

## CHAPTER XVIII

# THE TEMPLE OF THE UNDISTRACTED MIND

There came a night in Lucknow when I threw off my mess-dress, medals, Wellington boots, and all my gear as a soldier, as if I could then and there forget these toys and start afresh with new ones. My time as a "bear-leader" was over, and every fibre in me was in revolt against my ghost-like existence as an officer of vanished Bengal Lancers.

The Colonel who commanded our amalgamation made no difficulty about my taking ten days' leave to the hills. There were three dozen officers in our confluent regiments; certainly I could be spared.

Next day, Naim Shah saw me off to Katgodam. He knew this was the beginning of the end of our happy life; and although he disapproved of my cult of strange gods, at the back of his mind he held to a thought which was too great to be uttered, but not difficult to guess for his eyes roved often to a possession of mine which is the Afridi's god. So I gave him a promise, which I shall not particularise owing to the laws about gun licences.

As I travelled towards the Himalayas, I looked out once more over the great plains, which have seen so many conquerors, and say so little to the unquiet West.

It was "cow-dust hour." Ox-carts creaked slowly to a mud-walled village. Blue buffaloes browsed along in front of a naked pot-bellied baby : black-buck bounded high, as if to see the train better : a procession of peasants trailed out towards a shrine : a peacock preened himself by a bamboo covert : men and beasts were gentle and well content. An infinite serenity lay under all that sky.

And as background to this pervasive peace, stood the Himalayas, white and holy, their summits reaching into an after-glow of crimson. Would it be my work, I wondered, to tell the West a little of what may be discovered there, and how Christ Himself threw the light of His divinity upon the truths that were known in the childhood of the Vedas ? The task was broad and big as these plains I travelled, and my equipment scanty. Would anyone listen to the stammering of a soldier ?

I knew little, then, except by instinct. And to-day I have learned only the extent of my ignorance, but I know that even that is worth recording, for others will take up the tale. There are philosophies in India which the nations need, and my own country most of

all, for her destiny is bound up with the peoples who profess them.

I had heard that Bhagawan Sri was at Katgodam, preparing for his annual pilgrimage to the Shaivite shrine of Amarnath, but when I arrived there, I found that he had left the previous evening with two disciples.

Hoping to overtake him while still on the highways of civilisation, I hired a car to drive me up to Naini Tal ; and had hardly begun enquiring for him in the rambling outskirts of the bazaar below the lake when I saw his tall, loose-limbed, saffron-robed figure at a sweetmeat stall. He was buying parched-barley for his bitch, who sat up and begged for it.

" I have been longing for this moment," I said, as I clasped his hand. " You seem younger, *guru-ji*, than when I saw you nine whole years ago."

" Age is nothing, Sahib. I am happy, too. We have been expecting you for some time."

" Sivanand is with you ? "

" Sivanand and his wife, Sahib. They were married in Cashmere this spring. We three are going to Amarnath together."

" With me, I hope, and your dog ? "

" Come weal or woe, I will never desert my faithful dog," he answered promptly. " Those were the words

of Yudisthira on reaching heaven, and I hope to be able to echo them when my time comes."

"And as to me?"

"I see signs that you have progressed in the Path," he answered. "But the journey is a far one."

"I wish I had progressed, *guru-ji*. But while your disciples have been engaged in worship and meditation, I have only been soldiering, which is a waste of time. Or isn't it?"

"You have passed your years of begging and meditation in a different way from ours, that is all. Tell me of the War."

"How can I talk about it, *guru-ji*, when I have so much to hear from you? Has Sivanand been initiated yet? And who is his wife?"

"You will soon find out, Sahib! You and I have all eternity before us, just as Sivanand and Hastini have all eternity in which to study the mysteries of love and devotion. You remember Hastini—who brought you to me?"

"The girl with the limp?"

"Yes. She has become rich in worldly possessions. But they will tell you their story, and you must tell me yours while we walk to the place where we are staying, over there on the terrace by the single tree. Is that a wound on your right arm?"

"It is only a polo accident, *guru-ji*. The War left no outer marks."

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“ But it made you suffer ? Tell me.”

His voice was smooth, but I felt that he commanded. There was a core of steel in that benign body.

As we strolled through the bazaar, and on by a mountain path which led away from the lake and upwards to the charcoal-burner's hut at which they had halted, I spoke easily to him of many things which I found it impossible to say to others, for there was a stillness in his mind which drew me out. He seemed to understand everything, and to understand in three dimensions. When I told him of my walk from Winchester to Twyford, for instance, he gauged both my physical and mental states, and saw beyond them to larger questions.

“ It is good to love your country,” he said, surprisingly, “ for war is a disease which patriotism can cure.”

“ Yet patriotism may lead to terrible conflicts ? ”

“ It may, but it need not. If it does, it is better so. Last year eight millions of us died by influenza. That also is nothing. Siva must take his toll until men know him for what he is. The worst enemy is not death, but wrong desire. Wars are fevers, mass-perversions of the sexual instinct. They come as a fever does, when disease is present ; and do good like a fever. The alternative to a fever, when you are diseased, is death. But it is better not to have the disease or the fever, but to love. It is better if your heart is pure.”

“ A national as well as a personal Yoga ? ”

“ There is no difference, Sahib. A body whose units are in harmony is at peace with all the world.”

“ But how can there be peace when conflict is a law of Nature? Nature is ugly, *guru-ji*. She makes the turtles eat the dead in the Ganges, and plans the unpleasant fate of various insects, as well as that of humanity. I know your Siva and his Kali now : I first saw her when I had sunstroke, years ago ; and again when I killed a favourite horse ; and I saw her gloating in the deserts of Mesopotamia. For these last four years she has been dancing on the body of her husband with her girdle of dead hands and bloody breasts, so that the whole earth trembles.”

The *guru's* small bright eyes wrinkled in laughter.

“ You have seen much and learned much during these years, Sahib,” he said, “ but you have not learned to love. And love, you know, is the first as well as the last virtue of the Path.”

“ Can it be taught ? ”

“ You must first learn indifference, Sahib, for love can only come into stillness. You must make a void and then let love flood in from its infinite source. But Sivanand and Hastini will tell you of these things better than I, for they are studying them. Moreover, I must go down the valley, to bathe before the evening meal.”

Not one word would he say as to my discipleship. Our talk plunged about like a restive horse, without advancing in any direction ; yet it occurred to me now

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that we had reached the hut, that perhaps he had been the rider and I the steed, and that I was being guided.

The *cheelas* welcomed us with open arms and cries of " Ram ! Ram ! " While the *guru* gathered his brass vessels for washing and drinking, Sivanand and Hastini spread a blanket for me between themselves, and offered me warm milk. Sivanand was the same as he had been at Agra, except that his ropy locks were brushed and parted in the middle, as a sign, perhaps, that he had received the *diksha*<sup>1</sup> which ended his time of wandering. As to Hastini, she seemed to me to be more tidied and more mundane than I remembered her. She wore the saffron robe of a Yogi, like Sivanand, but hers was of silk, and was adorned with a turquoise necklace. A diamond shone in each ear, setting off the glossy black of her short hair, and her caressing eyes.

She told me that she had inherited six villages near Patna on the death of an uncle, and that the Bhagawan Sri had advised her to settle down and administer her inheritance, but that she had begged first to be allowed to visit an *ashram* kept by the Maharajah of Cashmere, and that there she had met Sivanand ; and she told me also of how Sivanand had led her round the sacred marriage fire, and of the lilies on the Dal Lake, and of the garden of Shalimar, and of devil-dancers, and red-cap lamas, and the glittering icicle of Siva in the cave they were to visit. . . .

<sup>1</sup> Initiation.

She talked without pause, simply and smoothly ; while I listened with half my mind, and wondered with the other half whether this was really the girl who had stumbled along with me, almost sullenly, towards the Dasaswamedh Ghat.

“ And you ”—she asked, having exhausted her news —“ are you married, Sahib ? ”

“ No, and I don’t expect to be,” I answered.

“ You don’t want to have a son to send your spirit on its last journey ! I am sorry, Sahib.”

When Bhagawan Sri returned, he said in his dry way that I was right not to undertake the duties of a householder, for I was a seeker after the wisdom of the ages. Domestic bliss was not for the *brahmacharin*. They must instruct me in higher matters, he said, such as the mysteries of Being and Not-being and the methods by which the illumined Self may taste the nectar of Attributeless Brahman.

“ But what can we teach him while you are here ? ” protested Hastini.

“ I shall not be here,” said the *guru*. “ Look at the little Western god, on your left wrist, Sahib, and tell me what it says.”

“ Five-thirty, *guru-ji* ! ”

“ In two hours it will be nearly sunset. Until the shadows lengthen I shall meditate. I am an old man with nothing to say, but you three are young, and can



edify yourselves by discussing the quintessence of the Vedanta."

Hastini clapped her hands.

"I understand, *guru-ji*, for you did the same with me ! When you are ready," she explained to me, "he will teach you more in five minutes than we can tell you in five years, but not till then. Meanwhile, what shall we talk about ? "

"There are so many things——"

"The Sahib is *stiff* ! " said Sivanand suddenly.

"Perhaps he doesn't cry and laugh enough," suggested Hastini. "It must be stifling to wear an English mask."

"As to that," I answered, "you know what it is to be shy yourself, I think."

"Indeed I do," she admitted.

Silence fell between us, and the two watched me curiously.

The *guru*, meanwhile, had spread his antelope skin under the single tree. Completely enfolded in his robe, with back and neck as straight as the fir under which he sat, he looked out with unwinking eyes over the mountains where the Vedas were revealed.

Sivanand stretched himself, and lit a cigarette.

"Have you ever tried to calm your mind, Sahib ? "

"Of course."

"And how ? "

"By relaxing, and—being calm."

“ You cannot control thought by thinking. The lungs are the keys to the treasuries of vision. Let us be practical, and talk of that excellent path to peace.”

“ By all means. And you shall judge for yourself whether or not I have already taken some steps along the road.”

“ Show me,” said Sivanand.

I showed him the *bhastrika* then, as I had practised it in Turkey, but he told me that I had only been wasting my time.

“ You will become more flexible with practice,” he said. “ Your ribs are like an old cask at present. They should be like young branches. Even your tail-bones should move, and your skin should grow luminous and the vital force should tingle at your finger-tips when the lotuses of your body are fully opened.”

“ Your words slip through my mind, Sivanand. All I know is that this breathing makes me giddy.”

“ Your heart was not pure if it made you giddy. The life of the body is the blood. The life of the blood is the Spirit. The life of the Spirit is God. God is Spirit. You cannot know Him through the brain, but through the purified and exalted body. As food is turned by the body into blood, and the seed into life, so by the transmutation of divine energy are ideas born. This is a hard saying, even for the gods, and may only be known through purification and active prayer, including *asana* and *mudra*.<sup>1</sup> You will never understand your Self, or

<sup>1</sup> Posture and exercise.

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the Creation of which you are a part, as long as you separate it into pieces. Every attribute of the Universe is in your mind. Every quality of your mind—stiffness, strength, fear, joy—is reflected in your body, somewhere, somehow.”

“A child can perform every *asana* with ease,” added Hastini, “and many of the *mudras*, but not an adult. The seeds of death begin in the joints, and to free them means pain. I know, for I began Yoga only when I was twenty, after a fever in which I would have died but for Bhagawan Sri, and I had almost to break my ankles in order to acquire the lotus seat. For you it will also be difficult.”

“And what shall I gain if I do these things?” I asked.

“The right to breathe,” she said solemnly, “and therefore a mind at peace, for, as Sivanand says, the breath and brain are linked. You cannot think deep thoughts with shallow lungs and you cannot absorb *prana*<sup>1</sup> through a poisoned body. Hence the necessary purifications. Bliss really begins with the bowels. The *Tantra Sanhita* has a *dhauti*<sup>2</sup> in which the worshipper stands navel deep in water and draws out his long intestine. That is not possible for you. But you can fill it with a gallon of tepid water. Then you must learn to drink water through the nose and expel it through the

<sup>1</sup> Air, which the Hindus have always held to be something more than a mixture of gases.

<sup>2</sup> Purification.

mouth, and drink it through the mouth and expel it through the nose<sup>1</sup> ; and the purification of the heart by vomiting,<sup>2</sup> and the ventilation of the alimentary canal by means of the crow-bill pout.”\*

Then, seeing I was puzzled, she continued :

“ These things must be learned from a teacher, as also the postures and exercises which force the evil humours from the joints, and enable the seeker after knowledge to concentrate the currents of his body.”

“ It seems to me you think too much about the body.”

“ When its gross elements are vivified, Sahib,” she answered, “ you will understand, but that can only come with practice.”

“ I think I had better begin now ! ”

Hastini was utterly in earnest, and took me at my word.

“ Begin, then,” she said, “ by inhaling the beauty of the world : the individuality that the new-born child proclaims with its first cry : the fragrance of the gardens of Shalimar : or the stuff that God gave to your nostrils to make you a living soul, if you like. It is all the same *prana*. Receive it thankfully and humbly. Do not expect to absorb more of it than you are ready to build with. There is no greater sin than pride, and no greater friend than breath : its inspiration, retention and exhalation is your life, and all life ; through it you shall know the truth of Sivagama’s words : ‘ There is

<sup>1</sup> *Vayut Krama* and *s’it Krama*.

<sup>2</sup> *Hrid-dhauti* by *vamana*.

\* *Vatasara-dhauti* by *Kakini-mudra*.

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nothing, O Lotus-faced goddess, beyond the breath.' Sivanand will show you, and you can copy him."

Sivanand made me place one hand at his navel and the other at the small of his back. Then he swelled himself with air and collapsed himself with rhythmic speed, each inhalation seeming like a light hammer-tap. Finally, with breath retained and eyes upturned, he remained still, yet strangely vibrant. Through this hidden energy I drew through him a sense of power, not directly derived from his physical envelope, but coming, perhaps, from all thought in all worlds. I saw distant minds and the souls of the dead, and reached out to them with the fingers of spirit, but grasped only air : I could not enter them.

" Once a *guru* was able to possess himself of the mind and body of a Queen of Benares by this power of *prana*, so that he became the Queen herself," said Sivanand. " But the control of such forces is very difficult. The *bhastrika* is first of all a cleansing breath. Beyond that you need not look. During the inward breath, imagine that you are absorbing some portion of the Cosmic Consciousness. During the outward breath, send your spirit out to the four corners of the earth. And during the holding of the breath, listen attentively to the life within. In that stillness the five illusions fade in the knowledge of Siva, and Reality is seen as a candle in a windless place. The flame is in every heart, but it cannot shine amidst confusions of desire."

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Three times I took twenty-one breaths and held my breath.

The first time I felt as if something had caught me by the throat.

The second time I again felt suffocated, but knew that *prana* was mobilising the armies of the blood and forcing its way through the barriers of the body. There was a struggle between opposing forces, a descent into hell, a search of Orpheus for his bride ; then so-called mind asserted its dominion over so-called matter, light replaced darkness and my stimulated blood-stream flooded through every cell. I felt buoyant and calm and intuitively aware.

The third time, a sense of ease and equipoise almost instantly replaced the initial struggle, and with this physical balancing came an apprehension untellable. With my Angel I took wings of wonder and traversed continents and worlds, and seemed to reach the last stars, beyond thinking, where mind is not, and where that nothing out of which came something seems almost clutchable.

“ If you practise this restraint three times a day for six months at regular hours,” said Sivanand, “ you may begin to obtain results.”

“ Results ? ”

“ Sounds : they will be but your own blood in your arteries. Sights : images in your own retina if you care to separate them from other illusions. Sensations : the

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quivering of *Kundalini* in the spine, if you so imagine it. But if I tell you what to expect, what you expect will come to pass, but not in its natural order. You must have confidence. Open your heart and lungs to the source of life and *prana* will work for you. Remember that the purpose of all *pranayama*—and this is a truth on which you must ponder—is to make the breath come slowly and slowly. When its inspiration and expiration are exactly balanced, you will have peace of mind, whether you know it or not.”

Bhagawan Sri, I remembered, had told me the same at Benares. What was he doing now, I wondered, so aloof and still?

An hour and a half had passed, and still he remained immobile, unseeing, as if carved against a red sky. Sivanand guessed my thought.

“We could not disturb him, even if we would, Sahib, for he is rapt. But let us go to him, for he would not have meditated like this in the open unless he had desired you to see him.”

We went to the place where he sat, followed by the terrier, growling.

“Touch him,” said Sivanand, “and you will see that he is cold. He is with his *shakti*, in the isolation of bliss. He has drawn *Kundalini* upwards so that all life has left his body except in one place. The thousand-petalled jewel of the lotus glows. There only his life burns in one fiery point.”

I hesitated, but the *cheelas* made me put my hand on his ankles and his neck. They were icy-cold. His eyes were turned upwards into his skull. He did not seem to breathe. To all intents and purposes he was dead, except that the extreme top of his head was hot.

“Do not be alarmed, Sahib,” said Hastini. “He can recall *Kundalini* at will.”

“You are sure that he can come back?”

“He will bring *Kundalini* down at nightfall,” said Hastini. “Come, Sahib, you are cold.”

She drew her arm through mine, and we returned to the hut. The glow of her body warmed me through and through.

A curious comprehension seemed to link us, but whatever this understanding was, she was its mistress as she was its begetter : she could make me burn or freeze, but I did not feel that I had any effect on her.

She began to speak of that serpent-lore of the Tantriks which is at once so mystical and so material that it baffles the Western mind.

“The goddess is more subtle than the fibre of the lotus,” she said, “and lies asleep at the base of the spine, curled three-and-a-half times round Herself, closing with Her body the door of Brahman. Sometimes She awakes of Her own volition, which you call falling in love. Falling in love ! Yes, like slipping on a mango skin. The right way to arouse Her is through breathing. Then you do not fall, but rise into love. Then She



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uncoils Herself, and raises Her head, and enters the royal road of the spine, piercing the mystic centres, until She reaches the brain. These things are not to be understood in a day. When She reaches the thousand-petalled jewel of the lotus, then the Sun at the navel meets the Moon at the throat, and you taste Her nectar, and know that She is Life, and that Life is God.”

Hastini held me as if I had been entranced. I could not take my eyes from hers : they were my gates of pearl.

One can, if one will, describe what happens when four hands meet. One can, if one will, describe the sudden understanding between a man and woman, the conflagrant moment when two Selves come into the sunlight of unity, knowing each other. But there are moments stranger still, which no tongue can tell, or pen write, when nothing happens on the physical plane, unless the eyes between themselves spin some etheric web in which something dances, like the sex-chromosomes in the womb. It is not in the body alone that a child is born. Every woman carries within her another seed : she is the begetter of more than bodies. That which was born between Hastini and I that night still lives, and can therefore reproduce its kind, but what and where it is I cannot say.

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When the *guru* returned, he joined in our conversation as if he had never left us. I did ask him about his

trance, for the talk still ran on the mysteries of love and devotion, and Bhagawan Sri was disposed to listen to his *cheelas*. "Sivanand and I have renounced even the Veda." Hastini was saying: "We are crossing the ocean of Maya, and we do not know what we shall find on its farther shore. But after all this is the play-time of the spirit that cannot always live in one room, nor always fix its thoughts on eternity."

"The wife and the mother is the sole and sacred path," said Bhagawan Sri, quoting a text. "In her you shall be born again."

Hastini considered this a moment, and added a saying of Bhartihari's :

" 'The true object of love is the union of the hearts of the participants. When that is not accomplished, the mating might be that of two corpses.' "

"Through breathing you shall come to *Laya-siddhi*," said Bhagawan Sri, "as through walking you reach a place of pilgrimage. Sivanand will find Her who is his hidden half, and you, Hastini, Him. The true knowledge of Being comes out of the masculine awakening in woman, and the feminine in man, which is manifested on the earth-plane as sexual union. In that super-sensual bliss the rock of egoism is riven, and the two become One, and Very God."

"And then, after a long time," said Sivanand, "when we see the children of our children, we shall abandon all food taken in towns and take refuge in a

lonely forest. And so we shall have escaped from the net of desire, although still together, and Siva shall be seen by us in his true aspect."

"Instead of as Kali," I said, "who dances upon the body of her husband?"

"Yes, Sahib, instead of in the *mayik* form necessary for creation. Every instant upon this earth there is a great out-pouring of fertility. Every second a new-born child is somewhere crying, and somewhere another soul is leaving the skull it inhabits. These changes pertain to *maya*; their perception is the higher wisdom. There are a million lives in Sivanand, waiting to meet Hastini's. Their wills shall choose them, by a knowledge and control of their dual natures which is the microcosm of the world-process between Siva and his *shakti*."

Again I suspected, but I think now wrongly, that Bhagawan Sri was not being as explicit as he might have been.

We ate a few mangoes and drank a little milk. We looked up to the stars, and warmed ourselves at our fire. Sivanand smoked incessantly.

"I have found clues, *guru-ji*, to some of the things which I have been seeking," I said at last, "but there is one of my questions which you have avoided. Tomorrow I shall know the answer; so why not tell me now whether I may come to Amarnath?"

The *guru* took a piece of biscuit and showed it to his

terrier, who jumped round him expectantly. When he tossed it up, she caught it in mid-air.

“ Look at that for concentration ! ” he said. “ That is the quality of *ekagrata*, the faculty of sinking the mind in space, as a lover into the arms of his adored.”

“ You will not take me ? ”

“ The bee buzzes when it is outside the flower,” said Bhagawan Sri, “ but within the chalice it drinks honey silently. In the West you may find a *guru* who knows the skilful management of your times and values, to lead you to the threshold of the temple of the undistracted mind.”

I swallowed my disappointment. In the light of the embers over which we crouched, I could see Hastini's eyes, narrowed, observant, like a line of black bees in a summer sky.

We talked far into the night, of many things of both East and West ; and I knew that I was receiving a lesson in that virtue of the Path which complements love.

We spoke of the teachings of Christianity in regard to death (the *guru* considered that we sometimes relinquished this life with an unseemly struggle) ; and of the connexion between modern mathematics and the word *iva*—relativity—so constantly appearing in the Vedas ; and again of breathings such as the *brahmarai*,<sup>1</sup> and the *sitali*,<sup>2</sup> and the one-four-two rhythm,

<sup>1</sup> A droning sound.

<sup>2</sup> A serpent-hiss.

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by which the mind may pass behind the lights and shadows of the phenomenal world.

“How may the knower cut the knot of appearances with a knife of grey pulp?” said Sivanand. “A knock against the hard facts of existence may blunt the brain : too much sleep may rust it : too little sleep may make it as brittle as a dry twig. Then snap—you cannot know Reality until your next incarnation !”

Presently I lay down, telling myself I could listen better like that.

“Your civilisation has done marvellous things,” he continued, sucking at the cup of his hands in which a cigarette burned, so that he drew in lungfuls of mixed smoke and air. “You have almost conquered the earth. With your telescopes and trains and battleships you can move and control almost everything, except your thoughts, and the food in your bowels. . . . You look outwards too much. Our methods are more reasonable. We do not bother about engines. The *shakti-nadi* is a more important machine.”

I rose, startled. Sivanand was still speaking, but in another tone.

“As the dew is dried by the morning light,” he was saying, “so are the sins of mankind dispersed by the glories of Himalaya.”

Then Hastini capped him with : “ He who has seen Himalaya is greater than he who has performed all the worships of Kashi.”

Hours had passed, and although it was not yet dawn, its foreglow had already lit three hundred miles of snow before me, remote, and plumed with storms that never cease ; yet in appearance so close and so quiet that it seemed to me that I might stroll there in an hour or two, and bask in a white peace.

The three now sat silent, with the old bitch at my *guru's* feet, looking over those titanic masses that have given India her fertility and her faith. In the increasing light, the clouds above them took the shape of beasts. A dragon pounced on the mountains of Nepal, a lizard with eyes of flame devoured a fly upon Nanda Devi, a sprawling giantess stretched her length from Trisul to Diwalghiri and searched the valleys with a luminous rapier.

Surya had begun the skyey chase that never ends. For all his pains he can do no more than touch the hem of the twilight maid, and gather the roses of morning that she scatters. Yet it is for her that the world is lit. But for her, flowers would not open, nor man walk the earth. But for her darkness, there would be no light.

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The old mountains looked indulgently on the five of us who faced the shrines of Aryavarta. Buddhas and birds and butterflies and trees were one to them. The world was still young, and full of a blossoming and a fluttering and a search for things unfindable.

The sun lit up the yellow robes of my friends, and their lips moved, but I heard no sound, for the Gayatri is very sacred :

OM TAT SAVITUR VARENYAM BHARGO DEVASYA DIMOHI  
DHIYO YO NAH PRACHODAYAT OM.

*O face of the True Sun, now hidden by a disc of gold, may we know Thy Reality, and do our whole duty on our journey to Thy Light.<sup>1</sup>*

“Guru-jī, when may I say that prayer ? ”

“Soon or late you will be one of us, for there is that within a man which is stronger than any outer circumstance. When you have learned more of the breath which is a reflex of the Great Breath, you will notice the tricks time plays on man, and know that it is not within the frame of our measurements.”

“In this dawn I am aware of that ! ”

“You have begun to be aware of love. But mortal mind cannot know its heights and depths. In the Upanishads it is written that in the beginning nor time nor change, nor speech, nor shape, nor Aught, nor

<sup>1</sup> This is what I understand the Gayatri to mean : the literal translation is “ Let us contemplate that glorious Light of the divine Savitur : may He inspire our minds.”

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Naught, existed. Love came to this emptiness as the in-drawn breath of cosmos, and out of it the worlds were made. Nature and Will were formed then and both are bound by Love, so that the three are one. Every religion in the world says this, and I have studied them all ! ”

The words rang true. In his mind, so resilient and so sane, were faiths flooded over by the sands of Atlantis and Chaldea ; the Vaishna trident and the Shaivite eye were there ; the seal of twi-sexed Hermes, the vulture cap of Isis, the serpent-circled rod, the Crescent and the Cross. And as all colours mingle and merge in sunlight, so in him the blending of these beliefs showed forth love.

THE END



# APPENDIX



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The word Yoga comes from root *yug*, meaning to join : it signifies the union of the body of the disciple with the visible world, and of his spirit with cosmic consciousness. Further, Yoga has the sense of a yoke, or discipline, which the student must undergo in order to reach happiness and heaven.

Yoga, as I know it, is monistic. "All that exists is one, though sages call it by different names." Many centuries after these Vedic words were written St. Athanasius was made responsible for the idea that : "the reasonable soul and flesh is one man. One, not by conversion of the God-head into flesh ; but by taking of the manhood into God ; one altogether, not by confusion of substance : but by unity of person."

There is no notion in Yoga, as I know it, of a divinity disjunct from the Self, no doctrine of a Creator ruling His Universe from an outside heaven. Such a possibility may be admitted or implied in some Hindu scriptures, but my *guru*, at any rate, concerned himself entirely with Man and his Becoming.

Yoga is the study of You.

The body of the Yogi is the universe. It is not, however, either so material or so metaphysical a body as is commonly believed ; but the whole subject is so enmeshed in prejudice, misunderstanding, and unfamiliar Sanskrit terms that I despair of condensing into a few thousand words what Arthur Avalon and Professor Radha Krishnan have discussed brilliantly—in many volumes.

I take courage, however, from the fact that the knowledge of the Vedas is beginning to spread in Europe. "In

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the whole world there is no study so beneficial or so elevating," said Schopenhauer, adding that "the Vedas have been the solace of my life : they will be the solace of my death." On this Max Müller observed that "if the words of Schopenhauer required any endorsement from me I would willingly give it as the result of my own experiences during a long life devoted to the study of many philosophies and many religions. If by philosophy is meant a preparation for a happy death, I know no preparation better than the philosophy of the Vedas. The early Indians possessed a knowledge of the true God. All their writings are replete with sentiments and expressions that are noble, clear and severely grand. Not to know what the Vedas have already done in illuminating the darkest passages of the human mind—of that mind on which we ourselves are feeding and living—is a misfortune." Two modern authorities (Sir John Woodroffe and M. Maeterlinck) support these statements. The former, in *The World as Power-Reality*, claims that "an examination of Indian Vedic doctrine shows that it is, in important respects, in conformity with the most advanced scientific and philosophic thought of the West, and that when this is not so, it is science which will go to the Vedanta and not the reverse" ; while M. Maeterlinck, in *La Grande Féerie*, writing of the problems of time and space, says : "Seule, à l'origine des âges, l'antique religion de l'Inde eut l'intuition de ces gigantesques et insolubles problèmes. Elle regardait l'univers en mouvement comme une illusion qui apparaît ou disparaît selon un rythme sans fin que scandent le sommeil et le réveil de la Cause Éternelle. . . . N'est-ce pas dans cette voie que marche notre science ? "

But Hindu philosophy will require many more libraries and expositors—say another thousand man-years of work—before it is rightly valued in the West. A system whose scriptures number five hundred volumes and go back five thousand years cannot be understood in a day, or even in a generation. To sift and refine, to analyse and compare,

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will be a labour in which the exact scholarship of Europe and America may co-operate with the intuitive feeling-realisation of the race to whom the Vedas belong. Already the University of Oxford has published some forty translations of Sanskrit texts. Harvard has published twenty-six texts, and Johns Hopkins the whole of the Atharva Veda, but there are many more books that await translation, and even discovery, for some of the Tantrik scriptures have been hidden away.

Further, there is an immense exegesis in Sanskrit, German, French and English ; and, incomparably more important than all else, there still exists a living tradition of Vedic culture by the banks of the Ganges. The Brahmins of to-day, like their ancestors, have a great appetite for abstractions : they have always discussed everything and tried everything of which man has ever thought. In a material sense this has perhaps been their undoing, but it has also been a source of inner strength. No other race has delved so deep into the Unconscious. And no other race has survived so long in racial purity. Theirs is the most ancient civilisation on earth. Benares was a venerable town when London and Paris were villages. Down the centuries the Brahmins have carried the torch of the Vedas above the heads of the crowd, and they are rightly proud of the light it has given the world.

But with Hindu philosophy as a whole I am only indirectly concerned. I have no knowledge of the meditational environments of the *ashrams* and monasteries of Asia. There is only one branch of Yoga which I have experienced in my bones and breathing, and that a very practical one, which would be well adapted to meet the increasing nervous strain of modern life.

The Hindus have never held that matter is some inert outside substance. It is a commonplace with them that the body is an aspect of the mind. God is life. Life is God. Yoga is an orderly and objective process of self-realisation ; the

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handmaid of religion, not a religion in itself. It has nothing to do with mystery and Mahatmas.

Moreover, there is more than one Yoga. Here are six, which I have set down as a concession to our Western love for classification :

1. *Mantra Yoga*, or the science of vibrations ;
2. *Gnana Yoga*, in which the intellect is invoked to obtain a knowledge of heaven ;
3. *Bhakti Yoga*, where the disciple finds “ paradise here in this body pent ” by means of love and devotion ;
4. *Karma Yoga*, which is the philosophy of work and the attainment of happiness through action ;
5. *Raja Yoga*, which aims at a synthesis *Gnana*, *Karma* and *Bhakti* Yoga by service and self-sacrifice in the management of worldly affairs ;

And 6. *Hatha* or *Gathastha Yoga*, with which I have been chiefly concerned, and which seeks in its early stages to awaken the sleeping serpent of *Kundalini*, or vitality, by a physiological psychology.

But there is no real dividing line between these Yogas nor between the eight stages (corresponding to the Buddhist's “ noble eight-fold path ”) into which every one of them is divided. These stages are :

1. Right thought, or *yama-niyama*, meaning literally “ death-not death.” The pundit at Delhi gave me a list of these preliminary virtues, which includes the moralities of all religions,

2. *Asana*, or right positions. These relate to the balance and posture of the body. Buddha, for instance, is generally represented with his right foot on his left thigh and his left foot on his right, in what is known as the lotus seat, which has as definite an effect on the mind as has the Christian *asana* of kneeling in prayer.

3. *Mudra* consists of exercises and gestures, including the *dhauties*, or purifications, or baptisms.

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4. *Pranayama* is the study of the various rhythms of breathing. It cannot be undertaken until both mind and body have been rendered supple and pure by previous exercises.

The four succeeding stages are : 5. *Pratyahara*, 6. *Dharana*, 7. *Dhyana*, and 8. *Samadhi*. These steps are described at great length in some English works on Yoga, but the true teaching never will and never can be put in print, being personal and infinitely flexible. All that is written in Sanskrit concerning it is in the nature of notes or outlines to enable the *guru* to pass on the teaching to his *cheela* in the accustomed order. Roughly, *pratyahara* is nerve control ; *dharana*, mind control ; *dhyana*, meditation ; *samadhi*, bliss, isolation, emancipation, ecstasy. The Jesuits, whose exercises Loyola may have borrowed from Moorish mysticism, possess the nearest approach to *dhyana* in the West.

Before the fourth stage can be entered upon (*pranayama*) three baptisms are necessary ; by water, fire and the Holy Ghost. Baptism by water is of the skin, teeth, nasal passages and lower bowel. Purification by fire is concerned with control of the digestive system—for an active metabolism is considered in Yoga as a function of purity. Finally the sloughing of the shell of egoism, the preparation of the mind for the illumination of the Spirit, is a combination of exercises for the cerebro-spinal and sympathetic nervous systems together with an individual course of character-training under the *guru*. Hot baths and white linen will not of themselves make us clean ; nor sexual repressions. The Eastern purity is more thorough than ours, and insists on an elimination of poisons of the intestinal tract, a proper digestion of food, and a riddance of the lumber of thwarted will and unsatisfied desire that hamper the brain.

Here in the West we make an exact science of medicine and are inclined to consider religion as something rather esoteric ; the Brahmins, on the contrary, see in our body a mystical microcosm of the Universe, and in ideas about God only a formal and rather sterile intellectual exercise.

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A balance between these views would certainly contribute to the advancement of knowledge and be of benefit to both races. The Hindus, as I think they would themselves admit, should come closer to certain practical realities ; as to ourselves, if we studied the mystical phenomena of India, we might well discover facts of importance not only to Harley Street, but to Christendom.

I am a Christian myself, and it seems to me clear that Christ based his teaching on a tradition existing in His time and country, and that that tradition originally came from India, and is still being followed there, passing from father to son, from *guru* to *cheela*, with some accretions and superstitions perhaps, yet still one of the most ancient of languages "in which men have spoken of their God."

Consider, for instance, the healing miracles of Christ from the standpoint of the aphorisms of Patanjali. In the vivid and mysterious 11th chapter of the Gospel according to St. John, the disciple whom Jesus loved would appear to have been prepared for an ancient exercise, no doubt practised by the Essenes of that time as it is by the Copts to-day, and known in India as the *Kali-mudra*.<sup>1</sup>

This *Kali-mudra* is a self-induced trance which is only entered into by the aptest pupils of a great teacher, and then only after preparation and purification, for it is dangerous, and success in it is proof that the student can transcend the limitations of time in his own flesh. Quite properly, such powers were kept secret in past ages. Even to-day they are not for the crowd, but if they do exist (and I know that they are still being practised) then I think that knowledge of them would elucidate certain incidents in the life of the Founder of our Faith.

There is nothing in the following "reconstruction" of the story of Lazarus that need strain our sense of probability.

First, then, let us assume, as we surely may, that the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven were given to

<sup>1</sup> Literally, "death-gesture."



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some and not to others of those whom Christ taught. Between Jesus and the Little Eleazer (Lazarus is an affectionate diminutive ; moreover he was unmarried, which again points to discipleship) there existed some special bond which may well have been that of master to initiate.

Lazarus stopped breathing. His heart-beat could not be felt. Naturally his sisters thought that he was dead and sent word to Jesus, their friend.

What did Jesus do ? Hurry to the house that had so often sheltered Him and help the boy to whom He had given His divine love ? On the contrary, He said that the sickness was “ not unto death, but for the glory of God ”—words which seem to indicate that Lazarus was undergoing a step in his training which the Master did not wish to interrupt.

The disciples come to the Master and say that if Lazarus is only asleep “ he will do well.” There is no reason, they add, to risk the danger of a journey into Judea.

Two days pass. Lazarus has not yet awakened from his trance and is now in danger.

Then Jesus says to his disciples plainly, “ Lazarus is dead.”

To all intents and purposes Lazarus is dead, for unless the Master raises him, the ordeal will end in tragedy. First Jesus says that the sleep is not unto death and two days later that the sleeper is dead : how better are we to account for the apparent contradiction in Christ’s words than by the hypothesis that Lazarus has been in a trance ? No other explanation, it seems to me, will square with all the facts given in the Fourth Gospel.

Jesus comes to Bethany and finds that His disciple has been in the grave for four days. Martha says, “ Lord, if Thou hadst been here my brother had not died.” True, Lazarus would not have died. But each soul must go out alone to meet its God : the divine arms can only help it after it has tried to walk.

The terrible moment of His tears and groaning as He

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draws near the tomb is now understandable (indeed it is suffused with new light) if we accept this theory. The one being who could have understood the hidden side of His teaching and might therefore have given Him a human sympathy, has been unable, through bodily weakness, to carry the burden of the knowledge given. Amongst these folk Jesus feels himself surrounded by love, but not by comprehension. Lazarus knew a little more than they, but less than He had hoped. A friend has failed him, not for the first or last time.

When the stone is about to be removed, Martha says that the body will stink. So it would have in that climate ; but Yogis have been known to remain as long as forty days in *Kali-mudra*.

They take away the stone. Jesus lifts up His eyes and says : " Father, I thank Thee that Thòu hast heard Me." Then he calls Lazarus in a loud voice (or a " piercing " voice, for the dearly-loved voice of the Master must reach a numbed consciousness) and the soul of the disciple is brought back from the borderland where it hovers.

Christ speaks and there is life.