

NETI · NETI  
(NOT THIS · NOT THAT)

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of expressing my gratitude to  
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to which this work owes so much.*

L.C.B.

३३

How should he know him  
by whom he knows all this?  
That self is to be described by  
*Neti, Neti (not This, not That).*

How, O Beloved, should he know  
the Knower?

*Brihad-Aranyaka Upanishad  
iv. Adhyaya: 5th Brahmana:  
15th verse.*

## PROLOGUE

AS I SIT HERE ON THIS GOOD FRIDAY, 1954, and ponder over the events of that Good Friday long ago, two things appear to be irrefutable in that great story. In the first place: no more can there be any doubt that a man named Jesus of Nazareth was handed over to the Jews by the Roman Governor of Palestine to be crucified on that Feast of the Passover, for this has been historically authenticated in the last few years from documents of the period. Secondly: as he was dying, that man cried out: 'Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani'. Everything else he said or did on that day may be open to question, or accepted in faith, but these words could never have been invented for they are, from the point of view of any religion, most terrible blasphemy. Any man who could utter such words at the point of death would cause a shudder in all around. They were in fact so terrible that some of those who stood by when they heard it said: 'Behold he calleth Elias,'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Gospel according to St. Mark, ch. XV, v. 35.

rather than believe their ears. There must have been someone there present however who knew what Jesus really did say, since no one could have imagined such words coming from such a one, still less have handed them down to posterity. Being the dying words of one who was God as well as man, no one has dared to question them and, quite naturally, the Church has never attempted to explain them. But one feels surprised that they were not expurgated by the Council of Nicea when the Gospels were sorted out from the mass of apocryphal material. In any case there they stand. What did Jesus mean by such words? What could he have meant?

That is what I propose to try and discover, for the idea that those words were merely an expression of Jesus' weakness is obviously absurd. Jesus was not the weak kind of man who would cry out at death. There is nothing in his whole life that could lead one to think such a thing. He always boldly faced his enemies, and even provoked them in the very courts of the Temple at Jerusalem, furthermore there is every reason to suppose he knew the risk he ran in going up to Jerusalem for that Feast of the Passover. He might have returned to Galilee in safety. 'Nevertheless I must walk today and tomorrow and the day following for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem'.<sup>2</sup> He deliberately chose to risk his life.

<sup>2</sup> *Gospel according to St. Luke*, ch. XIII, v. 33.

Nor was Jesus a man inclined to despair. He had had all too many reasons for despairing of the success of his cause during the years of his ministry, yet that feeling never seems to have touched him. His prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane, if it were genuine, might perhaps be taken as showing a moment of doubt or weakness. But according to all accounts, the disciples could not watch with him even one hour, but slept soundly; how then can anyone know what his prayer really was? I shall have occasion to come back to this point later; here I only wish to stress the fact that, being the man he was, it was certainly not the idea of death that was troubling Jesus. His serenity and his confidence in the righteousness of his cause had never wavered; equally he was unconcerned with the things of this world: 'Take no thought for your life . . . but seek ye first the kingdom of God'.<sup>3</sup> That was the only thing that mattered to him. To such a one, the death of the body could not have been something so appalling that, when faced with it, he could recant all he had believed in until then! How many with far less faith have faced it without any such recantation?

Furthermore I cannot believe that he had any such thought as is attributed to him in the temptations: 'Thou shalt be hung upon the Cross but 'He shall give his angels charge over thee,' (an idea that has some-

<sup>3</sup> *Gospel according to St. Matthew*, ch. VI, v. 25 ff

times been ascribed to Judas Iscariot in his defence,) and that then, in the agony of discovering that there were no angels, he felt forsaken by God. I feel that there is here something far deeper than all this, something which the Christian religion, based on faith in a loving Father has never contemplated, nor wished to. Did he at the last moment have a realisation of something different from anything he had ever known before?

If in the investigation of this matter, we discover from other sources something that would justify a cry of that kind, Jesus' words might prove to be the discovery of a universal fact, recognised by the most wise in the history of mankind, and might constitute a first approach to an understanding of Reality.

I

**I**N MY SEARCH FOR AN EXPLANATION OF Jesus' words, I shall have to retrace the path I have been treading for the last few years because what I have to say is extremely difficult to convey to others, and it seems easiest to do so in this subjective way.

Before I begin however, I must meet an objection that some of my readers may feel inclined to raise against my method. It has been said by mystics of all times that no truth learnt from others is of any value, it is only what we learn from our inner experience that matters. I entirely agree. That being so, it may appear, firstly, that this book is largely based on ideas, both scientific and religious, propounded by others; secondly, that I am trying to teach others instead of letting them teach themselves.

But, I suggest with all humility that, although I have quoted extensively from both scientists and mystics, in all of them I have been searching for a confirmation of my own idea. I have pondered their

teachings and those of many others not mentioned here, to see what support might be found for that idea. And, not being either a Master or a Guru, I have used the words of men who have achieved distinction in various fields, wherever they have seemed to share and confirm my own thoughts. Any careful reader will find this to be true for, whatever my quotation, it is never taken as an end in itself but used for what lies behind it. As to the second objection: I had learnt much from many sources before my own idea about Reality dawned upon me; therefore perhaps my experience may be one of the milestones on another's path to enlightenment. That is all I ask.

The first thing that threw light on my problem was Fred Hoyle's book: *The Nature of the Universe*. I was familiar with the work of Eddington and Jeans, in fact I have always regarded the former as one of the greatest thinkers of our time. He was not only a great scientist but also a modern mystic, which I believe is equally true of Einstein. Yet for me, Hoyle opened wider horizons than any of his predecessors. Particularly into ultimate ends, which are what I am seeking.

For many years there was one scientific idea that I was never able to accept, namely that our universe had had a definite beginning once upon a time however long ago it may have been. Until quite recently it was estimated that 4000 million years ago, 'the

Universe started its life . . . in a single huge explosion and that the present expansion is a relic of this explosion'.<sup>1</sup> All ideas on this subject set out to explain this expansion which is the one thing that seems to be certain among the discoveries regarding the depths of the universe in the last half century. With the help of the largest new telescope, it has been discovered that there is a movement that is universally the same in whatever region of the sky the eye be directed. 'All these outlying galaxies or island universes, are apparently receding from our solar system and from each other'.<sup>2</sup> And between them the universe expands. Cosmologists agree in comparing it to a spotted balloon that is being stretched but on which the spots are not stretched with the expansion of the rubber between. Only the space between those spots (the nebulae or galaxies) widens, and the speed at which the spots recede from us and from one another increases with distance. 'While the nearer galaxies, about one million light years away, are travelling at a mere 100 miles a second, those 250 million light years away are flying off at the fantastic rate of the velocity of light'.<sup>3</sup> This fact led to the idea of a single original explosion, an idea which is still current among many physicists and cosmologists. It seemed to be the most logical conclusion to be drawn from

<sup>1</sup> Fred Hoyle: *The Nature of the Universe*, p.102

<sup>2</sup> Lincoln Barnett: *The Universe and Dr. Einstein*, p.87

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p.88

the known facts. 'Since all these remote galaxies without exception are moving *away* from us and from each other, one must conclude that at some epoch of cosmic time all of them were clustered together in one fiery inchoate mass . . . And if the geometry of space is shaped by its material content, then the universe in this pregalactic phase must have been an uncomfortably cramped and crowded receptacle characterized by an excessive curvature and packed with matter of an inconceivable density.'<sup>4</sup> That exactly explains the reason for my objection to that theory: any kind of a receptacle must be limited and there must be something outside it. What was around it? Into what did that 'fiery mass' explode? What was there before that happened?

The theory of the universe being 'finite but unbounded' should also be considered. What sets the limits and what is outside them; what limits what?

All the objections which I had to these academic theories have been answered by Fred Hoyle's new ideas. Against the idea that the universe started as a single huge explosion, Hoyle and the new school of astronomers have a very serious objection. Hoyle says: 'The big bang idea seemed to me to be unsatisfactory even before detailed examination showed that it leads to serious difficulties. For when we look at our own galaxy there is not the smallest sign that

<sup>4</sup> Lincoln Barnett, opus cit., p.88

such an explosion ever occurred. This might not be such a cogent argument if on such theories our galaxy were much younger than the whole Universe. But this is not so. In fact, in some of these theories there is the obvious contradiction that the Universe comes out to be younger than our astrophysical estimates of the age of our galaxy. But the really serious difficulty arises when we try to reconcile the idea of an explosion with the requirement that the galaxies have condensed out of a diffuse background material. The two concepts of an explosion and the condensation are obviously contradictory and it is easy to show, if you postulate an explosion of sufficient violence to explain the expansion of the Universe, that condensations looking at all like the galaxies could never have been formed'.<sup>5</sup>

Besides that, it seems undeniable, and Hoyle stresses the point, that had the Universe started four billion years ago with the famous explosion and been expanding from that centre ever since, as the distance between the galaxies, and their speed, rapidly increases, and more and more of them disappear over our visible horizon, we must eventually float solitarily in space. 'If any of the older theories were right, we should end in a seemingly empty Universe, or at any rate in a Universe that was empty apart perhaps from one or two very close galaxies that became attached to

<sup>5</sup> Hoyle: opus cit., p.102

our galaxy as satellites. Nor would this situation take very long to develop. Only about 10,000,000,000 years—that is about a fifth of the lifetime of the sun would be needed to empty the sky of the 100,000,000 or so galaxies that we now observe!<sup>6</sup>

Remembering that I started with the intention of discovering an explanation of Jesus' words, I should like to interrupt my scientific investigations to point out that this 'original explosion' has been used by the Christian Church to confirm the words of the 1st Chapter of Genesis that 'in the beginning God created the world'. Pursuing this idea to its logical conclusion we must presume that since God created the Universe in that way, everything since then must have proceeded along the lines known to us from any explosion in mid-air: the materials which were originally condensed in one lump, scattering in all directions and cooling off. Seeing that nothing in the Universe was added later, according to these theories, it should be progressing inexorably to a condition of maximum entropy when: 'all the processes of nature cease . . . There will be no light, no life, no warmth—nothing but perpetual and irrevocable stagnation.'<sup>7</sup>

Such an idea is however incompatible with any idea of God in the Christian sense of the word: what would the author of that one creative act have been

<sup>6</sup> *ibid.*, pp.103-4      <sup>7</sup> Lincoln Barnett, *opus cit.*, p.90

doing ever since to allow things to be driving towards such a state? Our universe could not be the alpha and omega of the work of one who could give birth to a world in which, within our range alone there are 100,000,000 galaxies. If that world were evolving through millions of light years to a final frozen death without any further interference from its Creator, as the academic school of thought maintains, it would imply that the Creator was going to his death together with his creation. Of course he might be creating other explosions beyond the limits of our Universe—into infinity? That is a possible but terrifying thought, too much for us to comprehend. I would rather return to Hoyle and with him explore the possibilities inherent in what we see around us, namely our Universe.

What are the real objections to the above rather unpleasant prospect? Hoyle says: 'Although I think there is no doubt that every galaxy we now observe to be receding from us will in about 10,000,000,000 years have passed entirely beyond the limit of vision of an observer in our galaxy, yet I think that such an observer would still be able to see about the same number of galaxies as we do now. By this I mean that new galaxies will have condensed out of the background material at just about the rate necessary to compensate for those that are being lost as a consequence of their passing beyond our observable

Universe. At first sight it might be thought that this could not go on indefinitely because the material forming the background would ultimately become exhausted. But again I do not believe that this is so for it seems likely that *new material is constantly being created*\* so as to maintain a constant density in the background material. So we have a situation in which the loss of galaxies through the expansion of the Universe is compensated by the condensation of new galaxies and this can continue indefinitely.<sup>8</sup> Of course the first question that rises to one's mind in reading this is: whence comes the fresh background material? Hoyle replies: 'it does not come from anywhere. Material simply appears, it is created . . . At one time the various atoms do not exist and at a later time they do.'<sup>9</sup> The Astronomer Royal, Sir Harold Spencer-Jones says: 'It is created out of nothing; it must be supposed that there is literally a true creation going on as a continuous process.'<sup>10</sup> In Eckhart, the greatest Christian mystic, we find the same idea expressed in other terms: 'The Nothing is without beginning, therefore to make us in his own image, God could not do better than make us out of Nothing.'<sup>11</sup> Mark: *in his own image. Was God then also Nothing?*

\* Italics mine

<sup>8</sup> Hoyle: opus cit., p.104

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p.105

<sup>10</sup> Broadcast Talk reported in the *Listener*, July 17th, 1952

<sup>11</sup> Meister Eckhart's *Schriften und Predigten aus dem mittelhochdeutschen Übersetzer von Herman Bittner*, Vol. I, p.190, rendered into English by the author

In contrast to the idea of the increasing entropy in the Universe, and that idea of finiteness which bothered me, the new ideas give a totally different picture: 'Essential elements in this new view are that the universe is not finite but infinite in extent, and that creation is a continuous process which has been going on throughout all past time and which is still going on.'<sup>12</sup> This also Eckhart seems to have known: 'God is making the world now exactly as on the first day.'<sup>13</sup> He clearly rejects the orthodox idea of a creation in six days.

I want to go into this question as carefully as I can for it is absolutely fundamental to everything I have to say. After all, it is a matter that has occupied the mind of man since time immemorial; all the oldest religions have some explanation to give of the beginning of the world, all the great myths are built up around it. So, if our present day pundits have a new solution of this mystery to offer, based for the first time on observed facts, it is of utmost importance to us.

From Hoyle we can obtain further enlightenment: he says that hydrogen is 'the basic material out of which the Universe is built'<sup>14</sup> and furthermore: 'To avoid the issue of creation it would be necessary for all the material of the Universe to be infinitely

<sup>12</sup> Spencer Jones, opus cit.

<sup>13</sup> Eckhart, opus cit., Vol. I, p.3

<sup>14</sup> Hoyle, opus cit., p.48

old and this it cannot be. For if this were so, there could be no hydrogen left in the Universe. Hydrogen is steadily being converted into helium and the other elements throughout the Universe, and this conversion is a one-way process—that is to say hydrogen cannot be produced in any appreciable quantity through the breakdown of other elements. How comes it then that the Universe consists almost entirely of hydrogen? If matter were infinitely old this would be quite impossible. So we see that the Universe being what it is, the creation issue simply cannot be dodged. . . . *It is this creation that drives the Universe*\*. . . . With continuous creation the apparent contradiction between the expansion of the Universe and the requirement that the background material shall be able to condense into galaxies is completely overcome',<sup>15</sup>

It seems obvious from the foregoing that hydrogen atoms are the bricks which are being continuously created for the construction of the Universe, all other atoms being a multiplication of the components of the hydrogen atom, let us therefore examine the structure of these atoms. First we must remember that they are composed of one positive and one negative electric unit; a proton and an electron. Of what nature are these two? How do they react upon one another? Jeans says: 'Consider the case of a

\* *Italics mine* <sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 103-107

hypothetical universe containing only two material constituents: a negative electron and a positive proton of equal charge situated at, let us say, a distance of a million light years apart. Does such a Universe consist of two free electric charges or of a hydrogen atom? . . . This last alternative can be dismissed at once, for two free charges cannot absorb or emit radiant energy, whereas the hydrogen atom can. We see at once that a hydrogen atom must be something more than the sum of its material constituent parts,<sup>16</sup> and this 'something' is the Nothing in the interstice between proton and electron which turns them into hydrogen. They themselves being, in the final instance, also Nothing, as we shall learn from Einstein, they are in fact part of it. The continuous creation lies in their appearance as 'something' to ourselves.

Furthermore the Nothing between, not only electron and proton, sun and planets, genes and chromosomes, diastole and systole, but also between Yin and Yang, female and male, and all other dualities on earth and in heaven, builds the Universe. Even the hydrogen duality is not the ultimate duality, for the nucleus of the second isotope of hydrogen consists of a yet smaller and more condensed duality: a proton and a neutron; and if even here there are separate charges, may there not be yet smaller units, and still smaller, completely inapprehensible to us? At the

<sup>16</sup> Sir James Jeans: *Atomity and Quanta*, p. 42

opposite extreme, on the vastest scale we can think of, what makes a galaxy into a unit is the Nothing between its component parts. That is the creative factor, otherwise they would remain part of the background material. Can we set any highest or lowest limit to extension in the Universe? Ultimately a Nothing Between must be the only factor that counts. 'The softest thing on earth outweighs the hardest thing on earth. The non-existent penetrates even there where there is no interstice.'<sup>17</sup> It eternally pours itself out as the Universe.

As an example of the identical conditions ruling both great and small, let us consider our sun and the planet Mercury for a moment: Jeans says that the electron describes a circular or elliptic orbit round the nucleus: 'The semi-major axes of the various elliptic orbits which are possible, are equal to the radii of the possible circular orbits. A similar type of atomicity governs the internal dispositions of more complex atoms.'<sup>18</sup> Then why not the vaster orbits of the planets round the sun?

Taking for example the planet Mercury whose yearly deviations from its course round the sun have made it the object of special attention. 'Instead of revolving in its elliptical orbit with the regularity of other planets, Mercury deviates from its course each

<sup>17</sup> Lao-tzu: *Tao-teh-king*, ch.43. Translated into German by Richard Wilhelm, rendered into English by the author

<sup>18</sup> Jeans, *opus cit.*, p.22

year by a slight but exasperating degree . . . It was not until Einstein evolved his Laws of Gravitation that the problem was solved. Of all the planets Mercury is closest to the sun. It is small and travels with great speed. Under Newtonian laws these factors should not in themselves account for the deviation; the dynamics of Mercury's movement should be basically the same as those of any other planet. But under Einstein's laws, the intensity of the sun's gravitational field and Mercury's enormous speed make a difference causing the whole ellipse of Mercury's orbit to execute a slow but inexorable swing round the sun at the rate of one revolution in 3,000,000 years.'<sup>19</sup>

If the influence of the sun on Mercury's movements depends on the comparatively narrow space between them, the small size of Mercury and the speed of its movement, we obtain the same conditions as those which explain the powerful forces confined in the nucleus, and we may presume that Nothing Between acts here with the same intensity, through compression as it does in that. There can be no doubt that it is a Nothing Between which draws sun and Mercury together—here it is actually called a 'gravitational field'—and the picture we obtain of the result must help us to understand what happens in all continuous creation, Everything, everywhere

<sup>19</sup> Lincoln Barnett, *opus cit.*, p.75

is affected by it: 'So long as gravitation acts, no disturbance can be confined to an area less than the whole of space', as Jeans remarks.<sup>20</sup> But it seems to me that in so far as the building up of the Universe is concerned, there have to be wider spaces than those between protons and electrons, or even Mercury and the sun in order that the creation out of Nothing may balance the dispersal of the galaxies through expansion.

This brings me to my last point in this cosmological investigation, namely that all cosmologists to-day are agreed in regarding the Universe as being in a 'dynamic state of expansion', as Hoyle puts it. That expansion would seem to contradict the idea of a Nothing Between holding units together. But I believe we cannot judge these things in the light of either—or; the unknown factor we are considering has no such limitations, in it all extremes amalgamate. And I think Einstein would agree with this for it is said: 'What the Unified Field Theory does is to show that gravitational and electromagnetic forces are not independent of each other—that they are in a very real physical sense inseparable. More specifically it describes gravitational and electromagnetic forces in terms of a deeper reality that undergirds both\*—a basic universal field within which gravitational and electromagnetic fields are merely particular eph-

<sup>20</sup> *The Universe Around Us*, p.198 \* Italics mine

meral forms or conditions of state.'<sup>21</sup> If that is so, then I think it is legitimate to imagine that in Nothing one and the same nature, *at the same time*, both draws all things together into a creation, and expands itself in an eternal outspreading motion. Again I cannot express it better than did Lao-tzu: 'The transcending expanding power which resides in the middle space does not die. It is always the same and acts the same way without ceasing nor diminishing.'<sup>22</sup> Elsewhere he says it expends itself in streams, but remains ever the same.<sup>23</sup>

Hoyle gives a brilliant illustration of this fact in modern terms: 'Let us suppose that a film is made from any space position in the universe. . . What would the film look like? Well, galaxies would be observed to be continually condensing out of the background material. The general expansion of the whole system would be clear, but though the galaxies seemed to be moving away from us there would be a curious sameness about the film. It would be only in the details of each galaxy that changes would be seen. . . A casual observer who went to sleep during the showing of the film would find it difficult to see much change when he awoke. How long would our film go on? It would go on for ever.'<sup>24</sup> run it either

<sup>21</sup> Lincoln Barnett, opus cit., p.97

<sup>22</sup> Lao-tzu: *Tao-eh-king*, ch.6, translated into French by Leon Wiegier, rendered into English by the author

as ibid., ch.4 <sup>23</sup> Hoyle, opus cit., p.108-109

backwards or forwards. I think this is a truly wonderful description of all I am trying to convey: the new material being continuously created, as Hoyle said above, and this by a drawing together of the free parts, Nothing Between expanding forever into infinity, the whole remaining eternally unchanged.

This is perhaps almost impossible for the human mind to grasp. If there is eternally no change, either in past or future, then there can obviously be no time measure, time being a measurement of events relative to ourselves, as Einstein has proved. On the large scale measure of the universe, it simply does not exist. The continuous creation from between must therefore be timeless; since it cannot be known it is also *nothing*. Eckhart sums up the whole thing in one sentence: 'He did not create Heaven and Earth as we according to human conception ascribe a becoming to them, but all creatures are from eternity in the divine WORD'.<sup>25</sup> That conception annihilates time completely. If everything from all eternity lies in a single word, and that word be IS, and in the split second of IS the whole evolution of the universe takes place, that is-ness (Eckhart calls it 'Istigkeit') comprises the void, its expansions and continuous creation in one breath. The flowing, which is time, ceases, and with the flowing of time all beginnings and all endings. We reach something which 'is an

<sup>25</sup> Eckhart, opus cl., Vol. I, p.16

undivided self-process in eternity'.<sup>26</sup> With this Hoyle would certainly agree.

Seeing therefore that although it be 'nothing' to us, and that we can only say of our surroundings that they are *NETI, NETI*,\* and seeing that we are obliged moreover to concede creativeness and synthesis coming simultaneously from out of the space of Nothing Between, I shall in future call it thus in the many instances in which it appears in the course of this study. My whole aim is to find out as much as I can about that 'self-process' of true creation going on in Nothing Between all 'things'.

<sup>26</sup> *ibid.*, p. 155

\* These two words are to Indians an expression of something inexpressible, for this reason there can be no precise interpretation of their meaning. A selection of the most authoritative translations may convey the essence of it. Prof. S. Radhakrishnan: "Not this, not this"; Dr. E. Roer: "Not this nor ought else"; Max Müller: "No, no" (*Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XV); Swami Prabhavananda and F. Manchester: "Not this, not that"; as also Robert E. Hume in *The Thirteen Principles Upanishads*. Dr. Paul Deussen's translation seems to me the nearest: "Ist nicht so und ist nicht so".

**I**CANNOT LEAVE THIS QUESTION OF WHAT lies between the stars without alluding to the ether, which would have been the obvious solution of the problem from the time of the Greeks until quite recently. But Einstein has proved conclusively that there can be no ether. Had he not done so our answer would have been simple and there would have been no room for delving into the unknown. It is necessary, therefore, to make it quite clear what Einstein's views are on the subject for that may also throw light on continuous creation, and open new vistas to those who still cling to the idea of the ether or some such invisible medium.

We must find out to begin with if there is anything that can be called *something* in that void which we have so far discovered everywhere in creation; And if not, what then? To the 18th and 19th century physicists it was obvious that if light consisted of waves, there must be some medium to support them, just as water propagates the waves of the sea, and air

transmits the vibrations we call sound. Hence when experiments showed that light can travel in a vacuum, scientists evolved a hypothetical substance called 'ether'\* which they decided must pervade all space and matter . . . A universe permeated with an invisible medium in which the stars wandered and through which light travelled like vibrations in a bowl of jelly was the end product of Newtonian physics. . . . Yet the ether presented certain problems, not the least of which was that its actual existence had never been proved<sup>1</sup>. In order to find an adequate answer once and for all, two American physicists, A. A. Michelson and E. W. Morley, made their famous experiment in the year 1881 which seems to have settled the matter, though at the time it confronted scientists with a puzzling dilemma. 'On the one hand they could scrap the ether theory which had explained so many things about electricity, magnetism and light. Or, if they insisted on retaining the ether they had to abandon the still more venerable Copernican theory that the earth is in motion.'<sup>2</sup> It seemed impossible to physicists to believe that waves of any kind could travel without anything to carry them. Yet, although Morley and others repeated the experiment, the result was the same: 'the apparent velocity of the earth through the ether was zero.'<sup>3</sup>

\* The principle had already been propounded by Anaximenes in the 6th century B.C.

<sup>1</sup> Lincoln Barnett, *opus cit.*, p. 34, ff.   <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 37   <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 37

Among the young scientists who pondered over the enigma was Albert Einstein, and in 1905 he published a paper suggesting the answer: 'He began by rejecting the ether theory and with it the whole idea of space as a fixed system or framework, absolutely at rest, within which it is possible to distinguish absolute from relative motion'.<sup>4</sup> From the fact, also brought to light by the Michelson-Morley experiment, that: 'the velocity of light is unaffected by the motion of the earth',<sup>5</sup> Einstein drew the conclusion that it is unaffected by any body in the universe and must therefore be a universal law of nature. 'From this he drew a broader generalization and asserted that the laws of nature are the same for all uniformly moving systems'.<sup>6</sup>

In itself perhaps this declaration may not seem epochmaking, yet it means that there is no absolute background nor stable fact against which we can measure anything in the universe, nothing to tell us how fast or slow we are really moving, nor the direction in which we are travelling—for we can only measure these things against other equally moving systems—in fact we must now suppose that: 'in space there are no directions and no boundaries. . . . *Without things occupying it, it is nothing.*'<sup>7\*</sup> Here again we stumble upon the same 'Nothing'.

Einstein, however, goes further still: having

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* p.38

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* <sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* p.39

\* Italics mine

abolished the ether, he also discards absolute time together with absolute space: 'for distance like time is a relative concept and there is no such thing as a space interval independent of the motion of the system of reference'.<sup>8</sup> This must signify for us that independency of the motion of proton and electron there is Nothing, only through their juxtaposition can we recognise this. They become a system of reference by being drawn together; then Nothing Between becomes a 'space-interval' from which springs creation. Without that interval, when close enough, they would fall together and disappear into radiation in 'a thousand millionth of a second'.

That is not all however for in his Unified Field Theory, Einstein proceeds to demolish all distinctions and demonstrates the fundamental sameness of all things hitherto regarded as separate forces: 'From its august perspective the entire universe is revealed as one elemental field in which each star, each atom, each wandering comet or slow wheeling galaxy and flying electron is seen to be but a ripple or tumescence in the underlying space-time unity. . . . The distinction between gravitational force and electromagnetic force, matter and energy, electric charge and field, space and time, all fade in the light of their revealed relationship into configurations of the four-dimensional continuum which is the universe'.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Lincoln Barnett, *opus cit.*, p.46

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.98-99

It may perhaps seem difficult to imagine space-time as non-existent and yet a continuum, but let us go further. 'The event is the unit of things real', Alfred North Whitehead is quoted as saying. An event is not a seizable fact, it is the name given to an occurrence, be it the birth of a child, a star or an idea. 'The implications of this idea can best be illustrated by contemplating a simple physical event such as the meeting of two electrons. Within the frame of modern physics one can depict this event as a collision of two elementary grains of matter or two units of electrical energy, as a concurrence of particles or of probability waves, or as a commingling of eddies in a four-dimensional space-time continuum. Theory does not define what the principles in the encounter actually are. Thus in a sense the electrons are not "real" but merely theoretical symbols. On the other hand the meeting itself is "real"—the event is "real" . . . . A consistent isomorphic representation of the relationships and events is the maximal possibility of his (man's) knowledge. Beyond that point he stares into the void,'<sup>10</sup> into the *Unknowm*. Therefore if the only realities in all that we see are the events and the relationship between them, all the rest being nothing, then indeed do we reach beyond all *things*, and *Neti, Neti* is the only answer. In Nothing between all things lies the greatest of mysteries which we have

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid*, pp.102-3

persistently screened from our minds with the image of God, because no man cares to contemplate a void. But 'a mind that is burdened with knowledge cannot possibly understand that which is real, which is not measurable', says one who has understood.<sup>11</sup>

If we have to free our minds, not only of beliefs and of the appearances which our five senses claim as reality, but even of that which our more enlightened minds took to be the foundation of appearances, namely space-time, then indeed we have a long way to go before we can hope to plunge into Nothing Between. I think we might feel we had made one small step towards an apprehension of Reality however if we recognised that it is no mere myth but a truth, that in the no-thing between all we think of as 'things', there is a creation going on everywhere, spaceless and timeless, incessantly for evermore. And in that what are we? Well perhaps 'a shell floating in the infinitude of that which is not.'<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Krishnamurti: *Talks in London*, 1952, p.10

<sup>12</sup> Sir A. Eddington: *Nature of the Physical World*, p.83

### III

**B**UT THAT WAY WE CANNOT LIVE. LIVING, we have to take notice of the conditions around us. For that reason we must now pretend that all things we know are real—they certainly are as far as our consciousness of them is concerned—and examine them more closely to see if here also we may discover Nothing Between.

Let us first enquire into the nature of light. Here again the electron plays a leading part. The study of the dispersal of light first started scientists on the road to a closer study of the nature of the atom. In 1925 the French physicist, Louis de Broglie suggested that: 'Phenomena involving the interplay of matter and radiation could best be understood by regarding electrons not as individual particles but as systems of waves.' Up to that time: 'the atom had come to be pictured as a kind of miniature solar system composed of a central nucleus surrounded by varying numbers of electrons (1 for hydrogen, 92 for uranium) revolving in circular or elliptical orbits. The

electron was less vivid'.<sup>1</sup> . . . 'Shortly after de Broglie had his vision of "matter waves", a Viennese physicist named Schrödinger developed the same idea in inherent mathematical form, evolving a system explained quantum phenomena by attributing specific wave functions to protons and electrons'.<sup>2</sup> A system has come to be known as 'wave mechanics' for all later experiments confirmed de Broglie's ideas. Schrödinger's ideas, and it has been proved by experiments with a crystal surface, that not only electrons but whole atoms produce wave-patterns by diffraction. 'The old-fashioned spherical electron wave reduced to an undulating charge of electrical energy the atom to a system of superimposed waves.'<sup>3</sup>

But even that was not enough. Later the German physicist Born, 'took the mathematical expression used by Schrödinger in his equations to denote wave function and interpreted it as a "probability" in a statistical sense. That is to say he regarded the intensity of any part of a wave as a measure of probability of particles at that point. Thus he connected with the phenomena of diffraction, which hitherto only the wave theory could explain, in terms of probability of certain corpuscles—light quanta electrons—following certain paths and arriving at certain places. And so "waves of matter" were reduced to "waves of probability"'.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Lincoln Barnett, opus cit. p.22    <sup>2</sup> Ibid. p.23    <sup>3</sup> Ibid. p.24    <sup>4</sup> Ibid. p.

This however might imply a certain continuity; we cannot imagine waves without this. It is also difficult to think of a corpuscle or electron without a 'body' of some kind, even if it is a group of particles, but that is the very thing which the newest ideas cannot confirm. 'The final result of all these studies of microscopic phenomena is summed up in the so-called Heisenberg principle of uncertainty which says in essence that it is impossible to increase the accuracy of measurement of *velocity* of a particle without by this very observational act introducing an uncertainty into the determination of the position of the particle,'<sup>5</sup> because by illuminating it with any kind of rays for measurement, the particle or electron is knocked out. 'The Principle of Uncertainty asserts therefore that it is absolutely and forever impossible to determine the position and velocity of an electron at the same time. . . . For by the very act of observing its position its velocity is changed; and conversely the more accurately its velocity is determined, the more indefinite its position becomes.'<sup>6</sup> Hence: 'Physics has come to the conclusion that velocity and position, or energy and time, or more simply length and time are not at bottom independent of each other, in other words that there is no such thing as absolute time nor indeed absolute length, and that

<sup>5</sup> Robert Andrews Millikan: *Time, Matter and Values*, p. 28  
<sup>6</sup> *ibid.*, p. 27, ff.

therefore in the world of elementary processes there is no possibility of predicting . . . what is going to happen to a particular electron or atom or light quant at a particular future instant in time, from any observations of what has happened to this electron, atom or light quant at any preceding instant'.<sup>7</sup> It is imagined to be here and now—in space and time—but then it is there, presumably by wave action but in the interval between where it was and where it will be, there is no knowing what happens. Where it was is not the cause of where it will be, the interval between determines that, and thereby creates the world. But apparently it also determines something more: *what* it will be, either waves which may show all the properties of particles, or particles which show all the properties of waves,<sup>8</sup> somewhere between the two there is a void, a gap, after which there is the probability of a manifestation of one or the other; out of that gap comes everything we know.

The meaning of all this and the reason why I have quoted it so extensively must be clear to all: in this analysis of the properties of light, and incidentally of the electron, we discover the most irrefutable manifestation to be found anywhere of the existence of the unknown factor between. For whether we call that which lies between one appearance of the 'electron' and another: wave, or probability, or both—it

<sup>7</sup> Millikan, *opus cit.*, p. 29    <sup>8</sup> See Millikan, *ibid.*

is all simply an effort to describe in comprehensible terms, something *that is not*, i.e. something unknown. Eddington once said: 'Something unknown is doing we know not what.'<sup>9</sup> We may say: *continuously creating out of Nothing, in Nothing.*

Let us now come nearer to earth than light transmission, and look at life as we know it in human experience. No one has ever seen an atom, the life of stars and galaxies is only studied through the largest telescopes, and light itself by means of screens, crystals and the like, but what are *we*? Not from the biological nor even the psychological point of view—though from these we may learn much—but just as a manifestation of what we call 'life'?

All the scientific knowledge we possess to-day was, until little over a century ago, 'secret doctrine'. Not that it was kept secret, that is not the way of the West, but it was hidden from us. And who knows whether it would not have been better for mankind if our pundits in science had preserved their secrets? There is quite a chance that we may destroy ourselves by having entrusted these secrets to those who have not the wisdom to use them well. The Tibetans were wiser. There is good evidence that they knew long since what we are only discovering now, but they kept their counsel. The time has come however when we should realise that, although the Tibetan

<sup>9</sup> *The Nature of the Physical World*, p.201

ideas and those of Dr. Einstein would appear to be diametrically opposed, fundamentally they have a great deal in common.

There are two scholars among us to-day who have apparently been able to learn something of the secret doctrines of Tibet: Dr. Evans-Wentz and Madame Alexandra David-Neel. But while the former has limited himself to acquiring knowledge of their 'philosophy' (as far as I know), the latter has not only studied the religion of Tibet, but has also as a Buddhist nun lived the life Tibetans lead and thus experienced as well as learnt their doctrines. Therefore I think it best to let her tell us what is essential to our understanding of this matter.

The fundamental idea of the Secret Teaching of the Tibetan Buddhists seems to be an understanding of the '*Pratitya Samutpada*', the interdependent origins,<sup>10</sup> and in her interpretation of this doctrine Madame David-Neel says many things that might have been said by de Broglie, Heisenberg or by Einstein.

To begin with, the sensible world we know is regarded by these Tibetan teachers as *movement*, 'not agglomerations of objects in motion, but motion itself. There are no objects "which move", it is movement which constitutes the objects which

<sup>10</sup> In Pali: *Paicca Samuppada*: chain of causation, causal genesis, etc. See Pali Text Society's *Pali-English Dictionary*

appear to us: they are but motion'.<sup>11</sup> Is this not the same idea as Einstein's: 'The universe is a restless place; stars, nebulae, galaxies and all the vast gravitational system of outer space are incessantly in motion'.<sup>12</sup> Gustav le Bon put it in words with which I think all scientists would agree: 'Matter is speed and as substance imbued with speed is also energy, matter must be considered to be a particular form of energy'.<sup>13</sup> Therefore without motion there would be *Nothing*, and consequently when motion ceases we should get beyond it and its phantom world.

Further what the Tibetans say regarding 'movement' might be a description of the electron by one of our scientists: 'This motion is a continuous and infinitely rapid succession of flashes of energy. All objects which our senses perceive, all phenomena of whatever kind they may be, whatever be the aspect they may assume, are made up of a succession of instantaneous events'. (Clearly 'events' in Einstein's meaning of the term, for the author explains that the word 'event' should not be taken in the ordinary sense of the term. 'Event' here signifies something that is produced, though not as the germ is produced by the grain.) 'The germ exists by dependence on the grain; according to the classical Buddhist formula

<sup>11</sup> A. David-Néel: *Enseignements Secrets dans les Sectes Bouddhistes*

<sup>12</sup> *Theories*, p. 30. All translations from this work are mine

<sup>13</sup> *Naissance et Evolution de la Matière*, translated from the French by the author

la: "this being, that is produced", which should not be interpreted as meaning that *this* is the father that has generated *that* by substantial connection. *This* is but the occasion which has conducted to *that*'.<sup>14</sup>

Puzzling over these words I watch the fireflies making gay the summer night in my southern garden and they open my eyes to the meaning: they are here—then there; but all one can say is that once seen they will reappear, though when and where is unpredictable. One is the occasion of the other, which may equally be said of the electron, or of the interdependent origins of the life we know. But the description of life which results from this 'is not a description of events occurring round a human being which exists apart from them. Every being is the chain of interdependent origins, as that is the universe and apart from its activity there exists no being in the universe'.<sup>15</sup> Does this not express the idea contained in Einstein's Unified Field Theory?

How then does this chain of 'interdependent' origins' work out in that which we call existence? According to the Tibetans: '... there are not any real contacts which are *produced* in the universe. The universe is movement and this movement is made up of contacts. The contacts and their effects are the universe',<sup>16</sup> as are Einstein's 'events'. The Buddha explains the cause of contacts in terms with which

<sup>14</sup> A. David-Néel, opus cit., p. 31    <sup>15</sup> *ibid*, p. 64    <sup>16</sup> *ibid*, p. 41

Einstein would probably agree: 'If, Ananda, you were asked: "Is contact due to a particular cause?" you should say: "It is". And to the question: "From what cause is contact?" you should say: "Name and form (*nāma-rūpa*) is the cause of contact".'<sup>17</sup> 'And what ye monks is *nāma-rūpa*? Sensation, perception, thinking, contact, attention—these, friends, are called *nāma*. The four chief elements and the corporeal form that comes to be by reason of the four chief elements—this friends, is called *rūpa*. This ye monks is called *nāma-rūpa*.'<sup>18</sup> In other terms: mind-body, and these are the interdependent origins. I think if we transcribe *Pratitya Samatpada* into space-time continuum, we arrive at the same idea—something is constructed into events or contacts, through interposition of Nothing between the *nāma* and the *rūpa*, the space and the time, or the electron and the proton.

But, seeing we are alive and conscious, we have to try and understand all this in its application to the conditions in which we find ourselves and '... on the restricted scale of our individuality, it is this movement of contacts and their effects that is this individual we call our "self" ... these events, nothing more, are our Self ... Everyone of our physical or mental movements is the fruit of causes deriving from the whole universe and has repercussions in the

<sup>17</sup> *Dīgha Nikāya*, XV    <sup>18</sup> *Samyutta Nikāya*, II, p 3

whole universe. Thus unfolds the play, without appreciable beginning, of the activity which is the universe.<sup>19</sup> All these ideas, both Einstein's and the Tibetan, seem to me to exclude all sense of continuity anywhere, and indeed the Secret Teaching never ceases to stress the point that impermanence governs everything from the furthest stars to the 'innest grain of dust.'

What occurs between such contacts, between events, between the impermanent appearances we call men or electrons? All we know is that the flashes, the events, the contacts do occur, but what happens in that unprobed void between their appearances is, and remains, unknown. From out of nowhere a new event, a new contact will be created—sometimes, somewhere.

I wish I could convey only the smallest spark of this stupendous fact.

In considering these ideas emanating from Buddhist sources, the reader may think they have nothing to do with life, but concern the doctrine of reincarnation. I was however not thinking of any after-life, but of our actual condition here and now, and the opinion of a contemporary Indian seems to confirm my understanding of these Buddhist texts. Krishnamurti says: 'You say I shall be reborn. What is the "I" that is to be reborn? Is the "I" a spiritual entity,

<sup>19</sup> A. David-Néel, *opus cit.*, pp.42 and 72

is the "I" something continuous, is the "I" something independent of memory, experience, knowledge? . . . If the "I" be a spiritual entity it must be beyond all time, therefore it cannot be reborn. . . . Thought cannot think about it, because thought comes within the measure of time.<sup>20</sup> (While we think about the "I" it is measured by time and therefore cannot be a spiritual entity.) 'So the "I", the you, is only a process of thought . . . That "I", that entity *which is a thought process*,\* can it ever be new? If it cannot then there must be an ending of thought . . . for only that which dies, that which comes to an end can renew itself.'<sup>20</sup> He is obviously not referring to bodily death, the renewal he speaks of is a possible new creation from between one thought and another. And this opens out a possibility of Nothing working at the very seat of our consciousness to create thoughts, if we will but allow it.

Reincarnation is only one of the many fantasies man has built up as a protection against the awful Unknown: better a continuation of something similar to what we know, even if not very pleasant, than that Unknown. Thought, however, cannot reincarnate, and how much more wonderful is our position if we discover a means of making a break in the continuum of thought, allowing an unknown force to surge up and create a new world picture here and now.

\* *Kalica mihic* 20 *Krishnamurti: Talks in Ceylon, 1949-50, p.24*

#### IV

WE HAVE NOW REACHED THE POINT when I feel it necessary to examine our biological structure and enquire into the possibility of discovering traces of some unfathomed gap within ourselves. Our brains, our minds, are of course the most important factors in our lives as men, the one biologically, the other empirically, and so far no one can tell how closely they work together. To begin with, it would be as well to understand something of our ways of apprehending the world around us, real or not real. If we accept it that the only realities are those 'events' we call atoms, space-time, *नाम-रूप*, etc., how is it that we recognise this person, that ocean, this table so distinctly that there is no doubt in our minds that they are *really*? By what magic are the space-time conditions transformed into something palpable? 'Except on the reels of our consciousness the universe, the objective world of our consciousness does not happen.'<sup>1</sup> Therefore it must

<sup>1</sup> Lincoln Barnett, *opus cit.*, p.61

be in what we call 'consciousness' that we should seek the unknown point, and, although we may not be aware of it, there is in fact, at every moment of our lives, except perhaps in dreamless sleep, a most striking example of Nothing Between controlling our whole perception of life.

How is the world of motion of which we form part imprinted on the reels of our consciousness? We are all familiar with the mechanism of cinematographic projection: to our eyes is presented a series of independent events which compose a continuous story, but although the subject matter is continuous, its origin is not. Between each picture there is a blank interval of film; not only that, but there is another far more important blank space, on the one side of which there is the photograph, on the other side, in our minds, the story. And even though we realise all these blanks and know that the apparent continuity is a combination of various illusions produced by a series of discontinuous pictures thrown onto a screen by means of a shutter working at high speed, yet we still continue to be conscious only of the uninterrupted whole. That is an exact image of how we are seeing everything from the cradle to the grave. I am not referring back to the invisible atomic world, but am dealing with the actual mechanism of the senses.

I once read a masterly summary of the conditions of our apprehension of the physical world by Sir

Arthur Eddington, and it has remained at the back of my mind ever since. I always felt that there was more behind it than I was able to grasp at the time, and now biologists are confirming it. He says: "The physiologist can trace the nerve mechanism up to the brain; but ultimately there is a hiatus which no one professes to fill up. Symbolically we may follow the influences of the physical world up to the door of the mind; they ring the bell and depart.<sup>2</sup> What exactly happens on both sides of that door?"

In trying to find out, the important question is not what imprints itself on our eyes, ears, etc., but what of that appears on the screen of the mind, and what happens on the way? As I happen to have been reading about the journey of the optic stimulus to the brain, I will confine myself to investigating the nature of these. But whatever is said applies to our other senses as well, though of course with different results. Sound for instance must also 'knock at the door and then depart'; on the one side of the door is a clash—on the other appears the St. Matthew Passion.

If Eddington is right, there is every reason to suppose that the visual area of the brain has not accurately reproduced the picture received by the retina. One of the facts that would exclude this is that: 'the fibres of the optic nerve spread out in various branches to the left and right hemispheres of the brain.

<sup>2</sup> *The Nature of the Physical World*, p.99

Some of these branches are longer than others, and since the rate of frequency with which the nerve impulses follow one another along the optic nerve vary with the nature of the cell structure,\* the arrival of the neural impulses at the nerve terminals, situated in the visual area of the brain, will not be simultaneous. Accordingly the necessary conditions for the simultaneous transmission of the retinal picture as a *simultaneous whole* to the brain do not exist. Further, the frequency with which the neural impulses succeed each other in the optic nerve is never more than 1 500 per second, and generally less, and this is incomparably slower than light waves. This means that the "retinal stimulus pattern" cannot be duplicated in the brain as a simultaneous whole.<sup>3</sup> Yet there is no doubt that we do perceive things in the world around us as a 'simultaneous whole'; by making it whole we have created it.

There is besides that, another very mysterious occurrence. 'When we perceive the colour red, we grasp together or prehend simultaneously, that is as one indivisible qualitative whole, 400 billion physical events in one second. (Each frequency or wave motion being regarded as a physical event.) Psychologists tell us that the smallest interval of time which

\* Of the nerve itself

<sup>3</sup> M. M. Moncrieff: *The Clairvoyant Theory of Perception*, p.85

(I do not intend to go into this author's theory of three and four-dimensional vision, although I think it important, but it is outside the scope of this work.)

we can detect or discriminate consciously is approximately one-thousandth of a second of time. On the supposition that the time interval between two separate and successive events is one-thousandth of a second, then a simple calculation will show that it would take 12,500 years for our consciousness (limited in this way) to experience separately the number of physical events that are associated with the colour red. . . . This amazing feat of integration, it must be remembered is accomplished not only by man with a highly-developed brain and mind, but by primitive animals and insects with only rudimentary ones.<sup>4</sup> I have an inverted proof of this last in my garden: there is a beetle which eats roses of all colours except red; obviously it cannot catch the red frequency.

This is a most fantastic fact: under these circumstances how do we see 'red' or in fact any colour, for all are composed of successive events at approximately that rate of frequency? And not only do we apprehend colour, but at the same time the flower or dress of that hue—something quite extraordinary happens in between.

The best illustration of this is a well-known occurrence in dreams, of which I have personal experience. By accident I had been involved in a shooting incident during a revolutionary movement in X. One night shortly after this, I dreamt I was driving in a

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p.69

car through that town, I saw all those fateful streets, and, suddenly out of one of the houses some person shot at me. I awoke with a start, and discovered that the 'shot' had been occasioned by the bang of a wooden sun-blind, closed by the wind. In that one bang my mind had reconstructed the streets and the shooting. That door at which the sun-blind knocked, had let into the brain something different to what my aural nerve fibres had presented to it, and constructed backwards so to speak, for all the preliminaries of the 'shot' were thrown onto my mind screen simultaneously. Many of my readers must have had similar experiences. This proves that even 400 billion successive physical events can be apprehended in a flash by that dark spot on the way to the brain, not only that, but it can equally reconstruct backwards in that flash, and moreover transmit and refashion its material. Does this not abolish time altogether? Whitehead was certainly right in saying that: 'Sense perception does not provide the data in terms of which we interpret it'.<sup>5</sup> What can biologists tell us of the transformation that occurs between?

This point is extremely interesting, for it carries the conception of Nothing Between into the very stronghold of our conception of the world and of life. Prof. W. Russell Brain says: 'thus when we perceive a two-dimensional circle we do so by means of

<sup>5</sup> A. N. Whitehead: *Modes of Thought*, p. 182

an activity in the brain which is halved, reduplicated, transposed, inverted, distorted and three-dimensional. If physiological idealism is to be really physiological, it must admit that the theory of projection breaks down because the circle which is said to be projected from the cerebral cortex never existed there at all'.<sup>6</sup> What then did we actually see? That we shall never know if the circle never existed in the cerebral cortex any more than the dream shot did in mine. Had I not woken up in fright, I would never have known anything of the sun-blind blowing in the wind, and would have taken the shot for the real thing. Has anything we perceive any more real value than that? Where lies the thing in itself? Dr. D. Emmet says: 'There is a *gap* in which a transmutation occurs of which no satisfactory account has yet been given, between agitations in the cortex and conscious sensations. The sensation depends on the co-ordination of cerebral events, and on muscular and motor reactions of which we are quite unconscious. But it is certainly not a "representation" of these. Nor is it even probable that there is a structural resemblance between the disposition of the physiological events and the elements of the sensation which is projected as a perception on the contemporary field'.<sup>7</sup> In that 'gap' as everywhere else in the Universe, even down

<sup>6</sup> Quoted by Moncrieff, opus cit., p. 291, ff  
<sup>7</sup> *The Nature of Metaphysical Thinking*, p. 58

to the minute world of the atom there is Nothing. Here we discover it actually within ourselves as the source of everything we know.

Let us now turn to the latest discoveries in psychology. What is of interest here is the study of dreams. In ancient times all kings had their dream interpreters, for they were fully aware that dreams (those called by Jung: 'big dreams'), relate not only to past and present events, but often forecast the future. I have even known of a case where a man dreamt of something which occurred at his own funeral some days later, therefore the dream consciousness could project knowledge of events after the death of waking consciousness.

But with the rise of Christianity the art of dream interpretation was forgotten until it was rediscovered in our time by Freud and Jung. To-day the new science of Analytical Psychology regards dream analysis as one of the most important assets in the healing of the mind (even sometimes of the body) for it opens vistas into the mental condition of patients as nothing else can. For this same reason even so-called normal people may find it of advantage to understand their dreams: almost all of us have some complex, some repression of which we are not aware but which it would be useful to us to know. Between that secret life and consciousness there is a gap from out of which a revealing picture may be

thrown onto the mind in dream. Sleep gives Nothing Between a chance of creating. It takes a highly trained and absolutely impartial observer however, to interpret the hieroglyphs of dreams, for they never under any circumstances, say what they mean. They give a picture of something apparently unrelated to the dreamer's life, no situation resembling his own. Even when such figures as the dreamer's father or some elderly relative occur, they are not what they appear to be but are symbolic of some complex, some suppressed instinct or desire, some unhealthy attachment, some unconscious feeling in the dreamer's life. Neither does the story the dream tells, nor its background bear any relationship to empirical experience. If a scene known in life is depicted, it is in such confused fashion that it seems entirely out of context, except as symbol. I have often dreamt myself in London, but only twice has it been the London I know, and both times the dream has used Trafalgar Square as a symbol of the *temenos*, the square, symbol of completeness.

The great problem in interpreting dreams is to distinguish between what refers to a present situation and what to a future one; either is possible. I once took what I knew to be a 'big dream' of mine to the three cleverest analysts I knew. They each gave a different interpretation of the dream, but I felt that none bore any relation to the real meaning of it. One

becomes very intuitive about one's dreams. After about a year that dream started making sense, and after three years I saw the whole dream complete in my life. No psychologist however wise could have foreseen this, although the ancient interpreters of dreams, using clairvoyance, could perhaps have known.

Regarding the material dreams use, it is interesting to note that the above dream set the scene for the upheaval in my life which it foreshadowed, in a peaceful country lane and a wood leading off it. I had driven down this lane hundreds of times and never noticed the wood on my right until the dream made me aware of it. Why choose this particular rural scene on which to stage a tremendous occurrence which, when it actually occurred, happened in London? Somewhere *between* the fact and its projection a new thing appeared: both in space and in time my realities were reversed.

Is the whole world we perceive with our senses and our minds anything more like the real thing than was this dream? Are we perhaps looking at an unreal phantom world until its 'events' have gone through the door of Nothing Between? I never drive down that lane now without feeling that it has been the scene of a crucial event in my life—yet *in itself* it was of no importance at all, its significance lies in the part it played in my dream. Is everything we see in

the world around us merely a picture in symbols of what things really are? On the other hand, how much reality attaches to symbols which are often the same to-day—carrying the same meaning—as they have been since the earliest times, when religion, myth and dream were one? The wood in my dream is typical of this: in 'real life' it was so insignificant that I had not even noticed it. But on the other side of the door, it was transformed into the ageless symbol of the forest, which, at all times and in all places, has signified the darkness, the danger, the lostness, the frustration which the heroes of myths, epics, fairy tales and religions have had to face on the path of enlightenment, or realisation. To mystics it represents the 'dark night of the soul'.

The most familiar example known to us of the nature of that 'forest' is the experience of Jesus in the olive grove (the only kind of forest known in that region) on the night before he died, which is also in perfect keeping with the symbol. Here Jesus went through the darkness, the abandonment, and finally the danger, always associated with the experience in the 'forest'. In my case, out of the Between a universal symbol appeared, yet it used the 'real' wood and made it 'unreal'. What is real: as Chuang Tzu asked about his dream of the butterfly. Perhaps only the perpetual creation in Nothing Between.

We may further ask: what is future and what is

past in all this? Dreams seem to know nothing of that; events and images in dreams are not subject to cause and effect as is our waking consciousness. There is something which constructs these images *out of the ingredients* pertaining to the human race: men's thoughts, passions, hopes, fears, senses, what the Indians call the *samskaras*, and no doubt chiefly out of what lies concealed in the collective unconscious\* of mankind, thereby making us aware of facts we had ignored or chosen to ignore. The significance of the dream *applies* to reality, but is *not* reality, or what we commonly regard as reality. And again we can only look to that gap: the Nothing Between, where the 'hydrogen' atom of our cerebral cortex is being continually created. Is the mind perhaps the 'proton' and the physical events the 'electron'? In any case, it is plain that: 'The country that is nowhere is the true home'.<sup>8</sup>

\* The word "collective" refers to a level of psychic contents that is deeper than, prior to and more fundamental than the individual personality'. In Progeroff: *Jung's Psychology and its Social Meaning*. For examples of dream material and its interpretation see: C. G. Jung: *Psychology and Alchemy*, from the German by R. F. C. Hull in *The Collected Works of C. G. Jung*.  
<sup>8</sup> Saying attributed to Eliot-1211.

## V

HAVING EXPLORED SOME OF THE FACTS that regulate our apprehension of the world around us and the structure of the images our brains project, let us now consider our lives, our thoughts, our words, our experiences in the light of the Nothing Between, to find out if here also we may find any trace of it. To begin with: how do we think? Of what are our thoughts composed? I have shown that out of the gap between comes the picture we recognise as our room, the colour red, or our friend, but what the brain produces is also conditioned by the quality of the brain, by racial tradition, family inheritance, and influences in childhood. A child is told: this is your bed, that is a red dress, it is day, we sleep by night and play by day. But if this process had been reversed, the child would have grown up to regard the day as the time for sleep—to take a very crude example. In this way our thoughts are slowly built up out of memories of the past, in fact we never in all time know the actual

*present.* Directly we apprehend a thing, it is already in the past, and our conception of it is coloured by our own and our parents' memories of similar past experiences. There is here not only continuity in our own lives, but also continuity in racial knowledge—a conditioning by it. It has been said that in order to know Truth, we must see things unconditioned by past experience, private or racial, by memories in short, for Truth is always new. That creative Nothing Between is certainly free of any form of conditioning seeing that it produces images which are always new constructions.

How then are we to become unconditioned? We have grown up in Europe, in India, or in China, and the atmosphere of people, place, climate—some say even the water we drink—have impressed themselves not only on the colour of our skins but on the very composition of our characters; however much we may try, we cannot free ourselves from this. To take the most outstanding examples known to us of people who should have escaped conditioning, having freed themselves of all other ties that bind men's thoughts—I speak of Jesus Christ, the Buddha and, in our own time, Krishnamurti—even there we find it as conspicuous as in ourselves. Jesus was the son of countless generations of Jews, and his teaching sprang from out of Old Testament soil: is it not founded on the monotheism peculiar to his race—the belief in

One God? Likewise the Buddha descended from the ancient *Rishis*: the *Vedas* and the *Upanishads* were in his blood; the circle of ideas inherent in the latter are fundamental to his teaching. The same applies to Krishnamurti: he says he has never read the *Bhagavadgita* nor the Gospels, yet he constantly says things which those brought up on the *Gita* affirm are the same, but no one ever says: that is what the Gospels say (although when one compares the two it would often apply); clearly the one is in his blood, the other is not.

Seeing therefore that the mind cannot escape memory and conditioning which means continuity, and that the Between has always meant discontinuity, we must start our investigations of thought by considering whether the mind shows any symptoms of that same discontinuity; can we discover here, in our thoughts, some trace of the same gap found in other places? Let us first remember what has come out of the gap Between every time we discovered it; was it not a new creation? In the universe we discovered 'continuous creation' between atoms, even within the hydrogen atom itself; on the way from sensation to the brain, we found that what our brain produces is certainly not the event that was photographed on the retina—as the dream is never what our waking consciousness knew. So also in our thoughts: if the Nothing is creatively active, as we have no reason to doubt, there must be some point

at which there is a blank in the conditioning-memory continuum.

It is difficult to find an example of a situation in which the mind is forced to act creatively (I do not speak of creative geniuses) yet it is obviously in that alone that we might discover some trace of a break in continuity. Even though I see a tree or a piece of architecture never seen before, say a Banyan tree or the Taj Mahal, the like of which exists nowhere in Europe, memory immediately says: that is a tree, this is a form of architecture; if I am fairly educated I add: Moghul architecture. But, in my experience there is one test which always works: the effect of modern abstract painting, because although it is a picture, it is not a picture of anything ever conceived of before. One may like or dislike it, but the first question that rises to the mind in looking at it is: what does it mean? I never tell what it means to me, because it interests me to observe what connection people establish out of their own personalities, their memories and unconscious minds, since one interpretation is as good as another, and here their conditioning is completely at sea. Although they try hard to establish a connection with something they know, it does not work. They are as perplexed as is the non-psychological person in face of a big dream, and few have the patience or the presence of mind to grasp at the meaning that may come up out of the

unconscious—if we may call it so: Could they do so, they might learn something about themselves, perhaps more than about the picture;

That is an example of how we may begin to see life new: in our thoughts as in visual experience, allowing the creative interval to come through. I admit that this is an extremely difficult thing to do, because it is no more an automatic activity but depends on the strength of our purpose to drop what has been the framework of our lives, and see everything afresh. The creativity is the positive side of what comes out of the unknown Between, but the negative side is the most important: *in Between there is nothing of the things we take to be real: it is Neti, Neti.*

In India through thousands of years, men have been taught that all is illusion, which might appear to be an approach to the Unknown. But this theory of illusion is also part of the Creation Between: there must be something there for the Indian to be able to call it 'illusion'. We can with equal justification call the whole material world an illusion built up on the wave-electron! According to the *Ahavaia* doctrine of all oneness, the illusion itself should be part of that Oneness. The Buddha found the answer to this illusion theory long ago: 'Men are in the habit of holding to the declaration: "this is" or "this is not", but he who sees according to the truth and to knowledge how things are produced in this world, for him

there is no "this is not". And for him who perceives in truth and in knowledge how things perish in this world, for him there is no "this is". Everything is, is one extreme; nothing is, is the other extreme. I teach between the two the truth of interdependent origins.<sup>1</sup> To him it was the Between that was the reality, and it is that which transforms whatever the event may be into something that is or is not.

In the West there has never been any doubt that things are as we see them; it is only lately that physicists and biologists have given us ground for thinking we create the world we see. The first say: there is no matter, all is energy (at most); the second have various different theories as to what happens to our sensual perceptions of 'reality' on the way to the brain. But whatever be the result: 'Except a corn of wheat fall to the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit.'<sup>2</sup> Down in the depths, between thoughts, out of Nothing, beauty as well as filth is created, and both are 'real' as far as our lives are concerned, not only for Westerners but for Indians also: in the very act of saying: all is illusion, they admit the existence of 'all'.

But, whilst discerning that new creation is the only sign of any gap between our thoughts, how do we get at it? I think that Krishnamurti knows more

<sup>1</sup> *Samyutta Nikaya*

<sup>2</sup> *Gospel according to St. John*, ch. XII, v.24

about this than anyone I have ever met. Let us therefore listen to what he says. "The unknown, that which is not created by the mind cannot be formulated by the mind. . . . The moment you think about the unknown it is already the known. So when you think and meditate, when you sit down and think about God, you only think about what is known, and what is known is in time; it is caught in the net of time; it is therefore not real."<sup>3</sup> I hope I have made it clear that what I have been groping after all along is that 'real'—an entirely unknown factor. The only aspect of it that emerges is its creativeness, but creativeness is also something undefinable, anything may be new creation provided it be uncontrolled by preceding events. Fred Hoyle's assertion that the universe did not explode into being at some given moment in time, but that there is a timeless process of creation going on for ever and ever, may be the most significant step ever made towards a conception of Nothing creating, for undoubtedly according to all scientists and mystics, that must be something that has nothing in common with anything controlled by space-time. The Buddha says: "When thou hast recognised the passing away of the organic processes—*samsara*—then dost thou know the Unbecome."<sup>4</sup> That means not only the 'passing away' of all the conditions of life as we know them but

<sup>3</sup> Krishnamurti: *Talks in Bombay*, 1948, p.36

<sup>4</sup> *Dhammapadam*, verse 383

equally of our apprehension of these things. If the colour red has frequencies which, when strung out, could not possibly be apprehended by the brain, yet they reach it all the same, there is obviously no time measure here either. 'The universe is not the interior of the soap-bubble but its surface. . . . And the substance out of which this bubble is blown, the soap film, is empty space welded on to empty time' (Jeans). When that point of empty space and empty time is reached there is Continuous Creation.

So should it also be in our minds, and we shall have to seek it somewhere where we can discover a gap in the sequence of memories—ideas—conceptions. 'As long as thought continues through memory, through desire, through experience, it can never renew itself',<sup>5</sup> never be open to the creative Between. 'A mind that desires to understand reality must be free at the beginning from all compulsion inward or outward . . . the capacity to understand requires freedom from conformity, which is freedom from fear',<sup>6</sup> from fear of finding oneself spiritually and mentally outcast, which has happened to all of those who have found this freedom. But provided it has not this fear, how does the mind free itself from the 'organic processes', from conditioning by past experiences of its own and its race piled up in the brain cells? I feel that all the disciplines and religious exercises undertaken in

<sup>5</sup> Krishnamurti: *Talks in Ceylon, 1949-50*, p.24    <sup>6</sup> *ibid.*, p.22

every land only replace one bondage with another. Certainly Krishnamurti would agree with this, for he always insists that: 'A disciplined mind is an exclusive mind . . . what is called concentration is merely a process of exclusion and the mind that knows how to exclude, how to resist, is not a free mind'.<sup>7</sup> He is certainly not suggesting a licentious mind, but one that excludes nothing and encompasses all things: in the words of Nietzsche: 'all things shall find place in thy love'.

What then would a free mind be like? How is it to be attained? 'Can thought be free?' Krishnamurti asks, 'Idea is the continuation of yesterday in a modified form, and that continuation will condition tomorrow, which means action based on idea can never be free. . . . If it cannot be free is it possible for continuity to cease?'<sup>8</sup> If, as he says, the mind is based on the background of the past: 'can thought ever free itself of the past? All that thought can do is to come to an end—but obviously not through compulsion, not through effort, not through any form of discipline, control or subjugation. As an observer, see the truth of what it means for thought to come to an end. . . . When there is action not based on idea or on the past, then the mind is silent, absolutely silent. In that silence the mind is free from idea'.<sup>9</sup> So long as this does not happen, there can be no creation in Nothing Between.

<sup>7</sup> *ibid.*, p.34    <sup>8</sup> *Talks in Ceylon, 1949-50*, p.25    <sup>9</sup> *ibid.*, p.26

That is therefore something definite to bring about: action from out of a silence, spontaneous, unconnected with memory, desire, experience. It might be regarded as a 'step in the dark', but would this not be equivalent to a *letting go* of the known and a dive into the unknown. Between, action with no preconceived opinion, just living *what is*? Krishnamurti speaks elsewhere of 'passive awareness', would not action free from idea arise from out of passive awareness? And of this last he says: 'In passive awareness there is creative stillness, creative emptiness.'<sup>10</sup> What could describe Nothing Between better than this?

A realisation of all this fills me with intense joy: can we really discover this continuous creation at work within ourselves? What would it be like? Krishnamurti seems to know: 'When do you have creative moments, a sense of joy, a sense of beauty? Surely only when the thinker is absent, when the thought process ceases for a second, for a minute, for a period of time; then in that space there is creative joy. . . . Then in that moment when the thinker is silent there comes creative being.'<sup>11</sup>

But the great problem is: how to make the thinker silent? All the various disciplines only seem to have replaced one thought by another. In this Krishnamurti has most helpful advice to offer—if we can

<sup>10</sup> *Talks in Bombay, 1948, p.112*    <sup>11</sup> *Ibid, p.30*

take it. He says that the beginning of consciousness lies in challenge, response and experiencing: 'The experience is named, termed, given a label, pleasant or unpleasant and then it is recorded, put away in the mind. . . . Now what would happen if the middle process which is naming or terming were not done, if the middle process were put an end to? . . . If there is no continuity the mind is not, consciousness is not. . . . The giving a name to a feeling, to an experience is instantaneous; because the mind which is the record keeper, memory, labels a feeling in order to give it substance, in order to give it continuity which means the continuation of thought. . . . So naming a feeling, an experience, gives permanency to the thinker, to the record keeper which is the mind. . . . If you don't name, term, label a sensation whether pleasant or unpleasant, they both wither away, and therefore the thinker which is the creator of the opposites come to an end.'<sup>12</sup> and we are free, truly free, in Nothing where all thought ceases: in *Neti, Neti*.

No one realises the immense difficulty of this task better than I. We cannot make a goal of freedom, nor arrive at it through any form of training, because this would infer a preconceived idea of that which we desire to attain and there is no doubt that: 'your belief is a hindrance to the discovery of the real be-

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid, p.55*

cause it is based on an idea or patterned after a tradition. As long as belief exists there can never be the unknown; you cannot think about the unknown, thought cannot measure it.<sup>13</sup> So long as it does, it is creating what it knows: 'Were I not, God also would not be'.<sup>14</sup>

The Samnyasin who retires from the world would observe that such freedom is also the aim of all Yoga training. But we are situated in life, in relationship to people and things, and as above mentioned, even scientifically, relationship is of the essence of creation everywhere in the universe; to renounce all that is perhaps a way, but surely not the essential one. The Zen Buddhists believe in the possibility of sudden enlightenment, anywhere, at any time. 'In fact if it is not abrupt and momentary it is not satori'.<sup>15</sup> I strongly feel that this is true. It may happen to any of us if our mental defences are down, as it did to Paul on the road to Damascus. Paul is a perfect example of what I mean: his mind had been full of the Christians and the heresy which he was going to Damascus to eradicate. On the one hand was his hatred of them, on the other probably a sneaking interest, otherwise

<sup>13</sup> Krishnamurti: *Talks in Ceylon, 1949-1950* p.27

<sup>14</sup> Meister Eckhart, opus cit., voll. I, p.176

<sup>15</sup> D. T. Suzuki: *Essays in Zen Buddhism*, 2nd Series, p.34. Collected Edition by Christmas Humphreys. Re "satori", Tai-hai says: 'Zen has no words; when you have satori, you have everything'. The coming home of the Prodigal Son has also been compared to satori.

why trouble to persecute them? The more violent the one, the more likely the other, on the principle of enantiodromia. Between these—suddenly the gap opens. Perhaps he was walking along in the sunshine, passively aware of his intention, but half dormant as one is, trudging along on a hot and dusty road, and suddenly the 'creator of opposites' ceased, and the Real erupted from between and changed his whole life. There is nothing to prevent this happening to any one of us, except our own selves. On our roads to Damascus we certainly have to learn to free our minds from the network of anxieties, hopes, fears, problems, even enjoyments and happiness. To empty the mind, that is the first step.

The first time that I experienced this 'between thoughts', I was alone, driving across Dartmoor on a lovely summer's day, thinking of nothing, passively aware in my whole being of the beauty around me, completely relaxed; my thoughts were 'wool-gathering' as they say, and I drove automatically. Suddenly I was overcome by a sense of intense bliss, of something welling up inside me, so that I could have thrown out my arms and shouted for joy, for no conceivable reason. I must have plunged into the Unknown Between. Since then I know that if I can switch off, in a bus or in my room, just let go, and think of nothing, there is a *chance*—no more—just a chance that this welling up of a life more intense,

more absolute than anything else, may occur. I think it is perhaps a matter of synthesis; since I have been working at these ideas it has happened on several occasions. Perhaps the interval between two thoughts: concentration on manifestations from Between on the one hand, and the troubles of everyday life on the other, has provided the gap from out of which a creation from Nothing may appear. I cannot say more than this, nor can I pretend that it is easily accomplished, but it should be possible wherever one is. I have seen it happen to Krishnamurti in a crowded hall, but he does not think this extraordinary. He said once: 'You all *could*'. That depends on ourselves.

The unknown is within, in every atom of our being; we cannot know it, for then it would be a thought projection, but there is an experience which leaves an indescribable, ineffable joy.

Further references to Krishnamurti's ideas from which I have quoted here can be found in his talks in: Ojai, California 1949, London 1949, Madras 1948 and 1952, etc. Publishers: Krishnamurti Writings Inc. 29 Park Lane, Wembley, Middlesex.

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## VI

IT IS EXTREMELY DIFFICULT FOR A WESTERN person to discover ways of letting Nothing Between act in daily life. The idea of finding a gap between two thoughts is so hard to understand, as I know from my own experience, that I would like to suggest a few simple methods which anyone can follow in their own homes if they choose, without all the discipline needed for the practice of Yoga, which very few outside India have ever succeeded in mastering.

I shall start my description of the 'simple methods' with an account of the use of an ancient Chinese book, the *I Ging*. For 3,000 years at least this book has been consulted by the wise and its advice followed. Even to-day, the wisest man I know, a European, consults the *I Ging* when faced with an insoluble problem. What exactly is the *I Ging*? A fortune-teller? A Book of Prophecy, an aid to clairvoyance? All these epithets have been applied to it at different times by western people, but actually it is none of

these things, and they who consult it as such will learn nothing from it.

As work with the *I Ging* seems to me to be the clearest example of what I wish to convey, I shall go into it rather closely. The Chinese sit down with the *I Ging* before them and a bundle of fifty sticks\* which they proceed to cast; according to the way in which they fall, they learn what chapter of the book they should consult. Western people simplify this action by casting three identical coins: heads stand for uneven, tails for even, uneven are male; even, female. In the characters of the *I Ging* a single stroke — represents heads or 3; a double stroke — — tails or 2. The coins are thrown six times. When all three coins turn up heads, 9, it is a starred stroke: — \*; if all are tails, 6, it is: — — \*. If there are two heads and a tail it is 8, female and — — — unstarred. If two tails and a head it is 7, male and — unstarred. The numbers which are starred emphasise particular paragraphs, corresponding to the number of the line, those unstarred refer to the general meaning. The lines are to be read from bottom upwards. I will give one example:

6. Three heads — \*
5. Two heads and a tail — —
4. Two tails and a head — — \*
3. Three heads — — \*
2. Two heads and a tail — —
1. Three tails — — \*

\* Sticks of the Achitua Millefolium

This gives the sign Li which is chapter 56. There are two parts to the *I Ging* which are complementary.

The foregone is merely a description of the material actions required, and of course this makes it sound like an ordinary game of dice. But the physical act of casting the sticks, or coins, is only the final act following upon careful preparation. It is no good whatsoever to sit down and just toss the coins. To begin with it is important to find a quiet room and hour, when one can be sure of not being disturbed. Then, having seated oneself in a comfortable but alert position, not loling in an armchair, one proceeds to relax all one's muscles and to free one's mind from any anxiety, fear or hope with regard to the results of what one is about to do. One should have no ideas about it at all. The mind should be as blank as possible; in psychological terms one should try to free the unconscious mind. The actual act of casting the coins should be done almost automatically, without the smallest effort. Any definite sensation, any emotion, completely defeats the purpose of the whole procedure and the result is worthless; the chapter referred to is meaningless. Without this preparation no one need consult the *I Ging*. But if the preparation be adequate and sufficient detachment is achieved, the reply from the *I Ging* is truly remarkable, for it links up with one's innermost problems and points to the issue.

'Pure luck of course', the sceptic will say. But a book that has been consulted for thousands of years by wise men seeking help in the solution of their problems, is not built up on luck. And what is 'luck' after all? With the principle of indeterminacy in mind, how can anyone positively assert what is determined by anything? The things we term 'luck' are probably the effects of causes beyond our control, and as significant as the things dictated by our reason. Therefore I shall try and explain the function of the *I Ging* in its relationship to the enquirer as far as I can.

We and our problems are not independent phenomena (I am not speaking of those who believe in a God who supervises their lives; for them everything is explained); we play our part in the pattern, not only of the evolution of our time and country, but also of the conditions around us; there is a whole state of affairs in which we are inevitably involved for better or worse, according to our capacity for harmonising with the general situation. Our wills and desires drive us one way and another and it is admittedly very difficult to understand our function in this world drama. Only much later, if we choose to look back with objective minds, we can see where we worked in with the pattern and where we went astray. (Politicians bear a heavy responsibility in this matter). In the one case everything seemed to work out successfully, in the other everything was always

going wrong. Of course in times of stress it is not much help to say: some day I shall know what I should have done.

But here enters the *I Ging*. *Provided that the coins are cast with a blank mind*, the chapter indicated points to the pattern of this moment in time as a whole, and incidentally to the part we should play therein. This last is suggested by the starred numbers. If we read our chapter without attempting to interpret it in the light of our wishes, we may see in it a picture of all the circumstances in which we are involved and the presumable outcome. After that it is our own responsibility if we fit our further action into the picture or not. A word of warning however: the *I Ging* does not use terms that are easily understood, its symbolism is as intricate as that of dreams, and without some help or guidance from someone who has experience of it in the beginning, it may be difficult to decipher. But even without that, good results can be obtained by him who is prepared to 'let go' and does not try to project his own conclusions on to the *I Ging's* reply, but allows the Between to cast the meaning on to his mind, as we might allow a modern picture to tell its story. It certainly works.<sup>1</sup>

There are of course only a few who have the *I Ging* at hand, and these seldom need to consult it for exper-

<sup>1</sup> *I Ging* translated from the Chinese into German by Richard Wilhelm and rendered into English in 2 vols. by C. M. Baynes. Published by Routledge-Kegan Paul Ltd.

rience has taught them to apply its methods to their lives, therefore I only speak of that method as an illustration of how one may set about freeing oneself of all conditioning, allowing the creative gap between to work on the pages of one's life. Life itself can be read like the *I Ging* if one takes the trouble to learn. We do not need the practices of Yoga, these are a strain on the steel, an enforced condition, the exact reverse of what I am trying to describe. 'Let go' is what I am saying. Not the letting go that means a plunge into sexual, licentious or violent excesses, all these are the result of *tanha* (thirst) as the Buddha shows. As with the book, so with the life *I Ging*, only a mind that is free from desires can interpret it rightly. It is certainly as difficult of achievement as any Yoga, and it takes years of practice, even after one has seen the necessity of it, which not everyone does.

C. G. Jung in his constant insistence on the need for integration of the personality, in his recognition of the unconscious mind and its power, has opened men's eyes to the fact that consciousness and intellect are not our only guides in life. The unconscious mind is a very potent factor which men have ignored, but to-day Jung leaves us no excuse for our ignorance. It is certain that the unconscious is always present, leading its own life within us and, I firmly believe, receiving impressions from what lies between it and

consciousness. The process with the *I Ging* is, among other things, a means of tapping the unconscious, and so long as we are unable to do this, which means getting across the crevasse between it and our thoughts, new creation will never appear in our minds.

Admittedly it is very difficult to visualise our individual lives as merged in the general pattern of life: those who have been able to do so are extremely rare. But this is not indispensable, and if we aim at what is impossible to us at our present stage, we will not even achieve the possible. To read the real life *I Ging* we shall have to content ourselves with spelling it out word by word, with a mind that is indifferent to the outcome. 'Awaken the mind without fixing it anywhere';<sup>2</sup> that is the secret. But it is not a thing we can relegate to any special day or hour, like five minutes breathing exercises in the morning, or going to church on Sundays. If we truly intend to pursue this path, it is something from which we may never digress, wherever we are and whatever we may be doing, until finally the sign posts on the way are rightly read and we follow them without question, with minds unconditioned by desire.

I will try and make a few suggestions as to the first steps. These must necessarily relate to extremely obvious manifestations as our minds are not yet trained to see implications in small occurrences. I can

<sup>2</sup> Yen-chi Kuang-wen; see Suzuki, opus cit., p. 83

most easily illustrate my meaning by an experience of my own. I was told that a famous man was coming to London to lecture on a subject in which I was interested, and friends urged me to go and hear him, but I had other plans which seemed more attractive, and as I was about to go abroad, I dismissed it from my mind. About a week before I intended to start, I received a telegram from the people I was going to meet saying they had to leave for America. I put down the telegram and said: now I can go and hear K. That is a perfect example of how these things work; I had a completely unbiassed mind, no wish in the matter, which is the essential condition for a right understanding of the signs, be it in the *I Ging* or in life, and the decision proved of great importance to my life.

This may seem a rather obvious case, but actually it was not so, for I doubt if anyone who had not been letting themselves be guided by the upwelling from Nothing Between would have allowed all their plans to be upset in a flash in order to hear a lecture. And thereby they might have missed a chance of dying to the past and the beauty and creation that comes out of that death, which this experience brought me. Having practised this dropping Between for years, I recognise that my mind was not influenced by any desire, therefore in the split-second between reading the telegram and my decision to go and hear K.

Nothing between two thoughts had acted. 'The movement is discontinuous and proceeds by separate flashes of energy which succeed one another at such minute intervals that they are almost in-existent',<sup>8</sup> but in those intervals lies the creative gap which, at any moment, may alter the trend of our lives.

That happened to be a big and far-reaching incident, but if one cares to take notice, there are constantly very slight encouragements or impediments to our plans which may appear to be of no importance yet, if one is prepared to face the new, the creative impulse from Between, one has no right to ignore any sign whatsoever. A lost pen when one had intended to write an important letter; a notice in the paper of a new airline flying to a place about going to which one had felt uncertain; a pertinent sentence in a book one had opened absentmindedly; a breakdown in the car in which one had been driving to an important interview—I find even the weather can speak—all these are single or double stripes on the life *I Ging* indicating the pattern emerging from Nothing Between.

Relating to the writing of this book there has been a most curious series of incidents. I had made many notes for it, and in June 1953 I was prepared to spend several months quietly in the country writing. On June the 5th I suddenly fell ill, and consequently was

<sup>8</sup> A. David-Neal, *opus cit.*, p. 32

in hospital for several months. After that I was quite incapable of any consecutive thought for a considerable time. Then came winter in town and my flat invaded with visitors. Still no work and there seemed no possibility of it for a long time ahead. In the meantime, with my illness, my ideas had changed and I felt that my notes would no longer be of much use. So I just let the Between work underground, and in spare moments translated Lao-tzu's *Tao-teh-king*. Then I was unexpectedly called abroad on business which should have been finished in a week. Instead of that, it turned out to be highly complicated. Yet, owing to this, I obtained three months of complete solitude (except for people on business), and after two months of passive meditation, my whole circle of ideas matured and poured out with a rush in little over five weeks. That is a picture of how 'it' works when one is prepared to 'let go'.

I might have written during my peaceful convalescence; in my home in town I might have set aside some hours a day for my work; during the first two months abroad I had solitude enough to concentrate on work—in fact each day I determined to begin, yet it was not until Good Friday that the dam was opened. The pattern works with what we, in our short-sightedness, regard as misfortunes, as well as with pleasant incidents; more often the former because we have to be forced to take our place in it.

But in fact anything may serve as the necessary tool. We are colts who kick our heels in air and try to leap fences, but that is not the way to drop. Between and let creation act, minute by minute.

He who wanders in search increases daily;

He who wanders in Tao decreases daily,

he lessens his activity and lessens it more and more till he arrives at non-action.

In non-action there is nothing left undone.<sup>4</sup>

Non-action is not meant in the sense of sitting down and throwing up the sponge, but of decreasing the persistent action of will and brain, the action of the Ego, and all I have been saying shows, I think, how 'nothing is left undone' if one arrives at such non-action as this.

I have found that the easiest way of arriving at that kind of non-action in daily life is to occupy oneself with something that requires nothing but automatic attention and no intellect: driving a car, gardening, cooking, digging, sewing, turning a bolt on a machine part as it passes on the conveyor belt, fishing, even playing patience; any such activity releases the mind from functioning and gives Nothing a chance to act. Hui-neng, the sixth and most famous of Zen patriarchs, worked, not as a monk, but in the granary of the monastery, as a rice cleaner, and thus attained enlightenment. Evidently during this menial work

<sup>4</sup> Lao-tzu: *Tao-teh-king*, ch. 48, translation by Richard Wilhelm

his mind was 'not fixed anywhere', for in the end, completely unlettered as he was, he wrote a poem which has expressed the condition of enlightenment to all future generations of Zen followers.\*

I cannot deny that this may also happen to those who follow Yoga practises, or the Exercises of St. Ignatius, or the long hours of prayer and meditation practised by monks of all denominations. However it is not any exercises as such that bring about release, but, emptying the mind of all distractions and letting it rest on one point (be it the Virgin Mary or the navel), acts in the same way as the more simple activities in inhibiting thought and opening the lock-gates for the upsurge out of Nothing.

\* See p.91

## VII

**T**HE CIRCLE IS NOW COMPLETE, AND LIKE the Ouroboros who has his tail in his mouth, I have reached the point which started me on my quest and which has also been my goal: the Koan in Zen Buddhism. In the course of this study I have investigated the gaps between stars and between atoms, as also between two thoughts. I have spoken of the creative impulse thrown on to the screen of the mind from out of what lies between it and the actual sense perception. I have shown a means of suppressing thought and setting free what lies between it and the automatic action we happen to be pursuing. But through the Koan there is a chance of a sudden and immediate plunge into Nothing, which is inherent in all of these.

What is a Koan? In simple words it is a question and an answer—but how much more. A question is asked and a totally unrelated reply is given, yet thereby the pupil may attain enlightenment or 'satori'. It did not make sense to me when I first heard of it, and

I much doubt if it would do so to anyone else at first sight. Perhaps the best approach to an understanding of the Koan is to take some particular question and ponder over it. But as no question and answer is more logical than any other it is necessary that the beginner should acquaint himself with several Koans before he can discover the one that opens the gates to himself—not necessarily to another—and then he will give his own answer. As the Koan can never be explained theoretically, a personal experience is imperative to an understanding of it. I have chosen a few Koans that have been important to me, and will give them as they stand without explanation. Only one word of advice: let the reader constantly keep in mind what has been said in the preceding pages, for Nothing Between is of the essence of the Koan.

My first example is the most famous of Koans and one of the most ancient: it immediately opens up the whole problem. 'A monk once asked Chao-chou: "Is there Buddha nature in a dog?" Chao-chou answered: "Wu"'. Almost all the great masters of Zen have turned to this lesson of 'Wu' and it has opened the eyes of many to satori. 'Chao-chou's "Wu" before you have penetrated into its meaning is like a silver mountain in an iron wall. . . But as you go on with "Wu" day after day, trying to get into its content and do not give even a moment's rest to yourself, the supreme moment will inevitably come upon

you just as a flood makes its own channel. . . Do not waste your time merely thinking of "Wu" as if you were no more than a simpleton, make no attempt to give a false solution to it by means of speculation or imagination. Resolutely put yourself heart and soul (he does not say mind) into the unravelling of the problem of "Wu". When suddenly as you let go your hold, there comes a grand overturning of the whole system of consciousness!<sup>1</sup> Another master says: 'See into the phrase that liveth and not into the one that is dead'.<sup>2</sup> The Koan is regarded as the live phrase, for: 'it gives no clues whatever to . . . rational interpretation but puts an end to the functioning of the empirical consciousness', according to T'ui-yin. The 'Wu' is a supreme example of this.

But it does not really matter what Koan you choose, any that anyone finds particularly puzzling to himself will serve; whatever takes the ground from under the feet of the mind. 'Do not think that the meaning of the Koan is at the moment of your holding it up for solution; do not reason about or exercise your imagination over it; do not wait for satori to come over you by clearing your mind of confused ideas; only collect yourself on the unintelligibility of the Koan over which the mind evidently has no control. You will finally find yourself like an

<sup>1</sup> Suzuki, opus cit., p.95. K'ung ku Ching-lung

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.* From the *Mirror for Zen Students*. Appeared 1579

old rat getting into the furthest corner of the barn where it suddenly perceives by veering clear round, the way of escape. To measure the Koan by an intellectual standard, as you ordinarily do other things, to live your life up and down in the stream of birth and death, to be always assailed by feelings of fear, worry and uncertainty, all this is owing to your imagination and calculating mind.<sup>3</sup> He tells us not to waste time over these things but as Hui-neng says: 'Let go your hold and fall over the precipice.'

I think this makes it clear how perplexing the whole thing is, but I hope no one will give up trying to understand it for that. If understanding does not come through one Koan it may through another, therefore as it is impossible to theorise about it, I will give a few examples in the hope that one may bring realisation where another has failed.

A monk asked Yun-men: 'Who is the Buddha?' 'The dried up dirt cleaner' is the reply. In this astounding answer lies the possibility of enlightenment for the questioner, according to Zen. Provided that the 'dirt cleaner' lies at the back of one's mind, not only at the time of asking the question, but constantly without ever leaving it, whatever one may be doing, then: 'The time will come when your mind will suddenly come to a stop like an old rat that finds himself in a *cul-de-sac*. Then there will be a plunging

<sup>3</sup> Suzuki, opus cit., p.96

into the unknown with the cry: "Ah this!"<sup>4</sup> One cannot see any possible connection between this question and the answer, but that is the whole point of the Koan, obliging every individual to puzzle it out for himself. I think that possibly the very illogicality of it is why, when we have once known a Koan, we cannot let it alone. Why a 'dirt cleaner'? What possible application could that have to the Buddha? We live in a world of cause and effect which has accustomed us to think that a reply must refer to a question; whether we seek replies from books, or other men or our own minds, the reply is still conditioned by the question. But when the effect bears not the slightest relation to the cause, and yet there *does* occur a totally unprecedented effect, the mind keeps worrying at it like a dog at a bone. Perhaps the first ray of understanding will pierce our minds when we discover of cause and effect what Eddington did of the association of exact position with exact momentum: 'There is no such thing in nature.'<sup>5</sup> There are only interdependent origins, which means many causes but independent effects. That is the Koan.

It is perhaps impossible to understand the significance of the Koan without a realisation of what satori means in Zen Buddhism. When the pupil cries: 'Ah this', or 'Oh master, I understand', that is everything. Suzuki tells us that: 'Satori is the measure of Zen . . .

<sup>4</sup> *ibid.*, p.93    <sup>5</sup> *Nature of the Physical World*

(it) is not a state of mere quietude, it is not tranquillization, it is an inner experience which has a poetic quality; there must be a certain awakening from the relative field of consciousness; a certain turning-away from the ordinary form of experience which characterizes our everyday life.<sup>6</sup> That this is attended with a feeling of exaltation is understandable, for satori is the breaking up of all the dualities that hem in the individual, the destruction of all boundaries. 'To be released of this . . . must make one feel above all things intensely exalted. A wandering outcast maltreated everywhere not only by others but by himself, finds that he is the possessor of all the wealth and power that is ever attainable in this world by a mortal being . . . Says a Zen master: 'When you have satori you are able to reveal a palatial mansion made of precious stones on a single blade of grass; but when you have no satori, a palatial mansion is concealed behind a single blade of grass.'<sup>7</sup>

I think I can best illustrate the difference between what the experience of satori means and the ideas of 'enlightenment' behind other religious experiences by the classical example of two poems presented to Hung-jen, the 5th Patriarch of Zen, by Shen-hsiu, the chief and most learned of his 500 disciples, and the rice-cleaner of the Monastery, Hui-neng, respectively. The first wrote on the wall:

<sup>6</sup> Suzuki, *opus cit.*, p.21    <sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p.34

The body is the Bodhi tree  
The soul is like the mirror bright;  
Take heed to keep it always clean  
And let not dust collect upon it.<sup>8</sup>

That might have been written by a follower of any of the great religious teachers of any denomination. But this did not satisfy Hui-neng, so in the night he went and wrote on the wall beside Shen-hsiu's words:

The Bodhi is not like the tree  
The mirror bright is nowhere shining;  
As there is nothing from the beginning  
Where can the dust collect itself?<sup>9</sup>

Thereafter he became the 6th and most famous of all Zen Patriarchs.

To reach this state of understanding all one's accumulated learning must be effaced; they compare it to hanging over a precipice or to a man drowning in a well, who puts everything he has into the effort of getting out, nothing else matters. 'Supposing a man has wandered out among the remote mountains where no one else has ever ventured. He comes to the edge of a precipice unfathomably deep, the rugged rock covered with moss is extremely slippery, giving him no sure foothold: he can neither advance nor retreat, death is looking him in the face. . . . It is the same with the student of Zen. When he grapples with the Koan single-handedly he will come to

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p.40    <sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p.41

see that he has reached the limit of his mental tension, and he is brought to a standstill. Like the man hanging over the precipice, he is completely at a loss what to do next.' (That is the sensation of one who ponders over a Koan, there seems to be no explanation, no outlet.) 'All of a sudden he finds his body and his mind wiped out of existence altogether with the Koan. That is what is known as "letting go" your hold. . . . It will be joy inexpressible!'<sup>10</sup> That is the experience of the moment of satori, a letting go of all memories, all conditioning by any previous experience, all ideas, and a dropping into the nothingness which eludes consciousness, yet which leaves a trail of infinite joy.

But again it cannot be thought of as *something*, Zen is 'suchness'—*Neti, Neti*. No definition applies to it, and what is said of satori is equally applicable to Zen. 'There is no Zen without satori'; but there is no golden road to it. It is depicted by a Zen master as an abrupt invasion of something unknown from somewhere unknown.

Devoid of thought I sat quietly by the desk of my official room,

With my fountain-mind undisturbed, serene as water;

A sudden clash of thunder, the mind doors burst open,

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p.98

and lo, there siteth an old man with all his homeliness.<sup>11</sup>

The old man sits there as before, unchanged in all his homeliness—and yet something immense has occurred, the clap of thunder, the sudden shock to his serene mind opened the crevice and something from Between welled up. That may happen to any of us, anywhere, provided the mind is inactive.

It is because of that Between that the Koan has meant so much to me. For some years after I had realised that the mystery lay in the fact that there was no link between question and answer, that there seemed to be a gap which nothing could bridge, the word 'between' was constantly at the back of my mind. There was evidently something there which I could not fathom. Then in 1950 came Hoyle with his 'continuous creation', 'out of nothing' as Spencer-Jones and Eckhart confirm, and in a flash I saw what I was looking for. There it lay in the Between of the Koan. It lies between every either-or, and is the solution of all our human duality. 'If you call this a stick you affirm; if you call it not a stick, you negate. Beyond affirmation and negation what would you call it?'<sup>12</sup> That applies to all questions and answers, therefore the Koan gives replies in terms that are neither negation nor affirmation.

The conditions necessary for an approach to the

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.* p.32    <sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p.91

Koan having been sufficiently explained, we can now pass on to a selection of Koans as subject for meditation. If my reader has gained any idea of the significance of Nothing Between from what has been said he will realise the importance of understanding the Koan. Actually it is only after reading many Koans that a western person will become conscious that there is something behind them which he has never met with before. Having understood that, he may discover Koans strewn along his path: at any moment life may set one a Koan question, and the more Koan-like our answer the truer is it likely to be. But the answer must be spontaneous, never intentional. It is a very difficult thing to explain, even if I take an example from amidst our European life, I doubt if I can make it any clearer. Speaking the other day to a friend about atomic bombs, he asked: 'What can be the meaning of these atomic bombs?' Into my mind came the answer: 'A child laughing in his bath'. My friend looked astonished and I could not explain it had been a Koan. It was a totally unrelated and unpremeditated answer. Thus it is with Koans, and the questioner is left to solve the riddle.

'When a monk said to Chao-chou: "All things are reducible to the One; but where is the One reducible?" Chou said: "When I was in the district of Ch'ing I had a robe that weighed seven *chih*."

'A monk asked Hsuan-sha: "I am a newcomer in the monastery, please tell me how to go on with my study?" "Do you hear the murmuring stream?" "Yes master". "If so here is the entrance".

'A monk asked Tung-shan: "Who is the Buddha?" "Three *chih* of flax".

One of the most famous is the reply given by Hui-neng to Ming who asked for enlightenment: "Think not of good, think not of evil, but see what at the moment thine original features are, which thou hadst even before thou wast born." That is a wonderful opening because it ignores time.<sup>18</sup>

The following story is important for it clearly shows that any kind of answer does not suffice. Tai-hui, aforementioned, a 12th-century Zen master, tells this story: 'I had been studying Zen for seventeen years and during that period here and there I had fragmentary satori. . . . Later I came to the capital and staying at the T'ien-ning monastery I listened one day to my teacher's discourse on Yun-men. He said "A monk came to Yun-men and asked: 'Where do all the Buddhas come from?' Yun-men answered: "The Eastern mountain walks on water'. But I, T'ien-ning differ from Yun-men. 'Where do all the Buddhas come from?' A breeze laden with fragrance from the south, and the spacious hall begins to be

<sup>18</sup> All Koans are drawn from Suzuki's *Essays in Zen Buddhism*, and Series

refreshingly cool". These two answers give an illuminating picture of the nature of Koans; they appear to be equally irrelevant, neither having any significance at all in relation to the question, and yet the master says he differs on the answer. What's there to differ about if neither make sense? Yet Tai-hui says: 'When my master said this, I felt suddenly as if I were severed from all time and space relations'.<sup>14</sup>

This throws new light on the Koan. It seems to be of great importance if the answer be: 'a breeze laden with fragrance' or 'the Eastern mountain', importance to that *particular* question. Yun-men did not see the same thing in reply to the question as T'ien-ning, yet neither of the replies is more logical than the other. It is obvious from this that in every individual something that is always different wells up from out of Nothing Between, if we give it a chance. If the picture were ever the same it would be no creation. This Koan clearly shows how something new that was not there before and which is severed from the continuity of time and space, appears spontaneously on the human brain—as new hydrogen atoms appear in the universe. By not allowing reason to dictate a logical reply, and thus 'letting go' of empirical experience, of memory, a gap must ensue and into this the pupil must tumble if he wants to realise *Neti, Neti*. I can say no more.

<sup>14</sup> opus cit., p.26

Personally, understanding came with the question: 'What is the secret of Bodhidharma?'<sup>15</sup> Reply: 'The cypress tree in the courtyard'.<sup>16</sup> After lying for several years at the back of my mind, I discovered in it the Between.

Later came Hoyle who opened my mind to the universal Nothing.

<sup>15</sup> The first Zen Patriarch

<sup>16</sup> Suzuki, opus cit., p.84

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## VIII

**I**N CONCLUSION I CANNOT AVOID SPEAKING about death, although I am well aware that for many, my ideas make it seem worse than ever. But that cannot be helped, I must pursue my path to the end.

We have all, in both East and West, sought consolation for the inevitability of death by imagining a Paradise of some kind on the other side. Christians, Jews and Mohammedans, as well as so-called 'heathens', have defended themselves against fears of death by a faith that a 'good' life on earth will be rewarded by an ascent into Paradise in the hereafter, where men's unfulfilled hopes and desires will be realised. Even Purgatory does not seem too bad with Heaven at the other end, and as for Hell—most people dismiss it as an outworn fantasy, or perhaps feel they have had enough of it on earth. In the East the belief in reincarnation or transmigration has been generally accepted, i.e. further opportunities of bettering oneself with Nirvana at the end.

Many years ago I talked to a well-known writer about Nirvana, the ultimate goal of reincarnation, and of the Law of Karma. He said: 'But I don't want to reach such a condition'. I said: 'You won't so long as you don't want to'. This only shows that Nirvana, like Paradise, is man's wish fulfilment although the descriptions of Nirvana are nearer to my ideas than are those of Heaven. 'That the Perfected One exists beyond death does not apply; that the Perfected One does not exist beyond death does not apply; that the Perfected One neither exists nor does not exist beyond death, neither does this apply'.<sup>1</sup>

That seems more or less true, although it is still a kind of plan for the hereafter, a condition to which what we regard as existence or non-existence does not apply, something which we should not regard as 'being' at all, but still a condition. I think this is proved by the following: 'Just as of the fire that flames up under the stroke of the smith's hammer, it cannot be said where it has gone after it is extinguished, so just as little can be discovered the abode of the truly delivered ones who have crossed over the stream of the bonds of the senses, and have reached the unshakable bliss'.<sup>2</sup> This quotation is a summary of the 72nd discourse of the *Majjhima Nikaya* between the Buddha and the monk Vachagotta upon which all other sayings concerning the

<sup>1</sup> Samyutta Nikaya, IV    <sup>2</sup> Udāna, VIII, 10

state of Nirvana are more or less based, 'Greed is the worst disease; the activities of the senses are the worst suffering. Having recognised this, verily one reaches Nirvana, highest bliss'.<sup>2</sup> Mankind's ideas of bliss being much the same all the world over, it seems to me there is very little difference between all these conceptions of after-life; only the means of attaining that bliss are different. Some hope to achieve it through love, others by the annihilation of suffering.

Perhaps my reader may feel that so much has been said in the course of human history, on the subject of freedom from all physical ills after death that nothing remains to be said. But to my way of thinking it is not *after death* that we must look to, but the present moment. What has always been relegated to an after-life is here in our midst if we only knew how to find it. I have gone into the problem of Nothing Between very carefully, and shown that it is out of Nothing between two electric charges, between cognition and concept, between the ingredients which make up events, and finally between two thoughts, that new creation arises. I have told as much as can be expressed in words of the means whereby we may put ourselves in condition to delve into that Nothing on our daily path—did it sound so dreadful that we have to find palliatives for it? Per-

<sup>2</sup> Dharmapada, v.203

haps we have felt horror at the idea of death for so long that it is difficult to realise that it is not something to be dreaded, merely the reverse side of the coin of life. Were we to see life from the other side, we would probably feel equal horror of such a thing.

What then might be the feeling of one who had plunged into Nothing unprepared for anything of the kind? Would it be pain or terror? No indeed, just the reverse. It happened to me in the most inauspicious place conceivable: in London at the corner of the Bank of England and Princes Street, amidst crowds of people and traffic, on a hot afternoon. I seemed to be suddenly lifted off my feet into a condition of knowing nothing of my surroundings at all. I walked through the crowds unaware of their presence; I passed over the traffic-congested crossings I know not how; I had no perception whatsoever of either time or place—an unconscious awareness carried me on. That is all I can tell of it. When I came to myself in the entrance hall of the house in Finsbury Circus, where I had intended to go when I got off my bus at the Bank, I was filled with the most unutterable despair—I felt I had lost something never to be replaced—and I feel the same now, 34 years after it happened. I felt hopelessly lost in a world in which I had no part. That return was terrible. I left my business unaccomplished, and got onto the first bus that came along, merely to be quiet,

not to move, and indeed I sat there unconscious of anything except my unbearable loss. Finally I found myself in a church where peace came at last. But my whole subsequent life was irrevocably altered.

If we can be sure that the plunge into Nothing while still alive, can bring release from all bondage, complete freedom in what I must call an all-life, why should it be more dreadful after the dissolution of the physical aggregates we call 'body'? Of course it remains dreadful so long as there is fear of the unknown, but once that fear is shown to be groundless, because the things we fear to loose have no substance, must not all fear cease? A person who had never dived is terrified of diving off a rock two foot high into the unknown depths beneath; an experienced diver thinks nothing of diving from 20 feet for he knows what it is like below.

Still pursuing this train of thought: if continuous creation in the universe is brought about by (what we call) electromagnetism and expansion, which we now find to be Nothing, death must have something to do with the expansion phase. Through expansion the molecules separate and scatter far and wide as do the nebulae, but Nothing remains unchanged as it always was.

Of course, if one had always imagined and hoped for loving arms to carry one to an abode of bliss, or aimed at a perfection which must eventually merge

in Nirvana; if one had never conceived of Nothing, I can imagine it would be a frightening break-up, a crashing disillusion. But it seems that those who have had a foretaste of it have never been in any way perturbed at the idea of death, It has always been said that Lazarus never smiled again after he came back; I can well understand that. He had had an experience of Nothing. So may you; what is there to fear if you discover that such condition is not limited to life on earth but is universal? As background material is concentrated into nebulae which eventually disperse over the visible horizon, so do the ingredients of man which had been temporarily assembled into an event you called your 'self' eventually scatter over the horizon of mind. But before and after that event, in every interstice between all events, great or small, outside as well as within, is the universal Nothing which we are and were. No Heaven or Nirvana later on—'later' is a dimension in time, and time is not, as we saw; there is only here and now, the Word.

Tomorrow as yesterday, and everywhere at every point, something is emerging out of Nothing. We have emerged in our time; evidently we shall merge back. All things have been created out of Nothing, therefore their true source is the Nothing.<sup>4</sup> Undoubtedly that source is here in this room as across the sea outside, or between me and the furthestmost

<sup>4</sup> Eckhart, opus ckt., Vol. I, p. 101

stars—creating, creating ceaselessly. Only some day when the senses drop their message at the door of the brain, there will be no image on the other side—and we shall be as we always were.

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## EPILOGUE

IT HAS OFTEN BEEN SAID THAT WE CRUCIFY Jesus every day anew—perhaps we do, but in a different sense to that in which those words were intended. What could be a greater crucifixion than to be misjudged for 2,000 years?

If there be anything that survives death it is surely the thoughts that men have left behind them. The Buddha's thought, Confucius' thought, Moses' thought, Jesus' thought, for instance, are embedded in the civilisations to which they gave rise. But in one particular Jesus is unique: in his apparent fear of death; witness the scene in the Garden of Gethsemane. Socrates knew he had to die, as did Jesus, but how wonderful, I might almost say sublime, is Socrates' last discourse before death—as also the Buddha's. Not only they but other enlightened men seem to have faced the prospect of death just as calmly: how serene is Francis of Assisi's death\* and, in our own time, Ramana Maharshi's: though suffer-

\* 'Mortem cantando suscepi', 2 Celano 3, 139

ing from an awful disease, he never lost his radiance to the last. The death of these and others was in accordance with the thoughts that had inspired their lives. There was no conflict. Why is it that Jesus' thought alone was transmitted in such agony of mind? Why did the faith that had carried him through life, fail him in the end?

Surely Jesus had nothing in the world to reproach himself with; his whole life had been spent in the service of God: "The works that the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me that the Father hath sent me."<sup>1</sup> And again: "I can do nothing of myself . . . I seek not mine own will but the will of the Father."<sup>2</sup> He and his Father had indeed been one, as he said. Only a short time before the end, probably thinking of what was about to happen, he could exclaim: "Now is the Son of Man glorified and God is glorified in him."<sup>3</sup> In these words one feels a note of triumph. What changed that in the end? There was nothing in what Jesus had ever said or done that could have led one to expect that things would end as they did; evidently he had not the slightest idea of it himself. He so clearly foresaw what would happen to his disciples, why had he no premonition of what would be his own state of mind? "Behold the hour cometh,

<sup>1</sup> Gospel according to St. John, ch. V, v. 36

<sup>2</sup> John, *ibid.*, v. 30

<sup>3</sup> John, ch. XIII, v. 31

yea is now come, that ye shall be scattered every man into his own, and shall leave me alone, and yet I am not alone because the Father is with me."<sup>4</sup> Yet, a few hours later there was the agony in the olive grove.

In order to understand what happened on the Cross, we must start by trying to understand the change in him that is so striking, the night before on the Mount of Olives. With regard to this we may do one of two things: either regard the whole story as another of the great myths, and with some justification, for there is much in common between the story of Jesus and the myths of the Sun God all the world over. Or, one can take the story literally as that of a man who actually lived and died as unquestionably as Moses or Mahommed. I prefer this latter course, and shall therefore consider the story of that night in the garden as that of a human being in his last hours.

The first thing that strikes one about it is that, although Jesus' prayer is reported with little variance by all the Synoptics, yet at the same time, all are agreed that the disciples slept when he most needed them. And that not only for one hour—when he came back the first time and woke them, can one not hear his sad voice: "Could ye not watch with me one hour?"—but he left them a second and a third time, perhaps two or three hours elapsed, for in the

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, ch. XVI, v. 32

end he says: 'Sleep on now and take your rest', in other words: It is over, now I need you no more. How could those men ever forgive themselves for having slept during those last precious hours with the friend they loved? One cannot imagine anyone doing such a thing, let alone men who had much reason for anxiety on his behalf.

The occurrences of that night are shrouded in mystery—sleep on the one hand, darkness on the other, have screened Jesus from prying eyes for 2,000 years. We have accepted the orthodox version of the story, which is apparently based on pure conjecture if one has to exclude the chief witnesses, because until now, any doubt was met with the charge of heresy. Of one thing we can feel certain however: Jesus in that night went through the 'dark forest' which always precedes the dawn of enlightenment, that enlightenment which, for lack of an unbiased judgement, has always been assumed to have taken place at the baptism in the Jordan. Enlightenment has never come to any man on a public occasion at the hands of another.

Be that as it may, I should like to make one common sense suggestion about those hours in Gethsemane. If we accept the report as true, there must have been someone there present at that tragic hour. I cannot believe the story was invented, it was completely out of keeping with the nature of Jesus. This

'someone' must not only have heard the prayers, but seen that 'being in agony he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was as great drops of blood falling to the ground'.<sup>5</sup> Seeing the state of fear and tension in which the whole group round Jesus must have been during those last days (which is the only excuse for the weariness of the sleeping disciples), is it not possible that some one of his followers who loved him, kept watch during that night to see that nothing happened to him? Perhaps it was that 'other disciple known to the High Priest', who later went with him into the High Priest's house?<sup>6</sup> Evidently that man must have been very close to Jesus, seeing he never left him even when all others fled or denied him. It has been suggested that this might have been Lazarus.\* If so it is also possible that it was Lazarus who was with him in the garden, for his link with Jesus was of a special kind, particularly with regard to death. One can imagine he might have been the one person whom Jesus would have been glad to have with him at that hour—for he knew.

I have gone into this very carefully because the story as it stands looks much like a later invention: the disciples who were asleep could certainly not have reported it; but it is inconceivable that it was an invention for the same reasons that the cry on the

<sup>5</sup> *Gospel according to St. Luke*, ch. XXII, v. 44

<sup>6</sup> John, ch. XVIII, v. 15

\* See *Ermanos Jahrbuch*, 1935. Article by Robert Eisler, p. 375

Cross could not have been invented. Therefore if at all, the tragic experiences in Gethsemane must have been reported later by one who shared them, the one to whom those pathetic words were spoken: 'My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death'. (I refuse to believe that the disciples could have heard those words and then fallen asleep.) The friend to whom they were spoken, who was present when Jesus prayed, and who saw the 'sweat as great drops of blood' was probably the same man who, next day was present at the Crucifixion and heard the words from the Cross. To one who had shared the agony in the garden, this would not have been surprising.

But now the great question is: why was Jesus in such despair? It is out of the question that death could have inspired any fear in a man such as he, when thousands of ordinary young men in our time faced it with equanimity; one need only read the citations of some of those who received the V.C. posthumously. Therefore in Jesus there must have been fear of another kind—was it perhaps not death that he was afraid of, but birth? new creation? In Gethsemane for the first time he felt he was not supported by the loving Father, he had a first intimation of being utterly alone—and that at a moment when he felt most in need of help.

Some years before, he had spoken of the necessity of being 'born again', but that was a birth to be

aspired at in order to 'enter the kingdom of God'; a promised state of bliss following upon 'doing truth'. How different would be the birth into the unknown, the unforeseen? Such birth is conditional upon the real death of everything known before; all those who have gone through the 'dark night of the soul' have borne witness to it. That was the death into which Jesus was plunging, and we may only guess at his agony after a whole life spent in constant identification with the Father: 'The Father is in me and I in him', he said; a feeling expressed more than once.

But in that last night he was in the throes of a terrible conflict: at one moment, hope against hope that there might be some escape; 'If it be possible, let this cup pass from me'; at the next a quick return to the familiar protecting arms: 'nevertheless not as I will but as thou wilt'. It would not be so unbearable if the Father were with him. But all these words show dread of something he had never realised before. How different were they to the earlier confident: 'But now I go my way to him that sent me'?

In the Garden of Gethsemane, there is no such confidence, only resignation at best. Actually the very words he uses tell us what he feared: in the cup, the magic 'was' is the new birth, it is the womb of life.

From that forest of despair to Golgotha, only a few hours elapsed, but in those hours the child burst

<sup>7</sup> John, ch. XVI, v. 5

through the placenta and on the Cross the umbilical cord was rent asunder. It was not the physical torture inflicted by the Jews which elicited the despairing cry: 'Eloi, Eloi, Lama Sabachthani', but the far greater agony of the bursting bonds between himself and his Father. In that moment he plunged into Nothing and knew it had all been *Neti, Neti*. As he descended into Nothing, with his last breath he proclaimed the Truth.

*Ravello-Darlington. 1954.*

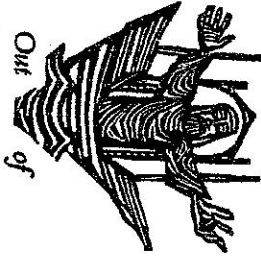
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