A Forerunner of The New Race

By Tara Mata-

(An actual experience in her life)

THOSE who have read Doctor Bucke's *Cosmic Consciousness* and Edward Carpenter's *Towards Democracy* know that these authors believe that Cosmic Consciousness is a natural faculty of man, and that a future race of men on this earth will be born with this faculty well developed, and not merely latent as it is now. Bucke's theory is that, just as man advanced from the state of simple consciousness, which he shared with the animal kingdom, into a state of self-consciousness, peculiar to man alone, and marked by the development of language, so he must inevitably come into a higher state of consciousness, distinguished by a cosmic or universal understanding.

Bucke maintains that the increasing number of people who have attained some degree of Cosmic Consciousness in the past few centuries is proof that these persons constitute the vanguard or forerunners of the new race. Among those whom Bucke believes to have had the cosmic sense more or less well developed (in recent centuries) are St. John of the Cross, Francis Bacon, Jacob Behman, Blaise Pascal, Spinoza, Swendenborg, William Blake, William Wordsworth, Alexander Pushkin, Honore de Balzac, Emerson, Tennyson, Thoreau, Walt Whitman, Edward Carpenter and Ramakrishna.

Besides these famous men, it is doubtless true that many hundreds of men and women in each century, unknown to fame, have been exalted to some degree of Cosmic Consciousness. There is no doubt in my mind that the message of Yogoda in this country and this century has been the means by which hundreds and perhaps thousands of Americans have achieved, through the meditation practices taught them, a glimpse of divine consciousness. Some few students have gone farther, and attained very high illumination. Here we have an example of how the cosmic sense is being developed in larger and larger numbers, paving the way for the great race of the future.

One paragraph from Bucke's book is well worth quoting here:

"In contact with the flux of Cosmic Consciousness all religions known and named today will be melted down. The human soul will be revolutionized. Religion will absolutely dominate the race. It will not depend on tradition. It will not be believed and disbelieved. It will not be a part of life, belonging to certain hours, times, occasions. It will not be in sacred books nor in the mouths of priests. It will not dwell in churches and meetings and forms and days. Its life will not be in prayers, hymns nor discourses. It will not depend on special revelations, on the words of gods who came down to teach, nor on any Bible or Bibles. It will have no mission to save men from their sins or to secure them entrance to heaven. It will not teach a future immortality nor future glories, for immortality and all glory will exist in the here and now. The evidence of immortality will live in every heart as sight in every eye. Doubt of God and of eternal life will be as impossible as is now doubt of existence; the evidence of each will be the same. Religion will govern every minute of every day of all life. Churches, priests, forms, creeds, prayers, all agents, all intermediaries between the individual man and God will be permanently replaced by
direct unmistakable intercourse. Sin will no longer exist nor will salvation be desired. Men will not worry about death or a future, about the kingdom of heaven, about what may come with and after the cessation of the life of the present body. Each soul will feel and know itself to be immortal, will feel and know that the entire universe with all its good and with all its beauty is for it and belongs to it forever. The world peopled by men possessing Cosmic Consciousness will be as far removed from the world of today as this is from the world as it was before the advent of self-consciousness. . . . This new race is in act of being born from us, and in the near future it will occupy and possess the earth."

The fact that there is a technique, such as Yogoda teaches, whereby Cosmic Consciousness can be attained, is in itself proof that this higher sense is indeed an inherent faculty of all men, needing but the necessary training to call it forth. Most people believe that divine knowledge comes to only a few chosen people, and that the average man can approach no nearer to God than his "faith" will take him. Realization that there is a definite Way to contact God, a technique usable by all men in all circumstances, has come with such a liberating shock to many Yogoda students that they feel they have undergone a new birth.

I have one such case in mind—a man who, as soon as he had heard the Yogoda message, was swept up into Cosmic Consciousness. He is the only man of true Illumination, outside of Swami Yogananda, whom I have known personally, though I have heard or read of a number of other Yogoda students who have had a more or less similar experience.

This man was possessed of intense religious faith and aspiration. Though well read in the sacred scriptures of the world, especially those of the Hindus, he knew that this intellectual knowledge was barren and stony; it did not feed the soul-hunger within him. He did not wish merely to read about spiritual food, but to taste it. Under the even tenor of his days there yawned a black abyss of despair—despair that he was worthy of any direct contact with God, since no such experience was given to him. He finally came to doubt, not God, but the possibility that he would ever be able to have more than an intellectual comprehension of Him. This conviction struck at the roots of his life, and made it seem a worthless and meaningless thing.

Into this dark night of his soul came the light of Yogoda. After attending a few of the public Yogoda lectures, and before taking the class lessons, this man felt the heavy weight of despair lifting from his heart. Returning to his home one night from the last of the public lectures, he was conscious of a great peace within himself. He felt that in some deep fundamental way, he had become a different person. An impulse urged him to look into a mirror in his room, that he might see the new man. There he saw, not his one face, but the face of the Hindu teacher whose lecture he had attended that evening. The floodgates of joy broke in his soul; he was inundated with waves of indescribable ecstasy. Words that had been merely words to him before—bliss, immortality, eternity, truth, divine love—became, in the twinkling of an eye, the core of his being, the essence of his life, the only possible reality. Realization that these deep, everlasting founts of joy existed in every heart, that this immortal life underlay all the mortality of humanity, that this eternal, all-inclusive love enveloped and supported and guided every particle, every atom of creation, burst upon him with a surety, a divine certainty that caused his whole being to pour forth in a flood of praise and gratitude.
He knew, not with his mind alone, but with his heart and soul, with every cell and molecule of his body. The sublime splendor and joy of this discovery were so vast that he felt that centuries, millennia, countless eons of suffering were as nothing, as less than nothing, if by such means this bliss could be obtained. Sin, sorrow, death—these were but words now, words without meaning, words swallowed up by joy as minnows by the seven seas.

He was aware, during this first period of illumination and during the weeks which followed, of a number of physiological changes within himself. The most striking was what seemed a rearrangement of molecular structures in his brain, or the opening up of new cell-territory there. Ceaselessly, day and night, he was conscious of this work going on. It seemed as though a kind of electrical drill was boring out new cellular thought-channels. This phenomenon is strong proof of Bucke's theory that Cosmic Consciousness is a natural faculty of man, for it gives evidence that the brain cells which are connected with this faculty are already present in man, although inactive or non-functioning in the majority of human beings at the present time.

Another important change was felt in his spinal column. The whole spine seemed turned into iron for several weeks, so that, when he sat to meditate on God, he felt anchored forever, able to sit in one place eternally without motion or consciousness of any bodily function. At times an influx of super-human strength invaded him, and he felt that he was carrying the whole universe on his shoulders. The elixir of life, the nectar of immortality, he felt flowing in his veins as an actual, tangible force. It seemed like a quicksilver, or a sort of electrical, fluid light throughout his body.

During the weeks of his illumination, he felt no need of food or sleep. But he conformed his outward life to the pattern of his household, and ate and slept when his family did. All food seemed pure spirit to him, and in sleep he was pillowed on the "everlasting arms," awakening to a joy past all words, past all powers of description.

He had previously suffered from chronic catarrh and had been a heavy smoker; now his body was purged of all sickness, and desire for nicotine was wiped completely from his consciousness. His family and friends were aware of a great change in his appearance and manner; his face shone with a radiant light, his eyes were pools of joy. Strangers spoke to him, irresistibly drawn by a strange sympathy; on the street-car, children would come over to sit on his lap, asking him to visit them.

The whole universe was to him bathed in a sea of love; he said to himself many times, "Now at last I know what Love is! This is God's love, shaming the noblest human affection. Eternal love, unconquerable love, all-satisfying love!" He knew beyond all possibility or thought of doubt that Love creates and sustains the universe, and that all created things human or sub-human, were destined to discover this Love, this immortal bliss that was the very essence of life. He felt his mind expand, his understanding reach out, endlessly widening, growing, touching everything in the universe, binding all things, all thoughts to himself. He was "center everywhere, circumference nowhere."

The air that he breathed was friendly, intimate, conscious of life. He felt that all the world was "home" to him, that he could never feel strange or alien to any place again; that the mountains, the sea, the distant lands which he had never seen, would be as much his own as the home of his boyhood. Everywhere he looked, he saw the "atom-dance" of nature; the air was filled with myriad moving pin-pricks of light.
During these weeks, he went about his daily duties as usual, but with a hitherto unknown efficiency and speed. Typed papers flew off his machine, completed without error in a fourth of his customary time. Fatigue was unknown to him; his work seemed like child's play, happy and carefree. Conversing in person or over the telephone with his clients, his inward joy covered every action and circumstance with a cosmic significance, for to him these men, this telephone, this table, this voice was God, God manifesting Himself in another of His fascinating disguises.

In the midst of his work, he would suddenly be freshly overwhelmed by the goodness of God Who had given him this incredible, unspeakable happiness. His breath would stop completely at such times; the awe which he felt would be accompanied by an absolute stillness within and without. Underlying all his consciousness was a sense of immeasurable and unutterable gratitude; a longing for others to know the joy which lay within them; but most of all, a divine knowledge, past all human comprehension, that all was well with the world, that everything was leading to the goal of Cosmic Consciousness, immortal bliss.

This state of illumination was present with the man for about two months, and then gradually wore away. It has never returned with all its pristine force, though certain features, especially the sense of divine peace and joy, return whenever he practices the Yogoda meditation exercises.

We can well imagine, with Doctor Bucke, that a race of men, possessing as a normal and permanent faculty this sense of Cosmic Consciousness, would soon turn the earth into a paradise, a planet fit for Christs and Buddhas, and polestar for the wheeling universe.

(The End)