

Lothar Pirc

The Blessing of Maharishi

The Wonderful Story of My Life

An Autobiography

Sample Chapters

KALYANA
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Most of the persons or institutions mentioned in this book are referred to by their real names. The names of persons or institutions from public life, however, have often been changed to maintain confidentiality. Fictitious names are designated with a*.

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Vedic knowledge and its implementation by Maharishi is, in part, so revolutionary that, especially when first meeting it, it needs a deeper explanation. We cut some of the more comprehensive elaborations from the text and put them in the Appendix (on page xxx) so as not to interrupt the flow of the narrative, while also not depriving readers who are interested in more detailed background knowledge.

Introduction

This book describes the personal and subjective experiences of my life and the blessings I experienced in nearly four decades of contact with Maharishi Mahesh Yogi and his eternal wisdom. I was not an especially close student of Maharishi's; nor can my experiences pretend to cover Maharishi's activities anywhere near to completeness. In his work, Maharishi gave thousands of people the chance to work with him directly for a certain phase of their lives, thus giving them special attention. He often did this for many at the same time. Many were closer to him and for longer periods of time than I was. Despite this, I am taking the risk to allow my readers to partake of my life with Maharishi to allow those who had lesser privilege, or none, to experience this great saint and sense who he was and what he accomplished.

It is impossible to adequately describe with words how much the mere presence of a human being with such unbounded consciousness can uplift a person's own experience and subtle perceptions. I hope that I have succeeded anyway to allow the spirit of Maharishi to shine through my words and to communicate to my readers some sense of his greatness. Among the countless projects for the betterment of human life on this planet that he has brought into being, the great legacy he left us is the knowledge and the consciousness techniques of the Vedic Tradition. Through his work, these are accessible and easily learned by anyone under the name Transcendental Meditation™ and its advanced programs. They enliven unbounded consciousness, the experience of which sleeps within each one of us as a birthright. Through regular practice we enliven our awareness of this all-pervading consciousness more and more, so that every one of us can lead an increasingly happier, more fulfilled, and blessed life.

So Many Stories

The flames in the fireplace throw orange, flickering light onto the wall; someone has lit candles, and the mood is peaceful. A few men and women are sitting together, and I, among them, am in some far away country, far from home. During the day, at a conference and in my capacity as the managing director of a private clinic in Germany, I spoke about the amazing success of the Maharishi Ayurveda treatments for our patients, also citing scientific studies and about conversations with doctors, influential politicians, and, sometimes, even with a minister of health.

As usual, generous people, in whatever city I happened to be, had supported me in preparing for these contacts, people who, like me, were intent on spreading this knowledge, knowledge humanity so desperately needs.

And now, we were all sitting together in the evening, in comfort and peace, thinking about the next steps or celebrating the successes achieved that day. Stories and anecdotes made their rounds, and, sooner or later, I began to talk about how I, personally, experienced Maharishi, the great sage of the last century. Often smiling, I told of the amazing events of my life, including some unbelievable experiences. And then, one of my listeners, deeply moved or sharing laughter would say, “Lothar, why don’t you write all this down; these are such wonderful stories!”

I’d continue telling stories, from the most diverse countries of our earth. People loved it; I loved it. And again, and again, a new friend would suggest, “Lothar, you should write all that down; write a book, there are so many people who would love to read it!”

At some point, I asked a Jyotishi, a Vedic astrologer, about that; he looked at my horoscope and then said with conviction, “You will write this book, and many thousands of people will read it!”

A few years passed, and I asked a second one. “Yes, Lothar, you will write this book, and it will inspire tens of thousands!” For sure

encouraging, but could I really do it? And he then expressed what I was feeling instinctively: “But you’re not such a good writer; it would only be good if you write these stories just as you tell them.”

A few years later, the desire to assemble these stories into a whole grew stronger. I kept putting it off as everyday concerns devoured me with a thousand inconsequential details. But at some point, the time had come. I began to speak into my little Dictaphone, telling how things began from the start. Right away, I showed the first print-out to my wife, Karin. As soon as she had read it, she looked up and said cautiously, “Hmm, that’s not really a fascinating read. You can tell it in such lively and compelling ways. And that’s the way it has to be put down on paper!”

Well, expressing myself in writing really is not my main strength. I have to get into the flow of things, and for that I need real listeners.

“Let me try and see if I can do it!” My dear wife was into it, and, soon enough, she really had fun articulating and writing. I told her my experiences. She asked questions about this or that, the tiniest details, lured out the feelings that had moved me back then with further questions, subsequently researched many fascinating details, and then expressed all that in lively words – only to read it all to me anew, so that we would for once (and not just once) agree. And so, finally, this book lies in your hands, with the highest possible accuracy possible in hindsight.

Dive right in, dear reader, into my eventful and varied life with all its twists of fate and miraculous events through which the blessings of my spiritual master Maharishi Mahesh Yogi run like a golden thread.

I. THE VILLAGE

*The space of the spirit,
where it can spread its wings,
that is silence.*

Antoine de Saint-Exupéry

1900-1944, French writer and pilot

A Head full of Crazy Ideas

That river was my flow.

I loved it. I loved sitting motionless on its shore, taking in its small, whirling movements and its peaceful flow. I knew the silence all around intimately; it was a part of me, sometimes lively with the far away voices of neighbors who, further down river, tended community gardens. Once every hour a steam locomotive with its puff-puff rattled along the shores of the Lahn River. Other than that, our village lay in tranquil peace that even the monotonous tones of the marble factory or the joyful calls of children on our unpaved streets could not disturb. Barely two hundred single family homes from various epochs nestled against the slope on one side, the lofty walls of the nine-hundred-year-old Schaumburg castle towering above them. On the opposite side of my river stood the motionless, tall trees of a great and untouched forest.

I knew almost every home inside and out, as I also knew their inhabitants. My mother and my father showered us three boys with their love and attention. They were protectively intent on keeping us from harm. And so, my two brothers and I grew up in the certainty that Father and Mother would be there for us, no matter what, to give us a good start in life. As a little boy, I felt love and protection all around me.

We lived in our own house, yet we were strictly frugal and we learned early that every penny had to be turned over twice. Some of the high points of the year were the family trips to Koblenz, where we let ourselves go into bargain hunting and clearance sales.

“Kids, put on your jackets, let’s go!”

My mother’s voice gave the starting signal. Six skinny boys’ legs ran down the hill of our street, jumping across the railroad tracks, past the sign with its black letters that carried the name of our village Balduinstein, and then, after excited and impatient waiting, climbed, the tall steps of the train car. The locomotive pulled its cars right along the shores of the Lahn River. The high-rising shores covered with trees

on both sides allowed us to see only trees rushing past and the few houses of small villages and train stations in the valley.

Just before getting to the outskirts of Bad Ems, I’d rush to the window and press my snub nose flat onto the pane. Excited and completely spellbound, I’d look around. With every trip my inner suspense rose again. Soon the city, with a prominent white house, would come into view. With its one hundred-fifty barred windows, its three-story height, and its tile-covered angular roof decorated with several pointed towers – all this was for me the essence of harmony and grandeur. Every time, I was overcome with inexplicable and inescapable fascination. The breath of a faraway intuition animated me...

Even as a small rug rat I loved to be outside in free and wide open nature. I spent much time playing with my friends and wandering through the forests and meadows of the untouched surroundings. This idyll was dimmed by the daily walk to school in which I had no special interest. With lovely predictability, this drove my father, who wanted the best future for me, up the wall. He had built most of our house for us with his own hands; he worked the nightshift at the railroad company and, during the day, he earned a bit more as a master tailor. His life had taught him that you couldn’t get anywhere without hard work and dedication. And with this, the deep and constant conflict of my childhood years was already programmed into me. As soon as I got home from school, the neighborhood boys would dribble a ball in front of our dining room window and yell, “Lotha, c’m on, let’s play soccer!”

Then nothing could hold me down; I’d fidget and want to go. And who, in the face of such temptation, could still want to do homework? When my father lost all patience and, fearing for my future, his admonitions always culminated in a standard sentence: “If you don’t try harder, then you’ll work construction with a shovel and a hoe.”

Well, if that isn’t a hell of a threat for a worry-free boy!

Not infrequently, I'd decamp after these dark prophecies to brood somewhere about that threatening future, which seemed to throw its dark shadow over me. One afternoon, on the balcony of our house, I let myself go into those gloomy thoughts. It became quieter and quieter within me, and the boundaries of my small, narrow boy's form seemed suddenly to dissolve. I felt myself become infinite and all-pervasive, merging with the hills and the heavens above me into one being. The whole environment seemed wrapped in dazzling light, and I felt these words rise from within me: "You don't have to worry, because you'll have a very special vocation and you'll accomplish great things, things that don't even exist today." I heard these words not in the way people normally spoke to me; instead it was a super-clear thought that sprang from deep inside and without any contribution on my part. Then, too, it was completely different from all the thoughts that normally flowed through my head. This inner voice felt as if someone had shared something with me in a gentle, quiet, and yet unmistakable way. At one with the infinite feeling of liberation that came with it, I felt deeply calmed and secure within this infinite space.

Another time I escaped into my parents' bedroom from the familiar and thundering tirade of my father's scolding and, lost, looked into the three-part mirror. There stood an eight-year old boy in shorts, with skinny legs, blond, short hair, and somewhat dreamy and sad blue eyes. Completely unexpected, and in the same way as before, that familiar voice came from deep within me, "You will be king in a realm yet unknown." The deep gentleness and unshakeable strength with which these words came, together with my child-like trust in them, consoled me completely.

This inner feeling of security had been part of me since my earliest childhood. Always when friends and relatives asked full of love, "Hey, Lotha, whaddya wanna be when ya grow up?" the answer came from deep within, "I'll be something that doesn't exist yet ..."

And a clear, gentle certainty would come with these words that felt good and true.

My father was often displeased, and not just because of my somewhat lacking enthusiasm for school. Now and then, he'd receive a summons from the principal because I didn't want to learn or had got into something. Our contact with the outside world was confined in those days to the daily newspaper and the wooden radio that was covered with cloth, sported three big dials, and could be found in nearly every house. Other than that, there was nothing happening, so that energy bubbling over and a good portion of unused creativity regularly forged us some path. Not only our teachers were targets for our pranks and plots, of which we devised many.

"Lotha, you in?"

My friend Joachim had whispered something to me grinning. Oh, wow, did that ever sound tempting! A done deal. We got a long thread from my mother's sewing basket, a thumbtack and some rosin – and we chose our victim. In a moonlit night, we stole outside and sneaked quietly to our classroom teacher's house.

From the bedroom of the clueless couple we could hear loud snoring, a clear sign that we could proceed. I wound the thread around the thumbtack and made a tight double knot while my stomach made somersaults and my legs trembled with excitement. Quickly, I pushed the thumbtack into the window putty in such a way – and this was important – that the metal point touched the glass. And then we were off as fast as could be.

Another one of us little rascals stood at a safe distance five meters away. He transformed the innocent thread into a ghastly-sounding violin string by covering it with the putty, and which, in combination with the dull vibrations of the window pane produced a loud blood-curdling sound.

In a few spots of our teacher's front yard a several of us little devils stood guard and listened. At last, the frightened voice of the teacher's wife: "Günther, somebody is sawing away at our house! Oh God, those are burglars! Should we turn on the light – or maybe not?"

We, little scoundrels that we were, held our stomachs with suppressed laughter and kept right on sawing.

“Elli, don’t turn on the light, I’ll surprise them!”

Suddenly, the front door opened and the teacher showed himself in all his glory in a white night gown and a floppy night cap shimmering in the moonlight, while we boys in unspeakable terror took flight and spread out in all directions. He pursued one of us for more than a kilometer and a half, until the teacher huffing and puffing, finally gave up and had to let the terrified and trembling boy get away.

We worried terribly about the uncertain fate of our friend and were reunited an hour later – thank God it was all of us – in the night-black center of the village, where we couldn’t stop laughing. Oh, what a terrible, delicious fright, that, naturally, urged many repetitions with other victims.

After the village baker had laid the bags full of rolls in front of everyone’s door, and the village lay deep in unsuspecting sleep, we were already out and about. With thin and quick fingers, we’d bore a hole in the yet warm crusts, enjoyed the yet somewhat sticky insides we’d dug out so carefully and chuckled at the perplexed faces that the rightful owners of these biscuits would make when they cut them open at the breakfast table.

On the evening of Witches’ Night, the night of May 1st, a night in which any kind of prank could be pulled off without punishment according to ancient tradition in our village, we dumped a double sized load of manure in front of both, the teacher’s and the priest’s door; or we sang provocative songs all over the village. The priest didn’t allow tricks to be played on him and always had ten buckets of water ready to defend his territory.

When we were older, my big brother and I used our brand-new tape recorder to document the loud scolding of a neighbor lady who, at the top of her lungs, regularly complained about us kids diagonally across the street from her. Then with smirking faces we’d play it back, maybe

even a little louder than the original – and, of course, at a safe distance, the window of our room. Then we recorded her subsequent screams of rage and played those back to the delight of all the kids around. We kept repeating until a letter from an attorney was delivered.

To save my father’s honor, it must be said here that he, too, enjoyed making fun of people. So, he often protected us and often had to suppress his own laughter when my brothers and I had played a mischievous trick on someone and he caught us at it.

All the above was one side of my life: I was a completely normal, wild, and mostly happy boy with a head full of crazy ideas.

But the other side was my carefully guarded secret.

My First Secret

It was a warm and sunny summer's day. My sandals carried me lightly up a steep hill; I was happy and content. The village sounds were far behind me. The air seemed almost to stand still under the blue summer skies; only now and then you could hear the thin humming of a mosquito.

At one point of the stony footpath and completely unexpectedly, I heard the peaceful inner voice I already knew so well, and it gently but firmly told me, "Sit down right here on this rock!" So persuasive was this impulse that I obeyed instantly. As soon as I was seated, a second quiet request made me repeat the name of a friend in a soft murmur. I didn't ask why, I just did it, slowly, innocently, just so, several times. The syllables transformed themselves, became softer and more subtle and reverberated gently within me. I surrendered to it while I had the feeling that the top of my head opened and received an energy yet unknown to me. It became bright and crystal clear, while two gentle syllables came from above and entered my mind. Instinctively, I repeated them again and again, until the sound faded away. I rested, fully awake within myself, and my body became almost rigid with the blissful sensation that I had finally come home. The world was alright here, and all my everyday problems paled.

In that way, I sat there for perhaps a quarter or half an hour. Happy and gently moved, I finally made my way home. I knew that what had just happened to me would remain my secret and that I could call it back any time. It was instinctively clear to me that I could speak to neither my friends nor my parents about this because they would not understand. And yet a deep joy came over me for having this one and wondrous secret.

From that moment on and in my wanderings through nature, I felt drawn again and again to my favorite benches: the one at the edge of the forest near a bee hive or the one next to a weeping willow at the river's shore, whose softly swaying branches softly stroked the water flowing gently

by. Unnoticed by my parents or my siblings, I was drawn there. How could I have found words for sinking within myself after repeating the syllables that had been gifted me in the stillness of my thoughts? Or for perceiving the water and nature in such a way that only silence and detachment surrounded me until my breath almost ceased? This inner world, that opened for me and for which I now had a key, attracted me with its magic. It was so beautiful, so quiet, so perfect – it seemed to me that what I experienced within myself was much more meaningful and important than anything happening in my small life. Surprisingly, other people seemed to know nothing of this inner kingdom. So I let it be and took joy in it quietly and secretly. It was impossible to forget it because, regularly, the gentle inner voice reminded me to go there again and let myself fall into this emptiness that was nevertheless a fullness.

Through this sinking into my inner self, it was completely clear to me that there must be other knowledge that was not taught in school. So convinced was I of this, so unshakably certain, that one day at home – I was perhaps eight years old – I grabbed our big encyclopedia with its green cloth covered back and its embossed gold letters and put it on my lap, leafing through it at length. Systematically, I searched for a picture of a great personality who had brought new or different knowledge into the world and who could explain my inner experiences to me. I had a clear idea of how this person should look and was confused as well as disappointed, after long searching, at being unable to find this significant person in our encyclopedia.

"Well, ok then, if I can't find him in there, I have to go look for him!" Many times, I came to this resolution, but my mind always kept me, a little munchkin, from going out into the big wide world. And so, the two souls within my breast argued until, finally – reason be damned – I simply went into the forest to look for him, following my inner desire. I went further and further until, finally, after almost three hours and six kilometers, almost to the next town and with dusk coming, my mind

won the upper hand: “What are you going to do? You’ve got nothing to eat, and where would you sleep? And your parents are going to worry big time if you don’t come back!” Back and forth these urges struggled until I gave up and turned to go home with a heavy heart.

And so, I had to be content to create this state of boundless peace for myself alone. When I’d sit somewhere in the pristine country-side, I directed my attention to it, let go completely, and then saw and felt how this deep silence suffused all of nature, the trees, the meadows, the houses, and the people. Its gentleness spread within me and all around me. This state of palpable peace and respite at last became such a part of me that I often felt it even while horsing around with my friends on the streets. Even then, I felt the soundless blessing that warmed my heart.

And yet, in my last years at the village school and during my business training, as well as my daily work in the textile shop in the neighboring city, this conscious contact with my inner world was lost more and more. Never again in daily life was I aware that everything was suffused with light. Then, too, the quiet admonitions of my inner voice that had always drawn me into nature to repeat the magic word that moved me within me was silenced. A growing and dense veil of forgetfulness spread over it. Finally, I didn’t even remember it.

I was still drawn into nature. But the untroubled long ramblings of my childhood had yielded to cruising by motorbike which I enjoyed a lot. On weekends, I camped with my friends or slept under the open skies during warm summer nights.

Without noticing and gradually, I looked for happiness in the outside world. Like my contemporaries, I began to smoke, to drink alcohol, went into nightclubs and, stressed out, as well as in vain, I looked for the ideal girlfriend.

During the week, I drove to the neighboring city daily and finished my training in a textile shop. Even as I was in my second and third year as an apprentice and became more and more independent and

responsible at advising customers while selling suits and coats, learning book-keeping and all the other activities that went with it, the prospects of having to do this, or something similar, for the rest of my life scared the wits out of me. My heart wasn’t in it; it all seemed too empty and monotonous. But I didn’t know anything better to do with my life. All in all, my life back then didn’t give me much joy. I was often frustrated and depressed.

Cut off from the magic of my childhood, I knew only one thing: I’m not in the right place. This is not the life I want; this day to day boredom, and always the same treadmill without sense or meaning.

The Dice are Cast

One evening after work, I wandered as usual to the station to take the train home and ...

... there he was.

He, whose image I'd searched for in vain in our encyclopedia and whom I'd wanted to track down even when I was still just a boy on a wild escape into the deep woods: a face that was completely familiar to me at first sight and that, for me, expressed wisdom, goodness and inner peace – the man of whom I'd known with unmistakable certainty, even back then, that he would give me knowledge and the truth for which my soul was thirsting.

His face was prominently displayed on a billboard and announced a talk about Transcendental Meditation for that same evening. It was obvious that I should go – in fact, absolutely had to go. I hesitated briefly...and took the train home.

What a colossal mistake! Again, and again I tried to shake off the feeling that I'd missed something extremely valuable and that I had made a grievous error in my life. Even two weeks later, I was distraught about this, and months later, I was still occasionally sad.

A year later I went to night school to get my high school diploma. In my distress, I talked to my history teacher after class because I felt that he might know how to deal with my elusive longings. But I couldn't find the words, and I had no name for what I was seeking. Even so, he gave me good advice, and I got a book about Socrates. Through the dialogues of this great man, with his students and other contemporaries, dialogues which are woven into Plato's writing, it became clear to me for the first time that there was such a thing as pure Being and that it could be experienced. Everything I read in Plato was familiar to me from my

own experience. And I tried to discover this pure Being through the questions Socrates asks. A distant echo of this pure Being came to me through my interest in these texts, but something central was missing: the possibility to experience this pure Being for myself. My seeking and my longing remained.

A short time later, a friend let me borrow the book *Siddhartha* by Hermann Hesse. Like lots of guys, I'm not too crazy about reading, but this story, of the wealthy son of a king, culminating in his enlightenment totally hit bull's eye for me. Contrary to my usual laziness when it came to reading, I devoured that book all at once. It held me spellbound till five in the morning, and I had to read a few passages two or three times to take it all in – that's how fascinated I was. Here, finally, was what I'd been searching for but couldn't find the words to express. Afterwards, I tried to meditate now and then as *Siddhartha* had done, and long lost intuitions from my childhood came back to life.

Through this great book, I now understood that there were higher states of human consciousness and that the sources of this knowledge were alive in India today. I sensed that I needed a teacher; I needed someone to guide me. Whenever I wanted to go within myself, something just didn't seem right.

Back then, something decisive changed as well. Suddenly I no longer wanted to eat meat. Even the smell of it was disgusting to me. And the thought that innocent animals had to give up their lives to nourish mine was even worse. But how could I communicate this to my parents, when my mother, tirelessly and with much love, day-in and day-out prepared and then brought to our dining room table that great-tasting German plain fare? I sensed clearly that such a change in my diet would fall on deaf ears..

“I don't want to eat meat anymore!”

There. It was out in the open. My father's response was instant: “Who put that bug in your ear?” As a united front, both my parents tried to talk me out of this crazy idea with all the counter arguments

they could muster.

But was stubborn. And Mom and Dad were extremely worried.

How can you change the mind of a determined boy of eighteen? Especially one who, meanwhile, had let his wavy hair grow down to his shoulders and who'd diligently and resolutely been pursuing night school despite all difficulties? A boy who, wanting to go his own way, slowly slipped through your fingers? Professional advice was imperative here!

And so, just a bit later, my father stomped into the office of the village doctor and reported our dilemma. The doctor was a good doctor and up on the cutting edge of his profession back then. "You can't let the boy do that; meat is the only thing that has all the essential amino acids. Without meat, he will miss vital proteins that the body can't produce by itself."

My father delivered the doctor's bad news: "If you quit eating meat, the doctor gives you one more year to live at most."

That was the end of the discussion. But my aversion remained.

I was still drawn to the outdoors. A special, intimate feeling united me with the cows on the long pasture far from town on the meadows on the other side of the Lahn. I When I wandered there, the cows liked to walk alongside me on the other side of the enclosure, while they looked at me with their big and gently melting eyes. Often, we walked together in silent harmony for the whole kilometer of their pasture and to its end, where they could go no further and so stood and watched me go.

How could you eat the flesh of these wonderful gentle beings? And yet I was forced to do it, though it felt all wrong to me. I was so sorry about it that, often, I silently asked their forgiveness.

It didn't help much, but it did lighten my heart.

On the way home on my motor bike after night school, I sometimes visited the youth center in the neighboring small town of Diez. Young people sat there in the dim light and in small groups in various corners.

I would get a seat somewhere in the room or at the bar near the entrance, drink a coke or some other drink, listen to pop music for fifteen minutes and then stroll off.

One time, I noticed a few boys and girls my age, who seemed especially relaxed and happy. These young people had such an open vibe that I had to look at them again and again. Clearly, something about them was different.

The next few times, when I went up the stairs in that old timber-frame house, I was expectant: would they be here today? If they were, my eyes, all by themselves, would seek out these young people to learn what it was they had going for them. They didn't smoke, didn't drink alcohol; and yet they were happy. Their eyes shone, and they laughed with each other. As much as I wanted to, as much as I longed to be a part of this happy group, I didn't have the nerve to talk to them.

Five or six times I went there, and every time my courage deserted me. I knew they had something that I was looking for. Every time, I went home depressed because, due to the fear that I'd make a fool of myself, I again had not been able say a word to them.

One evening only one young man of this group was still there, lean and lanky, with brown eyes and short dark hair – a young man who radiated enormous peace and harmony, which drew me to him. Thank God, he was alone at the bar. Unobtrusively, I sat down on the stool next to him. And we got into a conversation. At one point, he said, "Man, I haven't eaten anything in forever; I'm really hungry!"

That was my cue! Glad to be able to do something for him, I offered him my sandwich, "You are welcome to it; I don't need anything else today!"

Smiling, he asked, “What’s in it?”

“Salami.”

“That’s too bad; then I can’t eat it. I’m a vegetarian.”

“How long’s it been since you’ve had meat?”

“Two years.” My God, the dude looked like the very picture of good health!

“And you’re totally fine?”

“I feel better than ever!” In that moment, I decided never to eat another piece of meat. But my curiosity was not yet satisfied.

“What motivated you to become a vegetarian?”

“Since I’ve been meditating, the appetite for meat just got less and less by itself.”

I kept at him. “What kind of meditation do you practice, and where can you learn it?”

Jochen seemed glad to have found such an interested listener, and he eagerly told me all I wanted to know.

That night and in this way, I heard about Transcendental Meditation for the first time. Jochen called it simply TM. I learned that this kind of meditation was especially easy to practice. But it could only be learned from a qualified teacher who had been trained by Maharishi himself and who had brought this method from India to the West. Now it dawned on me slowly. I asked Jochen about his friends who were usually with him in this youth center. “Yes, they all meditate twice a day.”

So, it was this I’d noticed right away! Was it possible that, in this big room in the youth center, I unexpectedly found exactly what I’d been seeking for so long? A little later Jochen’s brother, Frank, joined us, and, with great enthusiasm, he wanted to tell me all about the scientific studies and the positive effects of TM. But my mind was already made up. I didn’t need any persuasion. All I wanted to know was when and where I could learn this meditation. And as fast as possible.

The brothers knew two teachers of Transcendental Meditation in the immediate vicinity. One was a lawyer, a respectable man, with

great charisma, whom they praised to the skies – but his schedule was so full that I’d have to wait four weeks for my initiation into TM. There was also a student in Koblenz who probably had time right away. I only asked, “Does it matter in terms of the quality of my meditation with whom I learn?”

“No, they’re both equally well-trained to initiate you into TM. It’s independent of the personality of the teacher.”

Patience has never been one of my virtues! I could hardly restrain myself. In the morning, I’d be off to Koblenz! Tomorrow, yes, indeed, tomorrow I’d be meditating!

The Blessing of Maharishi

Since the founding of his movement in 1957 at the Indian Madras²¹, Maharishi spent the first seven days of every year in silence. He went into silence, as we called it, and stayed alone in his room, didn't speak or eat, and nobody disturbed him during those days. For the rest of the year he was indefatigable, and, without a single day off, he was there for others and for the whole world. He slept at most two to four hours and held one conference or meeting after another, while, at the same time, working on innumerable projects with his disciples; or he was on the phone with people from all over the world, even at night. He kept three shifts of secretaries on the go continuously, young men in their prime, who helped him with his efforts; nobody could come even close to keeping pace with his energy and his countless activities. He gave of himself and his energy without end – but this one week every year belonged to him alone.

All course participants, who meditated here in Switzerland in those more than twenty hotels, used the precious opportunity of this carefully planned week of silence to join him. In our hotel at that time, there were about 120 people that belonged to his inner circle of coworkers. They, too, remained in their rooms for those seven days and went into silence with this spiritual technique from the Himalayas, which had stood the test of time for thousands of years. Only three times a day, they came into the dining hall and drank fresh juices. All world religions and traditions recognize the healing power of fasting and of silence to deepen the connection between the individual and the Divine. But what I was fortunate to experience here went beyond anything I could have imagined.

It was so far beyond all words, so deep, so boundless, that our human mind cannot grasp it. A silence, unbelievably gentle, descended upon the whole house, a silence so deep that it condensed into a field that was palpable and felt like cotton wool. Never in my entire life had

¹ Chennai

I experienced such concentrated quietness and energy as in that silent time. Even the walls vibrated with joy. And it became clear to me what Maharishi meant when he spoke of the power of silence. It wasn't just rhetoric – the power of silence is a lively level of life and a concrete experience.

The doors of my perception opened. In supreme clarity, I experienced all-pervasive Being. I was overwhelmed by this silence that inspired reverence; it was something I had only experienced in my deepest meditations. I felt a powerful, yet, at the same time, a gentle stillness and unboundedness. This force field of infinite energy, that I'd never known, penetrated the armchairs, the chairs, the walls, the carpets and the air with its powerful silence. Eternity and peace touched me and my environment; it was a heavenly silence. I was at home; my heart sang.

And I made juice.

I was one of the few who, in those days, still did physical work. The kitchen was closed; instead, I ordered and received trucks full of purple and green grapes. Directly under Maharishi's room, I made liter after liter of fresh and delicious grape juice that I served three times a day to everyone in the dining hall. The only loud sound was the big machine that cut through the silence with its droning. But even this could not disturb the silence. I made more than a thousand liters in those days for all those who so enlivened this field, this web woven of consciousness that I could see and feel even while working. My soul blossomed, and I bathed in the waves of eternity.

As he did every year, after those seven days – at midnight on the 7th of January – Maharishi ended his silence in his room. It was the highpoint for many of us because he let us partake of it, any of us who wanted to dive into his deep silence, and all of us wanted it – those 120 people in our hotel and the 300 who, in neighboring hotels, who had come for their six months' course and were part of our shared silence. They'd already been waiting patiently on the street, wrapped in their heavy parkas and their woolen caps.

My legendary good luck was with me once again. I was permitted, as one of the first in a group of about 30, to step quietly into Maharishi's room. Every fifteen minutes a new group was allowed in. Maharishi saw all of us until the early hours of the morning.

Somebody would open the door from the inside. You could only hear the muted sound of socks against the carpeting; and everyone sat down on the floor cross-legged. The light in Maharishi's room was so dim that my eyes took a while to make out his silhouette on the sofa.

How to express the inexpressible in words? How to even just suggest the awe-inspiring greatness that we saw here? The cumulative power of silence in this room was unimaginable. We knew that Maharishi's silence was so deep that he'd need two or three days for his expanded consciousness to take possession once again of his human body, and his metabolism was as active as before. Whispering, some of us expressed their joy that they were so privileged to be here and thanked him for all he did for humanity – and he answered lovingly, softly, and extremely slowly. He was still so far away, only coming back slowly to this gross and dense world.

We felt the unboundedness and the holiness of this man, who had come to us from India, from the country where great masters held inwardness to be more important than the outside world. A friend had previously explained to me that, through this deep silence, the consciousness of the world would be cleansed – and we partook of it up close and personally.

In this hotel room, at the feet of my master, I got a hint of all this and felt the extent of his great consciousness that he radiated upon all of us. I was deeply moved.

All of us felt the boundless, selfless, and universal love that he had brought back from those realms he had visited. And so there we sat, reverend and silent, taking it all in with gratitude and devotion. And he enveloped us, each one of us, and fulfilled our wide-open souls – the blessing of Maharishi.

The Indian Bride

On my way to school and in the immediate vicinity of downtown, a sign, “Birmingham Secondary School and Business College” * sprang into my eyes, and the idea hit me like lightening that I should talk to them. Had I known what waited for me there, I’d certainly have made a beeline in a different direction. But, unburdened by events to come, I demanded to see the proprietor of the school, and, a little later, I sat across from two Sikh brothers who owned the place jointly. I gave them the usual presentation for educational systems, while they nodded their white turban-clad heads in agreement until, at the end, I gave them the advice to try out Transcendental Meditation for themselves, before introducing the program in their school.

Sure enough, both appeared at our TM Center a little later with their wives and kids in tow. In accord with Indian culture, I only trained the men of this group to meditate; to train the women, I asked Anju, an Indian TM-teacher, to step in.

From then on, this tight-knit group of nine often showed up on Sundays in their VW bus. We discussed their experiences in meditation, and they were most interested in Vedic knowledge, which I gave with open hands to this receptive family. Mr. Singh’s* daughter was about twenty years old. She was extremely shy and always looked down, but occasionally gave me a quick glance, which made me realize that she was not indifferent to me. The other family members obviously also took a liking to me. The more often they came, the more frequently one or the other of them arranged things to speak to him alone. Then they began to suggest point blank that I could become a member of their family and marry their daughter. They were already dreaming about my expanding their schools and opening a series of them in India. I, on the other hand, didn’t take them up on it and suffered their hints without commenting. But soon it couldn’t be ignored any longer, and my TM colleagues had fun telling off-color jokes at my expense.

At some point, the two families invited Anju, her husband and me in their shared home. Suspecting nothing, I joyfully anticipated an excellent Indian meal and a thought-provoking evening. As a gift to my hosts, I brought a framed and lovingly wrapped portrait of Maharishi and a book. When I tried to give it to my hosts, they declined with a friendly smile: “Lothar, you can give it to our daughter yourself!”

Gosh, how embarrassing! It was intended for the whole family. I had nothing, nothing whatsoever, in mind for this delicate girl! But they wouldn’t have any of it, so that there was nothing I could do but give it to that beauty with velvety eyes and ebony black and braided hair. But that wasn’t the end of it.

The two brothers and the mother of the girl – always nicely one after the other – got me alone into a separate room and asked point blank, “What do you think, would you like to become a member of our family and marry our daughter Rohini*?”

Oh, jeez – how awkward! I had no clue about how to worm my way out of that situation politely. On top of all that, this obviously absurd idea did begin to take hold in my head as a vague possibility. And so, albeit I’d never exchanged so much as a word with her, I began to look at this bashful Indian bride more closely, and I noticed only then that she was attractive and even beautiful.

Finally, we sat down at a long table that was set for twenty. The head of the household indicated that I should sit at the head of the table. There I sat, enthroned on a wide and especially elegant arm chair realizing to my dismay that a video camera on a tripod was focused on me and ready. When I asked about it, the head of the household told me, “We have a big family, some live in London and some live in Gujarat; and all of them have to agree to this wedding.”

I was totally shocked. Here I was expecting a normal supper and was intent on implementing TM in the school of the two brothers, but they were set on palming off their daughter to be my wife. Unable to

say anything directly, I didn't know how to get out of this mess and couldn't bluntly tell them, "No." I was in a tight spot and had no idea what to do about it. In my distress, I talked about what was closest to me. In front of the camera, I explained the Unified Field of all the laws of nature, talked about enlightenment and scientific research on the effects of TM, reeling off on my most treasured expertise to them. In the space of two minutes, I was in my element and all the nervousness and cringe-worthiness of the situation that I'd just felt so keenly was erased. How could I have guessed that I was jumping from the frying pan into the fire?

Anju and her husband Sushil naturally had nothing better to do than report everything hot off the press to the rest of the gang. And the whole story spread like wildfire among the German and Indian Purushas, all the married couples, and our African TM-teacher colleagues. I, the bridegroom against my will, was the subject of discussion and, as could be expected, the others began to tease me mercilessly. How could this have happened, that I, as the spokesman of our Purusha group could slide into this thing?

Still, my friends tried to help and explained to Mr. Sing at their earliest opportunity that I was Purusha and so belonged to a group of unmarried men whom Maharishi personally guided spiritually and employed. Nevertheless, the prospective father of the bride could not be stopped, "It's all good, Lothar, I've got word from our relatives in England and in India. You've made a good impression on them, and they all agree that you should marry Rohini. Just give me Maharishi's and your father's phone numbers. I'll arrange everything!"

It was incomprehensible; I slipped even deeper into this strangely interwoven trap! It was literally shortly before midnight, and I could finally defend myself, "I don't have to ask either Maharishi or my father – this is entirely my own thing, and I can decide it for myself. I'll think about it for a couple of days!"

And that is what I did. As promised, I went deeply within myself. She was pretty for sure, and who knows, maybe this was exactly what my fate had organized for me? Didn't nature, Divine Intelligence, give me a clear pointer and, on a silver platter, serve up the future delights of wedded bliss with a glamorous and gentle Indian girl at my side? Well, maybe, just maybe, I should give this crazy thing a chance and get to know her personally?

Thought became action: I gathered up all my courage and, in all innocence, called Mr. Singh and, after a short introductory speech, I presented him with "I'd like to invite Rohini for lunch at the Hilton, so I can get to know her better." I'd stuck my fist straight into a hornet's nest. Loud and angry, the horror-stricken father chewed me out: "That is the height of insolence! You have insulted my entire family and dragged it into the mud. That is totally out of the question!"

After he'd calmed down a little, he did add as a kind of closure, "I'll have to talk to my brother about this since he's the oldest one in our family and makes all the decisions. I'll tell him about this. You can call back in about an hour!"

With my heart beating in my throat, I called back an hour later, only to get my hair washed once again, this time by Mr. Singh Senior himself. He ranted and raged on the phone, and screamed, his voice breaking while rejecting my indecent offer lock, stock, and barrel. And even that was not enough. He called Anju and Sushil, complaining bitterly about me and how I could be so low and shameless as to invite his daughter. But they understood both cultures and tried as much as possible to explain. To me, they made it clear that in Indian culture something like that would be completely unthinkable and indecent, and that an unmarried woman who goes out by herself with a man would lose her reputation, and, after that, could not easily be married off. On the other hand, they explained to the enraged family that, from my side, nothing untoward was intended and that my behavior was entirely normal in my culture.

Even so, there was complete silence between me and that family for three months. But one fine Sunday morning the whole united clan came back to the TM Center as if nothing had happened, and the game began anew: the secret and shy glances of the daughter, the comments and vague suggestions of family members, and, don't forget, the merciless teasing on the part of my Purusha buddies.

Finally, the brothers came up with a very special proposition. They wanted to sell their school and their college to the TM Movement and, with the money, build a group of 7,000 in India, and, with this, create world peace. Again, and again, they brought up this wild idea, until, at some point, I called Maharishi's secretaries in Europe and relayed their proposal, and their not entirely selfless ideas about the price. The finance committee of the international organization wanted to see some numbers before making a counter-offer: yearly sales and profits, necessary investments and so on. As soon as I passed on these suggestions, I once again seemed to have stepped on the feet of the entire clan. "We've never done that! Never, ever have we shown those numbers to anyone. No, that's totally out of the question!"

They were being unbelievably difficult, but after a lot of ifs, ands, and buts, they decided with a heavy heart to show those sensitive numbers. I gave the information to the Netherlands to evaluate. When I got the counter-offer a few weeks later, it was only a quarter of the amount that the Sikhs had offered.

Not expecting anything good, I took that thorny path. I went into the school by myself, where the two brothers expected me with high hopes on the top floor. As soon as I mentioned the price to them, they contorted their faces. Loud and excited, they abused me. "If you weren't a friend of the family, we'd kill you right here and now and throw you out the window!"

They lost their tempers completely. They screamed louder and louder and egged each other on into more and more rage. In the middle of evil curses, they grabbed me by the tie and my collar a few times. Utterly brow-beaten and taken off-guard by their angry outbursts, I saw to it that I could get down those life-saving stairs as fast as possible.

And that was it. I never saw the brothers again, or my lovely and shy Indian bride.

The Little Monk

The Cypriots who learned Transcendental Meditation at our place felt exhilarated by the positive changes in their lives that came with the regular descent into the finer levels of consciousness and the regular experience of deep silence. With Panos Panadakis* this enthusiasm came in huge waves immediately after his initiation. “I just want to meditate and become enlightened and that’s why I want to go to the Netherlands and join Purusha.”

All well and good, but it just doesn’t work that fast. Andreas and I talked to him: “The nervous system needs some time to get used to long meditation programs. You have to let it happen slowly! First off, a whole lot of stress and tension that’s accumulated in the nervous system has to be released. If you meditate a lot and a for long periods too early on, then it’s possible that you stir up too much stress. And then you won’t feel so good or you’ll react a bit too emotionally to your environment. Let it happen gradually! We can’t give you any recommendation just yet. But we’d love to later, when the time is right!”

But that did not sit well with a spiritual hot-head like our Panos. He wanted it now and he wanted it right away. Again, and again, he assailed us. We consoled him every time. And so it went for many weeks. First, he burst in on us every day, later he came once a week. He was inspired, his bright eyes sparkling, and he wanted more – we loved him, but we also held him back a little.

One fine day, he stopped coming. One, two, three weeks went by. Where was he? Well, he’d show up eventually since he was so enthusiastic.

A few days later, I was looking out the big windows of our lecture hall down onto the busy street. Cars honked, and hurried by one another in the typical southern way – it was all as usual. And yet, something was strange. Directly in front of our entrance, there stood a few wildly gesticulating and somehow excited and overwrought Cypriots. A few moments later, our doorbell rang. And these same men crowded in,

rough and unruly, “Where’s our brother; where did you hide him?”

Heavens alive – it was Panos Pandadkis’ two brothers and an uncle! With a threatening gesture, the oldest brother had already pulled a dead knife out of his pocket: “If you don’t cough him up right now, there will be big trouble!”

In their aggressive looks and their loud and sharp voices, there was such a threat that I was afraid and scared. When Andreas and I tried to make it clear to them that we hadn’t seen him for weeks, they didn’t believe a word of it. Even so, they eventually left with loud cursing.

For days, they took turns to position themselves on the street and across from our entrance: threatening and suspicious figures, who were extremely worried about the welfare of the youngest member of their family.

Meanwhile, Andreas and I transformed ourselves into private detectives. We asked all our meditators about him, and told them to look for him; we called everybody to see if we could find Panos anywhere. Finally, and totally frazzled, we called Vlodrop to find out if maybe a young Greek had shown up there, wanting to join Purusha come hell or high water. No, we were dead wrong, and he wasn’t there. We asked to be notified immediately in case he’d show up, while we were pulling out all stops to find Panos Panadakis; and the furious brothers were equally busy.

Police detectives showed up and interrogated us because the Panos family had set them on our tracks in case we’d sent the young man to the Netherlands. In front of our TM-center we saw bored detectives change shifts. A few days later, I saw a man on the side-walk who focused on our center with a telescope. When I pulled back the curtains, he made it disappear behind a newspaper with oxymoronic showmanship to make it seem subtle. But Andreas and I felt so innocent that we took it all lightly and even joked about it.

Then a series of articles about the disappearance of Panos Panadakis were published in various papers. And every one of them mentioned that he was last seen at our center. There were some unpleasant commentaries, stoked by the Greek Orthodox priests of Nikosia, who spread this rumor unperturbed, even in their church communities. But we had already gone through the fires of purgatory of slander and insults in Germany. Amused rather than exasperated, we discovered under the glaring Mediterranean sun that the clergy weren't any better here than they were back home. Panos, meanwhile, had a warrant out for him. His picture was prominently displayed all over Nikosia. But nothing helped. The search was unsuccessful. Our golden boy was and remained as if swallowed by the ground. After some weeks, the scene calmed down, and our Center blossomed and thrived unhindered.

After six months, the mystery was solved. Panos called his family on the phone. We were relieved, but we were also rolling on the floor with laughter when we got the news. He had fled up high into the mountains and into a reclusive Greek Orthodox monastery!!! What a grotesque joke! He'd been living there this whole time as a monk, praying and having found the kind of inward journey that he'd been searching for so passionately. Even in our dreams, we couldn't have guessed!

We were relieved and yet also somewhat put out. No excuse for their behavior toward us came from the brothers. No sign of contrition from the priests about the false accusations, and – this seemed most familiar – not a single retraction from any of the papers.

A Miraculous Healing

Andreas and I were extremely busy. Leading politicians learned TM at our center, several ambassadors, the owners of big businesses, and a few coworkers of big institutions as well as special representatives of the General Secretary of the UN who negotiated between Northern Turkey and the South Cypriots who were enemies with each other. He didn't just learn to meditate himself, but found it downright great what we were doing for the country. We were invited to dinners and banquets. Important personalities of the land brought others with them. And all of them heard with great interest about possibilities this age-old Vedic technique could make available to them.

We organized a presentation about Maharishi Ayurveda and Transcendental Meditation for the minister of health, all the department heads of that ministry, as well as all the executive directors of all the hospitals. When we had the commitment, we got a fellow Purusha, Dr. George Janssen from Vlodrop to come to our presentation – he was the physician who'd played a role in the development of Maharishi Ayurveda. Afterwards, the directors and executives were so keenly interested in Maharishi Ayurveda and TM that they wanted to integrate both into the entire health-care system of southern Cyprus. They asked us to write down the concrete steps through which the programs we offered could best be implemented.

The previous Minister of Education, a highly-educated man, had the task, during this time, as the advisor to the President and Parliament, to build the first university of Cyprus. He was especially captivated by the idea of creating an educational system that included the development consciousness of the students. The studies already extant and the successes of Maharishi University of Management in the U.S. were essential for him. "I have offers from other partners. But this university will be built in partnership with you. I'll advise and help you in its development step by step!"

Andreas and I had already been on the island for ten months and were busy with the further development of the cooperative offers from

the ministry of health and the ministry of education. Then, there came an unexpected invitation from Maharishi himself. He asked all of us Purushas, as well as other guests from all parts of the world, to be with him for four weeks in India for the Guru Purnima festivities – a celebration in honor of the spiritual masters, the gurus, on the first full moon of July.

So, we hugged and kissed our new friends good-bye, and temporarily gave our blossoming Center into the care of George Hadgiorgio, who wanted to become a TM-teacher, we once again sat on an airplane.

Maharishi was in process of having a gigantic facility built in a park in Noida, a South-East Suburb of New Delhi; it would be a large facility including many structures, long buildings up to three floors high and beautifully decorated with Indian-Moorish arches. The work to build these, was still a long way from being finished. And the number of finished rooms was clearly smaller than the number of the Purushas who'd been invited. So, I moved into a room with two others. The still-fresh cement floors were dusty. The sanitary facilities were Indian and simple. And when I looked into the main kitchen, I saw tons of flies sitting on the food. I lost my appetite to the extent that I ate almost nothing on these premises. Instead, I took one of those constantly honking tuk-tuks, a bright yellow, three-wheeled taxi open on the sides, to the Ashoka Hotel in Delhi every third day to really fill up my hungry stomach with a civilized meal. For more than that, I had neither the time, nor the money.

In contrast to the unpleasant physical arrangements, the nightly talks and lectures with Maharishi were like heavenly dreams for me. He sat in a round garden pavilion in the middle of a big lawn. In front of him sat more than 1,500 people in tight rows of chairs, people who were enjoying the balmy Indian summer nights, and, especially, Maharishi's presence under the moonlight. Besides us Purushas, there were about two hundred physicians from all over the world who were here for five weeks of advanced training in ayurvedic pulse diagnosis. There were

also hundreds of other participants who were either taking the course in pulse diagnosis or a weeklong introductory course in Jyotish, or Vedic astrology. At night, all of them drove to various hotels in Delhi. Every morning, they came back on busses, attended their lectures and practiced their Sidhi programs in two big halls.

On several occasions, Swami Vishnudevananda Saraswati, the then-reigning Shankaracharya of Jyotir Math² came also. He sat next to Maharishi in the garden pavilion and conversed with Maharishi before our eyes and ears. Here, I experienced Maharishi in his homeland for the first time in conversation with this other spiritually great man of the Indian sub-continent. The respect and the deference that the two of them conferred on one another impressed me deeply. The Shankaracharya radiated with an extraordinary peace and dignity. But I, personally, felt that the spiritual power and clarity of Maharishi was much greater.

My starved body became increasingly troublesome. Despite the hearty meals I ate, though with much time in between, I became weaker and weaker. My immune system hit rock bottom, and I caught a bad middle-ear infection. Days later, when I had to bury the idea that this continuously pounding pain in my ear would go away on its own, I once again drove to Delhi – this time to find a doctor. The doctor's office in a windowless room in a backstreet alley did not exactly inspire trust. Everything was extremely primitive and, for our spoiled European standards, also downright filthy. But I didn't have a choice. The Indian otolaryngologist wasted no time. Skillfully, he drew some liquid into a syringe to put into my tortured ear. "Don't worry! This is a very effective remedy. It'll pull out all the puss and it only has to remain in your ear for a few minutes – that's how strong it is!"

² A Shankaracharya is the equivalent of the pope in our culture; he is, however, chosen according to his state of consciousness.

Obediently, I laid my head in a 90-degree angle on the side of the examination chair. Comfortable it was not. As soon as that stuff landed in my right ear, it stung hard and made a sound like that of bursting bubbles in my head. And then the electricity went off. The light went out, and with it, the obsequious doctor vanished also. I heard only the click of the door. The ventilations system had gone out also and the room, already stuffy, got hotter and hotter. I sat alone in the pitch-black room and felt as if acid were eating away my ear. But there was nothing I could do; I sat tight on that chair with my head to the side and that stuff in my ear. It felt cruelly horrid. The pain in my ear became almost unbearable, and, after some exquisitely slow-moving thirty minutes, the electricity came back, and with it, the doctor. Quickly he removed the liquid from my infected ear, and I crept away only half conscious.

After this “healing,” I became terribly sick. I got a high fever and was soon completely debilitated with hunger and disease, while lying on my cot in Noida more dead than alive. I just wanted to go back to my beloved Cyprus and as fast as possible. I was planning to book my return trip on the very next day.

But, just as I was ready to leave for Delhi, Dr. Geoffrey Clements came towards me. He was a British physicist who plaid an important role in Maharishi’s team of scientists and was responsible for Maharishi’s Movement in all of Europe. “Maharishi asked me to tell you and Andreas that you should stay here. He wants to speak to both of you personally and to George Janssen before you fly back to Cyprus.”

What a great honor! But for me, in my condition, it was also a gigantic effort to stay here longer. My tortured body just wanted rest. But my soul, who so loved and venerated Maharishi was overjoyed with this precious opportunity. Andreas had already left the day before yesterday.

So, with Dr. Janssen, I slowly dragged myself to Maharishi’s little house at 11:00 P.M. after the evening lecture. We waited on the first floor for our appointment. Time crawled. A whole slew of people

waited ahead of us. And I was weak, unspeakably weak. Around 2:00 A.M., Maharishi’s Indian secretary finally came downstairs and asked everyone who’d not had their turn to come back the following evening. That process repeated itself for the following two nights. I became weaker and weaker. Late in the evening I crept to Maharishi’s house, but could no longer sit, and, instead, just lay stretched out flat on the ground.

I just couldn’t anymore. On the third day and with my last strength, I went to Delhi on a tuk-tuk because I had to get the ticket for the trip back personally at the airline office. When the usual evening wait started, I informed the secretary about my desolate state of health and said, “Regardless of what happens tonight, tomorrow morning early I’m flying to Cyprus.”

We waited patiently – I, flat on the ground once again. For days, I’d not really eaten. The infection raged in my body, and I was so sick that I could not even meditate properly. If I did it anyway, I kind of hung out on the surface of my spirit without a trace of more subtle levels of consciousness, and certainly no experience of clear transcending. But Maharishi had taught us that it would make sense to meditate even if we were sick, since this increased amount of rest would activate our natural ability to heal ourselves.

Towards three in the morning, the secretary came again and repeated his little speech: “So, everyone should just go and get some rest. Come back tomorrow.” Then he turned towards George Janssen and me, “... but you two can come upstairs now.”

I dragged myself up the stairs and directly into Maharishi’s suite. Here it was pleasantly cool. The whole room smelled like fresh Jasmin in the flower garlands that lay on the table. Maharishi was not there. Even so, his presence filled the room with a gentle sweetness and silence and a crystal-clear wakefulness that penetrated the deepest layers of my cells. George and I sat down on a couple of empty arm chairs in the

first row, directly in front of Maharishi's sofa that was covered with a cloth of white silk.

We began to meditate. And here, in his aura, separated from him only by a door, my consciousness was suddenly once again completely clear despite my illness. I had a heavenly and bliss-filled meditation. In the space of twenty minutes, my body felt light and healthy. The fever and the dejection due to the illness, as well as the raging pain in my ear, were miraculously gone and never came back.

Mozambique on the Upswing

MERU in Vlodrop opened its doors only a few times per year to outsiders. One of these days was Guru Purnima, the first full moon in July when the tradition of Vedic masters is honored as the source of wisdom. Every year Maharishi allowed the representatives of the world-wide TM Movement to present their successes in the spreading of Vedic knowledge. It was a way of thanking his master, Guru Dev, for everything that had become possible through him. This ceremonial meeting was transmitted to almost all the countries of the world via satellite, and, for many, it was the high point of the year.

Our children roughhoused together with many others in the big park; they went high up in the swing hung in an old tree and had fun. Karin and I stood at the edges of the drive that was decorated with flags, when an escort of the Netherlands government accompanied several state cars to MERU. The president of Mozambique exited one of those cars, together with many of his cabinet ministers. They disappeared into the huge entrance portal. Originally, the president had wanted to participate in a European UN conference that had been cancelled with short notice. Now, he used the time slot that had become open to accept a standing invitation from Maharishi. That it coincided with the first full moon of July made it possible for all of us to participate in this event.

We sat in the huge assembly hall in Maharishi's suite. There were no empty chairs. Various speakers reported the positive effects of their activities.

"Do you think that he's the president?" Karin pulled at my sleeve and, with an unobtrusive nod of her head, indicated a tall man standing amid a group of other Africans on the speaker's platform. He had a pleasant, friendly, and round face. His whole appearance radiated great authority.

"Presumably," I didn't know either. Shortly thereafter, the next speaker was introduced: Joaquim Chissanó, President of Mozambique.

For years, teams of Purusha had spoken to heads of state in many countries and introduced them to the TM-programs. They had presented the background and the scientific studies which showed that a new approach was available to peacefully address the problems on the most diverse levels of any country.

President Chissanó explained, "I was fascinated, but also careful. First, I and my family learned TM and practiced it for several months. After that, I knew for sure that it was a good thing. Only then did I speak with my ministers face to face to win them over gradually. They, too, first tested it for themselves and their families and were as pleased with the positive changes in their lives as I was. Slowly and carefully, we spread it until most of my cabinet practiced TM. Only with the next step did we then introduce the officers of our armed forces to our plans to build up a big and permanent peace-keeping force. These officers had already been convinced by the positive effects in their personal lives. And then, last year, we subjected the endeavor to thorough tests to see if we wanted to give this thing a chance."

He laughed a boyish laugh. "And we decided to do it. Many thousands of people in Mozambique have meanwhile learned TM; 12,000 of our soldiers practice TM, and most of these practice the TM-Sidhis as a group."

We were touched. Finally! The first head of state in the world, who implemented Vedic techniques for the development of consciousness exactly as Maharishi had suggested they should be. Mozambique was the first country to reward its soldiers for real peace-keeping.

President Chissanó continued: "As soon as this group of soldiers had started to meditate, we got plenty of rain after a prolonged drought, which led to record-breaking harvests in Mozambique and neighboring regions."

Well, didn't that sound familiar somehow?

Like no head of state before him, Joaquim Chissanó had understood the laws about the influence of consciousness and had used them in a targeted way to solve problems. He told us about the peace negotiations with his political opponents to end the civil war which had been ongoing since 1975, and which had broken out immediately after the termination of Portuguese colonialization, when Mozambique had entered the fight against the rule of the white minority in neighboring South Africa and Zimbabwe.

About these peace negotiations, he told us, “I had a group of meditators in an office right next to the conference hall, and the whole time during this meeting, they created coherence. When the representatives of other organizations came to me, they all expected massive quarrels and altercations. Yet the atmosphere was totally relaxed; we were like old friends who met after a long absence!”

Indeed, he accomplished what had earlier been impossible. In 1992, the conflict had been resolved, a conflict that had killed almost a million people through war and famine in the past 17 years. Six million had been uprooted, and the farmland had been mismanaged so that, in the end, the country was 70% dependent on foreign aid. In the meantime, however, things looked very different. Already in 1993 there was a noticeable reduction in crime and in traffic accidents, while the economic growth was 19% instead of the expected 6%.⁽⁷²⁾

On this full moon in July, Joaquim Chissanó was given an honorary doctorate from Maharishi Vedic University in Holland for the creation of the Maharishi-effect in his country.

With gracious humility, he expressed his gratitude: “Who is responsible for all the good things that happened in Mozambique? It could be our people who meditated there; but it’s also all the people on this planet who meditated for a better world. That is why the honor bestowed on us should go to all those who practice Transcendental Meditation.”

During the next intermission, our voices buzzed with excitement and happiness. That was excellent good news!

“Do you know what I think is best in this whole thing?” Karin’s voice was sunny and her eyes were bright, “I think it’s great that it’s Africans who are the first to implement this. They usually come last in the affairs of the world, and now they’re in the front as a good example!”

I could only agree with her, but would it continue? I was no longer the wide-eyed young man I’d been maybe ten years earlier. Back then, such news would have put me into an overabundant state of ecstasy. Brimming over with certainty, I would have gone with the assumption that the fate of humanity would turn toward the good after we could show a well-functioning model project. In the meanwhile, however, I’d seen that even brilliantly successful projects could come to nothing if the attention or the means behind them fizzled out... So, I just hoped deep in my heart that this thing would last.

Unnoticed by the peoples of the world, the peace wing of Mozambique’s military practiced the TM-Sidhi program every day. But we, who knew what the potential inherent in this project was, waited with bated breath for further development. A while back, we had learned at a similar conference that of the four million New-Zealanders, 40,000 had learned TM. There, too, we had followed the results of the 1% effect in the news and were happy that amazed reports showed up in the newspapers about the decline of unemployment and the improvement of the economy. We believed we knew the reasons for that on subtle levels. What would we be hearing about Mozambique?

About half a year later, there was a series of detailed reports about the remarkable changes in Mozambique. In the conservative “Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung” (one of Germany’s major newspapers – tr.) we read: “The contrast between the former colonies of Portugal in the south of Africa could not be greater. A decade ago Angola and Mozambique were immersed in civil war. Angola had vast resources of oil and diamonds. Mozambique, according to the statistics of the World

Bank was the poorest country in the world. Ten years later, the war in Angola became worse... Mozambique, on the other hand, is a model case of a peaceful conflict resolution... the respected government settles disputes in the region. The economy shows a growth rate of more than ten percent and an inflation rate of zero percent; the currency shows a growth rate on the free market, even when compared to the American dollar... That Mozambique is on a path of instituting one of the few governmental constitutions – and not just on paper – is evident, even now, as it upholds freedom of the press.”⁽⁷³⁾ Four years later, the International Edition of the New York Times confirmed the noteworthy transformation that had taken place in the fate of its population: “For the first time in years, Mozambique produces enough food to sustain itself. Refugees of the civil war have come back to their farms, and, in the fertile north, after the most severe draughts in the history of south Africa, the harvest is most bountiful. The inflation rate fell from 70% to 5%... The country that was regarded as one of the poorest in the world is starting to look like an African success story... The authority of UN in the termination of the civil war and the resulting general election was an exceptional African success story for this organization. International aid was, at one time, the only source of growth of industry in Mozambique, but today, there are many more private cars in Maputo (the capital city of Mozambique) than those of the relief organizations.”⁽⁷⁴⁾

A follow-up article a few months later, held that the transformation in Mozambique had its roots in something more humane than just politics. “The people are characterized by a peace that is impelled by a general refusal to continue the conflict, as well as an unshakeable determination to live a normal life. ...What really drives Mozambique’s rise is the energy of individuals to tackle problems at their inception.”⁽⁷⁵⁾

Joaquim Chissanó knew where these amazing transformations in the collective consciousness of his people came from. And it was crystal clear to him, how to duplicate these transformations. He loved his

country and he also loved his neighboring countries. So, what could be more obvious than to tell them how they could turn around their bad luck with little investment or cost? He was tireless at political meetings with other African statesmen to explain the Vedic defense strategy and to offer his experience in building these peace troops.

At the end of 1999, he once again affirmed the continuing success of his coherence-creating group. He conveyed how he had succeeded in ending the 20-year civil war in his country, and how, since then, in the past seven years, peace, stability, and democracy of his country had been maintained, for which results he’d implemented the techniques of Maharishi’s university. In his speech, this great and unconventional thinker said, “The culture of war has to be replaced with a culture of peace! For this reason, something deeper in our spirit and our consciousness must be changed to prevent the rekindling of hostilities.”

Chissanó, the statesman, emphasized that people who had always lived in a peaceful country could not understand the effects of war on the daily life of a nation. “In Mozambique, we know very well what we are talking about when we say, ‘No more war’ and ‘Peace forever.’”

He gave expression to his deepest conviction: “Stress is the ultimate cause of fear and conflict. Stress in the family brings domestic abuse; Stress in government causes false perceptions and power struggles and loss of success for the whole country.”

Not long after, the inevitable happened.

At a small meeting in Vlodrop, Joaquim Chissanó, the great beacon of hope, turned to Maharishi with all eyes on him: “Maharishi, in the last few weeks I experienced massive resistance. The heads of state of rich, Western countries are everything but enthusiastic about my support of Vedic theories about invincibility in other African nations. The UN threatened to cancel all financial aid to my country if I don’t stop talking at political functions about the potential of the TM-Sidhis for the military. They demand that I disband the detachment of soldiers who are practicing TM in Mozambique.”

Breathless and tense silence followed his words.

“Maharishi, I am very sorry. I know what you have done for our country, and I am most grateful for it. This is not what I want. But I don’t see any other possibility. I must disband that group. We are not yet ready to make it without these subsidies.”

Maharishi tried to encourage him: “If the soldiers continue to practice the Sidhis in such a big group, your country will become so strong that Mozambique will continue to grow even without international support.”

But Chissanó could no longer stand the pressure: “Of course, I’ll continue to meditate and many of the members of my cabinet and my people will too. But we have no other alternative; we have to back down.”

At the end of the conversation, Maharishi warned: “If you disband this detachment, you’ll have to be very careful with water – there is a danger that your country will be flooded.”

The die was cast: Joaquim Chissanó, the great and strong man with an innovative mind surrendered to the Superpowers.

In February of 2000, Mozambique once again made headlines – this time, negative ones. Heavy rains had led to catastrophic floods that cost numerous lives.

In appreciation of his accomplishments, the democratization of his country, the drafting of a constitution for a multi-party system, and the normalization of the relations with his neighboring country, South Africa, Joaquim Chissanó received the “Mo Ibrahim Foundation Prize for excellent governance” at the end of his presidency in 2007.