dream are really produced by the activity of Ātman, so in the case of waking states the objects are equally produced by the Ātman. The thing and its representation condition each other, each separately has no existence, but they exist in Ātman only (Keith 1976, p. 558).¹⁵⁴

The term *prājña-ātman*, intelligent or knowing self, is sometimes used to denote the absolute within man (Keith 1976, p. 569. See BAU 4,3,19-33).

There is also a state of the soul other than dreamless sleep in which the unification that ensues unconsciously in deep sleep is realised in a consciousness which is perfect but not resting in experience, or directed towards objects outside itself. This state is called *turiya*, “the fourth”.

Ātman in the Bhagavadgītā

In the Bhagavadgītā, we find a different view. According to Hiri-yanna, there is a tendency to separate Brahman, Ātman, and the world, and see them as coeval although Ātman and the physical world are held to be dependent on Brahman (Hiriyanna 1932, p.

¹⁵⁴ Gauḍapādas view from Māṇḍūkya-kārikā 2,1-18; 4,67; cf. Aitareya-upaniṣad 1,3,12; see also Frauwallner, p. 57: “When a man sinks into sleep, the soul withdraws from the organs of the body which consequently become bereft of consciousness and suspend their activity. During the dream-state, the soul tarries in transitional state between this existence and beyond and creates, by virtue of his creative power his dream-world. When the dream-sleep goes over into deep sleep, the soul temporarily withdraws completely out of this existence and unites himself with the *Brahma*. In this condition he is without consciousness because knowledge alone without something knowable cannot be known.”

132).¹⁵⁵ The physical universe is not traced to Brahman, as is the case in the Upaniṣads, but to *prakṛti* or nature. Prakṛti “is represented as standing over against ātman or the individual soul which is designated *puruṣa*” (Hiriyanna 1932, p.132).

This is the view of Sāṃkhya. The Upaniṣads entertain a different viewpoint in an important respect: the recognition accorded by them to the activity of Ātman (e.g. BAU 3,7 et passim). In Sāṃkhya, the Puruṣa has no real activity while all consciousness depends on an imaginary connection of Puruṣa with Prakṛti (Keith 1976, 312). This view seems to be parallel to the view elaborated upon by Maharishi in his later writings when discussing the silence and dynamism aspects of pure consciousness.

Similes Describing Ātman in the Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Upaniṣad with the Commentary of Śaṅkarācārya

For all the similes of the Bṛhadāraṇyaka-upaniṣad I have used the Kāṇva-recension. This is the one commented upon by Śaṅkara. All references to Śaṅkara are from *The Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad, with the commentary of Śaṅkarācārya*, translated by Swāmī Mādha-vānanda. (Madhavananda and Śaṅkarācārya 1965 [1935])

1. BAU 1,4,7:

sa eṣa iha praviṣṭa ānakhāgrebhyaḥ yathā kṣuraḥ kṣuradhāne'
vahiṭaḥ syāt viśvambharo vā viśvambharakulāye taṁ na paśyanti

He entered in here to the tips of the nails as a razor put into
the razor-case or as fire in the fire-receptacle. He is not seen.

¹⁵⁵ See e.g. 9,10 “Under My guidance, nature (*prakṛti*) gives birth to all things, moving and unmoving and by this means, O son of Kuntī (Arjuna), the world revolves.”

This simile is in the fourth Brāhmaṇa, which deals with the creation of the world out of Ātman. It sets forth the inner dependence of all existing things on the Ātman. (Deussen 1980, p. 409).

Ātman is the inner self, which cannot be seen from outside, but only known by itself.

There are two correlates in this simile. The purpose of the simile is to illustrate that Ātman is the inner nature of everything and yet permeates the material world. The first correlate seems intended to show that Ātman is innate and unseen. The second that it is a latent power, that can be transformed. In addition, its character of invisibility is hinted at.¹⁵⁶

Fire-receptacle means combustible material such as wood.

The word *praviṣṭa* “entered” gives the idea of the Self entering creation and giving spirit to it, though this idea does not have a corresponding expression in the correlate part of the simile. According to Śaṅkara, “the Supreme Self did not enter into the universe in its own form, but while in it, appeared under a different feature; hence it is metaphorically spoken of as having entered it.”

In his commentary it is interesting to see how Śaṅkara interprets the text using the “superimposition-theory”, which obviously reflects Śaṅkara’s concept of the Ultimate reality or Pure Consciousness. His view on the Self is that the differences of agent, action and result have been *superimposed* by primordial ignorance (*avidyā*). That is the cause of the universe consisting of name and form.

¹⁵⁶ For Maharishi’s view on the matter explained in his vocabulary, see e.g. the chapter “On the Concept of Consciousness or Ātman”, p. 247f.

The entrance of the Self-only means, according to Śaṅkara, that it is perceived as a reflection, such as that of the sun in water, in the differentiated universe. Before the manifestation of the universe, the Self is not perceived. Because it has manifested the universe, it is perceived as having entered into it. That is why the term “entered” is used. The simile of the sun in water Maharishi Mahesh Yogi uses several times in his commentary on Bhagavadgītā.

Śaṅkara makes no real difference, in his commentary, between the Self as self and as creator or Lord of the universe.

Another argument of Śaṅkara’s concerning the entrance of the Self is that “since duality has been repudiated, the passages delineating the manifestation of the universe can have the sole aim of helping the realisation of the unity of the Self.”

The two correlates of the razor and the fire Śaṅkara interprets as the Self residing in the body pervading it in both a general and a particular way. It is perceived as being alive, but you cannot see it in its true form, only in its conditioned aspect.

2. BAU 2,1,20:

sa yathorṇanābhiś tantunocaret yathāgneḥ kṣudrā
visphuliṅgā vyuccaranti evam evāsmād ātmanah sarve
prāṇāḥ sarve lokāḥ sarve devaḥ sarvāni bhūtāni
vyuccaranti tasyopaniṣat satyasya satyam iti prāṇa vai
satyam teṣām eṣa satyam

As a spider issues out the thread, as small sparks spreads out the fire, even so from this ātman is spread out all breaths, all worlds, all divinities, all beings. Its secret meaning is the Truth of the Truth. Vital breaths are the truth and their truth is It.

This passage is found at the end of a discourse on Brahman in the form of a dialogue between a brāhmaṇa, a priest, and a kṣatriya, a warrior or noble. As the brāhmaṇa does not give expression to the full knowledge of Brahman, he, disregarding tradition, asks the kṣatriya if he may become his disciple. This is accepted by the kṣatriya, and he explains to the brāhmaṇa how a person experiences Brahman in his Self (Ātman), ending with this verse, which is meant to illustrate how everything in the manifested universe comes from Ātman.

The purpose of using this simile is to show how emanation from the Ātman takes place. It is shown how something emanates from a common source. The simile of the spider shows how something is created from within. The simile of fire sparks shows how something created has the same nature as its source. The mention of all breaths, all worlds, etc., alludes to the brāhmaṇas explanation of Brahman, which was incomplete, taking the expressions of it for Brahman.

The view expounded here is what was later called *parināma-vāda*, the emanation theory. According to Śaṅkara this is the lower reality, *vivarta-vāda*¹⁵⁷ being the ultimate reality.

In his commentary on the verse, Śaṅkara writes: “...so from this Self *i.e. from the real nature of the individual self before it wakes up* emanate all organs *such as that of speech*.” The individual self is, however, identical with Brahman. That the universe emanates from the individual self, Śaṅkara confirms, when he says that the origin of the universe is from “that very Self possessed of the state of pro-

¹⁵⁷ The illusion-theory.

found sleep..., no other cause of the universe is mentioned in between, for this section deals exclusively with the individual self.”

Then follows a discussion in the commentary on whether it is the Supreme Self or the individual self, which creates this universe, the advaitins view being that the individual self creates the universe.

In his text Śaṅkara also makes no difference between the transcendent Īśvara and the Supreme Self (Madhavananda and Śaṅkarācārya 1965 (1935), p. 207).

Concerning the sparks of fire there is a debate on whether the simile of the sparks illustrates separateness of the Supreme Self from the individual self. The advaitin argues, “the passages are meant to convey the idea of oneness. We notice in life that sparks of fire may be considered identical with fire. Similarly a part may be considered identical with the whole.” (Madhavananda and Śaṅkarācārya 1965 (1935), p. 209).

The example of fire-sparks in BAU and of gold and iron in the Chāndogya are meant to strengthen the idea of oneness of the individual self and Brahman and, according to Śaṅkara, not to establish the multiplicity caused by the origin of the universe. The sparks of fire are one with the fire before they separate.

3. BAU 2,5,15

sa vā ayam ātmā sarveṣam bhūtānām adhipatiḥ sarveṣāṁ
bhūtānām rājā tad yathā rathanābhau ca rathanemau cārāḥ
sarve samarpitāḥ evam evasminn ātmani sarvāṇi bhūtāni
sarve devāḥ sarve lokāḥ sarve prāṇāḥ sarva eta ātmanaḥ samarpitāḥ

This self, verily, is the Lord of all beings, the king of all beings.
As all the spokes are held together in the hub and felly
of a wheel, just so, in this self, all beings, all gods,

all worlds, all breaths, all these selves are held together.

In this brāhmaṇa, or whole chapter, the mutual dependence of the beings and the elements, natural phenomena, and potencies in nature are dealt with. These are all “honey” to each other and nourish each other. Fourteen categories are enumerated. The fourteenth is Ātman, the self, and this is illustrated in verse 15 as the centre and circumference of everything; as that, which holds everything in the universe together.

The purpose of the simile is to show that Ātman is the underlying reality, which keeps everything in its proper place, and has a connection with everything in the universe. Ātman is not only the origin of all; it is constantly present as the preserver of the universe. The anaphorical passage “sarvāṇi bhūtāni sarve devāḥ sarve lokāḥ sarve prāṇāḥ sarva eta ātmanaḥ...” refers to some of the most important categories in the world of ideas of the Upaniṣads.

Śaṅkara in his commentary says that the illustrations are given in order to show that “in this knower of Brahman who is the self of all and has realised himself as such, the whole universe is fixed: Just as all the spokes are fixed... so are all beings... fixed in this Self, i.e. in the knower of Brahman who has realised his identity with the Supreme Self.”

4. BAU 4,5,13:

sa yathā saindhava-ghanāḥ anantaro 'bāhyah kṛtsno rasaghana
eva evaṁ vā are 'yam ātmā anantaro 'bāhayah kṛtsnaḥ
prajñānaghana eva etebhyo bhūtebhyah samutthāya tāny
evānuvinaśyati na pretya samjñāsti iti are bravīmi iti
hovāca yājñavalkyaḥ

'As a mass of salt is without inside, without outside, is altogether a mass of taste, even so verily, is this Self without inside, without outside, altogether a mass of intelligence only. Having arisen out of these elements (the Self) is dissolved again into them. After death there is no more consciousness. Thus, verily, say I', said Yājñavalkya

This simile is in essence the same as 2,4,12, though here it occurs in a slightly misrepresented form, according to Deussen (1980, p. 434). Actually, the entire brāhmaṇa 4,5, differs only slightly from 2,4, and Deussen considers it secondary (1966, pp. 500f).

5. BAU 2,4,12:

sa yathā saindhava khilya udake prāsta udakam evānuvilīyeta
na hāsya udgrahaṇāy eva syāt yato yatas tv ādadīta lavaṇam
eva evaṁ vā ara idam mahad bhūtam anantam apāraṁ vijñānaghana
eva etebhyo bhūtebhyaḥ samutthāya tāny evānuvinaśyati na pretya
sañjñāsti iti are bravīmi iti hovāca yājñavalkyaḥ

'As a lump of salt placed in water may become dissolved in water and there would not be any of it to seize forth, as it were, but wherever it may be taken it is salty indeed, so, verily this great being, infinite, limitless, a collection of knowledge. Arising from out of these elements one vanishes away into them. After death there is no more consciousness.¹⁵⁸ This is what I say my dear', so said Yājñavalkya

This brāhmaṇa contains the well-known dialogue between Yājñavalkya and his wife Maitreyī on the self.

It is clear that Ātman in this context denotes the Supreme Self, and Ātman is knowledge only. The simile becomes intelligible in the form it has in 2,4,12: the taste of salt is everywhere in the water, it

¹⁵⁸ Radhakrishnan translates *sañjñāsti* "knowledge" instead of consciousness; Monier Williams translates *sañjñā* "...consciousness, clear knowledge or understanding or notion or conception..." (1976 (1899), p. 1133).

cannot be found in any particular place. Ātman likewise cannot be localized in any particular place.

Śaṅkara says on 4,5,13:

When through knowledge all the effects have been merged, the one Self remains like a lump of salt, without interior or exterior, entire, and Pure Intelligence. Formerly it possessed particular consciousness owing to the particular combinations with the elements. When that particular consciousness and its cause, the combination with the elements, have been dissolved through knowledge - after attaining (this oneness) it has no more (particular) consciousness - this is what Yājñavalkya says.

Commenting on 2,4,12 Śaṅkara, to understand the parallelism in the simile, analyses: “As a lump of salt etc. The derivative meaning of the word ‘Sindhu’ is water, because it ‘flows’. That which is a modification or product of water is ‘Saindhava’ or salt... A lump of salt dropped into water, its cause, dissolves with the dissolution of (its component) water.” The lump becomes solid when it comes into contact with heat and particles of earth, and disappears when it comes into contact with water, its cause.

In the same way, says Śaṅkara, all individuals have been parted from the Supreme Self, due to ignorance, and have become separate entities. This is due to the connection with the limiting effects of body and organs, and so the individual has become mortal. When the separate existence of the individual has been merged in its cause, when differences created by ignorance are gone, then this universe becomes “one without a second”.

Śaṅkara explains the phrase “has no more consciousness”, by saying that when you have attained oneness with Brahman, ignorance,

which is the cause of *particular* consciousness, is absolutely destroyed.

Final Remarks

The concept of Ātman and its relation to the manifestation and development of the relative universe as explained by Śaṅkara I believe coincide with the explanations by Maharishi Mahesh Yogi in his commentary on the Bhagavadgītā chapters 1-6 and in his later elaborations on the matter in his Maharishi Vedic Science and Apauruṣeya Bhāṣya. Moreover, Maharishi in his commentary on the Bhagavadgītā, when using metaphorical language that relates to the concept of Ātman, or concepts that in meaning correspond to it, in many instances uses metaphors and similes common in the Upaniṣads elucidating the concept.

Appendix G

Survey of the Metaphorical Language in the Main Text of the Bhagavadgītā and its Relation to the Upaniṣads, with References to the Metaphorical Language of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi

Revised and extended version of a chapter in my licentiates thesis, *The Gita Pattern – Development of Genre-Analytical Methods in Relation to Indian Religious Literature* (Lindh, 1990).

The purpose of this exposition is, on the one hand to study connections between the metaphorical language of the Bhagavadgītā and different Upaniṣads, and on the other hand to observe relations between those texts and the metaphorical language of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, as it is expressed primarily in his translation and commentary on the Bhagavadgītā chapters 1-6. The reason for this is to put the metaphorical language expressing Maharishi Mahesh Yogi's central teaching and philosophy in relation to the tradition of this kind of text, philosophical treatise, thus putting them into a specific context.

In this exposition on the main text of the Bhagavadgītā and the Upaniṣads, I will in the first place try to make a categorization, concentrating on the similes, and also try to clarify their meaning, language and context. I will also try to give an account of the frequency of occurrence of the different similes within the text units.

The translations of Radhakrishnan have been used for both the Bhagavadgītā and the Upaniṣads. Of the Upaniṣads, those were cho-

sen which are considered *principal*, and are thought to be commented upon by Śaṅkara. (Radhakrishnan 1974 (1953), p. 21). These are, *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*, *Chāndogya*, *Aitareya*, *Taittirīya*, *Iśa*, *Kena*, *Kaṭha*, *Praśna*, *Muṇḍaka*, *Māṇḍūkya*, and *Śvetāśvatara*.¹⁵⁹

I. Similes

There are two similes in the Bhagavadgītā describing the state of a *jīvanmukta*, a liberated soul, whose intelligence is firm in Brahman, the simile of *the tortoise* and one of the similes of *water* running to the sea:

He who draws away the senses from the objects
of sense on every side, as a tortoise draws
in his limbs (into the shell), his intelligence
is firmly set (in wisdom). (II, 58)

He unto whom all desires enter as water
into the sea, which, though ever being filled
is ever motionless, attains to peace and not
he who hugs his desires. (II, 70)

Moreover, this verse on *purity*:

There is nothing on earth equal in purity
to wisdom. He who becomes perfected
by yoga finds this of himself, in his
self in course of time. (IV, 38)

The picture of *water* rushing to the sea we also have in XI, 28, where Arjuna describes his vision in metaphorical language:

¹⁵⁹ There are also special categories of metaphors, or identifications, one of which is connected with the thought of man and his world as a microcosm, and which establishes the relationship between man and the universe. This is represented in the scriptures e.g. by the horse sacrifice in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Upaniṣad*, the comparison of man with a tree, and the *Puruṣa*-hymn of the *Rgveda*, which has offshoots in the *Upaniṣads*. The *Puruṣa* concept is frequent e.g. in the *Brāhmaṇa* literature.

As many rushing torrents of rivers
race towards the ocean, so do these
heroes of the world of men rush
into Thy flaming mouths. (XI, 28)

From the Kāṭha-Upaniṣad:

As water rained upon a height flows down in various ways among
the hills; so he who views things as varied runs after them
(distractedly) (KU 2,1,14)

A simile using an image of *water* when describing the uselessness of
the Vedas to one who knows Brahman:

As is the use of a pond in a place
flooded with water everywhere,
so is that of all the Vedas for the
Brahmin who understands. (II, 46)

This view is similar to the main thoughts of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi
when he holds that the most important thing is to experience pure
consciousness, and that theoretical knowledge is there only to verify
one's experience of knowledge in Transcendental Consciousness.
(See different sources, e.g., Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 1976 [1967]).

Two similes, one using the simile of *gems on a string*, and the
other a simile on *air*, describe the status of Kṛṣṇa. He says:

There is nothing whatever that is
higher than I, O Winner of Wealth (Arjuna).
All that is here is strung on me as rows of
gems on a string. (VII, 7)

And:

As the mighty air, moving everywhere,
ever abides in the etheric space (ākāśā),

know thou that in the same manner all
existences abide in Me. (IX, 6)

Air (wind) and *space* (ether) are common in the similes.

Comparing it with *space* the spotlessness of the Self is shown in the following simile:

As the all-pervading ether is not
tainted, by reason of its subtlety,
even so the Self that is present in
every body does not suffer any taint. (XIII, 32)

Illustrating the mind's unpredictability Arjuna compares it with *the wind*:

For the mind is verily fickle,
O Kṛṣṇa, it is impetuous, strong
and obstinate. I think it is as
difficult to control as the wind. (VI, 34)

From chapter two:

When the mind runs after the roving
senses, it carries away the under-
standing, even as a wind carries
away a ship on the waters. (II, 67)

The motionlessness of the mind of one who practises yoga is illustrated in chapter six:

As a lamp in a windless place
flickereth not, to such is likened
the yogi of subdued thought who
practises union with the Self. (VI, 19)

In the Kāṭha-Upaniṣad *air* is likened to the Self:

As air which is one, entering this world becomes varied in shape according to the object (it enters), so also the one Self within all beings becomes varied according to whatever (it enters) and also exists outside (them all). (KU 2,2,10)

And also in another simile:

The person of the size of a thumb, the inner self, abides always in the hearts of men. Him one should draw out with firmness, from the body, as (one may do) the wind from the reed. Him one should know as the pure, the immortal, yea, Him one should know as the pure, the immortal. (KU 2,3,17)

A simile of *wind and perfume* illustrates the senses and the mind when the Lord changes bodies:

When the Lord takes up a body and when
he leaves it, he takes these (the senses and
the mind) and goes even as the wind carries
perfumes from their places. (XV, 8)

The sun is referred to in two similes of the Bhagavadgītā aiming at a description of the Lord, one of them as He is seen in the vision of Arjuna in chapter XI:

If the light of a thousand suns
were to blaze forth all at once
in the sky, that might resemble
the splendour of that exalted Being. (XI, 12)

In chapter XIII the Lord is referred to as illuminating the field (the relative):

As the one sun illumines this
whole world, so does the Lord
of the field (kṣetra) illumine this
entire field, O Bharata (Arjuna). (XIII, 33)

These similes both depict God in his personal aspect, Lord Kṛṣṇa, and thus both use *the sun* in the factual part of the simile. Of course, the sun is an image near at hand when trying to depict radiance. In the extension of this thought it is also possible to imagine how the sun becomes a concept of God in which one conceives God as a radiant being or even just radiance.

In addition, knowledge is compared with *the sun* in a simile in chapter V:

But for those in whom ignorance
is destroyed by wisdom, for
them wisdom lights up
the Supreme Self like the sun. (V, 16)

Fire in different aspects and situations also is one of the most frequent elements of similes. This I have seen in the analysis of the metaphorical language of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi's commentary on the Bhagavadgītā as well.

The effect of gaining wisdom is illustrated in chapter four, using a simile. It is interesting to notice how “fire” is the main concept of the image part of the simile, while “*fire of wisdom*” as a faded metaphor is the main concept of the factual part of the simile:

As the fire which is kindled
turns its fuel to ashes, O Arjuna,
even so does the fire of wisdom
turn to ashes all work. (IV, 37)

Other similes using *fire*, illustrate how the world is covered by ignorance:

As fire is covered by smoke,

as a mirror by dust, as an
embryo is enveloped by the womb,
so is this covered by that. (III, 38)

One should not give up the work suited to
one's nature, O Son of Kunti (Arjuna), though
it may be defective, for all enterprises are
clouded by defects as fire by smoke. (XVIII, 48)

Fire of course is common in the similes of the Upaniṣads as well:

As fire which is one, entering this world becomes varied in shape according
to the object (it burns), so also the one Self within all beings becomes var-
ied according to whatever (it enters) and also exists outside (them all). (KU
2,2,9)

The simile of *moths in fire* from Arjuna's vision in chapter eleven:

As moths rush swiftly into a blazing
fire to perish there, so do these men
rush into Thy mouths with great speed
to their own destruction. (XI, 29)

As the reader might have noticed *the elements*, space, air, fire, and
water are popular in similes and metaphors. Earth, however, is most
often represented by things made of earth, like metal etc. as in this
metaphorical image of Bhagavadgītā II, 23-24:

Swords do not cleave him
Fire does not burn him
Water does not wet him
Nor does the wind dry him

He is not to be cut, He cannot be burnt,
Not to be wetted nor dried is he,
He is eternal, all-pervading, fixed,
Immovable and everlasting is he

The popular simile of the *lotus flower* is found in Bhagavadgītā V, 10 and in Chāndogya IV, 14, 3. Here I have to consider the Sanskrit text, which I give in transliteration:

brahmaṇy ādhāya karmāṇi
saṅgam tyaktvā karoti yah
lipyate na sa pāpena
padmapatram ivā 'mbhasā

Whoever acts abandoning attachment,
He is not sullied by evil,
Surrendering actions to Brahman
Like a lotus leaf (is not stained) by wa-
ter. (Bhagavadgītā, V, 10).¹⁶⁰

ahaṃ tu te tad vakṣyāmi yathā puṣkara-
palāśa āpo na śliṣyante, evam evaṃ-
vidi pāpaṃ karma na śliṣyata iti

... but I will tell you this and as water
does not cling to the lotus leaf, so evil
does not cling to one who knows it.
(ChU, IV, 14, 3; in Radhakrishnan 1974
(1953), pp. 415f).

“It” in the context of the Upaniṣad means secret knowledge of Brahman.

Here, we find the very common indicative *yathā* usually followed by the correlative *tathā* - in this case *evam* - meaning “as”, “like”, “in which manner”, “according as”. (Monier-Williams 1899, pp. 841, 433). It often initiates the similes of the Upaniṣads and usually those of the Bhagavadgītā. Following *evam* we find a kind of substantivised form of an expression so often found in connection with some secret teaching in the Upaniṣads and the Brāhmaṇa literature, *ya evam veda* meaning “he who knows this”.

¹⁶⁰ My translation.

Puṣkara-palāśa means lotus-leaf, and is synonymous to *padma-pattra* in the Bhagavadgītā, the variation presumably due to metrical or stylistic causes.

The context of the simile in the Bhagavadgītā shows the significance given to *action*, a main theme in the Bhagavadgītā. The context of the Upaniṣad gives importance to knowledge, Brahman-knowledge, although not in an explicit way.

Then we have the simile of *poison and nectar* in Bhagavadgītā chapter 18:

That happiness which is like poison at first
and like nectar at the end, which springs
from a clear understanding of the Self, is
said to be of the nature of 'goodness' (*sattva*, my note). (XVIII, 37)

That happiness which arises from the contact of
the senses and their objects and which is like
nectar at first but like poison at the end – such
happiness is recorded to be 'passionate' (*rājas*, my note). (XVIII, 38)

The simile describing the fate of one who deviates from the path of yoga uses the image of a *rent cloud*:

Does he not perish like a rent cloud,
O Mighty-armed (Kṛṣṇa), fallen from both
and without any hold and bewildered in the
path that leads to the Eternal? (VI, 38)

Considering the similes from the point of view of their purpose I find two similes of the Bhagavadgītā describing the *transmigration of the soul*, one using an image of *childhood, youth and old age*, the other *changing of old clothes*.

This is from Lord Kṛṣṇas discourse in chapter two, where he tries to make Arjuna realize the non-reality of corporeal death as an end to existence:

dehino 'smin yathā dehe
kaumāraṁ yauvanaṁ jarā
tathā dehāntaraprāptir
dhīras tatra na muhyati

As in this body there is childhood
Youth and old age of the embodied
So it takes on another body;
The resolute is not confused thereby
(Bhagavadgītā II, 13)

vāsaṁsi jīrṇāṇi yathā vihāya
navāni grhṇāti naro 'parāṇi
tathā śarīrāṇi vihāya jīrṇāny
anyāni saṁyāti navāni dehī

As a person leaving old clothes,
Puts on others that are new,
So leaving old bodies, the embodied
Goes to other new one's (Bhagavadgītā
II, 22)¹⁶¹

From the Bṛhadāranyaka-Upaniṣad there are the similes of the *caterpillar* and of the *goldsmith* in this connection:

tad yathā tṛṇajalāyukā, tṛṇasyāntaṁ gatvā, anyam ākramam ākramya, āt-
mānam upasaṁharati, evam evāyam ātmā, idaṁ śarīraṁ nihatya, avidāṁ
gamayitvā, anyam ākramam ākramya, ātmānam upasaṁharati

Just as a leech (or caterpillar) when it has come to the end of a blade of grass, after having made another approach (to another blade) draws itself together towards it, so does this self, after having thrown away this body, and dispelled ignorance, after having another approach (to another body) draw itself together (for making the transition to another body) (BAU 4, 4, 3; in Radhakrishnan 1974 (1953), p. 271).

tad yathā peśaskārī peśaso mātrām upādāya, anyan navataraṁ kalyāṇtaraṁ

¹⁶¹ My translations.

rūpam tanute, evam evāyam ātmā, idaṁ śarīraṁ nihatya, avidyāṁ gamay-
itvā, anyan navataraṁ kalyāṇataraṁ rūpaṁ kurute, pitryaṁ vā, gāndharvaṁ
vā, daivaṁ vā, prajāpatyaṁ vā, brāhmaṁ vā anyeṣāṁ vā bhūtānāṁ

And as a goldsmith, taking a piece of gold turns it into another, newer and
more beautiful shape, even so does this self, after having thrown away this
body and dispelled its ignorance, make unto himself another, newer and
more beautiful shape like that of the fathers or of the gandharvas, or of the
gods or of Prajāpati or of Brahmā or of other beings. (BAU 4, 4, 4; in
Radhakrishnan 1974 (1953), p. 271)

In the Upaniṣad we find more detailed descriptions of the process of
reincarnation, a more far-reaching parallel, the element of purifi-
cation through death does e.g., not appear in the Bhagavadgītā.

In the similes on reincarnation, we have the same idea expressed
in different similes. This structure is quite frequent. Are there as well
different similes expressing the same idea? This I will consider, but
first I will discuss the theoretical implications of it.

In the similes of the lotus leaf, we have the same simile expressing
the same idea in different contexts.

The discussion above leaves us, at least, with the following three
possibilities:

- A. Same idea mostly expressed in the same image irrespective of con-
text
- B. Same idea expressed in different images in different contexts
- C. Same image expressing different ideas in different contexts

To determine the occurrence of those respective combinations could
raise some difficulty, since many implications may have to be con-
sidered.

For instance, why would the same idea always be expressed in the
same image or simile (A), or rather, why would the same simile al-

ways give expression to the same idea, is an historical issue: a certain simile may in time become reserved for a special idea. Using it in a different sense or using another simile would bring the wrong signals to the receiver.

For B and C the implications could be the universality of the image or the idea respectively.

Using different images to explain the same idea is, by far, more common than the other way around, since in the contexts under consideration the very purpose is to make an idea or a concept intelligible utilizing similes.

Nevertheless there are instances of C.¹⁶² I consider the reason for using the same simile for different ideas simply being the fact, as it is in the cases of A and B above, that the image is derived from a sphere that is well-known and easy to relate to for the reader. The important thing is just that the image should have a structure corresponding to the structure of the concept, or thing, being pictured.

II. Metaphors

Metaphors, in contrast to similes, lack the element of comparison. Generally speaking one could say, that the image is widened and intensified from the simile to the metaphor. The attention is directed away from the factual part, the tenor, to the image part, the vehicle, and is consequently considered to function as a kind of persuasion. (Cassirer 1979, p. 85; Hallberg 1983, p.76)

An example where a *metaphor* becomes more intensified – it never appears as a simile in our text, probably because it is already an established image, the transformation from simile to metaphor had

¹⁶² See e.g. CU 6,10,1-3 and Prašna 6,5; BAU 2,5,15 and CU 7,15,1.

taken place at an earlier stage – is found in V, 13 “*the citadel of nine gates*” meaning the human body. However, the image of the body, in this case compared to a temple, having nine gates (sanskṛt *dvāra* meaning door, gate, passage, entrance) (Monier-Williams 1899, p. 504 col. 2), we find in verse 4 of the Yogaśikhā Upaniṣad of the Atharvaveda:

Upon one pillar, three posts,
With nine doors, having five gods,
Stands a temple, body it is,
In it one shall seek the highest. (Cited from Deussen 1980, p. 710).

Here the metaphor is not completely loosened from the simile even though it is not a simile proper. The factual part of what may have been a simile is broken off and put as an explanation after the image part.

The term *navadvāra*, “nine-gated” in some texts even has come to mean “body” (Monier-Williams 1899, p 531, col. 2). In VIII, 9 the human body is elliptically referred to as “*the gates*”.

In this way, one may observe the different stages in the development of a simile into a faded metaphor.

Images similar to the one of Brahman in XIII, 13 one may find on e.g., paintings and sculptures of the gods in their all-knowing, all-powerful or omnipresent aspects:

It has hands and feet on all sides,
Eyes, heads, and faces on all sides,
Hearing on all sides in the world,
And it remains constantly enveloping all.

Knowledge, *jñāna*, is a main topic in the Bhagavadgītā and the Upaniṣads, and it is usually discussed in metaphorical language. There is a simile in V, 16, “wisdom lights up the Supreme Self like the sun”, which the following metaphors could be derived from: IV, 37 “fire of knowledge”; X, 11 “shining light of knowledge”, XIII, 34 “the eye of knowledge,” XV, 10 “whose eye is knowledge.” The eye is associated with the sun according to BAU I, 3, 14; III, 2, 13; ChU V, 14, 1–2 among others. All metaphors associated with the concept of knowledge are in text units representing the genre of a philosophic discussion.

Another picture of knowledge is when it is seen as analogous to a sword or as a purifier from evil or ignorance (*avidyā*): IV, 38 “not like unto knowledge is any purifier”, IV, 41 “cut off his doubt with knowledge”, IV, 42 “with the sword of knowledge thine own doubt cutting off”, V, 17 “sins destroyed by knowledge”. Knowledge is also likened to a “boat” in IV, 36: “by the boat of knowledge all evil shalt thou cross over”.

Other metaphors in these texts are those, which use the image of *fetters*, a *cord* or a *net*, or else something, which *binds*. These metaphors are often associated with ignorance, and the round of births and deaths:

The wise who have united their intelligence
(with the Divine) renouncing the fruits which
their action yields and freed from the bonds of birth
reach the sorrowless state. (II, 51)

By knowing God there is a falling off of all fetters; when the sufferings are destroyed, there is cessation of birth and death. (Sv. Up. 1,11 in Radhakrishnan 1974 (1953), p. 716).

He indeed is the protector of the world in time, the Lord of all, hidden in all things, in whom the seers of Brahman and the deities are united; by knowing Him thus one cuts the cords of death. (Sv. U. 4,15 in Radhakrishnan 1974 (1953), p. 736).

That God, who, after spreading out one net after another in various ways draws it together in that field, the Lord, having again created the lords, the great self, exercises his lordship over all. (Sv. U. 5,3 in Radhakrishnan 1974 (1953), p. 739).

Furthermore, we find the following metaphors in the Bhagavadgītā: XVIII, 61 “causing all beings to turn around fixed in a machine”, XVI, 16 “snares of delusion”, II, 51 “bondage of rebirth”, II, 52 “jungle of delusion,” XIV, 6 “goodness binds”, XVI, 5 “bondage”, XVI, 16 “snares of delusion”. All the above-mentioned are found in text units representing a philosophic discussion in the text.

In text units representing aretology, we find IV, 14 “bound by actions”.

These metaphors, which often are what we may call faded metaphors, picture the relative existence, or rather the soul’s relation to the relative existence. Of course, these metaphors influence the concept of the creation. By using these images the concept of God or the Ultimate, Ātman, as a free entity, by contrast, is emphasized.

The world, or, relative existence, is also likened to a wheel (*cakra*), the standard image of saṃsāra, in the third chapter of the Bhagavadgītā:

He who does not, in this world, help to turn
the wheel thus set in motion, is evil in his
nature, sensual in his delight, and he, O Pārtha
(Arjuna), lives in vain. (III, 16)

Of course, the metaphor of the *cakra* sets a world in motion for the reader, who pictures for himself all the implications of dharma, the bonds of saṃsāra, law of karma, release from birth and death, etc, which is implied by this image. To the Indian the *cakra* is one of the most important symbols, appearing even on the Indian flag as it is.

There is a three-fold gate to hell, “of hell the three-fold gate desire, wrath, and greed” (XVI, 21), and “these three gates of darkness” (XVI, 22).

In the next metaphor, we find the picture of the wish-yeilding cow of desires, *Kāmadhuk*:

In ancient days the Lord of creatures created men
along with sacrifice and said, “By this shall ye bring forth
and this shall be unto you that which yield
the milk of your desires” (“iṣṭakāmadhuk”, the wish-yeilding cow of de-
sires”, my note). (III, 10)

In the metaphor of the *dried senses* we imagine how the senses are usually fed with sense-objects giving satisfaction to the senses. Sorrow makes one's senses thirsty, and not capable of being satisfied again:

I do not see what will drive away this sorrow
which dries up my senses even if I should attain
rich and unrivalled kingdom on earth or even
the sovereignty of the gods. (II, 8)

In I, 12 Bhīṣma giving signal for war roars a lion-roar. In II, 59 we find a metaphor according to which the *taste* for the objects of the senses goes away when the Supreme is seen. Here the metaphor could be seen as a *catachresis*, in the sense that the word *taste* is used in a new sense in order to remedy a gap in the vocabulary. (See

Black 1976 (1962), p. 33). This may at some stage be true for most of the metaphorical language. It is true for I, 7 where one of the warriors are referred to as *twice-born*. In fact this is true for all the so-called faded metaphors, such as the one's having to do with bondage, and the very frequent *phala*, fruit, in the sense of result or effect.

Another interesting feature of the metaphorical language is the transformation of height scale into value scale, which is a universal phenomenon. Nevertheless it is interesting in this text, since we have a development of the value scale into representations of God or the Ultimate in terms of the scale, such as the term *para*, the “highest”, as the ultimate reality, as in VIII, 27, “the man of discipline goes to the highest primal place (*param sthānam*)”. This could also be exemplified by a verse in chapter three:

The senses, they say, are high;
Higher than the senses is the thought-organ;
But higher than the thought-organ is the consciousness;
While higher than the consciousness is He (the soul). (III, 42)

In VII, 5 the Lord refers to himself in the following way:

This is My lower (nature). But other than this,
My higher nature know:
It is the Life (soul), great-armed one,
By which this world is maintained.

And yet another verse:

Those that abide in goodness (*sattva*) go on high;
The men of passion (*rajas*) remain in the middle
Abiding in the scope of the base Strand (*tamas*),
The men of darkness go below. (XIV, 18)

Some metaphors are taken from the sphere of the division of time on earth and applied on a cosmic scale. In VIII, 18 we find :

From the unmanifest all manifestations
Come forth at the coming of day
And dissolve at the coming of night
In that same one, known as the unmanifest.

Day and night meaning day and night in the sense of creation and dissolution of the universe, Brahmā's day and night.

And in a transferred sense in the metaphor of II, 69:

What is night for all beings,
Therein the man of restraint is awake;
Wherein (other) beings are awake,
That is night for the sage of vision.

The chiasmus of this verse places an indication of the part of a day (viz. "night") in contrast to a state of consciousness ("awake"), utilizing the analogy pattern of *night–darkness–sleep–ignorance* and *day–light–wakefulness–enlightenment*.

A personification of "desire" occurs in III, 37, 39 and III, 43:

It is desire, it is wrath,
Arising from the Strand of passion,
All-consuming, very sinful;
Know that this is the enemy here. (III, 37)

By this is obscured the knowledge
Of the knowing one, by this his eternal foe,
That has the form of desire, son of Kuntī,
And is an insatiable fire. (III, 39)

Thus being conscious of that which is higher than consciousness,
Steadying the self by the Self,

Smite the enemy, great-armed one,
That has the form of desire, and is hard to get at. (III, 43)

Generally speaking, the character of the metaphors does not differ from each other in the different text units. Metaphors are, however, significantly more frequent in philosophic discussions, where app. 90% (or 74), of all the metaphors in the text of the Bhagavadgītā appear, whereas these text units occupy only 70 % of the text volume.

Five metaphors appear in text units we can signify as aretalogy, one in those representing a eulogy, one in those representing a vision, and three in those representing a lamentation.

III. Metonymy

Metonymy is based on nearness, and is, according to Olsson (1984), therefore more factual than the metaphoric expression, which is based on an imagined relationship.¹⁶³ Jakobson (1971), like Olsson (1984), does not take the concepts of *metaphor* and *metonymy* in their ordinary sense as terms for specific “poetical figures”, but in a more general sense as expressions of the principles *similarity* and *contiguity*. Jakobson even wants to see the one or the other as signs

¹⁶³ An interesting feature in Olsson's theory formation, which has its background in the theories developed by Roman Jakobson (the theories on two aspects of aphasic disturbances, based on a twofold character of language – the metonymic and the metaphoric. [See Jakobson, R. Fundamentals of language, part II, *Two Aspects of Language and Two Types of Aphasic Disturbances*]), is his understanding of symbolic representation among the Maasai.

There is a tree called *oreteti*, which is important to the Maasai. The tree is extra-ordinary high and for this reason considered closely connected to heaven and therefore to God. This symbolism can be called *metonymic*. On the other hand the tree is considered to look like a man and it is thus by analogy connected to man. This symbolism may be called *metaphoric* (Olsson 1984, p. 103).

However, the metonymic way of expression is not only symbolic and mythological. It is more factual than the metaphorical connection to man, since the nearness to heaven is real, while the association to man is an imagined isomorphic relationship (Olsson 1984, p. 104).

The metonymic way of expression is shown among the Maasai e.g. in hymns and prayers when God is invoked in terms of *olapa* "the moon", *enkolong* "the sun", and *ilakir* "the stars", instead of by the designation *enkAi*, God. This is linguistically and stylistically a metonymic way of expression; the Maasai see those phenomena as objects in which God manifests his presence.

of different psychic dispositions among men. (Jakobson 1971, pp. 69ff). If e.g., a person associates to the word *cottage* with *house*, *hut*, *shack*, *building*, etc. he tends to use metaphor and thinks in terms of likeness. If, however, he reacts to the same word with *old lady*, *cat*, *open fire*, etc., his world of ideas is bent towards the metonymic principle of nearness. (Hallberg 1983, pp. 187f. Cf. Jakobson, pp. 90ff).

The metonymic way of associating is reflected in the text units representing an aretalogy in our text. Actually, these text units are more or less a sample card of metonymic associations, whereas metonymy not is found in any of the other text units, except for sporadic instances like “heaven” (sanskrit *svarga* meaning the abode of the departed souls, derived from *svar*, the sun, sunshine, light, lustre; bright space or sky, heaven) (Monier-Williams 1899, p. 1281, cols. 1, 2)¹⁶⁴ in some places, and “the ape-bannered”, synecdoche for Arjuna in the text unit describing a war formation.

The metonymic way of expression I mean is prevalent e.g., in the text unit representing an aretalogy in chapter seven, “I am taste in water”, “I am light in the moon and sun, the sacred syllable in all the Vedas, sound in ether, manliness in men”, “odor in earth, and brilliance in fire am I, life in all beings”. This we find in chapter ten as well, “of the Ādityas I am Viṣṇu, of lights the radiant sun”, “of princely elephants, Airāvata, and of men, the king”, “the origin of things that are to be” etc. In these expressions, there is a synecdochic relation between the ultimate reality, in this case the personal god, and the image used.

¹⁶⁴ My suggestion is that the celestial abode, expressed by the term *svarga*, is imagined to be near to the physical heaven, whereas the physical heaven is expressed by *svar* meaning inter alia light and sky.

Furthermore, there is within the image a kind of inner metonymy. This manner of association is obvious for the initiated reader or listener, who knows the philosophical implications, like e.g., that sound is considered to be forwarded or to travel in ether, so it is metonymically associated to ether. The connection between sound and ether, taste and water etc. is clear to him, and he may even be associating in this way himself, being confronted with either of these terms in another context or situation.

Within the image there is a certain relationship between the components having the character of “part and whole”, where “the part” is always the one that is considered foremost or most excellent etc. within “the whole”.

Jakobson states that in verbal art the interaction of the two elements of similarity and contiguity is especially pronounced. He continues:

Rich material for the study of this relationship is to be found in verse patterns which require a compulsory PARALLELISM between adjacent lines, for example in Biblical poetry or in the Finnic and, to some extent, the Russian oral traditions. This provides an objective criterion of what in the given speech community acts as a correspondence. Since on any verbal level – morphemic, lexical, syntactic, and phraseological – either of these two relations (similarity and contiguity) can appear – and each in either of two aspects, an impressive range of possible configurations is created. Either of the two gravitational poles may prevail. **In russian lyrical songs, for example, metaphoric constructions predominate, while in the heroic epics the metonymic way is preponderant.** (Jakobson 1971, p. 91). (My bolds)

The aretalogy, which is our concern here, describe heroic exploits. But, even though there is a parallel with the russian heroic epics which is an interesting one, further investigation of this matter is

necessary to draw more far-reaching and definite conclusions. Since this is a matter of a treatise in itself, I leave the problem by just calling attention to the fact of the metonymic preponderance in aretalogy.

Furthermore, a *pars pro toto* relation exists between the Ultimate reality in the form of Kṛṣṇa and the image used in the metonymic expressions. For example *taste in water* and *brilliance in fire* is stated to represent Kṛṣṇa.

Here, a representation of God or the Ultimate is created and I mean that a reader or listener who has been in contact with this text may conceptualize e.g., taste in water, when referring to God or the Ultimate reality, i.e., conceptualize the part when referring to the whole. The image part of the metonymic expression may be seen as a representation of the Ultimate. This representation influences the concept of God or the Ultimate of the reader or listener, so that he, in the same way as has been suggested to be the case with the metaphorical language, may create a concept of God or the Ultimate, which in this case is based on a metonymic way of associating.

Final Remarks

That there has been an influence of the metaphorical language of texts like the Bhagavadgītā on religious beliefs I find likely. As has been shown in the analysis many of the most common ideas in Indian religion, like e.g., wisdom, which is pictured as the sun, fire which has become identical with knowledge etc., are pictured in the similes, which gradually develop into metaphors. This was also shown by the example of the body seen as a city of nine gates or doors, where we could observe different stages in a development of a

simile. In the Yogaśikhā Upaniṣad we find a simile, in Bhagavadgītā V, 13, a metaphor, and finally a faded metaphor in Bhagavadgītā VIII, 9. The point here is that the representation of God or the Ultimate in the simile which develops into the metaphor may influence the concept of, in this case, the body, in the religious practitioner's mind, as well as the language of the practitioner. Parallel to this is the influence of a representation of God or the Ultimate in a simile, developing into a metaphor, on the concept of God or the Ultimate in the practitioners mind, and accordingly on his language. The phenomenon may occur with metonymy as well as metaphor.

To connect to the metaphorical language of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, we can see that especially the traditional *metaphors* used for different aspects of the ultimate reality Maharishi use quite frequently in his commentary on the Bhagavadgītā. And with time the similes used by Maharishi are likely to glide into metaphors and represent in the minds of those using them what they are supposed to explain. An example would be if someone who is practising Transcendental Meditation meet another person practising and ask if he or she has watered the root today, meaning if they have practiced Transcendental Meditation, with a reference to Maharishi's use of the simile "water the root to enjoy the fruit", so frequently used in his teaching.

Appendix H

Extract from Gauḍapāda's Māṇḍūkya-kārikā.

Translation by Vidyavachaspati V. Panoli; Headings added from Richard King's translation. Obtained online 2010-08-02 at <http://www.spiritual-teachers.com/mandukya.htm>.

“(Advaita is Non-Contradiction)

III-17. The dualists, firmly settled in their own doctrine which is arrived at by their own conclusions, contradict one another. But this (view of the non-dualist) is in no conflict with them.

III-18. Non-duality is indeed the supreme Reality, inasmuch as duality is said to be its product. For them duality constitutes both (the Real and the unreal). Hence this (our view) is not opposed (to theirs).

III-19. This unborn (Self) undergoes modification through Maya and not in any other way. For, if the modifications are to be a reality, the immortal would tend to be mortal.

III-20. The disputants think of the very unborn Self in terms of birth. How can the Self that is unborn and immortal tend towards mortality?

III-21. The immortal can never become mortal. So, too mortal can never become immortal. For a change in one's nature cannot ever take place in any manner.

III-22. How can the entity that is immortal remain unchanged according to one to whom a thing that is immortal by nature can be born, since it is a product (in his view)?

(Creation in the Sruti)

III-23. The sruti favours equally the creation in reality and through Maya. That which is settled by the sruti and supported by reasoning is true, and not anything else.

III-24. Since the sruti says, “There is no multiplicity here”, “the Lord, owing to Maya, (is seen diversely)”, and “The Self, though unborn, (appears to be born in many ways)”, it becomes obvious that He is born through Maya.

III-25. By the censure of (the worship of) Hiranyagarbha is negated creation. By the statement, “Who will cause it to be born?”, is denied causality.

III-26. On the ground of non-apprehension (of Brahman), all the preceding instruction (for Its comprehension) is negated by the sruti, “This Self is that which has been declared as ‘Not this, not this’”. Hence the unborn Self becomes revealed by Itself.

III-27. Birth of that which exists occurs only through Maya and not in reality. He who thinks that something is born in reality, (should know) that that which is already born is (re)born.

III-28. The birth of that which is non-existent cannot occur either through Maya or in reality, for a son of a barren woman cannot be born either through Maya or in reality. (Panoli 1991)”

Appendix I

Metaphorical Language in Maharishi Mahesh Yogi's Commentary on the Bhagavadgītā Chapters 1-6

Coding of Metaphors and Similes

Metaphors

Chapter	Verse	Metaphor	Stands for...	Teaching
1	1	<i>As you sow, so shall you reap</i>	Dharma in practical life	Nature's force increases either happiness or crises in society
		<i>Wheel of evolution</i>	The concept <i>saṁsara</i>	Dharma
		<i>Field of Dharma</i>	Kurukshetra	This battlefield brings victory to the righteous
	7	<i>Twice-born</i>	Epithet of Drona	Qualification for study of Vedas
		<i>Door to inner kingdom of man</i>		Entrance to field of spiritual life
		<i>Light of God</i>		
	13	<i>Great cry of nature</i>	Noise of conches etc announcing war	Accumulated evil bursting out in the noise of conches declaring war
		<i>One reaps the consequences of one's own actions</i>		Explanation of the law of karma on a collective level
	14	<i>Chariot</i>	Body	Symbolic explanation of main text passage where the chariot protects righteousness
	23	<i>Nip it in the bud</i>	Stop at an early stage	Be cautious and not tolerate wrong-doing in the surroundings
		<i>Reap consequences</i>	Law of cause and effect	Stop evil influences before they

				grow and accumulate to future generations
28		<i>Fear is born of duality</i>	Experience of duality origin of fear	The sense of two or duality is cause of fear or suffering; also explaining Arjuna's grief which comes from difference between heart and mind
		<i>Diagnosis of suffering</i>	Medical term	Explains the cause of suffering
		<i>Stain of sin</i>		Heart and mind needs more than to be free of sin to be free from suffering
		<i>Seed of suffering</i>	Origin of suffering	Suffering caused by difference between heart and mind that has to be eliminated
39		<i>The life of any individual is a wave in the ocean of cosmic life</i>	The individual is part of the universal life	Everything is being influenced by everything else
40		<i>Stream of life</i>	Dharma	Modes of activity influencing life and creating traditions
40+41		<i>Upward current in nature; current</i>	Path of evolution or dharma	Explaining dharma and the traditions that uphold life in an evolutionary direction
		<i>Boat of life</i>	Life	Problem of changing one's personal path of evolution or dharma
2	Introduction	<i>Soul of the Bhagavad-Gita</i>		Explaining the importance of the chapter and its relation to the other chapters
		<i>Body (of the Bhagavad-Gita)</i>		
		<i>Seed-ideas</i>		Another metaphor explaining the

				content of chapter 2
		<i>Ocean of eternal wisdom</i>		Kṛṣṇa's wisdom
		<i>Key to this wisdom</i>		Importance of verse 45 of this chapter
1		<i>Wave of love</i>	Ocean derived metaphor	Part of Lord Kṛṣṇa's teaching in bringing Arjuna to the state of suspension where he could receive wisdom
		<i>Ground for divine wisdom to dawn</i>	Sun derived metaphor	Part of Kṛṣṇa's teaching explained
		<i>Altar of God whose light sustains our life</i>		Inner life of man explained in relation to outer phenomenal world, which is not so attractive
2		<i>Blemish of ignorance</i>	Fault	Part of Kṛṣṇa's teaching as explained by Maharishi to be the pedagogy of Kṛṣṇa for getting Arjuna out of his state of suspension
3		<i>Wave of love</i>		
		<i>Flow of mind</i>		Nature of mind explained
		<i>Breathe universal life</i>		Explaining Kṛṣṇa's teaching
		<i>Fall prey to "faintheartedness"</i>		Adhere to weakness
		<i>An illusion... easy to shake off</i>		Arjuna's suspension is due to ignorance and hence has no material substance and should therefore be easy to get rid of

	10	<i>The darkness is on the point of being illuminated by the celestial light</i>		Arjuna is “illuminated” by the teaching of the Lord
		<i>The silence of Arjuna is about to be broken and made melodious by the celestial song, as his grief is transformed into the smile of the Lord</i>		Arjuna receiving the Lord’s teaching in the gita, which Maharishi alludes to as he used the word song...
	15	<i>Understanding does not become ripe as a result of mood-making</i>	Reach its maturity	Explaining the naturalness of reaching higher states of consciousness
	17	<i>When the nervous system is at its purest, then Being reflects in all its fullness</i>	manifest	Explaining higher states of consciousness in relation to nervous system
	31-33	<i>Stream of evolution (several times); path of evolution</i>		Explaining the concept of dharma
	40	<i>Flow of the mind</i>		The mind’s craving for greater happiness is natural and therefore it spontaneously goes to the field of Being once put on the path and “no effort is lost” as it says in the main text
	45	<i>Great treasure-house within himself</i>	Inner man	Maharishi sums up the verse by explaining the result from using the technique propagated by the Lord in this verse.
	47	<i>It is the anticipated fruit of action that induces a man to act (several times in the verse)</i>	Results of action	Explaining the incentive of action
		<i>Horizontal plane of life</i>	Relative part of life	

		<i>Vertical plane of life</i>	Inner structure of life	
48		<i>Ocean of mind; surface of mind; diving within</i>		Metaphors used in relation to a simile on a diver's training, explaining the process of Transcendental Meditation
49		<i>Fruit of action</i>		Pondering on the problem of not achieving one's goal due to great hurry in achieving it, without proper preparation
		<i>Fruit of action</i>		Problem not aiming at the fulfilment of action, but not achieving it
50		<i>Bondage...born...of the weakness of the actor</i>	Being bound to the relative field of life	Action not the cause of involvement in samsara or "bondage"
51		<i>Road of evolution</i>	Dharma	Dharma
		<i>Break the shackles of bondage</i>	What keeps one under the influence of karma	Liberation from samsara
58		<i>Seed of future desires</i>		Karmic influences not enough to make impressions on the enlightened in Cosmic Consciousness
		<i>The senses... lose even the taste for their objects</i>		Indifference of the senses in Cosmic Consciousness
59		<i>Light of realization</i>		Higher states of consciousness
62		<i>Mire of delusion</i>	Mud	Ignorance explained due to desire
63		<i>Track of memory</i>	Path	Memory
		<i>Boat of life</i>	Vessel	Personal dharma

	69	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Light of the Self</i> • <i>Light of the senses</i> • <i>Light of absolute bliss</i> • <i>Light of relative joys of perishable nature</i> 		Explains the enlightened man in contrast to the ignorant
3	1	<i>Whole stream of life flowing</i>	Personal dharma	Explaining the meaning of life as putting the perishable aspect of life in tune with the imperishable
		<i>Current of dharma</i>	In analogy with the previous metaphor	
	2	<i>He is being provided with two boats</i>	Two alternatives	The predicament of Arjuna explained
		<i>Tell me which boat to take, this or that, for if I start in two boats I am sure to drown</i>		One-pointedness
	3	<i>Highway of evolution</i>		Principle of realization
	12	<p><i>Main text metaphor: "...he who enjoys their (the gods) gifts without offering to them is merely a thief"</i></p>	<p>Maharishis commentary: "Anyone who has not gained fixity in Being automatically remains involved with activity; he assumes authorship of action and obtains ownership of its fruit, which in reality belong to nature or to the gods, the powers of nature. That is why such a man is called a 'thief',...";</p> <p>"A thief commonly enjoys the wealth of other men but makes no attempt to grow wealthier by his own efforts. Here is the warning that the Lord gives: one should not be satisfied only with the growth of material prosperity, wisdom and creativity in the relative field of life, but should aspire to go beyond this and achieve oneness with the eternal life of absolute Being in God-Consciousness"</p>	Concept of human activity explained; and an interpretation which aims at developing higher states of consciousness

	13	Main text metaphor: "...eat the remains of the yagya..."	Maharishis commentary: "This is a metaphor explaining that the states of Transcendental Consciousness, Cosmic Consciousness and God-Consciousness should be made use of in daily life, so that actions may be free from sin"	Higher states of consciousness
	16	Main text metaphor: "wheel set revolving"		Explaining the wheel of creation in both a positive and negative sense
	25	The wise are tools in the hands of the Divine		The enlightened characterized
	41	Underground currents of desire		Relationship of desire and Self ; controlling of desires by organizing the senses
	43	Tree of life	Whole of life	Principle of highest first or a good life
4	5	The Lord's Being is the playground of the time which He creates		Explains relation between the Lord and Being and time
		He is the ocean of life	Totality of life	Transcendent nature of the Lord
	18	The mind... is anchored to the silence of the inner Being . This anchorage provides the experience of silence in the midst of all activity		Enlightenment in higher states of consciousness. (Dead metaphor often used)
	20	Sowing the seed of future action		Impressions' influence in Cosmic Consciousness
	35	The silent ocean of bliss , the silent ocean of love , begins to rise in waves of devotion		Development of different levels of higher states of consciousness
		Beings separate themselves from the supreme Being by means of prakriti , but this veil is re-		Higher states of consciousness or rather God-Consciousness de-

		<i>moved when life is dominated by the light of knowledge, the light of the awareness of life's Unity in God-Consciousness, which establishes eternity in the ephemeral world</i>		velops
	36	<i>The Lord explains that all actions are burned to ashes in the fire of knowledge</i>		Progression of development of higher states of consciousness
	37	<i>The real nature of life is absolute bliss-consciousness; this crystal water of life has been polluted by becoming mixed with the activities of the three gunas</i>		Bliss-consciousness
	39	<i>Faith provides an anchor in life, not only for the seeker of Truth but for any man</i>		Faith explained
5	5	Milestone	Landmark (which of course is another metaphor)	Elucidating the nature of Cosmic Consciousness and inspiring the aspirant to proceed to higher states of consciousness
	7	<i>Action is a veil which hides this essential nature of the Self</i> <i>The Self...permanently freed from all stain</i>		Explaining the process of Transcendental Meditation as a systematic procedure
	16	<i>It is omnipresent, veiled only by ignorance, and when this veil has been destroyed by knowledge, It shines forth in its own light.</i>		Being and the process of experiencing It
	22	<i>The difference between the consciousness of the enlightened man and that of the unenlightened is as great as that between the Absolute and the relative, between light and dark-</i>		Enlightened and unenlightened compared

		ness		
	24	<p><i>The experience of Being becomes clearer – the inner light grows</i></p> <p><i>Who dwells in the light of the Self, whose inner being is illuminated by the light of the inner Divine</i></p> <p><i>He does not need an external light, for he is awake in his own light</i></p>		Experience of Being
6	Introduction	<i>This chapter stands as the keystone in the arch of the Bhagavad-Gita</i>		
	2	<i>“‘incentive of desire’ translates the Sanskrit word ‘sankalpa’, which conveys the idea of a seed which sprouts into desire”</i>		A metaphor of the main text explained in the commentary
	3	<i>The mind, travelling as it were on the ladder of activity</i>		Explaining the mind’s shifting from activity to silence in the process of Transcendental Meditation , finally establishing Cosmic Consciousness
		<i>Light of God (twice)</i>		
	5	<i>The wind does nothing to the sun; it only clears away the clouds and the sun is found shining by its own light. The sun of the Self is self-effulgent. Meditation only takes the mind out of the clouds of relativity. The absolute state of the Self ever shines in Its own glory</i>		Here metaphorical language is used to clarify how Transcendental Meditation functions in developing higher states of consciousness
	12	<i>A living instrument tuned to the divine nature</i>	The body	The mind’s status in Transcendental Consciousness
	18	<i>‘His mind completely settled’: this refers to Transcendental Consciousness, where the mind has become an unlimited and silent ocean of pure consciousness without a single wave of thought. It may also be said to refer to Cosmic Consciousness,</i>		The mind’s experience of pure consciousness explained, as comment to reading in the main text

		where the calm of the ocean is not disturbed in spite of waves of thought and experience		
	22	Light of God		Unity in God-Consciousness explained
	23	These verses, 20 to 23, form the four pillars of the edifice of Yoga		
		inward march of the mind		Direction of the attention of the mind inwards
		Universal Being, a ray of whose eternal light is sufficient to dispel all the darkness of ignorance and shower down the blessings of almighty God		
		Royal road to fulfillment		Describing Transcendental Meditation
		This highway		
	24	The village of the senses	'The village of the senses': the place where the senses are housed. This is the structure of the nervous system. The whole nervous system is the village, the individual senses are the villagers and the mind the landlord. Thus, when the Lord says: 'controlling the village of the senses on every side by the mind alone', the principle He wants to bring out is this: control the landlord to influence the villagers, in order to re-orientate the village so that all its activity , the activity of the nervous system, proceeds in accordance with the laws of nature, while the awareness of the Self maintains its natural state in eternal Being	Transcendental Meditation in relation to nervous system explained
	27	Flower of divine wisdom... comes to full bloom		Describing the main verses of this chapter
	29	The milk	Of the Upaniṣads	The main text explained

Similes

In this section the figurative part column and the factual part column all are quotes from the commentary on the Bhagavadgītā chapters 1-6 and therefore no signs of quotation are used. The teachings column is my explanation of the teaching, and when quoting I use signs of quote in this column. In some instances the factual part comes before the figurative in the similes. When I do not write anything in the teachings part I consider the teaching obvious from the formulation of it. In certain similes there are no explicit factual part.

Chapter	Verse	Figurative part	Factual part	Teachings
1	29	<i>He stands like a child who is being called with love by his mother and at the same time is being summoned by his father...</i>		Describing Arjuna's state of heart and mind on the battlefield
	30	<i>As if the car of Arjuna's life were being driven with great speed on the road of love, and there came a great force of mind to reverse the direction</i>		Cause of Arjuna's state of indecisive mind
	34	<i>Like the ocean. It is like a silent ocean, for it ceases to flow in any direction.</i>	When love is full, life is full...	Depicting Arjuna's state of inactivity
	41	<i>The laws maintaining the well-being of the whole body consist of a collection of the laws maintaining its different parts, together with others added to co-ordinate different limbs. The laws of the evolution of the body likewise are the sum total of those governing the evolution of different limbs, along with those co-ordinating them.</i>	In a similar way, there are dharmas governing individual evolution and there are dharmas which connect and co-ordinate different individuals. These latter are said primarily to govern the evolution of the society or caste	
2	1	<i>It is like the bitter skin of an orange which contains sweet juice within it</i>	The outer structure of tears and distress serves to protect the inner glory of consciousness in a state of suspension	Arjuna's dilemma explained
		<i>Analyzing a problem to find its solution is like trying to restore freshness to a leaf by treating the leaf itself, whereas the solution lies in watering the root</i>		Arjuna's problem not solved on the level of the problem but on the level of Being as a commentary on main verse
	7	<i>When a patient will</i>	(This is a great secret of suc-	Here Maharishi is

		<i>not keep still, the surgeon cannot start the operation; only when the patient submits himself to the surgeon to do as he wishes does he feel free to operate</i>	cess when guidance is sought from another in any walk of life)	referring to Arjuna's state of mind where he first is not ready to listen to Lord Kṛṣṇa but then becomes attentive
		<i>When a calf approaches its mother, the milk begins to flow from her udder, ready for the calf to drink without effort</i>	Devotion on the part of the disciple creates affection in the heart of the master	Arjunas surrender at the feet of Lord Kṛṣṇa
	8	<i>A plant becomes dry because it has received no nourishment from the root, and there is no way of giving it nourishment from outside</i>	by reason of Arjuna's state of suspension, the co-ordination between the mind and the senses is lost	Arjuna's continued lamentation is explained
		<i>It can happen that even the ocean fails to subdue a volcanic eruption</i>	If the surrender described in the previous verse had been complete, Arjuna should have been silent about his grief from that moment. But he expresses it even after declaring that he has surrendered	
	9	<i>Arjuna stands as a child before the greatness of Lord Krishna</i> <i>His words: 'I will not fight', are like the words of a child who says: 'I will not go there', and yet looks to his father to find out his intentions</i> <i>Once Arjuna has surrendered himself at the feet of the Lord, he becomes as a child before Him</i>		Explanation of Arjuna's state when he has surrendered to Kṛṣṇa
	15	<i>The unlimited state of the ocean is not affected either by the inflow of rivers or the process of evaporation</i>	In the same way, a man established in the understanding of the unlimited abundance of absolute existence is naturally free from influence of the relative order	Explaining immortality
		<i>When once a man knows that he is king and the state belongs to him, he immediately begins to make use of his relationship with the state, begins to behave as a king. He is not required to culti-</i>	So simple is the path of understanding which results in freedom from bondage	Explaining the relationship experienced between inner and outer phases of existence in higher states of consciousness

		vate kingship by practice and by constant thought about his position, just as a child is not required to remember always that his mother is his mother. He just knows it once and lives the relationship at all times		
	17	As the same sun appears as different when shining on different media, such as water and oil,	so the same omnipresent Being, shining through different nervous systems, appears as different and forms the spirit, the subjective aspect of man's personality	Explains the universality of individuality
	40	As water flows down a slope in a natural way,	so the mind flows naturally in the direction of bliss	Process of reaching Being once this process is started
		When a man is listening to music and a more beautiful melody begins to come from another source, his whole mind will turn to enjoy it. No effort is needed to shift the attention to the more charming melody; the process is automatic. There is no loss of energy between starting to listen and enjoying the music with rapt attention	This is the Lord's meaning: since the field of eternal freedom is absolute bliss, the process of uniting the mind with it, once having begun, comes to completion without loss of energy or effort	See above; variation of this explanation; and also explaining the meaning of the main text's "no obstacle exists"
		As in the case of diving, one has only to take a correct angle and let go – the whole process is accomplished in an automatic manner		The process of reaching Being is automatic once having started due to the nature of the mind
		As the first ray of the sun dispels the darkness of the night,	so the first step in this practice dispels the darkness of ignorance and fear	Explaining the main text: "a little of this dharma", meaning that just a little experience of Being gives the profound experience of Being
	41	If a man on a mountain peak, wishing to guide another who is only half-way up, keeps shouting directions about where he himself is standing, it will not help the other	Arjuna is in a state of irresoluteness, and the Lord's intention is to bring him to the resolute state by first showing him all about the irresolute state of his mind, and then guiding him to the resolute state	The Lord's way of teaching , which could have a universal application

		<i>man to arrive at the top. The direct way of guiding him up is first to tell him where he is and describe his surroundings, thus making him aware of his own position, and then to guide him to the peak</i>		
	45	<i>Modern psychological theories investigate causes in order to influence effects. They grope in darkness to find the cause of darkness in order to remove it. In contradiction, here is the idea of bringing light to remove darkness</i>	Take the mind to a field of happiness in order to relieve it of suffering	The principle of the second element according to Maharishi
		<i>It is difficult for a man to improve his business affairs while he himself is constantly immersed in all their details. If he leaves them for a little while, he becomes able to see the business as a whole and can then more easily decide what is needed</i>	Arjuna has a deep belief in dharma; his mind is clear about considerations of right and wrong. But the Lord asks him to abandon the whole field of right and wrong for the field of the Transcendent. There, established in a state beyond all duality, beyond the influence of right and wrong, he will enjoy the absolute wisdom of life, from which springs all knowledge of the relative world	Explaining the sentence of the main text "be without the three gunas" ...
		<i>When you say to someone: 'Come here', you imply by these two words that he must get up and begin to put one foot before the other, and that this walking on both feet will bring him to you</i>	When the Lord says: 'Be without the three gunas', He obviously means that in whichever field of the three gunas you have your stand, from there you are to begin moving towards subtler planes of the gunas and, arriving at the subtlest, come out of it, transcend it, be by yourself...	Variation of previous
		<i>Life is tossed about as a ship on the rough sea from one wave to another</i>		Maharishi explains: "The relative field of life is full of conflicting elements: heat and cold, pleasure and pain, gain and loss, and all the other pairs of opposites which constitute life. Under their influence..."

		<i>It is like an anchor to the ship of life in the ocean of the three gunas. One gains steadiness and comfort</i>	To be freed from duality is to be in the field of non-duality, the absolute state of Being. This provides smoothness and security to life in the relative field.	Explaining the phrase “be without the three gunas”
	46	<i>The state of realization is like a reservoir full of water, from which people quite naturally draw to satisfy all their needs instead of getting their water from many small ponds</i>	to be a self-contained whole instead of trying to achieve a little here and there	Maharishi explains the benefits of reaching the Transcendent pure consciousness
	47	<i>If a student thinks the whole time about passing an examination, the progress of his study will be hampered, and this will jeopardize the result.</i>	It is to ensure the greater success of an action that the doer is asked not to concern himself with results during the course of the action	Explaining the principle of the technique for success in activity
	48	<i>Part of the training for one who wishes to become a good swimmer is the art of diving. When one is able to maintain oneself successfully in deep water, then swimming on the surface becomes easy</i>	All action is the result of the play of the conscious mind. If the mind is strong, then action is also strong and successful. The conscious mind becomes powerful when the deeper levels of the ocean of mind are activated during the process of transcendental meditation, which leads the attention from the surface of the conscious mind to the transcendental field of Being. The process of diving within is the way to become established in Yoga	illustrate the development of higher state of consciousness
		<i>To shoot an arrow successfully it is first necessary to draw it back on the bow, thus giving it great potential energy. When it is brought back to the fullest possible extent, then it possesses the greatest dynamic power</i>		The process of Transcendental Meditation
		<i>It is like a small business man becoming wealthy and reaching the status of a multimillionaire. The losses and gains of the market, which before used to influence him, now have no effect upon him and he rises quite naturally above their</i>	The reward of bringing the mind to this state is that the small individual mind grows to the status of the cosmic mind, rising above all its individual shortcomings and limitations	State of Cosmic Consciousness explained

		<i>influence</i>		
		<i>When a wealthy man wants his son to start a business, he does not usually wish him to begin in a small way, because he knows that in that way small losses and gains will influence his dear son and make him miserable or happy over trivialities. Therefore he gives him the status of a wealthy man and then asks him to start business from that level</i>	Lord Krishna, like a kind and able father, advises Arjuna to attain the state of cosmic intelligence and then to act from that high state of freedom in life	State of Cosmic Consciousness explained
	49	<i>When an arrow is to be shot, the first step is to pull it back on the bow. If, instead, in the hurry of things, the arrow is shot forward without being pulled back on the bowstring, then the aim will not be achieved, the target will not be reached,</i>	the action will be without force and the actor will remain unfulfilled	The concept of skill in action and how to achieve it, and how not to do it
	50	<i>Yoga is pulling the arrow back; karma is shooting the arrow forward</i>	Here the Lord contrasts the opposing characteristics of Yoga and karma (action)	Development of the simile of the bow and arrow; skill in action
		<i>One who tries to shoot the arrow without first pulling it back on the bow is said to have a poor sense of action. His shot will not be strong, and his arrow will not go far because it will not be carried forward with force. Wise in the skill of action are those who first pull the arrow back before they proceed to shoot it ahead.</i>		Further elaborations of the simile of archer; skill in action, due to proper meditation as a preparation for action
		<i>Such a person is as naturally above the influence of right and wrong as the wealthy business man is above loss and gain</i>	Coming out of the transcendental state of consciousness, a man regains individuality, by virtue of which he is able to act in the relative field of life, but he now acts infused with Being	Influence of higher states of consciousness on the mind of man
		<i>When a small business man incurs a loss, his mind is profoundly affected by it. This cre-</i>	An impression on the mind is the seed of the desire which leads to action. Action in turn produces an impression	Explaining the role of action in karmic influences and birth and

		<i>ates a deep impression, which comes to the surface again as a desire for gain when favourable conditions present themselves</i>	on the mind, and thus the cycle of impression, desire and action continues, keeping a man bound to the cycle of cause and effect, the cycle of birth and death. This is commonly called the binding influence of action, the bondage of karma	death
	51	<i>One dives into the ocean, reaches the bottom, gathers the pearls and comes out of the water to enjoy their value – the whole act is done in one dive. The technique of diving lies only in taking a correct angle and then letting go; reaching the bottom and coming up with the pearls follows automatically.</i>	What a seeker of Truth has to do is only to learn how to take a correct angle for the dive within	Explaining the process of Transcendental Meditation
	56	<i>Just as a millionaire who has great wealth remains unaffected by the rise and fall of the market,</i>	so the mind which has gained the state of bliss-consciousness through transcendental meditation remains naturally contented on coming out from the transcendental state to the field of activity	Explaining the state of an enlightened person
		<i>it is like the heart of a grown man remaining unaffected by the toys which create great emotions in the hearts of children</i>		Explaining the state of the enlightened with another simile
	57	<i>If a poor man puts up the sign of a wealthy man and tries to behave like one, this can only result in tension. By superficially copying the behavior of a rich man, he cannot possibly become rich</i>	Similarly, the behavior of a man of steady intellect provides no standard for one whose intellect is not steady. If he tries to go that way, his life will become cold, deprived of the qualities of heart and mind	Maharishi explains how other's interpretations have been misleading
		<i>This world of joys and sorrows, of man's great enterprise and ambition, is for them like a world of dolls and toys with which children play and amuse themselves</i>	Toys are a source of great excitement for children, but grown-ups remain untouched by them. The man of established intellect remains even and does not rejoice or recoil 'on gaining what is good or bad'	The enlightened person described
	58	<i>As a tortoise draws in its limbs from all sides, his intellect is established</i>	<i>when such a man withdraws his senses from their objects...</i>	Main text simile! Explains how the senses are withdrawn from their objects in an

				enlightened person
	66	<i>As on a calmer surface of water the sun reflects more clearly</i>	so a calmer mind receives a clearer reflection of the omnipresent bliss of the absolute Being	Peaceful mind in bliss-consciousness
	67	<i>They are the machinery through which the mind enjoys and, like a ready servant, are waiting to serve the mind</i>	If the senses draw the mind to the joys of their objects, this similarly is no discredit to the senses	Senses' purpose
		<i>...for it travels as if in a diverging beam, a course naturally opposed to the concentrated state of intellect</i>	As a ship is carried away by the wind, so is the mind completely carried away by the senses (main text simile cited in the commentary; my note) in the outward direction of gross creation, the direction of the objects of the senses. It loses the power of concentration...	Mind vs. steady intellect explained
	70	<i>...his state is like that of an ever-full and steady ocean</i>	When a man has risen to this lasting state of consciousness, the state where his Self is detached from and not overshadowed by the relative states of life – waking, dreaming and deep sleep – then...	Higher states of consciousness
		<i>...as rivers to the ocean</i>	Desires are always flowing towards eternal bliss-consciousness,...	Higher states of consciousness
		<i>... is like an ocean, which will accept any stream of desires</i>	The Self-awareness of the realized...	Higher states of consciousness
		<i>The ocean accepts the river as it comes and denies no stream rushing in, yet its status remains unaffected</i>	Such is the state of established intellect, which cannot be affected by anything	The enlightened in higher states of consciousness
3	9	<i>... as objects of oblation consumed in the sacrificial fire</i>	But here the Lord means the act of going to the transcendental Being – bringing the attention from the gross external experience of the world to the state of the Transcendent, allowing all thoughts and desires to converge upon the Transcendent...	Experiencing the Transcendent
	11	<i>The existence of gods may be understood by an analogy: each of the myriad cells in the human body has its own level of life, energy and intelligence; together, these innumerable</i>	The 'gods' mentioned here are the deities presiding over the innumerable laws of nature, which are present everywhere throughout relative life. They are the powers governing different impulses of intelligence and energy,	Concept of "gods" explained

		<i>merable lives produce human life. A human being is like a god to all these small impulses of energy and intelligence, each with its own form, tendencies, sphere of activity and influence, working for the purpose of evolution</i>	working out the evolution of everything in creation	
	15	<i>Every orange is meant to contain juice, but a shriveled orange does not yield any. So it is said that juice is present in a fresh orange. Even a shriveled orange has juice, but because this cannot be extracted, such an orange is not considered when juice is wanted</i>	Likewise divine consciousness can be developed through those types of action which help evolution	Divine or higher states of consciousness
	27	<i>It is a natural law that when vacuum is created somewhere in the atmosphere, at once a flow begins from an area of greater pressure. But while the flow starts from the area of greater pressure, the cause lies in the vacuum. It is the vacuum that creates the situation.</i>	Similarly, the currents of the three gunas flow in order to keep a balance among themselves	Phenomenal world as interplay of the three gunas
	35	<i>The First English Reader is certainly inferior to Milton's Paradise, but it is more valuable for the student of the first grade because it is more suited to him</i>	The comparative merit of the dharma of one's present state may be less than the dharma of a higher state, but its merit in its own place is greater by far	Individual dharmas explained
	37	<i>It is like a whirlpool in a river which threatens to upset the smooth flow of everything passing along it. It is like fire which burns up everything in its path</i>	That is why anger is called 'the enemy' by the Lord... Anger is said to be the great evil, mutilating the very purpose of creation	Explaining anger
	41	<i>In a mountain, various underground currents of water flow from all directions and all of them find a common outlet in a spring. The only way to organize all these underground</i>	Desires in the fields of intellect and mind are like currents underground. The field of the senses is like the outlet from which the currents emerge into the open air... According to this verse, organizing the outlet, organiz-	Relationship of desire and Self ; controlling of desires by organizing the senses

		<i>currents is to organize the outlet... By controlling the outlet, it is quite possible to use the whole outlet of water to advantage</i>	ing the senses, is the way to make the best use of the underground currents of desire	
	42	<i>If one has difficulty in dealing with an officer, one should seek out his superior in rank</i>	In the field of inner life, the Lord says, he who is beyond the intellect is the highest authority of all	Principle of highest first
	43	<i>Bring the light in order to remove the darkness</i>	Go to the state of enlightenment in order to come out of the bondage of karma	Principle of reaching enlightenment (not a proper simile, since there is no word of comparison)
		<i>The principle of maintaining the life of a tree is to go beyond the tree. If one attends to the area surrounding the root, to the transcendental field of the tree, it is easy to bring nourishment to all its parts</i>	If one attends to the field of the Transcendent one can make the whole tree of life healthy and fruitful	Principle of highest first or a good life (no word of comparison)
4	5	<i>As the embodied self remains unchanged when the body passes into the changing states of childhood, youth and old age...</i>	...so does the Self continue unchanged in the eternity of time	Self's immortality and birth and death of the Self
		<i>He is the ocean of life, while time rises and falls as the tide on the surface of the ocean. Though the tidal waves draw on the depths they can never fathom the unfathomable abyss</i>		Transcendent nature of the Lord; Aretalogy of the Lord explained
		<i>...is like a wave which rises up to see – it can see so far and no more; but Lord Krishna's stature is like that of an ocean on which the whole of space is reflected</i>	The life of man...	Difference between the Lord and Arjuna or man; Aretalogy of the Lord explained
	6	<i>Surgery is the inseparable power of the surgeon. Sometimes it is active, as when the surgeon works at the operating table, but at other times it is latent,</i>	Lila-shakti (the play-power of Brahman) functions in an analogous way, and by virtue of this the unmanifest, ever remaining in its absolute state, manifests into creation	Līlāśakti of Brahman explained

		<i>as when he is resting at home.</i>		
		<i>Just as the sap in a tree appears as a leaf and a flower without losing its quality as sap,...</i>	...so the unmanifest Being, remaining unmanifest imperishable and eternal, takes birth. Nothing happens to the Absolute, and yet the Incarnation of the Absolute springs up, by virtue of Its own nature	Manifestation of the Absolute or Brahman as the relative existence, and its relationship
	7	<i>(a)...just as law and order are automatically maintained by a government. (cont. b)</i>	(Start) The equilibrium of the three gunas is maintained automatically,...(cont. a)	Righteousness in decline prompts the Lord to incarnate
		<i>(b)But whenever a crisis arises, the head of state has to exercise his special power. (cont. c)</i>	(c)Whenever dharma is in decay, the balance of the three gunas is disturbed, the equilibrium in nature is lost, the path of evolution is distorted and chaos prevails	The Lord likened to head of state
		<i>It is like a powerful current which forcibly carries with it all that comes in its path</i>	This eternally ever-changing nature of relative life is maintained in all its aspects of creation and evolution by virtue of the enormous power of nature called dharma, which is at the basis of the smooth functioning of the three gunas	Dharma
		<i>...and like the water of a great lake, so does this fullness remain. The water has a tendency neither to flow away nor to resist flowing; it just remains as it is. If a farmer wants to take water to his field, he brings a pipe up to the level of the water. The water does not refuse to flow once the pipe is raised to its level</i>	In the fullness of Divinity, God is ever full,...	The Lord's fullness
	13	<i>Oxygen and hydrogen ions combine to give rise to the properties of water. The water freezes, giving rise to the properties of ice. In these different states of gas, liquid and solid, the basic elements – oxygen and hydrogen – remain the same. Inasmuch as they are the fundamental material from which gas, water</i>	This (the fourfold order of creation and the non-doing character of Being) may be further clarified by an example...	Maharishis explanation of varna or caste : "Lying at the base of all creation, it is the 'author' and, remaining unchanged, it is the 'non-doer' and 'immutable'". Note that it is not bound to birth or heredity

		<i>and ice are formed, oxygen and hydrogen could be said to have created these different substances. But because they remain oxygen and hydrogen through their various stages, they could be said to be non-doing. Such is the state of ultimate Being.</i>		
	17	<i>This art of action is like the art of a gardener who, by watering the root, makes the sap rise to every part of the tree without having to know anything about the mechanics of rising sap</i>	The Lord adopts a mode of instruction whereby, without knowledge of the whole field of action, one can acquire every benefit that such knowledge could bestow. He brings to light the art of action whereby, without having to gain knowledge of action, one can enjoy the blessings which such knowledge would give.	The art of action
	19	<i>He... whose action is burnt up in the fire of knowledge</i>	This knowledge is compared here to a blazing fire which burns up all action, in the sense that the action is set completely free from the binding influence of action or its fruits	Enlightened person in higher states of consciousness
	20	<i>When pure honey comes on the tongue, the taste of great sweetness surpasses in degree all the sweet tastes experienced up to then. If the tongue continues to cherish the taste of honey, then there will be no chance for a previous sweet taste to recur</i>	This is what happens when the mind lives permanently in the experience of transcendental bliss in the state of Cosmic Consciousness; there then remain no chance for impressions of past experiences to capture it. This is how the enlightened man has 'cast off attachment to the fruit of action' performed in the past	Cosmic Consciousness
		<i>If one has the taste of concentrated sweetness on the tongue and then tastes other sweets, these tastes do not leave any significant impression</i>	When a man, established in the bliss of the absolute Being, acts in the relative field of life, his experiences will not leave on the mind any deep impression which could give rise to future desires. In this way the cycle of action-impression-desire-action is broken. It is thus that in an enlightened man, activity and experience in the world are debarred from sowing the seed of future action	Aspect of Cosmic Consciousness explained
	31	<i>Unless the arrow is fully drawn back on</i>	Unless the mind is drawn inwards and brought to the ex-	Art of skill in action

		<i>the bow, it does not gain sufficient energy to shoot forward with great force;</i>	treme limit of its inward march, it does not become dynamic. And unless the mind becomes active and powerful, it certainly will not achieve success in the world	
	35	<i>When one sees through green spectacles, then everything looks green.</i>	When, through knowledge, the Self is realized as separate from activity and Self-consciousness becomes permanent in the state of Cosmic Consciousness, then everything is naturally experienced in the awareness of the Self; and when this permanent state of Self-consciousness, or Cosmic Consciousness, has been transformed through devotion into God-Consciousness, then everything is naturally experienced in the awareness of God, every experience is through God-Consciousness, everything is experienced and understood in the light of God, in terms of God, in God	Higher states of consciousness
	36	<i>However dense the darkness and however long it may have existed, one ray of the rising sun is enough to dispel the darkness, though it takes time to reach the brightness of the mid-day sun.</i>	Even a momentary flash of Transcendental Consciousness is enough to dispel the delusion of ignorance, though it takes time to gain full enlightenment in God-Consciousness, where one has crossed over all evil by the raft of knowledge.	Development from Transcendental Consciousness to God-Consciousness or highest state of consciousness
	37	<i>The impressions of past actions, which serve as the seed for future actions, become like roasted seeds, losing their potency. This is how the actions of the past are burnt in 'the fire of knowledge'</i>		Karma extinct through experience of Being leading to higher states of consciousness
	38	<i>Knowledge is the purifier of life</i>	It purifies life in the sense that it analyses the different aspects of existence and distinguishes and separates the eternal aspects from muddy water	
		<i>A balanced alternation of meditation and activity results in full realization. One analogy will make this clear: we dip a white cloth in a yellow dye and let it</i>	we keep repeating the process of gaining the state of universal Being in transcendence (samadhi) during meditation and of coming out to regain individuality in the field of relative exis-	Process of Transcendental Meditation developing into Cosmic Consciousness

		<i>remain in the dye to be coloured for a few minutes. Then we take it out and expose it to the sun till the colour begins to fade. We repeat the same process, again putting the cloth into the sunlight till the colour fades. Similarly, we meditate for about half an hour and follow this by coming out to act in practical life for about ten hours, by which time we begin to feel that we are out of the influence of the morning meditation. We meditate again in the same way and again let the influence fade by coming out into practical life;</i>	tence. This allows more and more infusion of Being into the nature of the mind even when it is engaged in activity through the senses.	
	39	<i>...They are as different one from another as spectacles of different colours through which the same view looks different</i>	In the sequence of development, one state (<i>of consciousness, my note</i>). leads to another in the order of waking, transcendental, cosmic and God-Consciousness...	Development of different higher states of consciousness
		<i>The first ray of the rising sun is enough to dispel the darkness of the night, and yet it takes some time for the sun to become fully risen.</i>	Through meditation, the mind reaches Transcendental Consciousness quickly and is enlightened by the first ray of the Divine; yet to allow this transcendental divine consciousness to shine forth through all circumstances, through waking, dreaming and dreamless sleep, regular practice of meditation is absolutely essential	Process of Transcendental Meditation developing higher states of consciousness progressively
	42	<i>As the sharp edge of a sword is capable of cutting whatever it meets,...</i>	...so the state of knowledge, the awareness of Being as separate from activity, cuts asunder all doubts about the true nature of life and activity	"Sword of knowledge" of the main text explained
5	Introduction	<i>It stands as a beacon not only for those who are miserable and confused, but also for the seekers, and even for those who are well advanced on the path</i>	Inexhaustible wisdom is contained in the twenty-nine verses of this chapter	Content of the chapter characterized
	7	<i>...the mind becomes as if intoxicated with a</i>	when Being first begins to be infused into the nature of	Victory of the senses

		<i>feeling of self-sufficiency</i>	the mind,...	
		<i>A real conquest is that where the enemy ceases to be an enemy; he is left free to do as he likes, but is not in a position to attack or do any harm.</i>	The conquest of the senses is so fully accomplished through the mastery of the Self that the senses are left free to function and, notwithstanding all the experiences of the relative field, life is firmly established in the eternal freedom of divine consciousness.	Description of the self's victory of the senses in higher states of consciousness
		<i>The light of a lamp is invisible in the light of the sun. The glory of the drop has no effect on the glory of the ocean</i>	The joy of an action leaves no lasting impression upon the bliss of Cosmic Consciousness. Therefore once a man is established in this state, he naturally enjoys so great a fullness of Being that he never feels he is out of It	Describing higher states of consciousness
	14	<i>Just as a coconut has two different aspects, the outer hard cover and the inner milk within, one solid, the other liquid, without any link between them...</i>	...so life has two aspects, one unchanging and eternal, the other ever-changing and relative, without any link between them	Outer and inner phases of life explained
	16	<i>The sun removes the darkness and spreads the light at the same time</i>	This indicates that when ignorance has been destroyed by wisdom, nothing more need be done to realize the Transcendent.	Being reveals the truth in higher states of consciousness
	19	<i>It is like a gardener who knows how to work at the level of the sap and can influence the whole tree in any way he likes; Someone who is acquainted with the atomic or sub-atomic level of an object, by working on that level could easily bring about a desired change in any stratum of the object's existence.</i>	When the mind, through the practice of transcendental meditation, rises to the state of Cosmic Consciousness, absolute Being becomes permanently established in the nature of the mind, and it attains the state of Brahman, the universal Being. Then the mind finds itself on a level of life from which all the gross and subtle levels of creation can be stimulated, controlled and commanded	Transcendental Meditation explained
		<i>--- it is like a slave to activity, a slave to the universe.</i>	As long as the mind has not risen permanently to the state of Being---	The mind before and after Cosmic Consciousness has been reached
		<i>...like a servant, to its every need</i>	But when it gains stability in Being and acquires a natural state of equanimity, then it finds the universe as separate from itself, responding quite automatically,...	
	20	<i>If the idea of catching</i>	If this can happen within the	The mind in

		<i>an aeroplane on time engages the mind fully, none of the many objects that are seen and sounds that are heard while one is driving through the streets will deflect the mind from the air terminal. In such circumstances the experience of the other things remains on the surface level of sensory perception and makes only a very faint impression on the mind</i>	waking state of consciousness, how much more so when another state of consciousness overtakes the mind	higher states of consciousness or the enlightened man (as described in the main text of the verse)
	22	<i>When a retailer becomes a wholesale merchant he no longer deals in the retail field, which requires more effort and produces less profit.</i>	Established in the state of eternal happiness, in Brahmi-sthiti, and experiencing the Self as separate from activity, he has by nature risen above the phenomenal phase of life, above the fleeting joys of the relative field, and so he is not in the state where he can rejoice in temporary joys.	Going from ignorance to higher states of consciousness
		<i>It may be likened to the experience of objects through glasses of different colours, whereby the same object is experienced differently.</i>	The experience of the objects of the senses in the waking state differs from that in the state of Cosmic Consciousness	Sense experiences in Cosmic Consciousness
	23	<i>...as a ship is anchored to the sea-bed.</i>	In the case of a non-realized man this excitement (<i>desire and anger exciting the nervous system. My note</i>) is immediately expressed as speech and action; but in the case of a realized man, it is anchored to eternal silence...	Enlightened person compared to non-enlightened
		<i>Self-awareness acts as a shock-absorber on the mental level, while the state of restful alertness of the nervous system acts as a shock-absorber on the physical level. This is the natural state of life in Cosmic Consciousness</i>		(due to character of simile factual part presented in cell for figurative) Cosmic Consciousness on physical and mental level explained
6	1	<i>Again, fire is that which destroys. What destroys the eternal calmness of the ocean?</i>	That is why desire is considered to be fire for one who chooses the life of silence	"Therefore being 'without fire' (a metaphor of the main text; my

		<i>A wind that sets up waves. Eternal un-manifested Being appears as waves of individual life through the instrumentality of desire.</i>		note) symbolizes the life of a sanyasi." Life of a sanyasi described. Not a simile proper.
	2	<i>...as water every wave</i>	Unity pervades all activity...	development of consciousness from Cosmic Consciousness to God-Consciousness
	5	<i>Like brothers bound by the natural affinity of blood, they support each other in every way. This is one aspect of their relationship. But there is another: when a difference arises between brothers, they can become deadly enemies.</i>	This happens when the self has not conquered the Self	Life in non-enlightened state
	12	<i>...just as someone very active on the surface of the water does not sink</i>	A normal state of mind is needed for starting meditation. The mind should neither be dull nor very active. When it is dull, tending to sleepiness, it loses the capacity for experience. When it is very active, it remains in the field of gross experience and, as it were, refuses to enter into the field of subtle experience,...	Starting Transcendental Meditation
	19	<i>...is like water without ripples. It is called 'manas', or mind, when ripples arise</i>	Chitta...	Chitta, thought or intellect and manas, mind explained
		<i>Imagine a silent wave on a silent ocean, ready to expand and merge into the silence of the deep.</i>	The state of the pure individuality of the mind, the pure individuality of the 'I', expressed by this verse, directly merges into transcendental Self-consciousness; this is expressed by the Lord as 'Union with the Self': the mind is united with divine Being	Unity of mind and Being
	20	<i>Having come back home, the traveller finds peace. The intensity of happiness is beyond superlative. The bliss of this state eliminates the possibility of any sorrow, great or small</i>	This is the glory of the nature of the Self	Experiencing the Self or pure consciousness explained

		<i>Into the bright light of the sun no darkness can penetrate...</i>	... no sorrow can enter bliss-consciousness, nor can bliss-consciousness know any gain greater than itself	Pure consciousness as bliss explained
	21	<i>When the crown prince becomes king, the crown prince ceases to exist, but even then it can be said that the crown prince has 'gained' kingship</i>	It is in this sense that the state of transcendental Self is 'gained by the intellect'	Development of Cosmic Consciousness
	25	<i>If a man standing in bright light suddenly rushes into a dark cave, his eyes may not be able to see what is there inside the cave; but if he enters slowly, his eyes become used to the lesser intensity of light, and then he is able to see</i>	The mind, when it retires deep within, goes from the more gross to the subtler levels of experience. Therefore it is essential for the mind not to rush in suddenly but to go gradually and patiently	Process of Transcendental Meditation explained
	26	<i>Like waves beginning to appear on the still surface of the ocean</i>	it is quite right for the mind to enter a wavering state when it comes out of the field of transcendental Unity	Details of the process of Transcendental Meditation explained
	28	<i>It may be likened to a mass of energy – matter – which does not exhibit any quality of energy</i>	Brahman, which is an all-pervading mass of bliss, does not exhibit any quality of bliss	Nature of Brahman , and experience of it
	30	<i>A thought of bread neither gives the taste of bread nor fills the stomach. If you want bread, go to the kitchen and get it instead of sitting outside thinking about it</i>	We remain thinking of God, or trying to feel Him, only so long as we lack knowledge of Him, so long as we do not know how to break through the phenomenal field of experience and enter the realm of transcendental bliss, the pure kingdom of the Almighty.	Knowledge and experience of God
		<i>Philosophers call this a mystical experience, but it is no more mysterious than is the working of a clock for a child</i>	On one level of consciousness it is normal, on another it is mysterious, and again on another it is impossible	God-Consciousness
	31	<i>When a man looks at things through green spectacles, no matter what he sees the green is there</i>	For a devotee, no matter what he is doing God is there in his consciousness; He is there in his vision and in his being	Devotee explained, bhakta
		<i>A child takes delight in toys; his consciousness grows and books take their place; as he develops farther his career in the world begins to interest him. As</i>	Similarly, when a man's consciousness has grown to cosmic status, the supreme level of creation becomes his normal field of interest. God, the manifested Being on the supreme level of creation,	Growth of higher states of consciousness

		<i>his consciousness grows, so does he rise to different levels of interest and understanding</i>	begins to draw him to Himself; he begins to rise to God-Consciousness	
	32	<i>To make such a vision more comprehensible to the ordinary level of consciousness, it may be compared to a father's even vision towards a variety of toys which, to the vision of his child's undeveloped consciousness, will present great differences</i>	The pairs of opposites, such as pleasure and pain, which present great contrasts on the lower levels of evolution, fail to divide the evenness of his vision	A yogi's or enlightened's vision explained
	32	<i>There are two ways of disciplining a dog. One way is difficult, the other easy. Run after the dog, try to catch it and then tie it down at the door – this is one way of controlling the dog. Do not run after it, do not try to catch it, do not try to tie it at the door; rather, leave the dog quite free to go anywhere it wants, only put some food outside the door, just what the dog likes to eat. The dog will be found always at the door and as often as you wish. This is a simple way of gaining control over the dog without controlling it</i>	It should not be thought that one has to strain in order to keep life disciplined--- We want to discipline the mind, and the easy way is not to try to put restraint upon it. It is attracted by fields of greater happiness; then lead it towards some field of greater happiness in life and it will be found to stay there through its own desire to enjoy that happiness. The practice of transcendental meditation, bringing contentment through the experience of Being, naturally establishes Cosmic Consciousness and thus gives a disciplined pattern to life. This is the simple way of gaining a disciplined state of mind	Details of practice of Transcendental Meditation and way of disciplining the mind
	40	<i>If someone has begun to wash a cloth and for some reason can rinse it only once, he has at least succeeded in removing some of the dirt, even though the cloth is not completely clean. Certainly he has not made it more dirty</i>	A man begins the practice of meditation and, even if he meditates only a few times and transcends only once or twice, whatever purity the mind has gained is his	Faith of one who starts the practice of gaining enlightenment through meditation but stops the practice
	43	<i>Suppose that a cloth needs dipping a hundred times in dye before it is fully coloured, and that after it has been dipped ten times the factory closes. The cloth will then be taken to another fac-</i>	When a man begins to meditate, Being begins to grow into the nature of his mind. If, after a certain degree of infusion, he stops the practice in this life, or if his body perishes, whenever he again resumes his practice he will do so at that level of purity	More of an allegory or parable. Faith of a man who dies before reaching the goal

		<p>tory. The second factory can only start from the eleventh dipping. Thus, even though the cloth could not be fully coloured by a continuous process in one factory, the degree of colour attained in the first factory determines the starting-point in the second</p>	<p>of consciousness which he has obtained through his former practice. The degree of purity gained in this life is not lost because of the death of the body</p>	
	45	<p><i>The Lord says: 'perfected through many births'. By this He means perfected through the continued practice of repeatedly gaining Transcendental Consciousness and thus being re-born to the world many, many times until cosmic consciousness is gained</i></p>		<p>Symbolical interpretation of the sentence 'perfected through many births'</p>

“UNITY PERVADES ALL ACTIVITY AS WATER EVERY WAVE”

The major purpose of this thesis is to investigate some essential aspects of the teachings and philosophy of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi (1917-2008) expressed during different periods of time.

There is a primary focus on the teachings expressed in Maharishi's translation and commentary on the didactic poem, Bhagavadgītā, with extensive references to Maharishi's metaphorical language. The philosophy and teaching expressed in this text is investigated in relation to later texts.

Since maybe the most significant and most propagated message of Maharishi was his peace message, its theory and practice, as well as studies published regarding the so-called Maharishi Effect, are reflected in the thesis.

Maharishi's philosophy and teachings are analysed using three categories: 1. Vision and Tradition, as Maharishi could be considered on the one hand, a custodian of the ancient Vedic tradition and is associated with the Advaita Vedānta tradition of Śaṅkara from his master. On the other hand, Maharishi could be considered an innovator of this tradition and a visionary in his interpretation of the Vedic texts in relation to modern science. 2. Consciousness and Experience are central concepts in the teachings of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, as well as the relationship between them, which is evidenced by their use in Maharishi's writing and lecturing. 3. Practice before Theory is a concept used because of the numerous instances in Maharishi's philosophy and teaching indicating that he put practice before theory for spiritual development. The practice of Transcendental Meditation and the advanced TM-Sidhi programme is according to Maharishi in his vision of a better society most essential and he considered the application of a practice forgotten in many interpretations of texts like the Bhagavadgītā.

The thesis thus considers Maharishi's view on “Veda” and the “Vedic literature”, and on the Self, Ātmā, which could be considered the single most important concept in Maharishi's world of ideas on which his entire teaching is based.

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