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"GREAT IS TRUTH AND IT SHALL PREVAIL"

ALTERNATE SATURDAYS

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THE PASSING OF SRI AUROBINDO ITS INNER SIGNIFICANCE AND CONSEQUENCE

I

"No one can write about my life because it is not on the surface for men to see"—this is what Sri Aurobindo said when the idea of a definitive biography was mooted. There is no doubt that, except perhaps for his brilliant academic career in England and the early phases of his fiery political period in India, his life was too deeply inward for its utmost sense and motive and achievement to be unravelled by a narration of external events supplemented by a psychological commentary. To arrive at some vision of it one would have to catch an inkling of not only the vast mysteries of traditional spiritual realisation but also the dazzling immensities of the new earth-transforming light which he called the Supermind and which he endeavoured for forty years to bring down *in toto* for suffering humanity. As with his life, so too with the phenomenon which the world has reported to be his death. Sri Aurobindo "dying" cannot but be as inward, as profound as Sri Aurobindo living.

No Yogi dies in the ordinary meaning of the word: his consciousness always exceeds the formula of the physical body, he is beyond and greater than his material sheath even while he inhabits it, and his action on mankind is essentially through his free and ample spirit to which both life and death are small masks of a fully aware immortality in the limitless being of the Divine and the Eternal. All the more inapplicable is the term "death" to the passing of a Master of Yoga like Sri Aurobindo. For, it is well known that the transformative power of the Supermind was at work in the very cells of his body and that it commanded an efficacy physical no less than psychological, to which hundreds of his disciples can testify because of the wonderful curative impact of it on their own ailments. This efficacy was not confined to his Ashram: telegraphic offices all over India will bear witness to the daily flashing of appeals for help in various illnesses, including those that medical science often despairs of, and then messages of thanksgiving for relief and remedy by spiritual means. No, Sri Aurobindo the Yogi of the Supermind descending into the outer as well as the inner being and bringing a divine life on earth in addition to the infinite immortality of the Beyond cannot be looked upon as passing away on account of old age and physical causes. Whatever the purely clinical picture, it must have behind it a significance integral with his highly significant and immeasurably more-than-physical life of spiritual attainment.

That there should be a clinical picture instead of a miraculous vanishing trick is exactly in keeping with Sri Aurobindo's Yoga. His Yoga was meant to be a process and a progression of the evolutionary method: it aimed not at a bewildering superimposition of divine qualities which still left the grain of human nature unchanged, but at a spiritually organic luminous growth, an assimilation by nature of supernature, a marvellous and yet no freakish transfiguration, an intense working out within a lifetime of what was not foreign to the purpose of terrestrial evolution but its inmost meaning whose unfoldment is in the very logic of things, though that unfoldment may ordinarily take aeons. The evolutionary was always fused with the revolutionary in Sri Aurobindo's Yoga of the Supermind and, just as his life's audacities, like those of his art of poetry and prose, were always felicitous, full of ease and aptness, gloriously adapting nature rather than violating it, so too the adventure of his death would be no utter supernormality but carry for all its profound import and exceptional mode some semblance of the common passage to the stillness and the shadow.

What medical science would try to describe as physical causes are, therefore, far indeed from being any contradiction of the thesis that Sri Aurobindo did not pass away as a result of them. And this thesis, we may now add, is based not only on Sri Aurobindo's special spiritual status but also on a number of remarkable physical facts. Doctors have declared, on the strength of typical non-response to stimuli, that he entered into deep coma in consequence of an extreme uraemic condition following

upon a failure of all treatment. As every medical tyro knows, such a state of uraemic coma admits of no return to consciousness. Yet to the surprise of the doctors attending on him, Sri Aurobindo opened his eyes at frequent intervals and asked for a drink or inquired what the time was! This repeated occurrence of the scientifically impossible leads one to believe that the deep uraemic coma was intermixed, as it were, with a very conscious Yogic self-withdrawal from an instrument which was too damaged to be kept for common use but which yet could not quite bar the uncommon will of its master. Here was no brain of mere carbon and iron and phosphorus: here was the subtilised servitor of a mind that had sat on the peaks of God and from there could command response in the midst of all material determinism. Even half an hour before the breathing ceased and the heart stopped beating, Sri Aurobindo looked out from his calm compassionate eyes, spoke the name of the doctor by his side and drank some water. This was the strangest uraemic coma in medical history.

Nor did the extraordinary character of the passing of this Yogi of Yogis end there. In a case certified to be one of complete pervasion of the system by the accumulation in the blood of body poisons which should be thrown off by the kidneys, the system gets discoloured in a short time, a blackening grows apace and then decomposition sets in. But when there was a consultation of doctors, both French and Indian, two and a half days after the death-certificate had been signed, Sri Aurobindo's body was found to have retained the beautiful white-gold colour that had distinguished it during his life and there was not the slightest trace of decomposition. It was just as it had been at the moment of his passing—1-26 A.M. on December 5—and also just as it had been 41 hours later when instead of the scheduled burial the famous announcement was made by the Mother, indefinitely postponing it: "The funeral of Sri Aurobindo has not taken place today. His body is charged with such a concentration of supramental light that there is no sign of decomposition and the body will be kept lying on his bed so long as it remains intact." It lay intact for several days in a grandeur of victorious quiet, with thousands upon thousands having *darshan* of it. Only at 5 P.M. on December 9, in a rosewood case lined with silver and satin, it was buried most simply and without any sectarian religious ceremony in a vault specially prepared in the centre of the Ashram courtyard. Even when the body was put into the case, there was neither actual decay nor the odour of death, though marks were present to indicate that the miraculous preservative light had begun to depart. The light may be said to have remained in full for over 90 hours—a period more than double the record time which Lyons' *Medical Jurisprudence* gives of a body keeping undecayed in the climatic conditions of the East.

When during the transition to life's close and even after, in the very thick of death, a challenging lordship is manifested over matter and the transformative power of the Supermind that was ever increasingly Sri Aurobindo's is not denied but paradoxically proved, it is—to say the least—reasonable to see the whole event of his passing as the culmination of a momentous deliberate fight whose implications must be read only by understanding a little the supramental light. But here the question arises: If the fight was deliberate, did he give any sign of its forthcoming? The answer is: Yes. It is indeed true that, though the great illuminating letters to his disciples had not quite ceased nor the fine humour forgotten altogether its leap and flash nor yet the wide look on the world's movement turned away, he had been for the last couple of years rather reticent about his plans for the future and more and more absorbed in his own inner spiritual work and in literary creation, especially his epic poem *Savitri: a Legend and a Symbol*. But through the reticence and the absorption a few hints did glimmer out of a strange and dire possibility he might have to confront in the course of his mission.

Some time in November the predictions of a Mahratta astrologer were read out to him. Their focal points were the years 1950 and 1964. The astrologer wrote: "In 1950, as the sun and the moon are in conjunction

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and the moon is the master of the twelfth house, there is a chance of Sri Aurobindo's self-undoing." About 1964 he opined: "In that year some mighty miracle of Sri Aurobindo's power will be witnessed. Aged 93, he will withdraw from the world at his own will after completing his mission." On hearing this, Sri Aurobindo raised his hand and half-jocularly said: "Oh, ninety-three!"—as if he had found that age too far away for his mission's achievement. With regard to 1950 a disciple remarked that it must be a year of importance, since important things had happened in Sri Aurobindo's life at intervals of 12 years. 1926 was an outstanding landmark in Sri Aurobindo's spiritual career: it is called the year of assurance of victory and marks practically the beginning of the Ashram with the Mother radiantly presiding over it. In 1938—12 years after that landmark—Sri Aurobindo passed through a physical crisis by falling and fracturing his thigh-bone. 1950—with its indication of a possibility of "self-undoing"—makes again a 12 years' lapse. And, though the astrologer took only his forecast of a memorable ninety-third year in Sri Aurobindo's life very seriously, Sri Aurobindo seemed to regard his statements as not quite fantastic. He said: "The man has got hold of some truth." Then he was asked: "Isn't the prediction about your 'self-undoing' this year nonsensical? Surely you are not going to leave us?" In his grand unhurrying way came the calm counter-query of just one mysterious word: "Why?"

A most surprising word, this, to all who had expected that an unusual longevity as a result of the Supermind's increasing descent was part of Sri Aurobindo's programme. Another surprise was fraught with a strange foreboding joy. To those who looked after him or worked in his room he gave a sign of sudden personal tenderness. Sri Aurobindo was not exactly a demonstrative nature: he had the subtle kindness as of an all-enveloping ether and though his extreme compassion is evident both in the labour he undertook and in many letters written to his disciples in difficulty, physical expressions of his great paternal attitude were rare. But now for a brief moment there went out to his attendants—to each in a different way and on a different occasion—a distinct outward gesture of affection, as if he had wished them to know before it might be too late his appreciation of their service. The gesture, exceedingly sweet and welcome though it was, appeared to hold vaguely in it the poignancy of a possible leave-taking.

A third surprise may be recorded: a remark fell oddly on the ear of the disciple whose job it was to take down whatever Sri Aurobindo dictated by way of letter or book. The Master had been busy with his *Savitri* for several years, revising the text he had composed earlier and constantly adding to it, amplifying the significances, enriching the story, extending the symbolism, catching more and more intensely the vision of the super-human planes of existence and consciousness to which he had access, breathing with an ever truer thrill the vast rhythms of the movements of the Gods with which he had grown familiar. Out of some unfathomable silence he would draw out golden phrase and apocalyptic line—wait as if he had eternities to throw away—proceed with splendid bursts of occult imagery and revealing description—hark back to expand or amend, with an eye to the tiniest detail of punctuation or sequence, and again press forward with a comprehensive yet meticulous inspiration. A lordly, a leisurely labour was *Savitri*, conceived with something of the antique temperament which rejoiced in massive structures—especially the temperament of the makers of *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* which take all human life and human thought in their spacious scope and blend the workings of the hidden worlds of Gods and Titans and Demons with the activities of earth. A kind of cosmic sweep was Sri Aurobindo's and he wanted his poem to be a many-sided multi-coloured carving out in word-music of the gigantic secrets of the supramental Yoga. More than fifty thousand lines were thought necessary to house the unique vision and the unparalleled experience. A patience as vast as that vision and that experience characterised always Sri Aurobindo's dealings with this epic. Even the version on which he was engaged was the eleventh or the twelfth. Time without end appeared to be at his disposal when he sat dictating lines like those about the central figure of the poem:

*As in a mystic and dynamic dance
A priestess of immaculate ecstasies
Inspired and ruled from Truth's revealing vault
Moves in some prophet cavern of the Gods,
A heart of silence in the hands of joy
Inhabited with rich creative beats
A body like a parable of dawn
That seemed a niche for veiled divinity
Or golden temple door to things beyond.*

But all of a sudden a couple of months before the fateful December 5 Sri Aurobindo startled his scribe by saying: "I must finish *Savitri* soon."

Of course, all this does not fix the very date of his passing nor does it show any desire to depart, but clearly the grim struggle in which he got involved and which came to a close on that date had loomed already as a likelihood in the near future. And a certain fact about *Savitri* fits in here with the aptest symbolism. Though he strove to finish his epic soon, it just fell short of completion. It had been projected in twelve Books, with an epilogue, and while even the epilogue got written—at least as a general first draft—and the Book of Beginnings, the Book of the Traveller of the Worlds, the Book of the Divine Mother, the Book of Birth and Quest, the Book of Life, the Book of Love, the Book of Fate and several other Books are either in print or in manuscript, the one single Book

which does not exist in any form at all—except for a short piece written a long time ago and meant to be revised and included in a much larger whole—is the Book of Death. Most suggestive is this fact, as if that Book could not be composed until the Grim Spectre had been grappled with in actuality and as if Sri Aurobindo had been waiting for some mighty crisis of his own bodily existence before he could launch on this part of his Legend and Symbol.

Everything goes to prove that what happened in the small hours of that December day was no purely physical casualty, no fell accident to the seeker of the life divine on earth, but a dreadful gamble freely accepted, an awesome trial undergone for a set purpose, a battle faced in every wounding detail with open eyes and joined with the explicit possibility threatening him of losing in it the most gifted and glorious bodily instrument forged by the manifesting Spirit that is for ever. But the question still stands to be answered: What could be the reason of the perilous experiment? It is doubtful whether any answer expressible by the mere mind can be entirely satisfying. Perhaps none ought to be attempted and we might rest with the conviction that Sri Aurobindo of his own will did what he deemed most necessary for the advancement of his work and we might leave it to the Mother—Sri Aurobindo's partner in that work—to unroll the supreme rationale of the Master's will in the actual developments of the Integral Yoga in the future. However, the Master himself never completely discouraged the efforts of the mind to comprehend the Spirit's manifold action. Intellectual formulation of direct inner knowledge or else of intuitive seizures of the Unknown was a thing he fostered, and if by some rapport with his own luminous philosophy we could arrive at a mental glimmer of the Aurobindonian Supermind's intention we should be doing what he himself from beyond our gross senses would perhaps not refuse to sanction.

II

The core of Sri Aurobindo's philosophy and Yoga is the dynamic Truth-consciousness that is the Supermind. By "Truth-consciousness" is meant that status and force of the Divine which brings out of the Divine's absolute transcendence into a perfect manifestation of Self-being and Self-becoming the potentialities of the play of the One who is at the same time the Many. This manifestation is a complete harmony in which exist and function the creative truths, the flawless originals, the golden archetypes of all that is in our imperfect cosmos in which the Divine has posited a difficult evolution of matter, life-force and mind—with a soul supporting them—out of a vast Inconscience, a primal darkness set by Him as the nether pole to the transcendent Absolute. Between the two poles and above the evolving earth and below the archetypal Supermind are various occult planes—Subtle Matter, Vitality, Mind, Overmind and, at the back of the first trio, Psyche—with their beings and movements and there is a complex interaction in the whole system of cosmos on cosmos. All this was known in general to the ancient seers and they saw in man who is the microcosm a threefold reality concretised into what they termed three sheaths or *shariras*—the gross outer, the subtle inner, the causal higher. The last is the substance of the Supermind, compacted of its creative light of total knowledge, infinite power, immortal bliss. But the ancients did not realise that the earthly evolution is meant not only to release the being into the cosmic Self and into ever more deep, ever more high poises of consciousness and into some eternity beyond birth and death but also to bring into earth-terms the dynamic modes of the widths, the depths and the heights and ultimately the supreme perfection of the Truth-plane—the *kārana sharira*, the causal body—so that earth-terms themselves may be fulfilled and not merely serve as bright points of departure into the wide and the deep and the high. In short, the ancients lacked a full and organised possession of the Supermind's purpose and power: the fusion of the supramental light with the inmost soul and the descent of it into mind and life-energy and even the physical body, transforming and divinising them in entirety, are Sri Aurobindo's special discovery and Yoga. With the supramental descent Sri Aurobindo aimed at creating a new humanity enjoying true self-consummation and living divinely in every field, and it is with this aim that he sought to form an initiating double centre for the new humanity by his own supramentalisation and the Mother's.

Supramentalisation involves, among its final elements, freedom from disease, duration of life at will and a change in the functionings of the body—all, of course, as a material expression of the divine nature emerging in the human and not as an outer aggrandisement of an expanding inner egoism. But to compass these final elements which alone would found with utter security a supramental earth-existence the Yogi has to tackle at last the bedrock of the Inconscience, the dark basis of the submerged Divine from which evolution seems to issue. Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, taking upon themselves as representative pioneers the age-long difficulties of all human nature, have been striking against this bedrock for the last decade and a half. "No, it is not with the Empyrean that I am busy," wrote Sri Aurobindo in 1936 to a disciple and added: "I wish it were. It is rather with the opposite end of things; it is in the Abyss that I have to plunge to build a bridge between the two. But that too is necessary for my work and one has to face it." In the course of this plunge, as layer after layer of the occult Inconscient is torn open and the supramental light sought to be called down into it, various dreadful possibilities rise up and great inner wounds as well as severe bodily tensions have to be endured. But throughout the fight the Master of the Supermind

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carries the talisman, as it were, that can ward off the fatal blow. Immense, in spite of the sublimest light within his very body, are his trials and yet he has also the capacity to emerge finally the victor and blaze a path of ultimate triumph for the men who follow him. Thus to emerge had been Sri Aurobindo's plan, so far as the plan can be read through his philosophical writings and his personal letters. Both the plan and the non-egoistic world-wide attitude of an Avatar find voice in a letter of 1935: "I am not doing anything for myself, as I have no personal need of anything, neither of salvation (*Moksha*) nor supramentalisation. If I am seeking after supramentalisation it is because it is a thing that has to be done for the earth-consciousness and if it is not done in myself, it cannot be done in others."

Yes, Sri Aurobindo, in his published pronouncements, appears to have envisaged the need and therefore the prospect of himself constituting together with the Mother the starting-point of supramental humanity. But in the same pronouncements he leaves also a small margin for a different *dénouement*. A letter of 1934 speaks in general about the ways of a vessel of God: "The Divinity acts according to the consciousness of the Truth above and the *Lila* below and It acts according to the need of the *Lila*, not according to men's ideas of what It should do or should not do." A clearer hint of unexpected turns in the Divine's dealings is contained in a letter of 1935: "Why should the Divine be tied down to succeed in all his operations? What if failure suits him better and serves better the ultimate purpose? What rigid primitive notions are these about the Divine!" This suggests that apparent defeat of the Divine's grandest goal could even be a concealed victory, a way precisely to reach that goal with greater swiftness by means of a paradoxical strategy. And, all conditions considered, it is indeed such a strategy that seems to have been employed by Sri Aurobindo when to the superficial gaze he succumbed to a renal disorder.

The whole supramental Yoga was indeed like a great general's campaign against forces that had never been combatted before by any spiritual figure. In the teeth of every common experience, every posture of human living down the ages, even every articulate spiritual tradition, this Yoga proceeded into an embattled darkness: only a fearless fighter like Sri Aurobindo, only a genius like him of the Spirit militant could have intuited the mighty secret of the epiphany in evolution and planned the transformative onslaught on established nature and moved ahead in the frame of mind that is disclosed in yet another letter of 1935: "It is not for personal greatness that I am seeking to bring down the Supermind. I care nothing for greatness or littleness in the human sense... If human reason regards me as a fool for trying to do what Krishna did not try, I do not in the least care. There is no question of X or Y or anybody else in that. It is a question between the Divine and myself—whether it is the Divine Will or not, whether I am sent to bring that down or open the way to its descent or at least make it more possible or not. Let all men jeer at me if they will or all Hell fall upon me if it will for my presumption—I go on till I conquer or perish. This is the spirit in which I seek the Supermind, no hunting for greatness for myself or others." A splendid heroism of selflessness is here, the vividest picture of a warrior Yogi who would take any risk if thereby he could press closer to his objective—and though the formula is "I conquer or perish" the frame of mind is one that might easily avail itself of a yet more audacious formula: "I perish to conquer." To embrace this formula what would be required is simply the sense that, by sacrificing in a final grapple with the black powers of the Inconscient a wonderful body tinged with supramental light, those powers would be terribly exhausted and the golden godhead above tremendously pulled towards earth and into this body's partner in the Yoga of the Supermind. As soon as the momentous sense would dawn Sri Aurobindo would be ready—supreme general that he was—to alter his entire scheme of battle, relinquish his whole line of previously prepared forts, abandon the old method of advance, change suddenly his well-plotted direction and, instead of attempting to supramentalise his physical existence in every detail, move imperturbably towards some titanic ambush, cast away the very guard given him by the Supermind and go down fighting to win all in secret while losing all on the surface.

Nothing except a colossal strategic sacrifice of this kind in order that the physical transformation of the Mother may be immeasurably hastened and rendered absolutely secure and, through it, a divine life on earth for humanity may get rooted and be set aflower—nothing less can explain the passing of Sri Aurobindo. There would also be implied in the holocaust a world-saving action by the sweet power of which Sri Aurobindo speaks in a letter as far back as 1934: "It is only divine Love which can bear the burden I have to bear, that all have to bear who have sacrificed everything else to the one aim of uplifting earth out of its darkness to the Divine." We may say that some undreamt-of catastrophe would have overwhelmed the world if the vast poison had not been drawn away into the body of this one man whose spiritual consciousness, armed with divine Love, had made him a universalised individual incarnating the Transcendent's will. And here we may refer again to the fact that the obstacles confronting Sri Aurobindo in his Yoga were not really personal. They were representative of the race and he gladly accepted their retarding perilous load in spite of or perhaps because of his own exceptional gifts and abilities. Apropos a query about some temporary complaint in the Mother's body many years ago, he wrote: "We have not sought perfection for our own separate sake, but as part of a general change—creating a possibility of perfection for others. That could not have been done without

our accepting and facing the difficulties of the realisation and the transformation and overcoming them for ourselves. It has been done to a sufficient degree on the other planes—but not yet on the most material part of the physical plane. Till it is done, the fight there continues... The Mother's difficulties are not her own; she bears the difficulties of others and those that are inherent in the general action and work for the transformation. If it had been otherwise, it would be a very different matter." Obviously, then, whatever sacrifice is made by Sri Aurobindo or the Mother cannot be one imposed on them by personal defects. Theirs the unique *adhars* or vehicles of Yoga which could, if left to themselves, surmount every obstacle. This, in the present context of Sri Aurobindo's departure, means that death is not anything he was obliged to undergo on account of some lack in himself. It is some stupendous crisis of the evolving earth-consciousness—some rebellious clouding upsurge of the divinely attacked Inconscient—that has been diverted to his own life, concentrated in the mortal risk of the uraemic coma and utilised by the master strategist for an occult advantage to the work he had assumed—the work which was always more important than direct personal consummation.

But it would be of the essence of the sacrifice and the strategy, as well as typically Aurobindonian, that a keenly struggling resistance should be there together with the large and tranquil acceptance. That is why we have said that Sri Aurobindo has gone down fighting. Never to acquiesce in any shortcoming of earth-nature was his motto, for he saw the very secret of evolution to be the manifestation in earth-nature of what superficially looks impossible—the quivering forth of vitality and sensation in seemingly lifeless matter, the glimmering out of mind and reason in apparently instinctive animality, the all-perfecting revelation of Supermind in ostensibly groping intelligence, stumbling life-force and mortal body. So there never could be for Sri Aurobindo either a surrender to ordinary world-conditions or a flight into peace away from the world. An inviolable timeless peace he had always known ever since those three grand days in Baroda in 1908 when through a complete silencing of the mind the absolute experience of Nirvana which has been the terminus of so many other Yogas became his—not as a terminus but only as a base for further conquests. As for surrender, he could surrender to nothing except the Divine. Consequently, he battled for the Supermind's descent till his last breath—calling the immortal Sun of the Spirit down, passionately packing his earthly envelope with the supramental light so much so indeed that he could keep for several days that envelope free from the taint of discolouration and decay. To battle thus in the very moments of the sacrifice was in tune with his whole life-endeavour. Has he not himself expounded in a letter the technique of triumph in the midst of seeming downfall? "Even if I foresee an adverse result I must work for the one that I consider should be; for it keeps alive the force, the principle of Truth which I serve and gives it a possibility to triumph hereafter so that it becomes part of the working of the future favourable fate even if the fate of the hour is adverse."

With these far-seeing phrases of the Master we may close our attempt to elucidate a little the mystery of that look of magnificent meditation with which he lay from early morning of December 5 for more than 111 hours in his simple bed in the room where he had spent over two decades of intense world-work. "Spiritually imperial"—this is the only description fitting the appearance of his body: the heroic countenance with its white beard and its flowing white hair above the massive forehead, its closed quiet eyes and its wide-nostrilled aquiline nose and its firm lips whose corners were touched with beatitude, the broad and smooth shoulders, the arms flexed to place on the indomitable chest hand over gentle, artistic yet capable hand, the strong manly waist covered by an ample cloth of gold-bordered silk, even the legs stretched out with an innate kingship reminiscent of their having trod through seventy-nine years with holy feet at once blessing and possessing earth. The atmosphere of the room was vibrant with a sacred power to cleanse and illumine, a power which appeared to emanate from the Master's poise of conquering rest and to invade the bodies of all the watchers with almost a hammering intensity from over their heads as if, in redoubled force because of Sri Aurobindo's selfless physical withdrawal, there came pouring down to humanity the life-transfiguring grace of the Supermind.

And we may add that somehow the personal presence itself of Sri Aurobindo grew intenser. He who had so long kept to a room for the sake of concentratedly hastening the Yogic process of transformation the wonderful bliss and dynamis of which the Mother had been canalising by her physical nearness to the disciples—he by setting aside his most exterior sheath broke out into a new intimacy with his followers and took them even more directly into his immense being. But it would hardly do justice to that being if we thought of it as merely a pervading greatness. Behind the material envelope are other organised vehicles—subtle and causal—and Sri Aurobindo had brought the remote causal effectively into the proximate subtle and was pressing it into the outer sheath at the time of his strategic sacrifice. To quote again his words: "The transformation has been done to a sufficient degree on the other planes." This means that he held the Supermind embodied in his subtle *sharira* and that he was under no occult necessity, no law of subtle nature, to give up the latter for the purpose of returning to some plane of the soul's rest before being reborn with a new subtle body as well as a new gross one. Sri Aurobindo at the hour of his physical withdrawal was in a position to do much more than be the cosmic and transcendent Purusha that his supramental Yoga had made his incarnate personality. He could actually be that

SRI AUROBINDO AND NIRVANA

An unpublished excerpt from "Letters of Sri Aurobindo—4th Series" now in the press

"To reach Nirvana was the first radical result of my own Yoga. It threw me suddenly into a condition above and without thought, unstained by any mental or vital movement, there was no ego, no real world—only when one looked through the immobile senses, something perceived or bore upon its sheer silence a world of empty forms, materialised shadows without true substance. There was no One or many even, only just absolutely That, featureless, relationless, sheer, indescribable, unthinkable, absolute, yet supremely real and solely real. This was no mental realisation nor something glimpsed somewhere above,—no abstraction,—it was positive, the only positive reality—although not a spatial physical world, pervading, occupying or rather flooding and drowning this semblance of a physical world, leaving no room or space for any reality but itself, allowing nothing else to seem at all actual, positive or substantial. I cannot say there was anything exhilarating or rapturous in the experience, as it then came to me—the ineffable Ananda I had years afterwards,—but what it brought was an inexpressible Peace, a stupendous silence, an infinity of release and freedom. I lived in that Nirvana day and night before it began to admit other things into itself or modify itself at all, and the inner heart of the experience, a constant memory of it and its power to return remained until in the end it began to disappear into a greater Superconsciousness from above. But meanwhile realisation added itself to realisation and fused itself with this original experience. At an early stage the aspect of an illusionary world gave place to one in which illusion* is only a small surface phenomenon with an immense Divine Reality behind it and a supreme Divine

Reality above it and an intense Divine Reality in the heart of every thing that had seemed at first only a cinematic shape or shadow. And this was no reimprisonment in the senses, no diminution or fall from supreme experience, it came rather as a constant heightening and widening of the Truth; it was the spirit that saw objects, not the senses, and the Peace, the silence, the freedom in Infinity remained always, with the world or all worlds only as a continuous incident in the timeless eternity of the Divine.

Now that is the whole trouble in my approach to Mayavada. Nirvana in my liberated consciousness turned out to be the beginning of my realisation, a first step towards the complete thing, not the sole true attainment possible or even a culminating finale. It came unasked, unsought for, though quite welcome. I had no least idea about it before, no aspiration towards it, in fact my aspiration was towards just the opposite, spiritual power to help the world and to do my work in it, yet it came—without even a "May I come in?" or a "By your leave." It just happened and settled in as if for all eternity or as if it had been really there always. And then it slowly grew into something not less but greater than its first self! How then could I accept Mayavada or persuade myself to pit against the Truth imposed on me from above the logic of Shankara?"

* In fact it is not an illusion in the sense of an imposition of something baseless and unreal on the consciousness, but a misinterpretation by the conscious mind and sense and a falsifying misuse of manifested existence.

Sri Aurobindo

His Light.....Lives On

In the delicate purples and mauves of the evening sky
A sunset sadness lingers in the glow,
And whispers to the heart: the Day must die—
Its light upon some alien shore to flow.
So too, when Thy Light, O Lord, withdraws from sight,
When Thy Face is veiled by the clamour of the world
And we bow our heads in sorrow—bodies curled
As once long ago in the ancient womb of Night.
Yet with the night the Moon Goddess prevails,
Reflecting Thy Light—too bright for human eyes—
Thy Supramental Sun that never fails
Draws nearer to earth from out Thy radiant skies.
In the depths of the Silence, in the heart of the
Eternal's Peace
Thy Golden Splendour lives with the soul's release.

In thee His Light, in thee the Eternal Flame
Burns in the silence of a boundless heart,
Joining the heavens with His Glorious Name—
His Will is thine and knows thy sacred Art;
Through thee His Holy Presence will prevail,
Through thee His Voice will echo o'er the earth,
In thee His labour counts—the soul's travail
Rests in the Wisdom of a higher Birth.
Faithful we stand whatever thy Command,
Nothing can daunt our courage in the fight—
His strength is thine whatever earth's demand,
His Power and Sweetness shall uphold thy might.
Mother, we bow to thee—to Truth that gives
Knowledge that here within His Spirit lives.

NORMAN C. DOWSETT

THE PASSING OF SRI AUROBINDO —Continued from page 3

Purusha active in an indissoluble subtle body at once divine and human, in a far more direct constant touch with the material world than could the forms which mystics have visioned of past rishis and prophets and avatars. In a most special sense, therefore, Sri Aurobindo the marvellously gifted and gracious person who was our guru and whom we loved is still at work and a concrete truth is expressed by the Mother when she says: "To grieve is an insult to Sri Aurobindo, who is here with us conscious and alive." The same concrete truth is ingemmed in the beautiful message of December 7, which she delivered out of her depths where she and Sri Aurobindo are one: "Lord, this morning Thou hast given me the assurance that Thou wouldst stay with us until Thy work is achieved, not only as a consciousness which guides and illumines but also as a dynamic Presence in action. In unmistakable terms Thou hast promised that all of Thyself would remain here and not leave the earth-atmosphere until earth is transformed. Grant that we may be worthy of this marvellous Presence and that henceforth everything in us be concentrated on the one Will to be more and more perfectly consecrated to the fulfilment to Thy Sublime Work."

So the work goes on, the Mother fronting the future, with the Master by her side in subtle embodiment. And for those who have faith in the work's fulfilment and who understand what that would be, there is a hope that sees the future pregnant with a particular most heart-soothing possibility. Sri Aurobindo has written in connection with the time when the Supermind's descent into flesh and blood will be complete: "In the theory of the occultists and in the gradation of the ranges and planes of our being which Yoga-knowledge outlines for us there is not only a subtle physical force but a subtle physical Matter intervening between life and gross Matter and to create in this subtle physical substance and

precipitate the forms thus made into our grosser materiality is feasible. It should be possible and it is believed to be possible for an object formed in this subtle physical substance to make a transit from its subtlety into the state of gross Matter directly by the intervention of an occult force and process whether with or even without the assistance or intervention of some gross material procedure. A soul wishing to enter into a body or form for itself a body and take part in a divine life upon earth might be assisted to do so or even provided with such a form by this method of direct transmutation without passing through birth by the sex process or undergoing any degradation or any of the heavy limitations in the growth and development of its mind and material body inevitable to our present way of existence. It might then assume at once the structure and greater powers and functionings of the truly divine material body which must one day emerge in a progressive evolution to a totally transformed existence both of life and form in a divinised earth-nature."

These words hold out the prospect that Sri Aurobindo who has already a divinised subtle physical sheath may employ the supramental mode of manifestation for the purpose of presiding in the domain of matter itself over the new humanity which the Mother will initiate. In that dawn of God's gold the Mother will be the first being to achieve the divine body by a progression through a body born in the natural manner, while through the support of her achievement Sri Aurobindo may be the first being to put on the physical vesture of transformation by a projection of substance and shape from supernature. Nothing, of course, is certain about what Sri Aurobindo may will to do, but the possibility we have figured is not out of accord with all that we have glimpsed of a quenchless and victorious light beyond the human in the very event which strikes the surface eye of the aspiring world as a universal sunset—the passing of Sri Aurobindo.

THE DEBT TO RUDRA

THE SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE OF SRI AUROBINDO'S LIFE AND WORK

By "Synergist"

"The law of Vishnu cannot prevail till the debt to Rudra is paid," writes Sri Aurobindo. What does he mean? Who is going to pay the debt, and what is the law of Vishnu he is referring to? Behind this allegorical statement lies the saga of human evolution and the story of the men who have either manifested or incarnated Divinity. Sri Aurobindo has written at great length on the work done by these men on earth and their relation to the evolutionary march of humanity. An attempt is made in this essay to bring together the salient features of his exposition of Avatarhood or Divine Incarnation with a view to reveal the spiritual significance of the statement made above and thereby throw some light on the event that occurred on 5th December—an event which may well be called the greatest since the Crucifixion.

Sri Aurobindo states his basic position regarding Avatarhood when he writes: "Avatarhood would have little meaning if it were not connected with the evolution. . . . If Avatarhood is only a flashing miracle then I have no use for it. If it is a coherent part of the arrangement of the Omnipotent Divine in Nature, then I can understand and accept it." This implies that the ordinary human ideas about the Divine Incarnation are not true. It is usually thought that if a being is the Incarnate Godhead he must do superhuman and miraculous feats which ordinary people long to do but cannot owing to their human limitations; or it is contended that if he is an Incarnation he must naturally be omnipotent, and if he is omnipotent he must solve all problems of human life by a miracle. If, instead of waving his magic wand, he chooses to respect and work through the laws he himself has created on the heights of his being from where he has descended, they have serious doubts about his Divinity. "Men want their eyes to be dazzled so that they can see", once wrote Sri Aurobindo; and this is perfectly true. However, it must be conceded that the average human being is not altogether unjustified in expecting the Avatar to act miraculously—he has learnt from the Scriptures that men of God are capable of doing supernormal things; but to think that the Divine takes birth as man in order to perform miracles and prove the reality of His own existence to skeptics and materialists, is to miss the whole sense and purpose of Avatarhood. The Divine Incarnation is not a supernatural freak working outside the laws of Nature; he acts in the world according to the dictates of the Divine Consciousness, out of the Truth above, and the need of the cosmic manifestation below; not according to what men think he should do.

The advent of the Avatar and the work he does in the earth-field are part of the Divine Plan which is gradually unfolded in the cosmic formula from the Transcendent Supreme. The evolution of the cosmic, with interventions from the supra-cosmic Transcendent at crucial stages of its development, is the background of the process of Avatarhood. This linkage between the cosmic and the Transcendent gives a dual status to the Avatar; that is, though he becomes an integral part of terrestrial existence, an earth-creature like other men, he remains on the summits of his being the supra-cosmic Divine, the Lord of Nature. This dual status of consciousness is the central fact of the Avatar's being. There is the Divine Presence behind and above, supporting and guiding the work to be done, and the frontal instrumental personality in Nature working amidst terrestrial conditions; this means that there are two elements in the Avatar's being—the human in front and the Divine behind and above.

Such a conception of the Divine Incarnation will most probably appear fantastic to the rationalistic temper of the modern mind, for to it the process of Avatarhood is not grounded in a metaphysic. But to the Indian mind Avatarhood is a logical outcome of its Vedantic world-view: it is a coherent part of its metaphysic, which is based on the spiritual realisations of her seer-philosophers. It declares that the Supreme Being is the one sole Reality, and cosmic existence an emanatory manifestation of Himself in Time and Space, Name and Form. Therefore all is made of the very substance of Divinity. But all is not Divine to the same degree and in exactly the same manner—there is a hierarchy of Being and Substance, from the summits to the depths. Every man is divine in essence, but not in manifestation. Ordinarily the Divine Being pours Himself into the forms of Nature and is known through His Eternal Verities, Truth, Good and Beauty—through Knowledge, Power, Love and Delight; but when He takes up a human form and incarnates in it, it is, says Sri Aurobindo, the height of the conditioned manifestation, it is the Avatar.

One thing must be borne in mind that all men of God are not Avatars; some are saints and prophets, and some are Jivanmuktas. Every man can attain oneness with the Divine, he can manifest the Divine, he can become a Jivanmukta—at least he is potentially capable of rising to these heights—but he cannot attain Avatarhood; the Avatar is a special manifestation, he is a phenomenon *sui generis*.

Regarding the Avatar's function in the world, it may be stated that the Divine takes on a human mind, life and body with all their limitations in order to show that these can be conquered by a growth into the spiritual consciousness; he accepts the conditions existing upon earth in order to change them and establish a new truth, and carries evolving humanity a step further by making a particular type of spiritual development possible which was hitherto not possible.

Now we may well ask: "In what sense, and to what extent can it be

said that Sri Aurobindo has been doing all these years the work of an Avatar?" In a very few lines I shall give the reader the metaphysical background necessary to understand the nature of his work.

Matter, Life and Mind are today established principles on earth; all three are modes and manifestations of the One Spiritual Reality. We say that they have evolved one after another out of the Inconscient; but Sri Aurobindo points out that we cannot speak of an evolution unless we posit a previous involution. Something does not come out of nothing; he says that out of the seed there evolves that which is already involved in the seed, pre-existent in being, predestined in its will to become; if there is an evolution, then there must have been a previous involution, for there seems to be no reason why the principle of Life should evolve out of Matter, or that of Mind out of Life, unless we assume that Life was already involved in Matter, and Mind in Life. Now, these three principles that have emerged have their corresponding typical planes which intersect our earth-plane—the typical non-evolutionary worlds of Mind, Life and Subtle Matter, each with its own laws. These principles have come out of the Inconscient in an ascending series owing to a secret urge and impulsion in themselves and in response to a pressure put upon them from their respective typical planes. The last emergent was Mind; when a pressure from the Mind plane was exerted on its own principle lying latent in animated and vitalised Matter, it responded owing to the secret urge in it to emerge, and a linkage was formed. After that, Mind was gradually established in the earth field as an operative power. Now, says Sri Aurobindo, the next principle, the Supermind—the gnostic light and creative dynamis of the Divine Being—has to emerge and take up within itself all the other powers and show them the way to their divine fulfilment. All the principles of existence are involved and buried deep in the abyss of the dark and obscure region of the Inconscient; in order to make the Supermind act on its own involute in this nether region and bring it out, someone who represents the earth-consciousness and humanity has first to attain the Supermind, and then delve into the abyss making the Supramental Light and Power act on the involved principle. This is the work Sri Aurobindo has been doing for the past forty years. Through his own spiritual development he has been joining the two ends of Being, bridging its depths and its heights. This bridging had to be done in his own being before it could be made possible on a cosmic scale. The base of the Inconscient had to be broken and the Light made to infiltrate its dark tunnels, because it is in this Inconscient that the roots of all human limitations and difficulties lie, because it is this obscure and intractable submerged region of man's consciousness that keeps him securely anchored to his lower nature and prevents his Godward growth.

It is obvious that a mere man will not be able to achieve all this. He must be more than an earth-representative, he must also represent the Divine Being. God has to become man in order to show him that he can conquer his human limitations by growing into the Godhead.

With this background in mind, the reader will now be better able to understand the significance of the event that took place on the fifth of December.

In the morning the news came that Sri Aurobindo had passed away. To the outside world it was an event that had to take place some time; was not Sri Aurobindo a very old man? To the disciples it came as a shock; they were not only shocked, they were surprised and puzzled. It seemed impossible to them that their Guru, who had snatched so many of them out of the jaws of death, who had cured them of serious maladies, averted calamities, and done things which would seem utterly miraculous to outsiders, whose mastery over the physical was remarkable even for a great Yogi, could not cure himself of an ailment like uraemia, a thing which he had already done once. They argued that if he had cured himself and others so many times by his yogic force, surely he could have done it this time too. Then gradually the idea dawned on them that they should not look at the passing away from a purely personal angle, but should try and see it in relation to his world mission. Perhaps he had deliberately decided to withdraw from his body for the better execution of his work. Had he not once written to a disciple, who had shown misgivings about his staying on in the world till his work was finished, that nothing of this nature would happen unless he gave his sanction to it? Then arose the question: "If so, what was the necessity of making such a decision?" This is the question on everyone's lips. I shall make an attempt here to clarify certain points about his passing away, and give articulation to ideas which have been hovering about in the atmosphere unexpressed. It would be presumption on my part to think that what I have written is true in every detail; nevertheless, I can say Platowise, "Something like this is true."

I shall begin by saying that after many years it will be realised that in the complete and total life of the Avatar known as Sri Aurobindo this withdrawal from the body was only an intermediate step; a very necessary step at a crucial and dangerous stage of his work, at a time when he was conquering the anarchic and anti-evolutionary forces thrown up from the Inconscient—but still an intermediate step, not the culminating point of his work; it will be said that this withdrawal was only a middle link connecting his complete life which was divided into two distinct periods—the first period dealing with the struggle and victory of the being who acted as the

THE DEBT TO RUDRA —Continued from page 5

spearhead of the evolutionary nisus and established on earth the conditions necessary for the advent of the Divine Light and Power of the Supermind, and the second dealing with the actual Supramentalisation of the earth consciousness and the divinisation of humanity. The first period will emphasise his humanity, the Divine aspect remaining back and working from behind a veil, the second his Divinity—his so-called "death" connecting the two periods and serving as a means to bring down the light. If so, "How much has he actually achieved, and how is the withdrawal from the body related to his work?" That is the next question. The Supermind has been brought down into the very cells of his body, Spirit has been overtly lodged in Matter—not merely in essence, that it always was "from years sempiternal,"—ordinary gross Matter has passed through a modification enabling it to hold within itself the Divine Light. The Supermind has not only touched the earth consciousness, it has been successfully housed in a mortal frame. Now the next step is its descent and gradual infiltration into earth-life till it becomes an operative power and transforms and divinises the entire being of man—his mental, vital and physical nature. The conditions necessary for this descent have been now established by Sri Aurobindo; he has broken the very base of the Inconscient, he has gone down into its abyss with the Divine Light and made it act on its lowest strata. The terrible upsurge from this dark region caused by the touch of the Light, an upsurge which if it had been allowed to remain unchecked would have shaken the earth to its very foundations and engulfed it in darkness, bringing suffering and unhappiness to mankind, has been drawn up by Sri Aurobindo most deliberately into himself. He could do this because he possessed a cosmic consciousness, and not an ego-centric consciousness like ordinary men; he could identify himself with whatever he wished to in universal Nature. Instead of transforming his own body with the Supermind, he chose to bring its Light into the lowest regions of the earth consciousness so that it could be placed within the reach of humanity. The price men would have had to pay owing to the revolt from these regions, he has himself paid by taking into his body all its poisonous elements; he has emptied the sewers of the Inconscient into himself so that men may have the Light of God and live in happiness. "Greater love hath no man....."

"Death" did not come upon Sri Aurobindo; it seems that he most deliberately decided to draw the poison from the Inconscient into himself. After that he must have felt that he would be able to carry on his work better out of the body than in it. It must be here clearly understood that he was following a particular line of action, a definite process, and that demanded the establishing of certain conditions in earth-life before the transformation of his own body could be taken up. He was too much of an Avatar to have given precedence to the transformation of his own body before the work of bringing down the Light had reached a satisfactory stage. Every act of his has the unmistakable stamp of the Avatar,—the cosmic sweep of action, the mastery over the field covered, the immense capacity for self-sacrifice, and above all, the possession of the Light that draws one nearer and the Compassion that envelopes all. His words express his thoughts and sentiments very clearly when he says: "I have no intention of achieving the Supermind for myself only—I am not doing anything for myself, as I have no personal need of anything, neither of salvation (Moksha) nor supramentalisation..... My supramentalisation is only a key for opening the gates of the Supramental to the earth-consciousness; done for its own sake, it would be perfectly futile." The person who would cry out to Sri Aurobindo: "If thou art so great why dost not thou save thyself?" has not understood the meaning and purpose of the Divine Incarnation; he is still thinking in terms of miracles.

I was weighing the truth of the ideas expressed here, when I happened to meet a friend of mine who is an old disciple of Sri Aurobindo. He is a man of spiritual experience and has a remarkable opening for vision. My ideas found the corroboration they needed when I listened to what he had seen when he went for the "darshan" on the fifth. He saw Sri Aurobindo's body covered with a golden light, and streaks of blackness were there as if they had mounted up from the lower part of his body. The light he saw was obviously the Divine Light of the Supermind, and the blackness was the poison he had drawn up from the Inconscient into his pure and golden body. Sri Aurobindo had linked the Empyrean to the Abyss, and had turned death itself into a victory.

Now we have some indication why, although uraemia had set in, the body remained intact for so many days. To know the nature of the golden light seen by the disciple, one has only to turn to the communication made by the Mother to the press: "...His body is charged with such a concentration of supramental light that there is no sign of decomposition....."

It will not be out of place here to try and see what indications Sri Aurobindo has given in his poems about the inner occult and spiritual significance of his work. The lines quoted below from *A God's Labour* and the epic *Savitri*.

*Coercing my godhead I have come down
Here on the sordid earth,
Ignorant, labouring, human grown
Twixt the gates of death and birth.*

*I have been digging deep and long
Mid a horror of filth and mire
A bed for the golden river's song,
A home for the deathless fire.*

But the Avatar has to face tremendous opposition:

*A dark concealed hostility is lodged
In the human depths, in the hidden heart of Time
That claims the right to change and mar God's work.*

*.....
Yet till the evil is slain in its own home
And Light invades the world's inconscient base
And perished has the adversary Force,
He still must labour on, his work half done.*

All this is exactly what Sri Aurobindo has been doing. He says:

*I have delved through the dumb Earth's dreadful heart
And heard her black mass bell.
I have seen the source whence her agonies part
And the inner reason of nell.*

*On a desperate stair my feet have trod
Armoured with boundless peace,
Bringing the fires of the splendour of God
Into the human abyss.*

He has had to do all this because it is the Divine Will that conditions should be established for humanity to take the next step in its evolution. Therefore one must try to understand that Sri Aurobindo's decision to leave the body has an evolutionary significance and occult implications; one must not let one's judgment be vitiated by viewing it only from the personal-egoistic angle. No doubt things could have been different; there were various possibilities out of which this particular one has materialised. Perhaps things would have shaped differently had the earth been less rebellious and more receptive to the Light, and the men and women inhabiting it a little more aspiring; but unfortunately the Avatar has to say:

*I have laboured and suffered in Matter's night
To bring the fire to man;
But the hate of hell and human spite
Are my meed since the world began.*

It is said that the sins of the fathers are visited upon the children; this is true in ordinary life, but in the spiritual and yogic life where the Guru is intimately connected with his disciples and, if he happens to be an Avatar, with the people of the world through a cosmic bond, the reverse seems to be true—the sins of the children are visited upon the Father, who gathers quietly within his own being all that they throw upon him, ill-will, hostility and antagonism.

Another important question to consider is the future of Sri Aurobindo's work. It is possible to make a positive statement regarding it—that it will not suffer; on the contrary it will gather momentum as time goes on. The spade work has been done, Matter has harboured the Supermind; a slow and gradual Descent will be the next step followed by the consolidation of the Supramental Light and Power and Bliss in the earth consciousness. This part of the work Sri Aurobindo can very well direct and accomplish from the planes of existence now occult to us. But then, if we admit this, another difficulty at once arises: what about the link with matter? For the Supramentalisation of the earth, it is absolutely necessary to grip matter—working purely from the occult planes cannot be sufficient. Sri Aurobindo would never have taken this step if he had not possessed an adequate means to have a firm hold on matter. The answer to the problem is the Mother, that great lady who has for the past twenty-five years toiled side by side with him in the work of the transformation and divinisation of humanity. All along the two have kept up a certain spiritual poise for their yogic work—he, the Consciousness behind supporting her actions and drawing down the Light and Power of the Supermind, and carrying on a general occult-spiritual action behind the veil, and she, gripping matter and manifesting that Light and Power in it. This same relation will be kept up still. It is evident that Sri Aurobindo made his decision knowing full well that his work will not suffer. He has time and again stressed the fact in his letters to his disciples that his consciousness is the same as hers at the summits. The Mother once said: "Without me he remains unmanifest, without him there is no existence of mine." She still has him with her all the time; one has only to read the message she gave to the disciples to grasp the meaning of what has been written here. The message reads: "Lord, this morning Thou hast given me the assurance that Thou wouldst stay with us until Thy Work is achieved, not only as a consciousness which guides and illumines but also as a dynamic Presence in action. In unmistakable terms Thou hast promised that all of Thyself would remain here and not leave the earth atmosphere until earth is transformed....." The meaning is very clear; Sri Aurobindo has not gone away leaving behind him an emanated Power of his being for the fulfilment of his work as great spiritual figures sometimes do; it cannot also be said that though he has gone away, he will be present in the Ashram in spirit; for he will be not only an Impersonal Presence behind the Mother guiding the execution of the work but "a dynamic Presence in action" as he always was.

Now the last question. Perhaps it will be remarked: "Is not Sri Aurobindo dead? What is all this talk about acting from occult planes? Is not the author deluding himself—somehow trying to sophisticate his mind into believing that his Guru is alive, even though he has passed away? We accept what he says about Sri Aurobindo's Avatarhood, if the Avatarhood

THE MASTER IS ALWAYS HERE

Even as he assumed the earthly frame, even as he took upon himself the physical suffering and ailing that are incident to a material body, he accepted too the last consummation. He has accepted indeed the whole gamut of ignorance, yes, down even to death. He has embraced the integral wholeness to the utmost limit, on either side, the full circle of earthly life. How else is he to seize it and transform it? By an apparent yielding to the normal fated *finis*, has he not simply by-passed it—to overtake it from behind, as it were? Has he not thus opened a new line of campaign leading to inevitable and absolute victory?

How is he to do it? That is his occult work—his supreme secret. And we need not pry into it for the present.

Even otherwise, we fight and labour for the goal. The goal is there assured. There can be no doubt about it. We want it to be of today. If it is not, it matters little. The Karmayogin, the ideal worker works, but awaits not the fruit. He works letting the fruit take care of itself. It will come, the ripe fruit, the fullness of what must and shall be, in its own time; noth-

ing can stay or cancel its inevitability. We work with a total conviction that it will be today, here and now. The general who leads his army or the soldier who goes to fight has in view always immediate victory, otherwise he cannot move a step forward: that is the *dharma* of his consciousness. For, in the fluctuating movement of possibilities which is the normal actual world, as anything can happen, so anything can be brought about—the probability is never ruled out. There is perhaps a higher destiny above, but we do not know its decree: at least it does not annul or abrogate our human endeavour.

We have met here on earth to carry out a mission. We do what we can and are appointed to do. If it is not our lot to achieve and fulfil here and now, even then, we do not falter, but march on. We will meet another time and yet another time till all is achieved and consummated. Time is no consideration. Even eternity is a fraction in His timelessness.

NOLINI KANTA GUPTA

A Hymn To Sri Aurobindo

Whatever I own may I now dedicate
As offering at thy feet:
My love, my hopes, my songs—all I create
Be on wings, Lord, thee to meet.
Dismounting from thy throne of inviolate Light
Thou cam'st, O Friend, in Grace,
Down to my life of dust and mad'st its night
Outflower in loveliness,
My penury to reclaim.
What play is this of an unimaginable
Compassion—Oh who will name?

O cherished of Gods, thou camest to my station
Of ash my fire to wake
But I failed to welcome thee with the adoration
Thou wouldst crave for my sake.
I only ask and ask: what can one give
To One who could take by storm
The Kingdom of Heaven and yet for our earth live
And woo with His love-warm
Heart-throbs my heart of clay,
Seeking His birth in me for what Compassion's
Deep, unfathomed play?

DILIP KUMAR ROY

THE DEBT TO RUDRA —Continued from page 6

of Rama and Krishna and Christ is accepted, there is no particular reason why Sri Aurobindo's should not be accepted—the bringing down of the Supermind cannot possibly be the work of a mere religious teacher, or prophet or moral leader. But this talk of acting from occult planes is a little too much."

My answer is that I do not expect everyone to believe what I have written here; my object in writing this essay is to enlighten, to the best of my ability, the minds of those who really want to know about the future of Sri Aurobindo's work. Consequently I am addressing only the spiritually-minded, who are naturally not as sense-bound as their less fortunate brothers, and am writing for those "that believe though they have not seen."

Actually the problem is this: when should a man be called dead? He is really dead when his *entire* being has been dissolved—not only the outer material sheath, the body, but also the subtle-physical, the vital and the mental sheaths. After the dissolution of these sheaths, the immortal part of his personality, the soul-being or psychic being—*chaitya purusha*—returns to the Psychic World and remains there till it is time for the next birth. It is only when the soul-being goes away to this World that it loses all connection with cosmic existence. Now, if a person's material body only is dissolved, and the other sheaths are intact he can remain connected with the earth atmosphere, that is, if he is yogically advanced and wishes to do so. When such a person happens to be a Master of Yoga of Sri Aurobindo's spiritual status, a person integrally one with the Divine in Being as well as in Dynamis, it is not difficult to understand that he can remain in contact with the earth and influence it. We can sum up and say: Sri Aurobindo's life was different from other men's, unique, extraordinary and baffling; so is his "death".

It was stated in the beginning that his complete life can be divided into two periods; as the second period is related to the future it is not possible to make any definite pronouncements about it other than those already made, especially as a new Power will be now working on the earth consciousness, the Supermind. That he will again manifest in a body seems certain to the author; to have a Supramental race without Sri Aurobindo would be like staging Hamlet without the Prince of Denmark. Of course, in this particular case Hamlet can work silently and remain unseen, but the author does not envisage such a possibility. It seems more probable to him that Sri Aurobindo will make his own body and manifest not as a man, but as a Gnostic Being.* All this is, of course, sheer moonshine if the existence of other worlds is not admitted; but he would be a bold man who would deny truths which are real in the experience of spiritually advanced men, but which do not fall within that of the unenlightened. Even if only a hard common sense view of things is taken, two factors clearly emerge—the body remained aglow and intact for 90 hours after the doctors had declared it to be dead; a few days before that Sri Aurobindo had been in an uraemic coma, in which the patient always sinks deeper and deeper till he loses

consciousness for ever. Most surprisingly he came out often from this coma and was quite conscious. These two facts by themselves would perhaps be classified as unexplainable scientific curiosities, utterly bewildering but of little value to the medical profession; but when they refer to a person who is worshipped as a Divine Incarnation, as the Kalki Avatar, by hundreds—by intellectuals, not yokels—they make one sit up and think.

To the majority of human beings only physical objects, which are sensibly perceptible, seem real; as soon as they cease to be perceived by the senses, it is thought that they no longer exist. This assumption is definitely incorrect if experience is the final criterion of truth. Sense perception is only one order of experience; a higher order of experience can at once show its limitations and reveal that what has ceased to exist in a physical body in a physical space can continue to exist in a subtle body in another space, and remain connected with it.

The debt to Rudra has been paid; not by humanity, but by a single individual representing it—not an individual imprisoned in the narrow confines of his ego like other men, but a universalised individual, a cosmic man. This payment has been the labour of forty years of yogic action with the sacrifice of his body its crowning glory. But this sacrifice is not the culmination of his life's work—it is the beginning of a greater life for him and for humanity.

*In vain thou mournst that Satyavan must die,
His death is the beginning of greater life,
Death is the Spirit's opportunity.*

That is the great secret. Sri Aurobindo has turned death into an opportunity for securing the Light permanently for the earth—he has outmanoeuvred the powers of Darkness by cutting across their revolt with his own body.

*It is finished, the dread mysterious sacrifice,
Offered by God's martyred body for the world.*

The highest law of Vishnu must now prevail—the law of the Supermind, because the conditions necessary for its advent have been established. The last act of the drama has yet to be played and Sri Aurobindo still remains the chief actor. He still remains the mighty man who is God, God who is man, bridging Heaven to earth, linking Spirit to Matter, creating here for us the Kingdom of God.

"A seed" has been "sown in Death's tremendous hour, a branch of Heaven" has been transplanted "to human soil", the world now waits for the complete manifestation of the Divine in human existence. I shall end this homage to my great Master Sri Aurobindo by turning my face towards the Light that He is and saying:

*I shall leave my dreams in their argent air,
For in a raiment of gold and blue
There shall move on the earth embodied and fair
The living truth of you.*

* The reader is here advised to refer to the *Bulletin of Physical Education*, of August, 1949. The possibility of creating a new body by spiritual and occult means is discussed there.

SAVITRI by SR AUROBINDO

BOOK VI: THE BOOK OF FATE: Canto 2—The Way of Fate and the Problem of Pain

(The text below—setting forth the colloquy between the divine sage Narad and Savitri's royal parents apropos her choice of doomed Satyavan for husband—contains some of Sri Aurobindo's last lines but remains without final revision—EDITOR)

A silence sealed the irrevocable decree,
The word of Fate that fell from the heavenly lips
Fixing a doom no power could ever reverse
Unless heaven's will itself could change its course.
Or so it seemed; yet from the silence rose
One voice that questioned changeless destiny.
A will that strove against the immutable Will,
A mother's heart had heard the fateful speech
That rang like a sanction to the call of death
And came like a chill close to life and hope.
Yet hope sank down like an extinguished fire.
She felt the leaden inevitable hand
Invade the secrecy of her guarded soul
And smite with sudden pain its still content
And the empire of her hard-won quietude.
Awhile she fell to the level of human mind,
A field of mortal grief and Nature's law
She shared, she bore the common lot of men
And felt what common hearts endure in Time.
Voicing earth's question to the inscrutable power
The queen now turned to the still immobile seer:
Assailed by the discontent in Nature's depths
Partner in the agony of dumb driven things
And all the misery, all the ignorant cry,
Passionate like sorrow questioning heaven she spoke.
Awhile she lost her spirit's tranquil poise,
Awhile she shared the lot of common souls
And bore the heavy hand of Death and Time
And felt the anguish in life's stricken deeps.
Lending her speech to the surface soul on earth
She uttered the suffering in the world's dumb heart
And man's revolt against his ignorant fate.
"O seer, in the earth's strange two-natured life
By what pitiless adverse Necessity
Or what cold freak of a Creator's will,
By what random accident or governed Chance
That shaped a rule out of fortuitous steps,
Made destiny from an hour's emotion, came
The direr mystery of grief and pain?
Is it thy God who made this cruel law?
Or some disastrous Power has marred his work
And he stands helpless to defend or save?
A fatal seed was sown in life's false start
When evil twinned with good on earthly soil.
Then first appeared the malady of mind,
Its pang of thought, its quest for the aim of life.
It twisted into forms of good and ill
The frank simplicity of the animal's acts;
It turned the straight path hewn by the body's gods,
Followed the zigzag of the uncertain course
Of life that wanders seeking for its aim
In the pale starlight falling from thought's skies;
It guides the unsure idea, the wavering will.
Lost was the instinct's safe identity
With the arrow-point of being's inmost sight,
Marred the sure steps of Nature's simple walk
And truth and freedom in the growing soul.
Out of some ageless innocence and peace,
Privilege of souls not yet betrayed to birth,
Cast down to suffer on this hard dangerous earth
Our life was born in pain and with a cry.
Although earth-nature welcomes heaven's breath
Inspiring Matter with the will to live,
A thousand ills assail the mortal's hours
And wear away the natural joy of life;
Our bodies are an engine cunningly made,
But for all its parts as cunningly are planned,
Contrived ingeniously with demon skill
Its apt inevitable heritage
Of mortal danger and peculiar pain,
Its payment of the tax of Time and Fate,
Its way to suffer and its way to die.
This is the ransom of our high estate,
The sign and stamp of our humanity.
A grisly company of maladies
Come, licensed lodgers, into man's bodily house,
Purveyors of death and torturers of life.
In the malignant hollows of the world,
In its subconscious cavern-passages
Ambushed they lie waiting their hour to leap,
Surrounding with danger the sieged city of life:
Admitted into the citadel of man's days
They mine his force and maim or suddenly kill.
Ourselves within us lethal forces nurse;
We make of our own enemies our guests:

Out of their holes like beasts they creep and gnaw
The chords of the divine musician's lyre
Till frayed and thin the music dies away
Or crashing snaps with a last tragic note.
All that we are is like a fort beset:
All that we strive to be alters like a dream
In the grey sleep of Matter's ignorance.
Mind suffers lamed by the world's disharmony
And the unloveliness of human things.
A treasure misspent or cheaply fruitlessly sold
In the bazar of a blind destiny,
A gift of priceless values from Time's gods
Lost or mislaid in an uncaring world,
Life is a marvel missed, an art gone wry;
A seeker in a dark and obscure place,
An ill-armed warrior facing dreadful odds,
An imperfect worker given a baffling task,
An ignorant judge of problems Ignorance made,
Its heavenward flights reach closed and keyless gates,
Its glorious outbursts peter out in mire.
On Nature's gifts to man a curse was laid.
All walks inarmed by its own opposites,
Error is the comrade of our mortal thought,
And falsehood lurks in the deep bosom of truth,
Sin poisons with its vivid flowers of joy
Or leaves a red scar burnt across the soul;
Virtue is a grey bondage and a gaol.
At every step is laid for us a snare.
Alien to reason and the spirit's light,
Our fount of action from a darkness wells;
In ignorance and nescience are our roots.
A growing register of calamities
Is the past's account, the future's book of Fate:
The centuries pile man's follies and man's crimes
Upon the countless crowd of Nature's ills;
As if the world's stone load was not enough,
A crop of miseries obstinately is sown
By his own hand in the furrows of the gods,
The vast increasing tragic harvest reaped
From old misdeeds buried by oblivious Time.
He walks by his own choice into hell's trap;
This mortal creature is his own worst foe.
His science is an artificer of doom;
He ransacks earth for means to harm his kind;
He slays his happiness and other's good.
Nothing has he learnt from time and its history;
Even as of old in the raw youth of Time,
When earth ignorant ran on the highways of Fate,
Old forms of evil cling to the world's soul:
War making nought the sweet smiling calm of life,
Battle and rapine, ruin and massacre
Are still the fierce pastimes of man's warring tribes;
An idiot hour destroys what centuries made,
His wanton rage of frenzied hate lays low
The beauty and greatness by his genius wrought
And the mighty output of a nation's toil.
All he has achieved he drags to the precipice.
His grandeur he turns to an epic of doom and fall;
His littleness crawls content through squalor and mud,
He calls heaven's retribution on his head,
And wallows in his self-made misery.
A part author of the cosmic tragedy,
His will conspires with death and time and fate.
His brief appearance on the engimaed earth
Ever recurs, but brings no high result
To this wanderer through the aeon-rings of God
That shut his life in their vast longevity.
His soul's wide search and ever returning hopes
Pursue the useless orbit of their course
In a vain repetition of lost toils
Across a track of soon forgotten lives.
All is an episode in a meaningless tale.
Why is it all and wherefore are we here?
If to some being of eternal bliss
It is our spirit's destiny to return
Or some still impersonal height of endless calm,
Since That we are and out of That we came,
Whence rose the strange and sterile interlude
Lasting in vain through interminable Time?
Or if these beings must be and their brief lives,
What need had the soul of ignorance and tears?
Whence rose the call for sorrow and for pain?
Or all came helplessly without a cause?
What power forced the immortal spirit to birth?
The eternal witness once of eternity,

A deathless sojourner mid transient scenes
 He camps in life's half-lit obscurity
 Amid the debris of his thoughts and dreams.
 Or who persuaded it to fall from bliss
 And forfeit its immortal privilege?
 Who laid on it the ceaseless will to live
 A wanderer in this beautiful, sorrowful world,
 And bear its load of joy and grief and love?
 Or if no being watches the works of Time
 What hard impersonal Necessity
 Compels the vain toil of brief living things?
 A great Illusion then has built the stars.
 But where then is the soul's security,
 Its poise in this circling of unreal suns?
 Or else it is a wanderer from its home
 Who strayed into a blind alley of Time and chance
 And finds no issue from a meaningless world.
 Or where begins and ends Illusion's reign?
 Perhaps the soul we feel is only a dream,
 Eternal self a fiction sensed in trance."

Then after a silence Narad made reply:
 Tuning his lips to earthly sound he spoke,
 And something now of the deep sense of fate
 Weighted the fragile hints of mortal speech.
 His forehead shone with vision solemnised,
 Turned to a tablet of supernal thoughts
 As if characters of an unwritten tongue
 Had left in its breadth the inscriptions of the gods.
 Bare in that Light Time toiled, his unseen works
 Detected, the broad-flung far-seeing schemes
 Unfinished which his aeoned flight unrolls
 Were mapped already in that world-wide look:
 "Was then the sun a dream because there is night?
 Hidden in the mortal's heart the Eternal lives:
 He lives secret in the chamber of thy soul,
 A light shines there nor pain nor grief can cross.
 A darkness stands between thyself and him,
 Thou canst not hear or feel the marvellous Guest,
 Thou canst not see the beatific sun.
 O queen, thy thought is a light of the Ignorance,
 Its brilliant curtain hides from thee God's face.
 It illumines a world born from the Inconscience
 But hides the Immortal's meaning in the world.
 Thy mind's light hides from thee the Eternal's thought,
 Thy heart's hopes hide from thee the Eternal's will,
 Earth's joys shut from thee the Immortal's bliss.
 Thence rose the need of a dark intruding god,
 The world's dread teacher, the creator, pain.
 Where Ignorance is, there suffering too must come;
 Thy grief is a cry of darkness to the Light;
 Pain was the first-born of the Inconscience
 Which was thy body's dumb original base;
 Already slept there pain's subconscious shape:
 A shadow in a shadowy tenebrous womb,
 Till life shall move, it waits to wake and be.
 In one caul with joy came forth the dreadful Power.
 In life's breast it was born hiding its twin;
 But pain came first, then only joy could be.
 Pain ploughed the first hard ground of the world-drowse.
 By pain a spirit started from the clod,
 By pain Life stirred in the subliminal deep.
 Interned, submerged, hidden in Matter's trance
 Awoke to itself the dreamer, sleeping Mind;
 It made a visible realm out of its dreams,
 It drew its shapes from the subconscious depths,
 Then turned to look upon the world it had made.
 By pain and joy the bright and tenebrous twins
 The inanimate world perceived its sentient soul,
 Else had the Inconscient never suffered change.
 Pain is the hammer of the gods to break
 A dead resistance in the mortal's heart,
 His slow inertia as of living stone.
 If the heart were not forced to want and weep,
 His soul would have lain down content, at ease,
 And never thought to exceed the human start
 And never learned to climb towards the Sun.
 This earth is full of labour, packed with pain;
 Throes of an endless birth coerce her still;
 The centuries end, the ages vainly pass
 And yet the godhead in her is not born.
 The ancient Mother faces all with joy,
 Calls for the ardent pang, the grandiose thrill;
 For with pain and labour all creation comes.
 This earth is full of the anguish of the gods;
 Ever they travail driven by Time's goad,
 And strive to work out the eternal will
 And shape the life divine in mortal forms.
 His will must be worked out in human breasts
 Against the Evil that rises from the gulfs,
 Against man's ignorance and his obstinate strength,
 Against the deep folly of his human mind,
 Against the blind reluctance of his human heart.
 The spirit is doomed to pain till man is free.

There is a clamour of battle, a tramp, a march:
 A cry arises like a moaning sea,
 A desperate laughter under the blows of death,
 A doom of blood and sweat and toil and tears.
 Men die that man may live and God be born.
 An awful Silence watches tragic Time.
 Pain is the hand of Nature sculpturing men
 To greatness: an inspired labour chisels
 With heavenly cruelty an unwilling mould.
 Implacable in the passion of their will,
 Lifting the hammers of titanic toil
 The demiurges of the universe work;
 They shape with giant strokes their own; their sons
 Are marked with their enormous stamp of fire.
 Although the shaping god's tremendous touch
 Is torture unbearable to mortal nerves,
 The fiery spirit grows in strength within
 And feels a joy in every titan pang.
 He who would save himself lives bare and calm;
 He who would save the race must share its pain:
 This he shall know who obeys that grandiose urge.
 The great who came to save this suffering world
 And rescue out of Time's shadow and the Law,
 Must pass beneath the yoke of grief and pain:
 They are caught by the Wheel that they had hoped to break,
 On their shoulders they must bear man's load of fate.
 Heaven's riches they bring, their sufferings count the price
 Or they pay the gift of knowledge with their lives.
 The Son of God born as the Son of man
 Has drunk the bitter cup, owned Godhead's debt,
 The debt the Eternal owes to the fallen kind
 His will has bound to death and struggling life
 That yearns in vain for rest and endless peace.
 Now is the debt paid, wiped off the original score.
 The Eternal suffers in a human form,
 He has signed salvation's testament with his blood:
 He has opened the doors of his undying peace.
 The Deity compensates the creature's claim,
 The Creator bears the law of pain and death;
 A retribution smites the incarnate God.
 His love has paved the mortal's road to Heaven:
 He has given his life and light to balance here
 The dark account of mortal ignorance.
 It is finished, the dread mysterious sacrifice,
 Offered by God's martyred body for the world;
 Gethsemane and Calvary are his lot,
 He carries the cross on which man's soul is nailed;
 His escort is the curses of the crowd;
 Insult and jeer are his right's acknowledgement;
 Two thieves slain with him mock his mighty death.
 He has trod with bleeding brow the Saviour's way.
 He who has found his identity with God
 Pays with the body's death his soul's vast light.
 His knowledge immortal triumphs by his death.
 Hewn, quartered on the scaffold as he falls
 His crucified voice proclaims, "I, I am God;"
 "Yes, all is God," peals back Heaven's deathless call.
 The seed of Godhead sleeps in mortal hearts,
 The flower of Godhead grows on the world-tree:
 All shall discover God in self and things,
 But when God's messenger comes to help the world
 And lead the soul of earth to higher things,
 He too must carry the yoke he came to unloose;
 He too must bear the pang that he would heal.
 Exempt and unafflicted by earth's fate,
 How shall he cure the ills he never felt?
 He covers the world's agony with his calm;
 But though to the outward eye no sign appears
 And peace is given to our torn human hearts,
 The struggle is there and paid the unseen price;
 The fire, the strife, the wrestle are within.
 He carries the suffering world in his own breast;
 Its sins weigh on his thoughts, its grief is his:
 Earth's ancient load lies heavy on his soul;
 Night and its powers beleaguer his tardy steps,
 The titan adversary's clutch he bears;
 His march is a battle and a pilgrimage.
 Life's evil smites, he is stricken with the world's pain:
 A million wounds gape in his secret heart.
 He journeys sleepless through an unending night;
 Antagonist forces crowd across his path;
 A siege, a combat is his inner life.
 Even worse may be the cost, direr the pain:
 His large identity and all-harboured love
 Shall bring the cosmic anguish into his depths,
 The sorrow of all living things shall come
 And knock at his doors and live within his house;
 A dreadful cord of sympathy can tie
 All suffering into his single grief and make
 All agony in all the worlds his own.
 He meets an ancient adversary Force,
 He is lashed with the whips that tear the world's worn heart;
 The weeping of the centuries visits his eyes:

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He wears the blood-glued fiery Centaur's shirt,
 The poison of the world has stained his throat.
 In the market-place of Matter's capital
 Amidst the chafferings of the world called life
 He is tied to the stake of a perennial Fire,
 He burns on an unseen original verge
 That Matter may be turned to spirit stuff:
 He is the victim in his own sacrifice.
 The Immortal bound to earth's mortality
 Appearing and perishing on the roads of Time
 Creates God's moment by eternity's beats.
 He dies that the world may be new born and live.
 Even if he escapes the fiercest fires,
 Even if the world breaks not in, a drowning sea,
 Only by hard sacrifice is high heaven earned:
 He must face the fight, the pang who would conquer Hell.
 A dark concealed hostility is lodged
 In the human depths, in the hidden heart of Time
 That claims the right to change and mar God's work.
 A secret enmity ambushes the world's march;
 It leaves a mark on thought and speech and act:
 It stamps stain and defect on all things done;
 Till it is slain peace is forbidden on earth.
 There is no visible foe, but the unseen
 Is round us, forces intangible besiege,
 Touches from alien realms, thoughts not our own
 Overtake us and compel the erring heart;
 Our lives are caught in an ambiguous net.
 An adversary Force was born of old:
 Invader of the life of mortal man,
 It hides from him the straight immortal path.
 A power came in to veil the eternal Light,
 A power opposed to the eternal will
 Diverts the messages of the infallible Word,
 Contorts the contours of the cosmic plan:
 A whisper lures to evil the human heart,
 It seals up wisdom's eyes, the soul's regard,
 It is the origin of our suffering here,
 It binds earth to calamity and pain.
 This all must conquer who would bring down God's peace.
 This hidden foe lodged in the human breast
 Man must overcome or miss his higher fate.
 This is the inner war without escape.

Hard is the world-redeemer's heavy task;
 The world itself becomes his adversary,
 His enemies are the beings he came to save.
 This world is in love with its own ignorance,
 Its darkness turns away from the saviour light,
 It gives the cross in payment for the crown.
 His work is a trickle of splendour in a long night;
 He sees the long march of Time, the little won;
 A few are saved, the rest strive on and fail:
 A Sun has passed, on earth's Night's shadow falls.
 Yes, there are happy ways near to God's sun;
 But few are they who tread the sunlit path;
 Only the pure in soul can walk in light.
 An exit is shown, a road of hard escape
 From the sorrow and the darkness and the chain;
 But how shall a few escaped release the world?
 The human mass lingers beneath the yoke.
 Escape, however high, redeems not life,
 Life that is left behind on a fallen earth.
 Escape cannot uplift the abandoned race
 Or bring to it victory and the reign of God.
 A greater power must come, a larger light.
 Although Light grows on earth and Night recedes,
 Yet till the evil is slain in its own home
 And Light invades the world's inconscient base
 And perished has the adversary Force,
 He still must labour on, his work half done.
 One yet may come armoured, invincible;
 His will immobile meets the mobile hour;
 The world's blows cannot bend that victor head;
 Calm and sure are his steps in the growing Night;
 The goal recedes, he hurries not his pace,
 He turns not to high voices in the Night.
 He asks no aid from the inferior gods;
 His eyes are fixed on the immutable aim.
 Man turns aside or chooses easier paths;
 He keeps to the one high and difficult road
 That sole can climb to the eternal's peaks;
 The ineffable planes already have felt his tread;
 He has made heaven and earth his instruments,
 But the limits fall from him of earth and heaven;
 Their law he transcends but uses as his means.
 He has seized life's hands, he has mastered his own heart.
 The feints of Nature mislead not his sight,
 Inflexible his look towards Truth's far end;
 Fate's deaf resistance cannot break his will.
 In the dreadful passages, the fatal paths

Invulnerable his soul, his heart unslain,
 He lives through the opposition of earth's Powers
 And Nature's ambushes and the world's attacks.
 His spirit's stature transcending pain and bliss
 He fronts evil and good with calm and equal eyes.
 He too must grapple with the riddling Sphinx
 And plunge into her long obscurity.
 He has broken into the Inconscient's depths
 That veil themselves even from their own regard:
 He has seen God's slumber shape these magic worlds.
 He has watched the dumb God fashioning Matter's frame,
 Dreaming the dreams of its unknowing sleep,
 And watched the unconscious Force that built the stars.
 He has learnt the Inconscient's workings and its law,
 Its incoherent thoughts and rigid acts,
 Its hazard wastes of impulse and idea,
 The chaos of its mechanic frequencies,
 Its random calls, its whispers falsely true,
 Misleaders of the hooded listening soul.
 All things come to its ear but nothing abides;
 All rose from the silence, all goes back to its hush.
 Its somnolence founded the universe,
 Its obscure waking makes the world seem vain.
 Arisen from Nothingness and towards Nothingness turned,
 Its dark and potent nescience was earth's start;
 It is the waste stuff from which all was made;
 Into its depths creation can collapse.
 Its opposition clogs the march of the soul,
 It is the mother of our ignorance.
 He must call light into its dark abysses,
 Else never can Truth conquer Matter's sleep
 And all earth look into the eyes of God.
 All things obscure his knowledge must relume,
 All things perverse his power must unknot:
 He must pass to the other shore of falsehood's sea,
 He must enter the world's dark to bring there light.
 The heart of evil must be bared to his eyes,
 He must learn its cosmic dark Necessity,
 Its right and its dire roots in Nature's soil.
 He must know the thought that moves the demon act
 And justifies the Titan's erring pride
 And the falsehood lurking in earth's crooked dreams:
 He must enter the eternity of Night
 And know God's darkness as he knows his Sun.
 For this he must go down into the pit,
 For this he must invade the dolorous Vasts.
 Imperishable and wise and infinite,
 He still must travel Hell the world to save.
 Into the eternal Light he shall emerge
 On borders of the meeting of all worlds;
 There on the verge of Nature's summit steps
 The secret Law of each thing is fulfilled,
 All contraries heal their long dissidence.
 There meet and clasp the eternal opposites,
 There pain becomes a violent fiery joy;
 Evil turns back to its original good,
 And sorrow lies upon the breasts of Bliss:
 She has learnt to weep glad tears of happiness;
 Her gaze is charged with a wistful ecstasy.
 Then shall be ended here the Law of Pain.
 Earth shall be made a home of Heaven's light,
 A seer heaven-born shall lodge in human breasts;
 The superconscient beam shall touch men's eyes
 And the truth-conscious world come down to earth
 Invading Matter with the Spirit's ray
 Awaking its silence to immortal thoughts,
 Awaking the dumb heart to the living Word.
 This mortal life shall house Eternity's bliss,
 The body's self taste immortality.
 Then shall the world-redeemer's task be done.
 Till then must life carry its seed of death
 And sorrow's plaint be heard in the slow Night.
 O mortal, bear this great world's law of pain,
 In thy hard passage through a suffering world
 Lean for thy soul's support on Heaven's strength,
 Turn towards high Truth, aspire to love and peace.
 A little bliss is lent thee from above,
 A touch divine upon thy human days:
 Make of thy daily way a pilgrimage,
 For through small joys and griefs thou mov'st towards God.
 Haste not towards Godhead on a dangerous road,
 Open not thy doorways to a nameless Power,
 Climb not to Godhead by the Titan's road.
 Against the Law he pits his single will,
 Across its way he throws his pride of might.
 Heavenward he clammers on a stair of storms
 Aspiring to live near the deathless Sun.
 He strives with a giant strength to wrest by force
 From life and nature the immortal's right;
 He takes by storm the world and fate and heaven.
 He comes not to the high world-maker's seat,

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He waits not for the outstretched hand of God
 To raise him out of his mortality.
 All he would make his own, leave nothing free,
 Stretching his small self to cope with the infinite.
 Obstructing the god's open ways he makes
 His own estate of the earth's air and light;
 A monopolist of the world-energy,
 He dominates the life of common men.
 His pain and others' pain he makes his means:
 On death and suffering he builds his throne.
 In the hurry and clangour of his acts of might,
 In a riot and excess of fame and shame,
 By his magnitudes of hate and violence
 By the quaking of the world beneath his tread
 He matches himself against the Eternal's calm
 And feels in himself the greatness of a god:
 Power is his image of celestial self.
 The Titan's heart is a sea of fire and force;
 He exults in the death of things and ruin and fall,
 He feeds his strength with his own and others' pain;
 In the world's pathos and passion he takes delight,
 His pride, his might call for the struggle and pang.
 He glories in the sufferings of the flesh
 And covers the stigmata with the Stoic's name.

.....

His moments centre the vast universe.
 He sees his little self as very God.
 His little "I" has swallowed the whole world,
 His ego has stretched into infinity.
 His mind, a beat in original Nothingness,
 Ciphers his thought on a slate of hourless Time.
 He builds on a mighty vacancy of soul
 A huge philosophy of Nothingness.
 In him Nirvana lives and speaks and acts
 Impossibly creating a universe.
 An eternal zero is his formless self,
 His spirit the void impersonal absolute.
 Take not that stride, O growing soul of man;
 Cast not thy self into that night of God.
 The soul suffering is not eternity's key,
 Or ransom by sorrow heaven's demand on life.
 O mortal, bear, but ask not for the stroke,
 Too soon will grief and anguish find thee out.
 Too enormous is that venture for thy will;
 Only in limits can man's strength be safe;
 Yet is infinity thy spirit's goal;
 Its bliss is there behind the world's face of tears.
 A power is in thee that thou knowest not;
 Thou art a vessel of the imprisoned spark.
 It seeks relief from Time's envelopment,
 And while thou shutst it in, the seal is pain:
 Bliss is the Godhead's crown, eternal, free,
 Unburdened by life's blind mystery of pain:
 Pain is the significance of the Ignorance
 Attesting the secret god denied by life:
 Until life finds him pain can never end.
 Calm is self's victory overcoming fate.
 Bear; thou shalt find at last thy road to bliss.
 Bliss is the secret stuff of all that lives,
 Even pain and grief are garbs of world-delight,
 It hides behind thy sorrow and thy cry.
 Because thy strength is a part and not God's whole,
 Because afflicted by the little self
 Thy consciousness forgets to be divine
 As it walks in the vague penumbra of the flesh
 And cannot bear the world's tremendous touch,
 Thou criest out and sayst that there is pain.
 Indifference, pain and joy, a triple disguise,
 Attire of the rapturous Dancer in the ways,
 Withhold from thee the body of God's bliss.
 Thy spirit's strength shall make thee one with God,
 Thy agony shall change to ecstasy,
 Indifference deepen into infinity's calm
 And joy laugh nude on the peaks of the Absolute.

O mortal who complaint of death and fate,
 Accuse none of the harms thyself hast called;
 This troubled world thou hast chosen for thy home,
 Thou art thyself the author of thy pain.
 Once in the immortal boundlessness of Self,
 In a vast of Truth and Consciousness and Light
 The soul looked out from its felicity.
 It felt the Spirit's interminable bliss,
 It knew itself deathless, timeless, spaceless, one,
 It saw the Eternal, lived in the Infinite.
 Then, curious of a shadow thrown by Truth,
 It strained towards some otherness of self,
 It was drawn to an unknown Face peering through night.
 It sensed a negative infinity,
 A void supernal whose immense excess
 Imitating God and everlasting Time
 Offered a ground for Nature's adverse birth

And Matter's rigid hard unconsciousness
 Harboured the brilliance of a transient soul
 That lights up birth and death and ignorant life.
 A Mind arose that stared at Nothingness
 Till figures formed of what could never be;
 It housed the contrary of all that is,
 A Nought appeared as Being's huge sealed cause,
 Its dumb support in a blank infinite,
 In whose abyss spirit must disappear:
 A darkened Nature lived and held the seed
 Of Spirit hidden and feigning not to be.
 The eternal Consciousness became the home
 Of some unsouled almighty Inconscient;
 One breathed no more the spirit's native air.
 A stranger in the insentient universe,
 Bliss was the incident of a mortal hour.
 As one drawn by the grandeur of the Void
 The soul attracted leaned to the Abyss:
 It longed for the adventure of Ignorance
 And the marvel and surprise of the Unknown
 And the endless possibility that lurked
 In the womb of Chaos and in Nothing's gulf
 Or looked from the unfathomed eyes of Chance.
 It tired of its unchanging happiness,
 It turned away from immortality:
 It was drawn to hazard's call and danger's charm,
 It yearned to the pathos of grief, the drama of pain,
 Perdition's peril, the wounded bare escape,
 The music of ruin and its glamour and crash,
 The savour and pity and the gamble of love
 And passion and the ambiguous face of Fate.
 A world of hard endeavour and difficult toil
 And battle on extinction's perilous verge,
 A clash of forces, a vast incertitude,
 The joy of creation out of Nothingness,
 Strange meetings on the roads of Ignorance
 And the companionship of half-known souls
 Or the solitary greatness and lonely force
 Of a separate being conquering its world,
 Called it from its too safe eternity.
 A huge descent began, a giant fall:
 For what the spirit sees, creates a truth
 And what the soul imagines is made a world.
 A Thought that leaped from the Timeless can become,
 Indicator of cosmic consequence
 And the itinerary of the gods,
 A cyclic movement in eternal Time.
 Thus came, born from a blind tremendous choice,
 This great perplexed and discontented world,
 This haunt of Ignorance, this home of Pain:
 There are pitched desire's tents, grief's headquarters,
 A vast disguise conceals the Eternal's bliss."

Then Aswapathy answered to the seer:
 "Is then the spirit ruled by an outward world?
 O seer, is there no remedy within?
 But what is fate if not the spirit's will
 After long time fulfilled by cosmic Force?
 I deemed a mighty Power had come with her;
 Is not that Power the high compeer of Fate?"

But Narad answered covering truth with truth:
 "O Aswapathy, random seem the ways
 Along whose banks your footsteps stray or run
 In casual hours and moments of the gods,
 Yet your least stumblings are foreseen above.
 Infallibly the curves of life are drawn
 Following the stream of Time through the unknown;
 They are led by a clue the calm immortals keep.
 This blazoned hieroglyph of prophet moons
 A meaning more sublime in symbols writes
 Than sealed Thought wakes to, but of this high script
 How shall my voice convince the mind of earth?
 Heaven's wiser love rejects the mortal's prayer;
 Unblinded by the breath of his desire,
 Unclouded by the mists of fear and hope,
 It bends above the strife of love with death;
 It keeps for her her privilege of pain.
 A greatness in thy daughter's soul resides
 That can transform herself and all around
 But must cross on stones of suffering to its goal.
 Although designed like a nectar cup of heaven,
 Of heavenly ether made she sought this air,
 She too must share the human need of grief
 And all her cause of joy transmute to pain.
 The mind of mortal man is led by words,
 His sight retires behind the walls of Thought
 And looks out only through half-opened doors.
 He cuts the boundless Truth into sky-strips
 And every strip he takes for all the heavens.
 He stares at infinite Possibility
 And gives to the plastic Vast the name of Chance.
 He sees the long results of an all-wise Force

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Planning a sequence of steps in endless Time
 But in its links imagines a senseless chain
 Or the dead hand of cold Necessity;
 He answers not to the mystic Mother's heart,
 Misses the ardent heavings of her breast
 And feels cold rigid limbs of lifeless Law.
 The will of the Timeless working out in Time
 In the free absolute steps of cosmic Truth
 Appears a hard machine or meaningless Fate.
 A Magician's formulas have made Matter's laws
 And while they last, all things by them are bound:
 But the Spirit's consent is needed for each act
 And freedom walks in the same pace with Law.
 All here can change if the Magician choose.
 If human will could be made one with God's,
 If human thought could echo the thoughts of God,
 Man might be all-knowing and omnipotent;
 But now he walks in Nature's doubtful ray.
 Yet can the mind of man receive God's light,
 The force of man can be driven by God's force,
 Then is he a miracle doing miracles.
 For only so can he be Nature's King.
 It is decreed and Satyavan must die;
 The hour is fixed, chosen the fatal stroke.
 What else shall be is written in her soul.
 But till the hour reveals the fateful script
 The writing waits illegible and mute.
 Fate is Truth working out in Ignorance.
 O King, thy fate is a transaction done
 At every hour between Nature and thy soul
 With God for its foreseeing arbiter.
 Fate is a balance drawn in Destiny's book.
 Man can accept his fate, he can refuse.
 Even if the One maintains the unseen decree
 He writes thy refusal in thy credit page:
 For doom is not a close, a mystic seal.
 Arisen from the tragic crash of life,
 Arisen from the body's torture and death,
 The spirit rises mightier by defeat;
 Its godlike wings grow wider with each fall.
 Its splendid failures sum to victory.
 O man, the events that meet thee on thy road,
 Though they smite thy body and soul with joy and grief,
 Are not thy fate; they touch thee awhile and pass;
 Even death can cut not short thy spirit's walk:
 Thy goal, the road thou chooseth are thy fate.
 On the altar throwing thy thoughts, thy heart, thy works,
 Thy fate is a long sacrifice to the gods
 Till they have opened to thee thy secret self
 And made thee one with the indwelling God.
 O soul, intruder in Nature's ignorance,
 Armed traveller to the unseen supernal heights,
 Thy spirit's fate, is a battle and ceaseless march
 Against invisible opponent Powers,
 A passage from Matter into timeless Self.
 Adventurer through blind unforeseeing Time,
 A forced advance through a long line of lives,
 It pushes its spearhead through the centuries.
 Across the dust and mire of the earthly plain,
 On many-guarded lines and dangerous fronts,
 In dire assaults in wounded slow retreats,
 Or in a hero's deal's battered fort
 Or in a lone soldier's odds in lonely posts,
 Or camped in a tent around the bivouac's fires,
 Awaiting the trumpets of the dawn
 In hunger and in plenty and in pain,
 Through peril and through triumph and through fall,
 Through life's green lanes and over her desert sands,
 Up the bald moor, along the sunlit ridge,
 In serried columns with a straggling rear
 Led by its nomad vanguard's signal fires,
 Marches the army of the waylost god.
 Then late the joy ineffable is felt,
 Then he remembers his forgotten self;
 He has refound the skies from which he fell.
 At length his front's indomitable line
 Forces the last passes of the Ignorance:
 Advancing beyond Nature's last known bounds,
 Reconnoitring the formidable unknown,
 Beyond the landmarks of things visible,
 It mounts through a miraculous upper air
 Till climbing the mute summit of the world
 He stands upon the splendour-peaks of God.
 In vain thou mournst that Satyavan must die;
 His death is a beginning of greater life,
 Death is the spirit's opportunity.
 A vast intention has brought the souls close
 And love and death conspire towards one great end.
 For out of danger and pain heaven-bliss shall come,
 Time's unforeseeing event, God's secret plan.
 This world was not built with random bricks of chance,

A blind god is not destiny's architect;
 A conscious power has drawn the plan of life,
 There is a meaning in each curve and line.
 It is an architecture high and grand
 By many named and nameless masons built
 In which unseeing hands obey the Unseen,
 And of its master-builders she is one.
 Queen, strive no more to change the secret will;
 Time's accidents are steps in its vast scheme,
 Bring not thy brief and helpless human tears
 Across the fathomless moments of a heart
 That knows its single will and God's as one:
 It can embrace its hostile destiny;
 It sits apart with grief and facing death
 Affronting adverse fate armed and alone.
 In this enormous world standing apart
 In the mightiness of her silent spirit's will,
 In the passion of her soul of sacrifice
 Her lonely strength facing the universe
 Affronting fate asks not man's help nor god's:
 Sometimes one life is charged with earth's destiny,
 It cries not for succour from the time-bound powers.
 Alone she is equal to her mighty task.
 Intervene not in a strife too great for thee,
 A struggle too deep for mortal thought to sound,
 Its question to this nature's rigid bounds
 When the soul fronts nude of garbs the infinite,
 Its too vast theme of a lonely mortal will
 Pacing the silence of eternity.
 As a star, unaccompanied, moves in heaven
 Unastonished by the immensities of space,
 Travelling infinity by its own light,
 The great are strongest when they stand alone.
 A God-given might of being is their force,
 A ray from self's solitude of light the guide,
 The soul that can live alone with itself meets God;
 Its lonely universe is their rendezvous.
 A day may come when she must stand unhelped
 On a dangerous brink of the world's doom and here,
 Carrying the world's future on her lonely breast,
 Carrying the human hope in a heart left sole
 To conquer or fail on a last desperate verge
 Alone with death and close to extinction's edge,
 Her single greatness in that last dire scene,
 She must cross alone a perilous bridge in Time
 And reach an apex of world-destiny
 Where all is won or all is lost for man.
 In that tremendous silence lone and lost
 Of a deciding hour in the world's fate,
 In her soul's climbing beyond mortal time
 When she stands sole with Death or sole with God
 Apart upon a silent desperate brink
 Alone with her self and death and destiny
 As on some verge between Time and Timelessness
 When being must end or life rebuild its base,
 Alone she must conquer or alone must fall.
 No human aid can reach her in that hour,
 No armoured God stand shining at her side.
 Cry not to heaven, for she alone can save.
 For this the silent Force came missioned down;
 In her the conscious Will took human shape
 She only can save herself and save the world.
 O queen, stand back from that stupendous scene,
 Come not between her and her hour of Fate.
 Her hour must come and none can intervene:
 Think not to turn her from her heaven-sent task,
 Strive not to save her from her own high will.
 Thou hast no place in that tremendous strife;
 Thy love and longing are not arbiters there,
 Leave the world's fate and her to God's sole guard.
 Even if he seems to leave her to her lone strength,
 Even though all falters and falls and sees an end
 And the heart fails and only are death and night,
 God-given her strength can battle against doom
 Even on a brink where Death alone seems close
 And no human strength can hinder or can help.
 Think not to intercede with the hidden Will,
 Intrude not twixt her spirit and its force
 But leave her to her mighty self and Fate."
 He spoke and ceased and left the earthly scene.
 Away from the strife and suffering on our globe,
 He turned towards his far-off blissful home.
 A brilliant arrow pointing straight to heaven,
 The luminous body of the eternal seer
 Assailed the purple glory of the noon
 And disappeared like a receding star
 Vanishing into the light of the Unseen;
 But still a cry was heard in the infinite,
 And still to the listening soul on mortal earth
 A high and far imperishable voice
 Chanted the anthem of eternal love.