

Invocation

Savitri

B H A V A N

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Study notes and Newsletter

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From the Editor

We apologise to all our regular readers that it was not possible to bring out the 15th (April 2002) issue of Invocation on time, due to an accident which I suffered. Instead we offer you this double issue (15 + 16) on the auspicious occasion of Sri Aurobindo's 130th birthday, which happens to fall in the Mother's 125th anniversary year - double cause for celebration. You also find enclosed an Index to the first 14 issues of INVOCATION.

Shraddhavan

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The Mother's sketch of Sri Aurobindo, 1935

*A pointing beam on earth's uncertain roads,
His birth held up a symbol and a sign;
His human self like a translucent cloak
Covered the All-Wise who leads the unseeing world.*

Savitri: I:3 p.22

“The World of Falsehood, the Mother of Evil and the Sons of Darkness”

Why the Mother set aside the painting of Book Two, Canto Eight of Savitri
by Huta

It was January 1964. The Mother and I were deeply absorbed in doing *Savitri* painting. When we came upon Canto Eight of Book Two, “The World of Falsehood, the Mother of Evil and the Sons of Darkness”, the Mother disclosed to me :

I have already fought with the Mother of Evil, and now I do not wish at all to give forms to the Falsehood in painting and put the pictures in front of humanity, so that they can easily get into the false consciousness. No, I am not going to give them forms. Drop Canto Eight altogether.

We skipped it. Nevertheless, I read it word by word intellectually with Amal Kiran, as arranged by the Mother. I was so horrified that I could not sleep for a few nights. The atmosphere was harrowing. Poisonous living vibrations of that terrifying world made me extremely sick. At that time I wondered whether this world of Falsehood had any general effect, any special influence on human beings. As years passed, I gradually became aware of its function through some human beings whose consciousness became perverted and possessed by the Sons of Darkness who made them their instruments.

In the book *Sri Aurobindo’s “Savitri” - an approach*, by A.B. Purani, I came across this statement:

When Aswapati saw the heart of the Night he found that there was a spiritless blank eternity where the eternal truth was denied and it was hoped to continue the anarchy of darkness. There was only a brute principle of life without the revealing presence of divine Light. Evil and pain acting in this brute life gave rise to demoniac powers which were :

*“World-egos racked with lust and thought and will,
Vast minds and lives without a spirit within”.*

There were in fact embodiments of dark ideas which were responsible for the creation of man’s hell. This hell was :

*“ ... the gate of a false Infinite
An eternity of disastrous absolutes”.*

*It denied all true things because it was the power of the Inconscience.
Thought became an instrument of perversity, and even Good*

*“ ... a faithless gardener of God,
Watered with virtue the world’s upas-tree”.*

*

My memory flies back to 20th January 1964. After the *Savitri* work, the Mother revealed to me - as she had never done before - what truth, lies and falsehood are:

Child, there is a vast difference between falsehood and a lie. When people tell a lie, it is words that come from their mouths and are contrary to the actual fact or deny it. For instance if you have gone somewhere and deny to have gone, or if you have done something and refuse to admit the fact - it is a lie. But lies have no strength. Lies are always the sign of a great weakness, and if they are habitual of a great crookedness.

Falsehood is something very serious. The world, as it is, is in a state of Falsehood - it denies the Eternal Truth. There are three chief categories of falsehood.

- 1) People who aspire for the Truth but are not sincere enough in their aspiration to discriminate between the Truth and the Falsehood and they fall always into trouble and misery and get out of the path leading to Truth.*
- 2) This category is dangerous. People who can very well discriminate between Truth and Falsehood, who know that*

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the Truth is better, but have no strength to resist the temptation and fall constantly into falsehood.

- 3) *The last one is the most dangerous of all. People who are aware of the Truth but refuse to recognise the truth and choose deliberately the falsehood - they have a kind of hate for the Truth and reject it violently. These, on the eternal list, can be stamped "Missing souls" as it is written in Savitri -*

*"So might one fall on the Eternal's road
Forfeiting the spirit's lonely chance in Time
And no news of him reach the waiting gods,
Marked 'missing' in the register of souls"*

(Book II, Canto 7, p. 239)

Happily there are very few people like that - who deny the Truth and choose Falsehood.

There are of course numbers of people who have good will, good purpose, good aspiration and the rest; but in spite of all that, they still live in Falsehood because they have not the strength to fight for the Truth. And if you let yourself go without reacting with a constant vigilance you are bound to live in Falsehood because this world is a world of Falsehood.

When souls come upon earth by accepting the sorrows, miseries and troubles of the world - it is because they want to conquer Falsehood and help in the Victory of the Truth - I call them heroic souls.

For those who leave aside their mental, vital and physical and live only in the Bliss, there is no struggle and pain, because their beings are untouched, undisturbed, and they remain as they are. But the souls who came upon earth to fight face to face with Falsehood are truly heroic souls, and the Supreme Love is there with them. They set a concrete example for the world.

Another important thing to be remembered is that one must have an unshaken faith in the Lord. The Flame of

Faith must be kept burning and it must grow and spread its light widely to replace the falsehood, because it is the Light of the Truth.

Why should you get disturbed? You must leave everything to the Lord. It is He who knows - and not only knows but sees and looks after everything, arranges everything - it is His responsibility and not the responsibility of human beings. The more you get disturbed and upset by falsehood, the more will it come under various forms and take a quick chance to enter your consciousness, heart and brain and make you miserable. Here, the body and the true consciousness are not separated, so naturally the body too suffers from Falsehood. But you must try constantly to ignore the Falsehood by remembering the Lord's Love only. Whatever thing may happen to you, don't get upset - just pray to the Lord.

*

In answer to my letter dated 26.11.72 the Mother wrote :

Before dying falsehood rises in full swing.

Still people understand only the lesson of catastrophe. Will it have to come before they open their eyes to the truth?

I ask an effort from all so that it has not to be.

It is only the Truth that can save us; truth in words, truth in action, truth in will, truth in feelings.

It is a choice between serving the Truth or being destroyed.

Here are Sri Aurobindo's encouraging words:

It is quite true that falsehood reigns in this world, that is the reason why these difficulties manifest. But you have not to allow yourself to be shaken. You must remain calm and strong and go straight, using the power of Truth and the Divine Force supporting you to overcome difficulties and set straight what has been made crooked by the falsehood.

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20-1-64

I went to the Mother today. She explained to me about truth, lie and falsehood which She never explained to me before.

"There is a vast difference between falsehood and a lie. When people tell a lie, ~~it is words which come from their mouths and those lies are innumerable.~~ ^{are contrary to the actual fact as seen by you.} For example, if you have gone somewhere and ~~then to have gone~~ ^{then to have gone} ~~or if you have done something and refuse to admit the fact~~ ^{refuse to the fact,} - it is a lie. But ~~the lie has no strength. It is just nothing.~~ ^{Lies are always the sign of a great weakness, and if they are habitual of a great crookedness.}

Falsehood is something very serious. ~~There are three kinds of~~ ^{is like a flake of falsehood} ~~Falsehood.~~ ^{It denies the Eternal Truth.} There are three chief categories of falsehoods:

(1) People who lie to live in Truth, ~~aspire for the Truth but~~ ^{aspire for the Truth but} ~~are not sincere enough to the truth and then~~ ^{are not sincere enough to the truth and then} ~~to discontinue between the Truth and the Falsehood~~ ^{to discontinue between the Truth and the Falsehood} ~~and they are always into trouble and misery when the things happen~~ ^{and they are always into trouble and misery when the things happen} ~~otherwise.~~ ^{This is one kind of Falsehood, and get out from the path leading to Truth.}

(2) This ~~is~~ ^{category} ~~is~~ ^{is} ~~rather~~ ^{rather} ~~dangerous.~~ ^{dangerous.} People who can very well discriminate between Truth and Falsehood, ~~still they like to remain in Falsehood~~ ^{still they like to remain in Falsehood} ~~have no strength to resist the temptation and fall constantly into~~ ^{have no strength to resist the temptation and fall constantly into} ~~Falsehood.~~ ^{Falsehood.}

(3) ~~This~~ ^{The last} ~~one is dangerous of all.~~ ^{one is dangerous of all.} People who know the Truth but ~~they~~ ^{they} ~~are not sincere enough to the truth~~ ^{are not sincere enough to the truth} ~~and choose deliberately the falsehood~~ ^{and choose deliberately the falsehood} ~~they have~~ ^{they have} ~~the kind of fate for that sake and reflect it involuntarily~~ ^{the kind of fate for that sake and reflect it involuntarily} ~~There, on the eternal list~~ ^{There, on the eternal list} ~~of "missing souls". As in Savitri is written: in Savitri~~ ^{of "missing souls". As in Savitri is written: in Savitri}

"So might one fall on the Eternal's road
Forfeiting the spirit's lonely chance in Time
And no news of him reach the waiting gods,
Marked "missing" in the register of souls".....

(Book II, Canto 7, Page 239, SAVITRI.)

^{Happily} ~~But,~~ ^{But,} there are very few people like that - ~~who~~ ^{who} ~~may~~ ^{may} ~~deny~~ ^{deny} the Truth and ~~accept~~ ^{accept} Falsehood.

There are of course, numbers of people who have good will, purpose, ^{good} ~~and~~ ^{and} ~~aspiration~~ ^{aspiration} ~~and~~ ^{and} ~~etc.~~ ^{etc.} but, in spite of all ~~this,~~ ^{this} they still live in ~~Falsehood~~ ^{Falsehood} ~~because they have not the strength to fight for the Truth~~ ^{because they have not the strength to fight for the Truth} ~~None lives, etc. and speaks the Truth~~ ^{None lives, etc. and speaks the Truth} ~~and if you let yourself go without reflecting with a constant vigilance~~ ^{and if you let yourself go without reflecting with a constant vigilance} ~~you are bound to live in Falsehood~~ ^{you are bound to live in Falsehood} ~~because this world is a world of Falsehood~~ ^{because this world is a world of Falsehood} ~~and that was why we considered the matter~~ ^{and that was why we considered the matter}

The Falsehood has numerous various aspects. They assume masks of Truth. They are like a chameleon - changing colours to suit and serve their own purpose. The hostile forces, in order to fulfil their blatant mission in the world, make some human beings their instruments and work through them or they work by themselves. These instruments, in fact, are responding to these lower forces, they are influenced and readily obey their commands.

These people are as the Mother explained to me in her talk:

The last one is the most dangerous of all. People who are aware of the Truth but refuse to recognise it and deliberately choose the Falsehood. They have a kind of hate for the Truth and reject it violently.

These very people use their tyranny, money-power, mischief, pride, dominating influence, and try desperately to prevent the true aspirants from reaching their Supreme Goal: the Divine. They are great schemers. These nasty forces want to destroy the true being physically, mentally, psychologically, morally and spiritually, even financially. They take perverted joy in harassing, torturing, brainwashing and ruining the true people. These hostile instruments cannot possibly tolerate anybody's happiness, peace and progress.

Nonetheless, the Divine too has His own instruments who are helpful and full of goodwill.

Sri Aurobindo has written about the nature of hostile Forces:

It is a fact always known to all yogis and occultists since the beginning of time, in Europe and Africa as in India, that wherever yoga or Yajna is done, there the hostile Forces gather together to stop it by any means. It is known that there is a lower nature and a higher spiritual nature - it is known that they pull different ways and the lower is strongest at first and the higher afterwards. It is known that the hostile Forces take advantage of the movements of the lower nature and try to spoil through them, smash or retard the siddhi ...

(SABCL 24 : 1731)

The following explanation by the Mother is appropriate :

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Those who want to follow the true path will naturally be exposed to the attacks of all the forces of ill-will which not only do not understand, but generally hate that which they do not understand.

These are some verses from *Savitri* which describe the mischief of the lower elements:

*Beings were there who wore a human form;
Absorbed they lived in the passion of the scene,
But knew not who they were or why they lived: ...
Ardent from the sack of happy peaceful homes
And gorged with slaughter, plunder, rape and fire,
They made of human selves their helpless prey,
A drove of captives led to lifelong woe,*

(p. 143-44)

*

It was Monday 27th July 1964. Always after the *Savitri* work the Mother revealed to me one thing or another. On this day, after our work she went into a deep trance. When she awoke she said solemnly:

*Child, Durga always chases the devils who are in thousands.
She does not kill them because they cannot be killed.*

When Durga fights them they run here and there to find a hiding place. Whenever human beings keep the doors of their consciousness open, the devils without losing a moment enter and start their mischief. I tell you, never keep the door open because it is dangerous to welcome these nasty forces.

*You must remember that human beings and the world are **One**. The whole One cannot be transformed - it takes time. Nevertheless, the individual can progress and can be freed if you do not listen and let the adverse forces into your consciousness.*

If you shut the door of your being to the Falsehood and cling only to the Truth, you are free and happy.

Remember, the Lord is stronger than these forces.

There is no end to her teaching. I have experienced that whenever she said something, she at the same time gave her Force to realise her truthful, brilliant teaching.

The Mother sent me a card illustrating Durga. Her hopeful words on the card were:

Durga - She will fight until there are no more anti-divine forces upon earth.

*

Sri Aurobindo has stated aptly in *Savitri* Book One, Canto Two:

*A grey tribunal of the Ignorance,
An Inquisition of the priests of Night
In judgment sit on the adventurer soul,
And the dual tables and the Karmic norm
Restrain the Titan in us and the God:
Pain with its lash, joy with its silver bribe
Guard the Wheel's circling immobility.
A bond is put on the high-climbing mind,
A seal on the too large wide-open heart; ...*

(p. 18)

The characteristic of the Devil is that he takes enormous pleasure in destroying beautiful things, new creations, new perceptions and visions. He never allows the Divine Truth, Beauty and Love to manifest easily upon earth. He is the creator of catastrophes. He even quotes scripture to deceive us. The Mother told me:

Child, we have to outwit the Devil.

She wrote to me in 1961:

*Alas! My poor little child, this kind of Devil is **immortal** and will disappear from the earth atmosphere only with the disappearance of **falsehood**.*

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She also wrote:

*Do not give up to the enemy (the adverse forces) - resist -
I am with you for the fight and **we must conquer.***

Many a time I faced the Falsehood. Its undercurrent of hostility and ill-will had disastrous vibrations. It was not at all an open, ordinary fight from the human point of view, but extremely subtle and invisible.

Under this effect I suffered both mentally and physically. I felt as if my whole being were strangled and suffocated. The situation recalled what Sri Aurobindo has expressed in his poem "In the Battle":

*All around me now the Titan forces press;
This world is theirs, they hold its days in fee;
I am full of wounds and the fight merciless.
Is not yet Thy hour of Victory?*

(SABCL 5:146)

On 6th November 1961 I saw the Mother in her room for our *Savitri* work. After the work, I requested her to make me understand the following Message given by her:

*The world is full of pitiable miseries. But of all beings those
are the most to be pitied who are so small and so weak that
they cannot avoid being nasty.*

Her explanation was:

*Child, when I was one with the Supreme the Pity came to
me because there are innumerable beings upon earth who
do not understand anything; they even know nothing about
the Divine. They are full of ignorance and mischief, they
are very small and cannot resist being nasty. They do not
know what they are doing and why they are doing it. They
are what they are.*

*But I want these small beings to be transformed
completely in order to become divine beings. I want
perfection for everyone.*

This experience I summed up in my Message. First I wrote in French - just after the experience, on 17th September 1963. Then the next day I wrote the Message in English.

*

When the anti-divine forces attacked me indiscriminately, I totally forgot to pray to the Lord - I even lost faith in Him. I wondered whether the Divine existed, whether there is justice in His Kingdom. I was really annoyed with Him because He created such a wretched world.

Then one day I read in the *Bulletin* these cheering words from the Mother:

All things considered, looking at the world as it is and as it seems it must be irremediably, the human intellect has decreed that this world must have been a mistake on the part of God and the manifestation or creation can be only the result of desire, desire for self-knowledge, desire for self-manifestation, desire for self enjoyment, and the only thing to be done is to put an end to this mistake as soon as possible by refusing consent to desire and its evil consequences.

But the supreme Lord answers that the comedy has not yet been wholly played out, and He adds, "Wait for the last act, maybe you will change your opinion."

The Mother send me a card dated 30.12.55. It depicted a pheonix coming out of a leaping fire. Her words on the card were:

This is the picture of the soul coming out victoriously from all the ordeals. I want this realisation for you.

I am grateful to the Mother for making me conscious of the World of Falsehood and its calamitous actions in concrete reality. Her Grace gave me tremendous endurance, patience, poise and peace and saw me through the most dangerous, severe and critical phases in my life.

The Mother remarked about all the *Savitri* paintings:

They are living beings - full of light, vividness and vibrations.

It was really good that the Mother and I did not do the painting of Canto Eight of Book Two of *Savitri*. If Sri Aurobindo's Compassion, Strength, Help and Presence had not been with me constantly, I would have been smashed into pieces.

Here are some luminous verses from *Savitri*:

*Only were safe who kept God in their hearts:
Courage their armour, faith their sword, they must walk,
The hand ready to smite, the eye to scout,
Casting a javelin regard in front,
Heroes and soldiers of the army of Light.*

(p. 211)

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Huta', written in a cursive, flowing style.

© Huta D. Hindocha

The Soul's Choice: Savitri, Book Eleven

Talk by Dr. Nadkarni

at Savitri Bhavan on March 5, 2002

I would like to begin by welcoming you all to this session which is being held at Savitri Bhavan. I consider Savitri Bhavan as an institution which exists for and in the Mother's consciousness - because here all our other affiliations, all our differences, are dropped and we affirm ourselves as the children of the Mother. Whether we have come from Sri Aurobindo Ashram or from any branch of Sri Aurobindo Society, or from Auroville, or from anywhere else, the only thing that really matters here is that we are all children of the Mother, and that we are here to celebrate the great epic that Sri Aurobindo has written. As I have been saying for many years now, *Savitri* is not great only as literature. It is a living book, a book that can give you the force that is needed to walk on the path that the Mother and Sri Aurobindo have laid out for us. They have done all that is needed to make sure that the path is secure and sure.

As a living book *Savitri* vibrates with the consciousness of Sri Aurobindo and therefore also of the Mother. It is not only the manifesto of the new spiritual age that is about to dawn on humanity, but it is also a power-house. This power becomes dynamic only when we receive it in ourselves and manifest it in our lives through our sadhana. *Savitri* is thus very closely linked with our sadhana; it is not a book which is merely to be read or written about. I think the most appropriate way of celebrating it is by incarnating the Savitri consciousness through our lives. I think that is the great purpose for which the Savitri Bhavan has been set up - to help flood the world with Savitri consciousness. We are all happy to be here this afternoon and are very grateful for this opportunity. So, once again, welcome to all of you, who have come from several different parts of India, from abroad, from different sections of Pondicherry, and from Auroville.

This time we devoted our sessions held at the Beach Office of the Sri Aurobindo Society to a study of Book Eleven of *Savitri*. As you remember, last year when we met here we concluded Book Ten. Towards the end of Book Ten, we saw that Savitri had made sure that the God of Death had no more questions to ask; all his objections had been met and the questions he

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had raised were answered. This process seems to have helped the God of Death to realise who he really is.

Savitri, the incarnation of the Divine Mother, does not fight to vanquish and destroy anybody; the Mother is intent on transforming all those who misunderstand the whole project of earthly evolution and strive to slow down its onward progress or to reverse it. The God of Death seems to be doing his best to put a stop to the progress of evolution. First he comes as the Dark Night and tries to intimidate Savitri, and when that fails he takes on various intellectual positions and argues against the feasibility and the reasonableness of her enterprise, which is to enable man to throw off the yoke of ignorance and death. It is not always clear what role the intellect plays in human affairs; it is meant to guide man but often ends up by confusing him. The God of Death raises many, many confusing questions, and Savitri answers them all. As we have seen, the God of Death never tells a lie, the God of Death always deals in truths, but in half-truths. Savitri completes each half-truth that the God of Death puts forward. In this way, one by one various questions are raised, and Savitri answers all of them. Finally, when the God of Death has no questions left to ask, he says, “You have the Wisdom, you have the Knowledge. But do you have the Power to bring in the new Consciousness, the new Light that you want to bring?”

In reply, Savitri removes her veil so that the Supreme Divine Mother that she really is stands before the God of Death. A powerful radiance emanates from Savitri and surrounds the God of Death. This is the part of the text that we read last time. The important thing is that when this happens, at this great moment of triumph, Savitri addresses the God of Death and says:

*“I hail thee, almighty and victorious Death,
Thou grandiose Darkness of the Infinite.*

(p. 666)

This is the moment of defeat for the God of Death, and yet Savitri hails him as

*... almighty and victorious Death,
Thou grandiose Darkness of the Infinite.*

And why she calls him ‘victorious’ is explained further on,

*I have given thee thy awful shape of dread
And thy sharp sword of terror and grief and pain
To force the soul of man to struggle for light
On the brevity of his half-conscious days.
Thou art his spur to greatness in his works,
The whip to his yearning for eternal bliss,
His poignant need of immortality.*

(p. 666)

She says, “You have been reminding man all the time of his poignant need for immortality. If we have now reached this stage ... “ as Savitri has reached, “... it is because of Death’s proddings. So you have fulfilled the purpose of your being here, which is to drive man, goad him onward on the path of immortality, and you have brought us here to do this, and in the process you have made yourself redundant as it were. Therefore we hail you and declare you victorious.”

But The God of Death is not yet conquered, he is only defeated. And therefore although his form disintegrates, something of his spirit still remains, so that at the end of that canto we are told that:

*... Satyavan and Savitri were alone
But neither stirred: between those figures rose
A mute invisible and translucent wall.*

(p. 668)

There was an invisible translucent wall and Savitri and Satyavan were not entirely alone. What this wall signifies, we will see later in Book Eleven.

Now we turn to Book Eleven, which has the phrase “The Eternal Day” in its title. When we review Books IX and X we see that the God of Death takes Savitri through three different regions, namely through the Darkness or the region of the Eternal Night; then come the two Twilight zones. Now we enter the fourth zone, that of the Eternal Day.

There are seven and a half to eight pages of exquisite poetry which

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describe this world of perfection, the Eternal Day. In Pondicherry when we were looking at it, we were able to finish this part very quickly, because the only way you can deal with these eight pages is just to read them and be quiet. There is nothing you can add to them. This is not the conception of the biblical paradise or the paradise in the Puranas. This is a totally different notion of perfection. I will just read a few lines and then go on. This is how it begins:

*A marvellous sun looked down from ecstasy's skies
On worlds of deathless bliss, perfection's home,
Magical unfoldings of the Eternal's smile
Capturing his secret heart-beats of delight.
God's everlasting day surrounded her,
Domains appeared of sempiternal light
Invading all Nature with the Absolute's joy.*

(p. 671)

This is the kind of world, this is the kind of paradise or world of perfection that has been described here over seven or eight pages and it is a gorgeous description. It goes on:

*Air seemed an ocean of felicity
Or the couch of the unknown spiritual rest,
A vast quiescence swallowing up all sound
Into a voicelessness of utter bliss;
Even Matter brought a close spiritual touch,
All thrilled with the immanence of one divine.
The lowest of these earths was still a heaven
Translating into the splendour of things divine
The beauty and brightness of terrestrial scenes...*

(p. 672)

This wonderful description concludes like this :

*Air was a luminous feeling, sound a voice,
Sunlight the soul's vision and moonlight its dream.*

*On a wide living base of wordless calm
All was a potent and a lucid joy.*

(p. 678)

At the end of the section we feel that we are surrounded by this perfect world, this paradise or heaven. But then begins a section which suddenly gives a kind of shock. We had assumed at the close of Book X that the God of Death had disintegrated and was gone. But then in the next section we are told :

*One whom her soul had faced as Death and Night
A sum of all sweetness gathered into his limbs
And blinded her heart to the beauty of the suns.*

(p. 678)

This figure was a being of light:

*A sum of all sweetness gathered into his limbs
And blinded her heart to the beauty of the suns.*

Here Sri Aurobindo does something which adds a new dimension to the description of the four states of the Self described in the Upanishads. In the Mandukya Upanishad, there is a description of the four states of the Self – the Waking Consciousness, the Dream Consciousness, the Sleep Consciousness, and what is called the Turiya or fourth state. These are the four states of the individual atman (Self), of the individual's consciousness, of the microcosm. Corresponding to that there is the macrocosm. In the Chandogya Upanishad the four states of cosmic consciousness are described in brief. Corresponding to the Waking Consciousness we have Virat or Vaishwanara; corresponding to the Dream Consciousness we have Hiranyagarbha; corresponding to the Sleep Consciousness we have Ishwara; and corresponding to the Turiya we have Brahman as Ananda.

Now in this part of *Savitri* we find a rich contribution to the Upanishadic lore. Sri Aurobindo describes the four states of this Parabrahman, the macrocosm, in wonderful poetry. Let me begin by reading the first passage, where he describes Virat, the phenomenal universe, Brahman manifested as

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the external world:

*In him the architect of the visible world,
At once the art and artist of his works,
Spirit and seer and thinker of things seen,
Virat, who lights his camp-fires in the suns
And the star-entangled ether is his hold,
Expressed himself with Matter for his speech:
Objects are his letters, forces are his words,
Events are the crowded history of his life,
And sea and land are the pages for his tale.*

(p.680)

Then he describes the second aspect which is called the Hiranyagarbha, the master of subtle matter, Brahman manifested as the Creator, self-container :

*In him shadows his form the Golden Child
Who in the Sun-capped Vast cradles his birth:
Hiranyagarbha, author of thoughts and dreams,
Who sees the invisible and hears the sounds
That never visited a mortal ear,
Discoverer of unthought realities
Truer to Truth than all we have ever known,
He is the leader on the inner roads;
A seer, he has entered the forbidden realms;
A magician with the omnipotent wand of thought,
He builds the secret uncreated worlds.*

(p. 681)

Just now I only read out to you the description of these two aspects. There are two more, but we do not have enough time to dwell on the other two aspects. I will now proceed to give you some indication of what is happening in this section.

We are in for a big surprise. The radiant figure, the four aspects of whose being have been described in such glorious poetry, still is seen pursuing the aim which the God of Death had pursued all the time, namely that of

dissuading Savitri from pursuing her goal.

He tells her, “In this world, Spirit and Matter have been forever separated. They can never come together. That is the nature of this world. Spirit and Matter are separated, Purusha and Prakriti are separated. Only in the lives of a few individuals can the Purusha and Prakriti recognise who each is - and then they step out of this world. But if you want to live in this world, you have to accept the dual law. And as long as you accept the dual law the world will continue to be exactly what it is. If you are tired of this, if you are willing to give up this world, there are wonderful opportunities for you. You can find peace, you can find bliss, you can find nirvana. That is what I am offering you.” He says :

Yet if thou wouldst abandon this vexed world,

The world will always remain vexed, that is the assumption, and if you are willing to abandon this world,

Careless of the dark moan of things below,

From here on earth there will always be the wails and the whining and the suffering and the cry of humanity; if you are willing to forget about all this, then you have a clear path to follow:

*Tread down the isthmus, overleap the flood,
Cancel thy contract with the labouring Force;
Renounce the tie that joins thee to earth-kind,
Cast off thy sympathy with mortal hearts.
Arise, vindicate thy spirit's conquered right:
Relinquishing thy charge of transient breath,
Under the cold gaze of the indifferent stars
Leaving thy borrowed body on the sod,
Ascend, O soul, into thy blissful home.*

(p.685)

He thus gives her an invitation to return to the blissful home of the Spirit. But Savitri replies :

Invocation

*“O besetter of man’s soul with life and death
And the world’s pleasure and pain and Day and Night,
Tempting his heart with the far lure of heaven,
Testing his strength with the close touch of hell,
I climb not to thy everlasting Day,
Even as I have shunned thy eternal Night.*

(p. 685)

Just as I rejected your eternal Night, I also reject your everlasting Day

*To me who turn not from thy terrestrial Way,
Give back the other self my nature asks.*

(p. 685-86)

She says, “I have not come here seeking either the bliss of paradise, or the peace of nirvana, I have come here to take Satyavan back with me to Earth. That is my one single purpose – to take him back with me.”

And then Savitri explains why she wants to go back to earth. This is something of a constant theme in all of Sri Aurobindo’s writings. Nobody has to tell him that the earth is corrupt, that the world is imperfect; that avatars have come and gone and yet the world does not seem to show any marked improvement. If you take away suffering from one corner of the world, it erupts in another corner, reduce it in one area of life, it increases in another. If we had Hitler yesterday we have Osama Bin Laden today, we have another name, another reason; economists, sociologists and politicians can always offer a perfect analysis of why what happened had to happen. None of them can predict it, none of them can stop it, they can only explain it perfectly after these tragedies happen. This will go on and on and on, and so this world is a terrible place, nothing happens, nothing improves here, nothing gets better.

In several of his letters to Sri Aurobindo, Dilip Kumar Roy raised this very issue: “Why, when this world is in such a mess and has always been a mess, why are you so much fascinated by this earth? What gives you such faith in its future?” Sri Aurobindo’s replies always followed the line which Savitri now takes. Savitri replies:

*Earth is the chosen place of mightiest souls;
Earth is the heroic spirit's battlefield,
The forge where the Archmason shapes his works.
Thy servitudes on earth are greater, King,
Than all the glorious liberties of heaven.*

(p. 686)

To be here, to struggle with this imperfect and miserable world, to bring perfection to it, to bring God's perfection and fullness to this world - this is the glorious opportunity that the earth always gives us. Because it is the only evolutionary world. All other worlds, however glorious, are frozen in their glory. What are these heavens? These are all heavens for retired souls, people who have no potential for growth, for evolution.

There is a belief in the Indian tradition that even gods, if they want to rise higher, have to come down to earth and take a human birth - because this is the only place in the whole universe which has a psychic being and where evolution takes place. And if today you are just a clod of clay, you still have the hope that tomorrow, the day after, or five years later, one millennium later, you will be able realise the perfection of God in a handful of dust. That is this place, - our sordid, miserable earth. "Heavens? Why are you in such a hurry to go back to your heavenly home? We have all come down from that abode of peace and perfection, from Sachidananda. I know what heavens have to offer" she says:

*The heavens were once to me my natural home,
I too have wandered in star-jewelled groves,
Paced sun-gold pastures and moon-silver swards
And heard the harping laughter of their streams
And lingered under branches dropping myrrh;
I too have revelled in the fields of light
Touched by the ethereal raiment of the winds,
Thy wonder-rounds of music I have trod
Lived in the rhyme of bright unlabouring thoughts,
I have beat swift harmonies of rapture vast,
Danced in spontaneous measures of the soul
The great and easy dances of the gods.*

(p. 686)

Invocation

You can go to heaven and dance the easy dances of the gods.

*O fragrant are the lanes thy children walk
And lovely is the memory of their feet
Amid the wonder-flowers of Paradise:
A heavier tread is mine, a mightier touch.
There where the gods and demons battle in night
Or wrestle on the borders of the Sun,
Taught by the sweetness and the pain of life
To bear the uneven strenuous beat that throbs
Against the edge of some divinest hope,
To dare the impossible with these pangs of search,
In me the spirit of immortal love
Stretches its arms out to embrace mankind.
Too far thy heavens for me from suffering men.
Imperfect is the joy not shared by all.*

(p. 686)

“If any perfection, if any happiness, any felicity cannot be shared by all, to that extent,” Savitri says, “it remains to me imperfect. I have not come here for salvation for myself.” What she is saying, in other words, is: “I need the boon of freedom for the whole of mankind, freedom from suffering, from death, from incapacity. This is what I seek. Do not tempt me, do not try to lure me away from my single aim. I have a single goal and that is to take Satyavan with me back to earth and work among human beings, so that human beings may rise and realise the fullness of their potential. Nothing can deter me from this.”

There is a letter in reply to Dilip Kumar Roy where Sri Aurobindo writes about one of his poems called “The Life Heavens”, in which there is a glorious description of the vital world’s perfection. And as he is describing it, you hear the voice of earth, saying:

*“I, Earth, have a deeper power than Heaven;
My lonely sorrow surpasses its rose-joys,
A red and bitter seed of the raptures seven; -
My dumbness fills with echoes of a far Voice.*

*“By me the last finite, yearning, strives
To reach the last infinity’s unknown,
The Eternal is broken into fleeting lives
And Godhead pent in the mire and the stone.”*

(SABCL 5:575)

Here is a little of what Sri Aurobindo has said by way of commentary on this poem. He says :

All the non-evolutionary worlds are limited to their own harmony like the Life Heavens. The Earth, on the other hand, is an evolutionary world, not at all glorious or harmonious even as the material world, ... but rather most sorrowful, disharmonious, imperfect. Yet in that imperfection is the urge towards a higher and more many-sided perfection. It contains the last finite which yet yearns to the supreme Infinite. (It is not satisfied by sense-joys precisely because in the conditions of the earth it is able to see their limitations). God is pent in the mire (mire is not glorious, so there is no claim to glory or beauty here), but that very fact imposes a necessity to break through that prison to a consciousness which is ever rising towards the heights.

(SABCL 22:388)

In this section we find again and again that there is a confrontation between two perspectives. One is the perspective which has the weight of a long Indian tradition, which says that getting out of life, freedom from *punarjanma*, is the great goal of all spiritual endeavour. This business of not coming back to birth has somehow become our highest aspiration. Let me give you a small illustration of what I mean. A recent issue of the Bhavan’s Journal has published an interview with Lata Mangeshkar. Lata Mangeshkar, as you know, is a person who has given so much joy and delight to millions of people of our generation and she has been doing it for so long. She was asked, “What is your highest aspiration?” and she replied “Not to come back to birth again!” Why does she say that, has she thought about it? No.

Invocation

In the Indian tradition, this is regarded as the highest goal, so if anybody asks you that question, you must say this. If I were Lata Mangeshkar, I would have said, “In this life I have given great delight, as they say, to Indian audiences. In my next life, I would like to give equal pleasure to African audiences, European audiences, American audiences, etc.” Why does she not say that? If you are an Indian, you do not say that. If you are an Indian you say, “I want moksha, I want nirvana, I want out.” This, Sri Aurobindo has always resisted. Sri Aurobindo tells us that the fact that we have always tried to get out of this world is the reason for many of the great tragedies that have happened to India, particularly during the last thousand years or so.

So this is the reply this Being of Light gets from Savitri. Now he is no longer a God of Death, he is a refined Being of Light. But even as a Being of Light he tempts her, and at one point Savitri says, “You have tried to forge a weapon, and of that weapon, I Savitri am the hilt and Satyavan is the blade.” I will read that. She says :

*O thou who soundst the trumpet in the lists,
Part not the handle from the untried steel,
Take not the warrior with his blow unstruck.
Are there not still a million fights to wage?
O king-smith, clang on still thy toil begun,
Weld us to one in thy strong smithy of life.
Thy fine-curved jewelled hilt call Savitri,
Thy blade's exultant smile name Satyavan.
Fashion to beauty, point us through the world.
Break not the lyre before the song is found;
Are there not still unnumbered chants to weave?
...
I know that I can lift man's soul to God,
I know that he can bring the Immortal down.*

(p. 687)

“Why do you want to become a spoil-sport, why? This is what we are intended to do, but instead of blessing us, you are trying to disrupt this by separating me and Satyavan, and you are promising me a kind of a escape from this world!”

The God of Death now become a Being of Light, is very, very sophisticated, very clever, and he asks Savitri, "I do appreciate your concern for mankind, you want to save mankind, you want to bring them perfection, but have you ever consulted mankind, have you asked them if they want to be saved? You may like to save them, but do they want to be saved? No." He says, "Mankind has temporary enthusiasms when they suddenly stand up, wave a flag and announce a new goal, a new ideal, etc... But this goes on for a few years, then suddenly the enthusiasm wanes and we are back where we started. So this sudden enthusiasm that you find in human beings, of idealism, of heroism, is only short-lived." He gives expression to this despair very beautifully:

*A few can climb to an unperishing sun,
Or live on the edges of the mystic moon
And channel to earth-mind the wizard ray.
The heroes and the demigods are few
To whom the close immortal voices speak
And to their acts the heavenly clan are near.*

(p 689)

And then he says

*Heaven's call is rare, rarer the heart that heeds;
The doors of light are sealed to common mind
And earth's needs nail to earth the human mass,
Only in an uplifting hour of stress
Men answer to the touch of greater things:*

(p 689)

Wars produce heroes, freedom struggles produce heroes, some crisis in life produces these great heroes. But once the freedom has come, once the war is over, the same old corruption, the same old pettiness, the same old cupidity, all come and settle down again in man's life. So mankind does not really get any better, it remains always the same.

*Only in an uplifting hour of stress
Men answer to the touch of greater things:*

Invocation

*Or, raised by some strong hand to breathe heaven-air
They slide back to the mud from which they climbed;*

Why?

*In the mud of which they are made, whose law they know
They joy in safe return to a friendly base, ...*

We all make an attempt to climb a little higher, then go back and wallow in the mud, like pigs, because that is where we belong, that is what we enjoy, where we are at home – this is mankind. The Being of Light asks Savitri, “You want to save this mankind?”

*To be the common man they think the best,
To live as others live is their delight.*

(p.689)

Well, the Being of Light then goes on to suggest the following line of action to Savitri: “You have only two choices, either to merge in the vacancy of non-being, nirvana; or, you know who you are, you are the Supreme Mother who has incarnated on earth, why do you not withdraw yourself into your original status?” In other words, in either case, take yourself away from the earth-scene, give up the great ideal you have been pursuing. This is what the God of Death now converted into the Being of Light still keeps telling her. Savitri, as you know, does not accept any of these things and finally she says:

*“In vain thou temptst with solitary bliss
Two spirits saved out of a suffering world;
My soul and his indissolubly linked
In the one task for which our lives were born, ...*

What is it we want to achieve?

*To raise the world to God in deathless Light,
To bring God down to the world on earth we came,
To change the earthly life to life divine.*

(p.692)

Sri Aurobindo has said that his yoga has three main objectives – one: to enable the aspiring sadhak to rise to the highest level of consciousness, which he has called the supramental consciousness, and to bring it down to earth; two: under this power, under this influence to transform all the parts of our being, the mind, the life and the body so that they can function as perfect instruments of a perfect soul. Transformation of life and the manifestation of the Divine in terrestrial life is thus the second objective. And third, this is not an individual salvation. But to use this tremendous new consciousness to change the whole of humanity gradually and slowly so that the entire nature participates in this new birth. So bring down the consciousness, the supreme consciousness called the supramental consciousness, change life, mind and body, give to each one of them the perfection that is latent in them; and three, take the whole of humanity with you.

Savitri says:

I sacrifice not earth to happier worlds.

(p.692)

This goes on and we do not have the time to go through all the details. Finally this Being of Light says to Savitri, “If you want to influence the earth, if you want to change the destiny of the earth, you cannot do it through parliaments, you cannot do it through financial institutions, you cannot do it through revolutions. What you have to do is to rise to a status of the spirit where no world exists, rise to the highest spiritual consciousness and from there, impress your will on this world.”

And at that moment everything disappears, including this Being of Light. All forms dissolve and Savitri finds herself on top of this entire creation, where there is nothing, no creation yet, it is a kind of blank slate, and at that time, this moment, whatever Savitri asks for will be given to her.

The God of Death became for a while a Being of Light. Now even he is dissolved. What she hears is a disembodied Voice and this Voice gives Savitri four chances to ask for whatever she wants. Each time, it says:

“Choose, spirit, thy supreme choice not given again; ...”

(p. 696)

Invocation

And each time the Voice also suggests the choice she is expected to make. The choices suggested are different forms of cessation from being, different forms of Nirvana.

*In a happy vast sublime cessation know, -
An immense extinction in eternity, ...*

I am offering you an immense extinction in eternity.

Felicity of the extinguished flame, ...

You know nirvana is basically a flame that is extinguished, *Felicity of the extinguished flame*, then:

Last sinking of a wave in a boundless sea, ...

(p.696)

Each individual being is a wave that rises on a sea and when the wave merges back with the sea, you are one with the sea, there is no wave left any more, your individuality is extinguished. In other words, he is offering her escape, extinction: nirvana is ready, just ask for it. But what Savitri asks for in reply is :

*“Thy peace, O Lord, a boon within to keep
Amid the roar and ruin of wild Time
For the magnificent soul of man on earth. ...”*

She does not give up, she answers, “If you want to give me anything, give it for the magnificent soul of man on earth.” A second time, similarly he says:

*“Wide open are the ineffable gates in front.
My spirit leans down to break the knot of earth, ...*

“I will destroy everything, all forms, and make sure that you have nothing but peace and bliss.” At that moment, and each time such an offer is made, the poet beautifully describes how Savitri hears a cry that is coming up from the earth :

She heard a million creatures cry to her.

(p. 696)

Remembering the earth, she says:

*“Thy oneness, Lord, in many approaching hearts,
My sweet infinity of thy numberless souls.”*

(p. 697)

A third time, and a fourth time, Savitri is incorrigible, whatever he says, with whatever force and emphasis, ”I am offering you extinction from this world” , she answers, “Give me love, give me energy, give me oneness for man on earth”.

When Savitri insists on all this, at that moment, this god of Death, who became a Being of Light and then just a Voice, is finally transformed, because from now on he does not put any impediments in Savitri’s way. He has been won over entirely by Savitri, not merely vanquished. For Savitri is not creating a path to salvation for herself, she has shown her readiness to include all of mankind, because she has realised that no one can be saved completely until all are saved. Once you realise this great truth and are entirely focussed on this goal, then even the gods are with you. So now he is entirely satisfied and there follow four or five pages of surpassingly wonderful poetry where this god, now the Supreme, gives his consent to Savitri’s enterprise and promises its fulfillment.

The Mother has said somewhere that all these experiences described in *Savitri*, beginning from the point where the confrontation with Death takes place at the end of Book Eight, through Books Nine, Ten and Eleven, were all her own experiences. “I have gone through them all” she has said. It seems that Sri Aurobindo used to write these lines at night, and the following morning he would come and read them out to her, and on one occasion she is reported to have said, ”O Lord, you have divulged all my secrets to the world.” So what is written here is in fact the Mother’s own experience. There is a beautiful recording available of the Mother’s reading of this long passage (which begins on page 696) and when the Mother reads these lines, her voice gets choked; her identification with Savitri is so strong.

Invocation

*I will pour delight from thee as from a jar,
I will whirl thee as my chariot through the ways,
I will use thee as my sword and as my lyre,
I will play on thee my minstrelsies of thought.
And when Thou art vibrant with all ecstasy,
And when thou liv'st one spirit with all things,
Then will I spare thee not my living fires,
But make thee a channel for my timeless force.*

And then it continues:

*Who hunts and seizes me, my captive grows:
This shalt thou henceforth learn from thy heart-beats.*

And in the concluding part, if you hear it in the Mother's voice, it is available on a tape, it is wonderful, she says:

For ever love, O beautiful slave of God!

The Mother says that reading this line gave her the most overpowering experience of the entire book.

*For ever love, O beautiful slave of God!
O lasso of my rapture's widening noose
Become my cord of universal love,
O mind grow full of the eternal peace;
O word, cry out the immortal litany;
Built is the golden tower, the flame child born
...
O Satyavan, O luminous Savitri,
I sent you forth of old beneath the stars,
A dual power of God in an ignorant world,
In a hedged creation shut from limitless self,
Bringing down God to the insentient globe.
Lifting earth-beings to immortality.*

(p. 702)

“I sent you down, a dual power”. Many of the recent writers on Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have emphasized that they have been a dual Avatar. This has never happened before. An Avatar has come and after he has finished his task another Avatar has come. This time two Avatars had come together. It is because the work undertaken this time is of great importance, and is a very complex one. As Sri Aurobindo himself has said, the ascent from the monkey or the ape to man was not as steep as the ascent that man is now set to make from man to Superman. So a lot of things had to be done at the same time; and, as you know, the work that Sri Aurobindo did and the Mother did, had never been attempted before. The great tapasya they performed right after the Siddhi Day, of twenty-fourth November 1926, until he left his body at the end of 1950, that is, for 24 years, has remained a mystery. Sri Aurobindo refused to revise some of the great books that needed to be re-written, like *The Synthesis of Yoga* and so on, *On Rebirth* and other essays, saying he had no time. What was Sri Aurobindo doing? If you want to see what Sri Aurobindo was doing, you have to go to Aswapati’s yoga and see how he was busy, digging in a filth of horror and mire: the entire work that he did in the Inconscient, all that cleansing of the Augean stables. Even after doing all this, he was not satisfied. He decided, “I will give this body to ensure that the descent of the Supramental Consciousness is hastened” and he offered his physical body for that great purpose on the 5th of December 1950. His body got shattered in that attempt, but in 1956, as the Mother has announced it, the Supramental Consciousness has come down.

So here in *Savitri* there is a description of what kind of a consciousness it is, what kind of a perfection that world will be, and it is also predicted that:

*The incarnate dual Power shall open God’s door,
Eternal supermind touch earthly Time*

(p. 705)

The incarnate dual Power will together work and shall open God’s door. Finally, I would like to relate this to the great statement that the Mother made announcing the descent of the Supramental Consciousness in earth.

Invocation

This evening the Divine Presence, concrete and material, was there present amongst you. I had a form of living gold, bigger than the universe, and I was facing a huge and massive golden door which separated the world from the Divine.

As I looked at the door, I knew and willed, in a single movement of consciousness, that “the time has come”, and lifting with both hands a mighty golden hammer I struck one blow, one single blow on the door and the door was shattered to pieces.

Then the supramental Light and Force and Consciousness rushed down upon earth in an uninterrupted flow.

(MCW 15:202)

This too was predicted in *Savitri*.

A number of other things one can note here, but we have no time to go into all those just now, so I will simply read the last part, which tells what will happen when the Superman comes. When the Supramental Consciousness comes down, man’s mind will work differently, man’s vital will be transformed, even the body will remember God. The body will not be made of the substance of which is it made now. It will be lighter, more plastic, etc., etc. - all these things have been described in this long prophetic passage. And the passage closes with these words which are very well known:

*A divine force shall flow through tissue and cell
And take the charge of breath and speech and act
And all the thoughts shall be a glow of suns
And every feeling a celestial thrill.
Often a lustrous inner dawn shall come
Lighting the chambers of the slumbering mind;
A sudden bliss shall run through every limb
And Nature with a mightier Presence fill.
Thus shall the earth open to divinity
And common natures feel the wide uplift,*

*Illumine common acts with the Spirit's ray
And meet the deity in common things.
Nature shall live to manifest secret God,
The Spirit shall take up the human play,
This earthly life become the life divine.*

(p. 710)

This is not the conclusion of the Canto. There follows a short passage describing Savitri after her great triumph, descending from that high plane back to the earth and that is described in the last two pages.

Now before I conclude, there is a letter which I think I should share, that I would like to read to you, because this is not as well known as some of the other things. Often people talk about the Supramental Consciousness as if it were something dull, uninteresting, as if they were saying, "I do not know why Sri Aurobindo wants this Supramental Consciousness it does not seem to be something very exciting or inspiring ...". You know that for Indians anything spiritual is a dull thing – we have made spirituality the dullest possible thing, because we have always talked about it in negative terms. Here Sri Aurobindo, in response to a letter, whose letter I do not know, writes something which I think all of us should make a copy of and place in a prominent place in our homes or where we are likely to see it again and again, for it is a very inspiring message about the Supramental, where he is saying that the touch of heaven does not cancel the earth but fulfils it. He says:

*The supramental is **not** grand, aloof, cold and austere; it is not something opposed to or inconsistent with a full vital and physical manifestation; on the contrary, it carries in it the only possibility of the full fulfilment of the vital force and the physical life on earth. It is because it is so, because it was so revealed to me and for no other reason that I have followed after it and persevered till I came into contact with it and was able to draw some power of it and its influence. I am concerned with the earth, not with worlds beyond for their own sake; it is a terrestrial realisation*

Invocation

that I seek and not a flight to distant summits. All other yogas regard this life as an illusion or a passing phase; the supramental yoga alone regards it as a thing created by the Divine for a progressive manifestation and takes the fulfilment of the life and the body for its object.

When he was asked "Why do you want to do yoga?" he answered: "For the fulfilment of life". Not abandonment of life, not cancellation of life, not impoverishment of life, but for the fulfilment of life. That is what he is saying.

The supramental is simply the Truth-Consciousness and what it brings in its descent is the full truth of life, the full truth of consciousness in Matter. One has indeed to rise to high summits to reach it, but the more one rises, the more one can bring down below. No doubt, life and body have not to remain in the ignorant, imperfect, impotent things they are now; but why should a change to fuller life-power, fuller body-power be considered something aloof, cold and undesirable? The utmost Ananda the body and life are now capable of is a brief excitement of the vital mind or the nerves or the cells which is limited, imperfect and soon passes: with the supramental change, all the cells, nerves, vital forces, embodied mental forces can become filled with a thousand-fold Ananda,...

He says that our delight in every aspect of our life will multiply a thousand-fold.

... capable of an intensity of bliss which passes description and which need not fade away. How aloof, repellent and undesirable! The supramental love means an intense unity of soul with soul, mind with mind, life with life, ...

People very often have asked "What will happened to love in the supramental world?" and this is what Sri Aurobindo has said:

The supramental love means an intense unity of soul with soul, mind with mind, life with life, and an entire flooding of the body consciousness with the physical experience of oneness, the presence of the Beloved in every part, in every cell of the body. Is that too something aloof and grand but undesirable? With the supramental change, the very thing on which you insist, the possibility of the free physical meeting of the embodied Divine with the sadhak without conflict of forces and without undesirable reactions becomes possible, assured and free.

And then he adds:

*I could go on - for pages, but this is enough for the moment.
(SABCL 22:90-91)*

Well, we have come to the end of the time available to us, so let us salute the great poet and conclude here for now.



*Our early approaches to the Infinite
Are sunrise splendours on a marvellous verge
While lingers yet unseen the glorious sun.
What now we see is a shadow of what must come.*

(Book One, Canto 4, p.46)

The New Creation

Talk by Sraddhalu Ranade

at Savitri Bhavan on March 17, 2002

In an introductory note to *Savitri*, Sri Aurobindo states that this narrative

“ ... is not a mere allegory, the characters are not personified qualities, but incarnations or emanations of living and conscious Forces with whom we can enter into concrete touch and they take human bodies in order to help man and show him the way from his mortal state to a divine consciousness and immortal life.”

Savitri, Satyavan, Aswapati, Dyumatsena and all other the personalities are conscious powers and it is in the fitness of things that they are given a special place here at Savitri Bhavan where not only are they respected, given outer forms through which to manifest, but where there is also a conscious and constant *yajna* that goes on throughout the year invoking the presence of *Savitri* and allowing it to manifest in all its diversities.

In this volume, in this book, Sri Aurobindo’s poetic narrative, we find all possible aspects of life described in essential form. So in principle it is possible to take up any theme and find some insight in *Savitri*. In fact I had a lot of trouble in the last few weeks, deciding what to speak of today. Among the many options which flickered through my thoughts were included even – you will be amused – terrorist techniques, something very topical today; for the methods used by terrorism are also described in great detail in *Savitri*, the methods of the asura; or the psychology of human relationships, or the different moods of the seasons and the earth. There were many possibilities. But after considering them all I thought that the most important and the most urgent of all is what I should take up today, and the others could be perhaps studied on some other occasion.

The most important thing, the most important work, the most important moment before us - that is what which I wish to elaborate on, through the narrative of *Savitri*.

Invocation

In the vast cosmic perspective of time, across the millions of years, evolution proceeds through cycles. Cycles of civilisations have come and gone, destroyed so completely that not even a racial memory remains of them. Through these cycles we have come to where we are today. Across the millions of years, the effort of billions of people, the result is the humanity of today. Between two great cycles is a period of transition, the joining of two yugas, the meeting of an old creation and a new creation. And in between, at that meeting point, is a violent struggle, a struggle between the old world that resists change and the new world that wishes to manifest principles so different that no one on earth has even an inkling of what they are or how to make them real.

Sri Aurobindo describes something of this New Creation, in words which are necessarily limited, but through which our minds can have some idea, however distorted, however constrained by the ego's perspective, some glimpse, some touch of that New Creation, in Book Three, Canto Three "The House of the Spirit and the New Creation".

Having reached the peaks of the cosmos, the consciousness of Oneness, Aswapati waits and watches. And then something happens.

*Then suddenly there came a downward look.
As if a sea exploring its own depths,
A living Oneness widened at its core
And joined him to unnumbered multitudes.
A Bliss, a Light, a Power, a flame-white Love
Caught all into a sole immense embrace;
Existence found its truth on Oneness' breast
And each became the self and space of all.
The great world-rhythms were heart-beats of one Soul,
To feel was a flame-discovery of God, ...*

In this tremendous clasp of a Bliss, a Light, a Power, a flame-white Love, gathering all into its immense embrace, into one Soul, the rhythms of the world, the yugas, the cycles going across millions of years are nothing but heart-beats of that one Soul.

All mind was a single harp of many strings,

*All life a song of many meeting lives;
For worlds were many, but the Self was one.
(p. 322-23)*

This experience condenses itself to become the seed of the New Creation:

*This knowledge now was made a cosmos' seed:
This seed was cased in the safety of the Light,
It needed not a sheath of Ignorance.*

Unlike all the other creations so far, all the successive stages of evolution, all the new worlds each greater than the other, this one is unique, unique in that this seed is encased in the safety of Light and does not need the covering of division, of ignorance.

It is this which makes the new age, the new creation to come now, so special. It is founded on a consciousness of unity, on a consciousness which is beyond the taint of ignorance, a consciousness of Truth which reaches out and embraces all creation.

*A Bliss, a Light, a Power, a flame-white Love
Caught all into a sole immense embrace;*

This is the foundation, the fundamental characteristic of the new creation, the seed that has been created.

*Then from the trance of that tremendous clasp
And from the throbbings of that single Heart
And from the naked Spirit's victory
A new and marvellous creation rose.*

And what happens when it rises?

*Incalculable outflowing infinitudes
Laughing out an unmeasured happiness
Lived their innumerable unity;*

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The oneness blossoms into a million directions, unmeasured in happiness, innumerable in forms and yet held by that unity.

*Worlds where the being is unbound and wide
Bodied unthinkably the egoless Self;*

No taint of the ego, only the Self embodied.

*Rapture of beatific energies
Joined Time to the Timeless, poles of a single joy;*

All the energies are ecstatic, divine, and play from the peaks of creation down to its very depths in one continuous movement of joy. There is no division.



Sraddhalu at Savitri Bhavan on March 17, 2002

*There were no contraries, no sundered parts,
All by spiritual links were joined to all
And bound indissolubly to the One:
Each was unique, but took all lives as his own, ...*

(p. 323)

Of course it is difficult for us to conceive of this state, and yet the mantric power of Sri Aurobindo's description puts us in tune with that consciousness.

In this creation, the surface forms, so far separated from their essential truth, are bridged.

*Appearance looked back to its hidden truth
And made of difference oneness' smiling play;*

(p. 324)

And what happens in the play of different movements, of different identities?

*All struggle was turned to a sweet strife of love
In the harmonised circle of a sure embrace.*

...

*There was no sob of suffering anywhere;
Experience ran from point to point of joy:
Bliss was the pure undying truth of things.
All Nature was a conscious front of God: ...*

In each movement of the present world, with each step forward there is a step back, there is a recoil. But in the new world the recoil does not exist. What happens there?

*All turned to all without reserve's recoil:
A single ecstasy without a break,
Love was a close and thrilled identity
In the throbbing heart of all that luminous life.
A universal vision that unites,
A sympathy of nerve replying to nerve,
Hearing that listens to thought's inner sound*

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*And follows the rhythmic meanings of the heart,
A touch that needs not hands to feel, to clasp,
Were there the native means of consciousness
And heightened the intimacy of soul with soul.*

(p. 325)

Even in the outer contact of the senses, there is the constant touch of the soul reaching out to the soul, increasing its intensity, no more dividing.

*The Spirit's white neutrality became
A playground of miracles, a rendezvous
For the secret powers of a mystic Timelessness:
It made of Space a marvel house of God, ...*

(p. 326)

All the cosmic powers so far hidden in their own worlds, high above in their heavens, now become manifest and play here in this physical universe, which is now a playground of their miracles, a marvel house of God's play.

*There Mind, a splendid sun of vision's rays,
Shaped substance by the glory of its thoughts
And moved amidst the grandeur of its dreams.*

(p. 327)

In the present world there is a constant conflict between the mind's conception and the material nature's response, but in this new creation whatever the mind conceives, the substance shapes itself to spontaneously.

Some glimpses of what this means, Mother has given us in various talks. She has said that the supramentalised body itself will be so plastic, its form so supple, that the present laws of rigidity, division, decay would all cease to exist and instead matter would spontaneously mould itself to reflect the moods of the soul, the thoughts, the intentions of the divinity within. The body itself, if we take this description a step further, would be so plastic that it could change form at will.

*There was no gulf between the thought and fact,
Ever they replied like bird to calling bird;*

*The will obeyed the thought, the act the will.
There was a harmony woven twixt soul and soul.*

(p. 327)

And what happens to the matter itself?

*There Matter is the Spirit's firm density,
An artistry of glad outwardness of self,
A treasure-house of lasting images
Where sense can build a world of pure delight: ...*

(p. 328)

The characteristic of Matter, which is today its greatest limitation, is that it resists change. In that world, in the new creation, that very characteristic now reveals its deeper truth. It has the same characteristic of lasting images, lasting forms, but the forms are only an expression of the Spirit, the firm density of the Spirit; and the Spirit in its artistry, in its joy, moulds this outer firmness to create an objective self-expression.

*There substance was a resonant harp of self,
A net for the constant lightnings of the spirit, ...*

(p. 328-29)

And the body itself reflects this.

*Its bodies woven by a divine sense
Prolonged the nearness of soul's clasp with soul; ...*

(p. 329)

And what happens to the whole of the universe when this transition is complete?

*An architect hewing out self's living rock,
Phenomenon built Reality's summer-house
On the beaches of the sea of Infinity.*

(p. 329)

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So far phenomenon has been an almost illusory surface transitory appearance. Deep behind it, is the reality, far beyond our reach or our conception. But now phenomenon is no longer an illusion, it is an architect hewing out the living rock of the self, the permanent Reality behind, and it builds

*... Reality's summer-house
On the beaches of the sea of Infinity.*

The Reality still remains in its ocean existence, but now projects itself into this little universe, creating its summer-house. But the summer-house is also the Reality, no longer an illusory phenomenon but a phenomenon of Reality.

This New Creation seems so far away, and yet it is time for its manifestation. It is what Sri Aurobindo and the Mother worked to bring down upon earth, and the Mother repeatedly says: "This new world is so close, you have only to reach out and touch it." Why can't we reach out and touch it? Why can't we see it? Because we are still caught in the mould of the old. From this new world Aswapati looks back at the old world. What does he see?

*Against this glory of spiritual states (that is, the new world)
Their parallels and yet their opposites,
Floated and swayed, eclipsed and shadowlike
As if a doubt made substance, flickering, pale,
This other scheme two vast negations found.*

(p. 329)

This other world is seen like a substance that is flickering, pale, shadowlike, so unreal, so flimsy when seen from the Reality of the new world. This old world is seen to be based on two vast negations. What are the negations of the old world in which we still live? The first negation:

*A world that knows not its inhabiting Self
Labours to find its cause and need to be;*

And the second negation:

*A spirit ignorant of the world it made,
Obscured by Matter, travestied by Life,
Struggles to emerge, to be free, to know and reign; ...*
(p. 329)

The deep gulf between spirit and the world is the characteristic of the old world. The surface world does not know the spirit which is hiding, living behind the appearance, and is constantly struggling to find its cause. And on the other side, the other negation is the spirit, which is ignorant of the world it has made: it is caught, trapped in matter, ridiculed by life and constantly struggling to emerge and be free.

These two contradictions make the old world the conflict, confusion and chaos that it is. But seen from the new world, which is so real, so tangible, so beautiful, the old world's forms are vague, insubstantial. Yet, though the two are tied, there is a conflict that takes place. There is a reason why the old world is still caught in the grip of darkness and that reason he touches upon. The poet says:

*This darkness hides our nobler destiny.
A chrysalis of a great and glorious truth,
It stifles the winged marvel in its sheath
Lest from the prison of Matter it escape
And, wasting its beauty on the formless Vast,
Merged into the Unknowable's mystery,
Leave unfulfilled the world's miraculous fate.*
(p. 330)

He likens the old world to a chrysalis in which the butterfly is waiting to emerge from the cocoon, the cocoon of Matter and the butterfly of the Self, of the Divine hidden within. And the cocoon holds back the glorious truth, so that it may not escape from the prison of Matter too soon, because if it escapes too soon, the butterfly will fly away and waste its beauty in the formless Vast beyond, which would be such a pity, because the world's miraculous fate which is intended would then remain unfulfilled. So Matter holds on to the Spirit within, and will not let it out without a tremendous struggle, a struggle so great that Spirit, in the very act of breaking out of Matter, will identify itself with Matter and change the very nature and

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substance of Matter. That is why the struggle has to be so great. The greater the struggle, the greater the glory of the final achievement. So this is the justification for the darkness hiding the nobler destiny.

*As yet thought only some high spirit's dream
Or a vexed illusion in man's toiling mind,
A new creation from the old shall rise,*

It will happen, it is a promise he gives us. And how will it take place?

*A Knowledge inarticulate find speech,
Beauty suppressed burst into paradise bloom,
Pleasure and pain dive into absolute bliss.*

The first step is that a Knowledge inarticulate finds speech. In fact it is that Knowledge which has found speech in this great mystic poetry of *Savitri* and in Sri Aurobindo's other revelatory writings. A Knowledge inarticulate has found speech.

The beauty suppressed behind matter is still preparing, pushing its way towards the surface. Some glimpses of it we have in our awakened moments, even in the details of our material circumstances. The thing which strikes people the most when they enter the Ashram, the first thing which strikes them is, "Oh, it is such a beautiful place!" Of course their senses dwell on the flowers and the forms which the mind needs to recognise that beauty, but they sense that beauty behind the form. The very first forms that Auroville threw up from the desert sands, manifested the beauty of nature, of trees, of flowers, before all else began to grow. The suppressed Beauty of the future is still preparing to burst out from behind the appearance.

And the third step: "Pleasure and pain dive into absolute bliss." Perhaps that still seems far away, but Sri Aurobindo has promised it to us a certainty. He says "*A new creation from the old shall rise*". But for the moment it seems so far away. Echoing our sentiments he tells us:

*But now all seemed a vainly teeming vast
Upheld by a deluded Energy ...*

(p. 330)

From the New Creation Aswapati sees the old.

*He saw a world that is from a world to be.
There he divined rather than saw or felt,
Far off upon the rim of consciousness,
Transient and frail this little whirling globe ...*

Here we can get a glimpse of how Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, living in that consciousness, perceived the old world and the earth:

*Far off upon the rim of consciousness.
Transient and frail this little whirling globe,
And on it left like a lost dream's vain mould,
A fragile copy of the spirit's shell,
His body gathered into mystic sleep.
A foreign shape it seemed, a mythic shade.*

(p. 330-31)

Such a gulf there is when the old world is seen from the new world. The old creation does not give in easily, the transition is not smooth. Sri Aurobindo observes that as the transition takes place, everything in the old resists the change. Cynicism is one of the first results, when the forms of the old world, while resisting change, find themselves incapable. Incapable not only of resisting the change, but incapable of continuing to rule the world as they have done before. And suddenly all those principles, philosophies, structures, on which humanity has stood firmly for centuries, on which humanity has built its progressive steps of evolution, all of these now suddenly seem futile, incapable of continuing their domination, incapable of making the transition. And a tremendous wave of cynicism surges throughout the world. This too he has described:

*Ideals, ethics, systems had no base
And soon collapsed or without sanction lived;*

- the present circumstances:

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*All grew a chaos, a heave and clash and strife.
Ideas warring and fierce leaped upon life;
A hard compression held down anarchy*

There is an anarchy welling up in humanity, and the structures of the past somehow contain it by pressure, but not for long:

*And liberty was only a phantom's name:
Creation and destruction waltzed inarmed
On the bosom of a torn and quaking earth;*

(p. 254 –55)

The transition is very painful. And because the old resists so intensely, at some point the help comes from above. And the help comes to aid the destruction of the old. From our human perspective, we may complain, “Why this chaos, why this suffering and destruction?” But it is so that we may free ourselves from the old, preparing for the new. And that is described here, Shiva in his dance of Tandava, at the end of a yuga destroys all that resists from the past.

*A giant dance of Shiva tore the past;
There was a thunder as of worlds that fall;
Earth was o'errun with fire and the roar of Death
Clamouring to slay a world his hunger had made;*

When worlds fall, there is a thunder and there is fire and the roar of Death.

*There was a clangour of Destruction's wings:
The Titan's battle-cry was in my ears,
Alarm and rumour shook the armoured Night.*

(p. 342)

The Titan's battle-cry, because the Titan knows that its end is to be soon. With the coming of the consciousness of unity, it will no longer have a place on the earth and the asura puts up its final fight of resistance, the final assault and battle-cry.

Mother makes an observation that at a particular phase, in order to hasten the transition, the Divine may even give free play to the asuras to do what they like, because she says that is the easiest way to defeat them. In their free play they begin, not only to destroy others but eventually to destroy themselves, fighting each other they lead to their own destruction.

But if the Divine helps the breakdown of the old, who is there to build the new world, who will come down and help humanity make that transition?

Sri Aurobindo describes the Avatar descending, taking upon himself the burden of humanity – a burden so great that even the Avatar himself in a humorous observation says: “If I had known it was so difficult to fight the Inconscient I might not have taken to the Yoga!” His task is so heavy.

*Hard is the world-redeemer’s heavy task;
The world itself becomes his adversary,
Those he would save are his antagonists;*

Why?

*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.*

It is not only that those he would save, not only the people, but the entire mass of consciousness which is ruled by ignorance, opposes the light. The burden he takes upon himself is not just of people, people only become focal points, representative symbols of the resistance from the cosmos itself. The entire burden of the universe resisting the Light opposes him and he faces that burden: “*The world itself becomes his adversary*”. In that long night, all the effort he makes:

*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:*

(p. 448)

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There is a detailed description extending across several pages, but I will touch only upon a few highlights, especially the portion describing this world-redeemer. It begins with a description of how this world-redeemer will come, what he will be like, what are the characteristics by which we will recognise him.

*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 his immutable aim.*

(p. 449)

This is the Avatar who comes to save the world. If he comes to save the world certainly nothing in the world is there to aid him. He has to come with the power necessary to carry on in spite of everything. That is why he comes invincible, his will is immobile against the world's blows and he moves calm and sure carrying that power, the certainty of accomplishment. He does not need the aid of inferior gods either.

In the history of the development of Sri Aurobindo's Yoga, there was a very interesting phase in the late twenties when the Mother had created an overmental creation, when the gods of the overmind were involved in the task. And as you know Sri Aurobindo observed that it would create a great religion but this was not what we wanted - and Mother dissolved that overmental creation, It is a longer and harder way to go directly to the supramental creation without the aid of the overmental gods, and yet that is the way he chose.

That is why, even though we may today find around us attempts to bring in religious forms, they will not succeed - because of this decision that Sri Aurobindo took. Every attempt to give a religious turn to Sri Aurobindo's Yoga or to his revelation will fizzle out after a while on its own, because the truth that he brings down is greater than the overmind.

*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; ...*

This is the great choice he makes, but in order to be able to rise to the heights he has to go to the very depths.

*He has broken into the Inconscient's depths
That veil themselves even from their own regard:*

...

*He has learned the Inconscient's workings and its laws,
Its incoherent thoughts and rigid acts, ...*

(p. 449)

In order to be able to defeat the inconscient, in order to overcome the asura's play, he must know them as well as he knows the heights.

*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*

...

*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.*

(p. 450)

This was the great burden that Sri Aurobindo took upon himself, the fight at the very foundations of the inconscience, which alone would make it possible for the new creation to manifest.

Notice that this passage begins with the future tense: “*One yet may come*

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...” (p.449), and then it takes on a past tense, very smoothly, as if that One is already here: “*He has broken into the unconscious depths, ... He has learned the unconscious’s working and its law ...*”. So this great world-redeemer is already here.

The Mother makes a reference to the battle which took place at the depths of the unconscious. I would just like to read out one portion. In one of her talks she casually mentions this. She says:

There was a terrible fight with the unconscious, for as I saw that the receptivity was not what it ought to be, I put the responsibility for it on the unconscious and it was there that I tried to give battle. I don’t say that this had no result, but between the result obtained and the result hoped for, there was a great difference.

That battle went on for years but eventually ...

*Into the eternal Light he shall emerge
On borders of the meeting of all worlds;*

(p. 450)

And what will happen?

*The superconscious 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.*

(p.451)

He is still working, his task is still unfinished, the battle is still continuing, but he has to share the world’s pain in order to save the world. It is not an easy task, which he can achieve within himself; if he has to save the world,

he has to take on the burden of the world.

*If thou wouldst save the toiling universe,
The vast universal suffering feel as thine:
Thou must bear the sorrow that thou claimst to heal;
The day-bringer must walk in darkest night.
He who would save the world must share its pain.
If he knows not grief, how shall he find grief's cure?*

...

*God must be born on earth and be as man
That man being human may grow even as God.*

(p. 536-37)

It is a tremendous sacrifice that he makes, taking upon himself the burden of the toiling universe, every human being and his suffering, his suffering not just of that moment, but all the suffering that he has carried with him across the lives. Every animal that lives and its pain and sorrow, every little worm, every grain of sand, the burden of every atom, he takes upon himself. The entire cosmos weighs on him.

In describing the photographs of Sri Aurobindo taken in 1950, the Mother says:

*By the time the photos were taken, already he had taken
upon himself the burden of the world. And that is why you
do not see anymore there the sweet smile which was his
normal demeanour.*

*He who would save the world must be one with the world,
All suffering things contain in his heart's space
And bear the grief and joy of all that lives.
His soul must be wider than the universe
And feel eternity as its very stuff; ...*

(p. 537)

Having taken this burden upon himself, Sri Aurobindo has paved the way for the new world, for the new creation to come. We enjoy its fruits, the fruits of his efforts. Unfortunately we still do not offer the support necessary

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for him to complete his task.

For at one stage of the effort, when the new world, the new consciousness transforms all the levels down to the subtle physical, a barrier is felt where the receptivity of the world decides whether that final step can be completed. As you know, Sri Aurobindo and the Mother brought down the Supramental, completed the process of transformation within themselves down to the subtle physical. But for the last step facing the barrier of the inconscience, they did not find the right support from those around them.

In the passage where Mother refers to the descent of the Mother of Ananda, she says:

The Mother of Ananda could not manifest because there was not enough receptivity among those around. There were very few who could offer themselves, who could provide the conditions necessary for her to be there. But she came down because there was a possibility and she often thinks of withdrawing. I tell you this, you see, you are all so close, you bathe in the atmosphere but who was aware of anything? You continued to live your little life as usual, didn't you?

So someone asks what should we do, how can we help? She says:

Try to change your consciousness.

But after all, to tell the truth, I think you have such an easy life that you don't take much trouble. Are there many among you who really feel an intense need to find your psychic being, to know what you really are, what you have to do, why you are here? One just goes on living, or even complains when things are not too easy. And then one takes like that things as they come and sometimes if some aspiration arises and one meets a difficulty in oneself, one says 'Oh, Mother is there, she will manage this for me' and then thinks of something else.

I think we are all guilty of this. At the beginning, she says, the conditions of

the Ashram, how strict they were! Of course she just justifies the dilution because, she says:

We were too much outside life, many problems did not occur, which when the full manifestation is wanted would suddenly appear. But we have taken up the problems a little too soon, many difficulties are overcome but it becomes more complicated and perhaps in the present conditions with such a large number of elements which don't have the least idea of the purpose for which they are here, it asks much more effort from the disciples than before. These are the circumstances in which we are today. But then you see, she says, but then you see, with this invasion one can't do sadhana for little chits of 3 or 4 or 5, you understand. All I can do is put the consciousness upon them and try to see that they grow up in the best possible conditions. So this has an advantage, it is that instead of being so totally and passively dependent, each one must make his own little effort, and truly speaking this is excellent.

She tells us how we have to prepare ourselves, that little step we need to take: to make a first effort to find out why we are here, to find our psychic, to find our purpose. And if enough of us can make that small effort, the supporting circumstances will gradually be created for their task to be completed. If all the effort they have made, if all the burden they have taken upon themselves is to be justified, this is the least that we can do: to offer them support.

In the transition into the new world, so close and yet so far, there are of course representatives from the new world who enter the old. Their task is to prepare these focal points of light through which the new world will creep in secretly and establish its first outposts and create a wider receptive environment.

A few years ago, one of my students spoke to me, a young child of 10. He said, "Why is this world like this? Where I come from it is so beautiful, so wonderful, but why are things here like this? I feel as if I don't belong

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here, what am I doing here? I can't bear it, I feel this disturbance in my heart, what should I do?"

So I tried to explain to the child. His mind was not yet formed, but with the few words which I could put across I said. "You know there is a new world which is trying to manifest, and some of us belong to that world and we have come here into this old world so that in our lives we may be able to create one small space in which something of that new world can manifest. We are, so to say, the secret agents of the new world who have sneaked in very quietly, doing our task secretly and preparing its invasion into the old world. So you feel this gap. But you have come for this, you have come to make possible the bridging of these two." The child replied "I understand what you say, but I don't understand it."

These forerunners also follow in the wake of the world-redeemer, and this Aswapati sees:

*I saw the Omnipotent's flaming pioneers
Over the heavenly verge which turns towards life
Come crowding down the amber stairs of birth;
Forerunners of a divine multitude,
Out of the paths of the morning star they came
Into the little room of mortal life.*

(p. 343)

From the realm in which they live, this little world is like a small room, so congested, so crowded, so limited, while they come from the paths of the morning star. The morning star that rises is a promise of the dawn to come. When Venus is seen on the horizon, the sun has not yet risen; but it is a promise that the sun is just going to follow. So it is in that midpoint between the two ages, the twilight zone, in which the morning star is seen, it is a promise.

I saw them cross the twilight of an age,

The old age is not yet ended, the new not yet begun.

I saw them cross the twilight of an age,

The sun-eyed children of a marvellous dawn,

They are the children who belong to that dawn to come. And what are they like?

*The great creators with wide brows of calm,
The massive barrier-breakers of the world*

No barriers will stand before them, they will break.

*And wrestlers with destiny in her lists of will,
The labourers in the quarries of the gods,
The messengers of the Incommunicable,
The architects of immortality.*

(p. 343-44)

The Mother gave certain dates, as you know, certain years when batches of children came, as she said: “*special children who have come for my work.*” On many occasions she referred to the new children coming. Now we can all see this in our own environments – that children today are much more conscious, much more awake than we were at their age. Mother identifies two characteristics of these children. She says that first of all they find it very difficult to accept authority, they do not accept authority for the sake of authority, often they are rebellious. The second characteristic is that they know exactly what they want. After all the explanations you may give them, they know what they want and they will do what they want.

In the early stages of the Ashram school, many teachers would complain to the Mother about some children, referring to them as problem children. I think we still do that, many of us as teachers: “So and so is a problem child”. Mother’s response was:

There are no problem children, they are the children of the future and these are the teachers of the past, they do not know how to bring up the children of the future.

We have to learn, we have to learn from them, and there is much that we

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will learn. Recently, working with a group of teachers, we helped them to implement some of the principles of integral education; and after two years of work I asked them each to tell me something new that had taken place in the last two years, something positive. And 60 teachers came up with 60 different positive things. Amongst them, how much they enjoyed, how much the children enjoyed, but many of them came up with the observation that they were learning so much from the children. The children were coming forward with new ideas, things which the teachers could not think of by themselves. Well, we have to learn from these pioneers who are coming crowding down the amber stairs of birth. And the promise still remains:

*Into the fallen human sphere they came,
Faces that wore the Immortal's glory still,
Voices that communed still with the thoughts of God,
Bodies made beautiful by the spirit's light,
...
Lips chanting an unknown anthem of the soul,
Feet echoing in the corridors of Time.*

What are they?

High priests of wisdom, sweetness, might and bliss, ...

Sri Aurobindo made a very interesting observation in the early part of the century. I do not remember the exact words, but he said that there are today coming upon earth great souls who will manifest a light brighter than anything manifested before by the greatest sages of the past.

*High priests of wisdom, sweetness, might and bliss,
Discoverers of beauty's sunlit ways
And swimmers of Love's laughing fiery floods
And dancers within rapture's golden doors,
Their tread one day shall change the suffering earth
And justify the light on Nature's face.*

(p. 444)

How can we help the transition? How can we become focal points of

the new world? How can we cooperate with the great effort that the world-redeemers are already working on? The Mother gives us the starting point: start by asking yourself why you are here, find your psychic. But then as the movement proceeds, we have to become conscious instruments of that new consciousness, of the new world waiting to be born still battling against the past that opposes. And the easiest way to become a conscious instrument, a vessel of that consciousness, a vehicle of its force, is to open ourselves to it, open the doors and windows of our house, instead of complaining of the darkness that exists within, open the gates – and the consciousness is waiting, it is waiting to enter and take charge. We should open ourselves to that consciousness, offer ourselves with love.

Since the Mother herself embodies that consciousness, our love for her can become the most powerful link, the easiest gateway of our entry into the new consciousness. But it is not enough simply to love her and aspire for that consciousness, one also has to remove all that exists of the old world within us and that is not an easy task. To consciously tear out all our rigidities, all our fixed ideas, all the habitual movements of our thoughts and feelings and behaviour, is not an easy task. But by clinging to those past habits we lose the chance to move forward.

In a beautiful passage, Sri Aurobindo leads us into the preparation necessary to tear out the old world, to open ourselves to the new, and give ourselves entirely to the divine Mother in love and adoration.

*All that denies must be torn out and slain
And crushed the many longings for whose sake
We lose the One for whom our lives were made.
Now other claims had hushed in him their cry:
Only he longed to draw her presence and power
Into his heart and mind and breathing frame;
Only he yearned to call for ever down
Her healing touch of love and truth and joy
Into the darkness of the suffering world.
His soul was freed and given to her alone.*

(p. 316)

This is the programme before us, if we are to become points of light through

which the new world, the new creation will manifest. Reading it once again let us meditate for a few minutes, drawing ourselves into that state, offering ourselves to her alone, opening ourselves and our lives to become an instrument for the new world's entry into the old.

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*A Prayer
for the Mother's
125th Birth Anniversary Year*

Sweet Mother

In this 125th anniversary year of Your incarnation on earth, we remember all that You have done for us, how You have dedicated Yourself exclusively to hastening the rule of Divine Love in this world.

In deep gratitude we bow at Your Lotus Feet and re-dedicate ourselves to live and work for the realisation of Your Vision. Consecrating ourselves again as willing servitors of the Divine Consciousness and Truth, we pray that throughout this year all our thoughts, words and actions may bring us closer to You and make us more and more truly Your faithful children, united in Your Love and Light.



Divine Love governing the world

“A beautiful and happy world for which we all aspire”

The Mother

News of Savitri Bhavan

This August marks the completion of three years of rapidly expanding activities in the Savitri Bhavan First Phase building. After a quiet two months, the full programme is resuming from July - August, and there are many new things in the pipeline. One new project that has been taken up this year by our audio-visual section is the conversion into digital form of two important sets of audio-recordings : Nirodbaran's reading of the whole of *Savitri*, recorded by Manendra of Gloria Farm in the late 1970s; and Dr. Mangesh Nadkarni's lectures at his *Savitri* Study Camps, hosted over the last ten years and more by the Sri Aurobindo Society of Pondicherry. These recordings, stored on normal audio-cassettes, are now being converted to digital form with a view to more permanent storage on CDRoM. This important work is being supported by two large specified donations and is expected to take about twelve months for completion. A similar work of scanning and recording to CD all the slides of Huta's "Meditations on Savitri" paintings is also going on, financed by a grant from the US.

Already after only three years our present premises are showing themselves as quite inadequate for the scope of all the work being undertaken. The First Phase building has an area of about 140 square metres. Of this the multi-purpose hall, where courses and camps as well as exhibitions and special presentations are held, occupies almost 100 square metres. All the work mentioned above, all the preparation of study-materials for the ongoing courses and camps, all the translation into Russian, Tamil, French and other languages, all the administrative and correspondence work and maintenance of mailing lists and details of donors, all the transcription of talks and the preparation of this magazine, of exhibitions and posters, takes place in our working-cum-storage room which is hardly 20 m square. This lack of working space is now beginning to restrict further development of our educational and research activities.

This is also the case with the Reading Room. Already the resources of Savitri Bhavan are being called upon by researchers and translators in several countries, and it is gaining recognition as a Deposit Library, where copies of translations, theses and studies relating to Savitri (whether as published books or as works in progress in ms. form) are being kept. And in order to accommodate all the various editions of Sri Aurobindo's and the Mother's works, translations and studies of them, as well as essential background materials in various languages, a well-equipped and professionally-staffed Library is seen as a high priority. The present space of about 20 sq.m. is just enough for five or six bookcases, and a few chairs - there is no working or storage space for a librarian.

Moreover, as reported in earlier issues of *Invocation*, Savitri Bhavan has been honoured by the trust of Huta, the Gujarati sadhika with whom the Mother worked from 1961 to 1970 on a project of making *Savitri* more accessible through paintings and explanations. In June 2001 the entire set of 468 oil paintings illustrating the whole of *Savitri*, entitled by the Mother “*Meditations on Savitri*”, was entrusted to our care, along with facsimiles of the Mother’s original sketches, written instructions and comments, copies of her recorded recitations of the selected passages, and of her recorded explanations of *Savitri*. This is a unique treasure, which will be a goldmine of insight to future scholars seeking to gain a deeper understanding of Sri Aurobindo’s vision. To house and display this priceless collection under secure and state of the art conditions, as well as providing the necessary curatorial and research facilities, is also a high priority.

Over the past twelve months, with the help of our architect Helmut, the team has completed a full 5-year Development Plan, including construction drawings and estimates for the entire proposed complex, and budgets for expanding equipment and activities requirements, amounting in total to almost Rs. 5 crore.

This Development Plan was prepared in the context of a proposal submitted by SAIER to the Ministry of Human Resources Development G.O.I. for further development of its educational activities, including a large range

higher educational and research facilities in Auroville. Under this scheme Savitri Bhavan would be the first base for the proposed Faculty of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother Studies.

In September 2001 Savitri Bhavan was honoured to host a visit by the Visiting Committee appointed by the Planning Department of the G.O.I. Ministry of Education to assess this proposal. The members of the Visiting Committee were accompanied by the Chairman of the Governing Board of the Auroville Foundation, Shri Kireet Joshi, and other members of the Governing Board. A presentation was made to them of the on-going activities in Auroville that would fall under this Faculty, as well as of the proposed development plans. We were also able to show some of Huta's priceless spiritual paintings. It is gratifying that the Committee made a specific recommendation for a grant that would enable construction of the next phase of the Savitri Bhavan complex, comprising an Art Gallery with curatorial and storage facilities for the precious paintings, plus an audio-visual studio for the preparation of further study aids related to our work, as well as offices and classrooms. This proposal is still under consideration by the G.O.I. This proposal has also been shown to the Minister for Tourism and Culture, Professor Jagmohan Singh, at his own request after a visit to the Bhavan, and he has instructed the relevant department to see what support can be given. This interest from both the Ministries is largely due to the good offices of Chairman Kireet Joshi, who has been giving consistent support and encouragement for our extension plans. However the proposal is still under consideration and no grant has been sanctioned so far.

Ideally, it is hoped to initiate implementation of this Plan during the coming year, as part of the Mother's 125th Anniversary Celebrations. A summary of the Plan is outlined over the following pages.

Savitri Bhavan Development Plan

Objectives:

completion of the main complex plus 12-room hostel in 4 phases :

- a) core building including art gallery
 - b) hostel
 - c) landscaping of the Savitri Park
 - d) library and conference hall
- equipping the new facilities
corresponding stepwise expansion of activities and staff

Background

The Savitri Bhavan project started in 1995, with a dream that there should be a place in Auroville where all possible materials for the enhancement of understanding and appreciation of Sri Aurobindo's revelatory epic *Savitri* could be gathered and made available to all in a suitable atmosphere, to evoke the transforming presence and power of Savitri - the Truth that has come from the Sun. This presence and the blessings of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo were powerfully invoked by Nirodbaran, Sri Aurobindo's scribe in the later stages of his composition of *Savitri*, when he laid the foundation stone for the project on November 24 1996.

From that time onwards regular activities were held on the site, at first under the trees, and later in a temporary thatched shelter : the Savitri Study Circle every Sunday morning, as well as inspiring talks by invited guest speakers. Publication of the quarterly journal *Invocation* was also initiated.

Fundraising efforts in the context of Sri Aurobindo's 125th Birth Anniversary celebrations made it possible to start construction of a first permanent building in December 1998. This was inaugurated by Nirodbaran on August 8, 1999 and comprises a multipurpose hall, a reading-room and a storage-cum-working area.

Over the last three years this first phase building has provided a base for a rapidly expanding programme of activities. Now in the Mother's 125th Birth Anniversary Year there is felt an urgent need to move forward towards manifesting the rest of the Savitri Bhavan complex.

Invocation

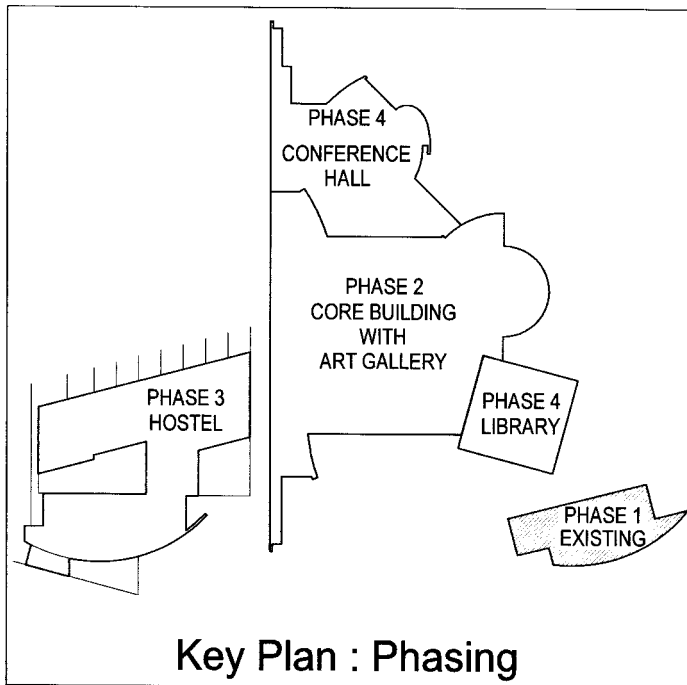
The Need

The completion of the complex has been envisaged in four steps corresponding to a clear priority of needs :

Art Gallery and additional working areas - “The Core Building”

The very first priority is to provide the Art Gallery where all the precious *Savitri* paintings prepared by Huta under the direct guidance of the Mother can be on permanent display in ideal conditions. Along with this, the next stage of implementation also includes a reception and administrative area, some study rooms, and space where the growing Library can be temporarily accommodated, the audio-visual studio, and the outdoor stage, as well as technical and storage rooms.

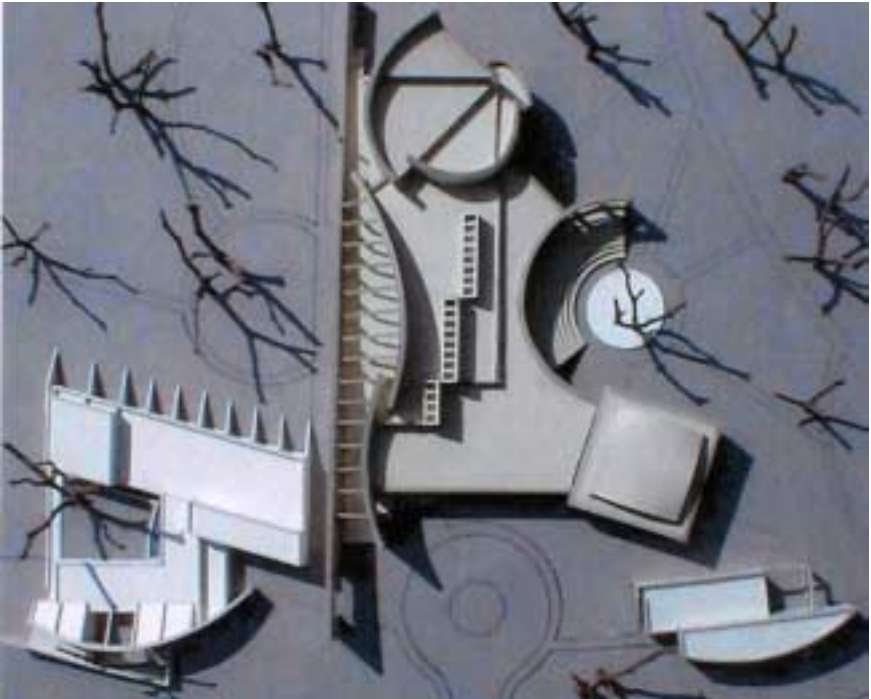
Area : 1086 sq.m.; Estimated Cost : Construction - Rs. 75 lakh; Equipment – Rs. 40 lakh; Estimated Construction time : 2 years



The Hostel

The next priority would be to provide a place where simple boarding and lodging in an appropriate atmosphere can be offered to people connected with the work of Savitri Bhavan, whether as permanent staff, visiting teachers, researchers or students, or as temporary volunteers. This stage would provide seven single rooms and two bigger ones, plus a small apartment for a manager, utilities, and a kitchen and dining room. *Area : 570 sq.m.; Estimated Cost : Construction – Rs. 38 lakh; Equipment – Rs. 15 lakh ; Estimated Construction time: 1 year:*

Bird's eye view of the model



Invocation

The Savitri Park

At the same time that these two buildings are going up, it is planned to complete landscaping and planting of the Savitri Park surrounding the complex. *Estimated Cost : Rs. 15 lakh*

Library and Conference Hall

This stage would complete the Main Building by addition of the Library and Conference Hall. *Area : 795 sq.m.; Estimated Cost : a) construction Rs. 60 lakh; equipment Rs. 25 lakh ; Estimated Construction time : 18 months*

Budgetting

◦ **Construction**

Estimates have been prepared according to Government of India PWD norms for higher educational facilities.

◦ **Equipment**

Equipment estimates for each of the phases are based on a rule of thumb of 40% of the expected construction costs. In the case of the Core Building the equipment estimate is higher because of the special needs of the Art Gallery, which include climate control, lighting and special security arrangements

◦ **Staff and Activities**

An annual budget of Rs. 15 lakh is taken as a base for the first year of the plan, with an increase of 30% per annum allowed for each following year, to keep pace with expanding activities as the new premises are commissioned, and consequent staff expansion

The construction of these buildings, the equipment and furnishing of them, and the step-wise expansion of our activities and staff to full functioning of the whole complex could be completed within five years, if sufficient funds can be found in time. Ideally, it is hoped to initiate implementation of this Plan during the coming year, as part of the Mother's 125th Anniversary Celebrations. A yearwise breakdown of the requirements is given below.

5-YEAR DEVELOPMENT BUDGET

Item	Year One	Year Two	Year Three	Year Four	Year Five	TOTAL
Existing Facility Equipment	Rs. 3 lakh					Rs. 3 lakh
Hostel						
Construction	Rs. 30 l Lakh	Rs. 8 lakh				Rs. 38 lakh
Equipment		Rs. 15 lakh				Rs. 15 lakh
Main Complex Core						
Construction		Rs. 50 lakh	Rs. 25 lakh			Rs. 75 lakh
Equipment			Rs. 15 lakh	Rs. 20 lakh	Rs. 5 lakh	Rs. 40 lakh
Library and Hall						
Construction			Rs. 30 lakh			Rs. 30 lakh
Equipment					Rs. 25 lakh	Rs. 25 lakh
Caretakers' House				Rs. 10 lakh (conversion)	Rs. 4 lakh (equipment)	Rs. 14 lakh
Park					Rs. 15 lakh	Rs. 15 lakh
Activities						
	Rs. 15 lakh	Rs. 20 lakh	Rs. 26 lakh	Rs. 34 lakh	Rs. 44 lakh	Rs. 1,39 lakh
Total	Rs. 48 lakh	Rs. 93 lakh	Rs. 96 lakh	Rs. 94 lakh	Rs. 93 lakh	
+ 10% inflation and contingencies	Rs. 4.8	Rs. 9.3 lakh	Rs. 9.6 lakh	Rs. 9.4 lakh	Rs. 9.3 lakh	Rs. 42.4 lakh
TOTAL	Rs. 52.8 lakh	Rs. 1,02.3 lakh	Rs. 1,05.6 lakh	Rs. 1,03.4 lakh	Rs. 1,02.3 lakh	Rs. 466.4 lakh

Invocation

Present financial situation

Savitri Bhavan is entirely supported by donations, and also needs your continued support for its present on-going activities. The current level of activities requires a regular annual budget of approx. Rs. 10 lakh or Rs. 85,000.- per month. A breakdown of requirements is given below :

Activities: approximate annual expenditure

(including administration, equipment and payments to staff)

Exhibitions	Rs. 70,000.-
Guest Speakers and special events	Rs. 1,50,000.-
Publications <i>(including mass mailing)</i>	Rs. 3,00,000.-
Study materials <i>(preparation and purchase - including translations and audio-visuals)</i>	2,00,000.-
Study courses and camps	70,000.-
Garden and Buildings Maintenance	2,00,000.-

Total - c. Rs. 10 lakh p.a.

There is however one major obstacle facing our fund-raising prospects: the 100% tax exemption formerly offered by SAIER to Indian donors under the “Social Sciences Research” scheme, has not yet been renewed. The renewal is pending since April 2000. While many of our well-wishers maintained their support throughout 2000 and 2001, with the failure to get the renewal sanctioned even till today, large-scale donations from within India, our major source of support, have dwindled steadily, and dropped to almost nothing since April 2002. This means that for future construction plans as well as on-going activities it will be essential to find new avenues of support in the immediate future.

Invitation

We invite all our readers, and everyone who feels the value of establishing this “Home of Savitri”, to make this 125th Anniversary Year of the Mother the occasion to pledge their on-going support to the realisation of this Dream. Would it not be wonderful to offer her the laying of the foundation stone of the Core Building on her 125th Birthday - February 21st, 2003? With the aim of completing the entire complex in time for her 130th Birthday, February 21, 2008? Please consider in what way you could help the Dream of Savitri Bhavan to become a reality – whether by a lump-sum donation, or by commitment to a regular monthly or yearly amount.

About Savitri Bhavan

We dream of an environment in Auroville

that will breathe the atmosphere of Savitri

that will welcome Savitri lovers from every corner of the world

that will be an inspiring centre of Savitri studies

that will house all kinds of materials and activities to enrich our understanding and enjoyment of Sri Aurobindo's revelatory epic

that will be the abode of Savitri, the Truth that has come from the Sun

We welcome support from everyone who feels that the vibration of Savitri will help to manifest a better tomorrow.

Now available from Savitri Bhavan

The following recordings are available for audio-cassette, audio CD, or as MP3 files on CD

Savitri reading. *We are preparing a complete recording of the entire text of Savitri, read by Shraddhavan. At present about 20 hours of recitation are available: Book One, Cantos 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5; Book Three, Cantos 1, 2, 3, 4; and Book Two, Cantos 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.*

Guest speakers at Savitri Bhavan. *Each talk is about one hour. Speakers include Nirodbaran, Arabinda Basu, the late Udar Pinto, Dr. Mangesh Nadkarni, R.Y. Deshpande, Dr. Ananda Reddy, Sraddhalu Ranade, C.V. Devan Nair, and more...*

If you would like to obtain any of these, please contact us for full details at the address given on the front & back inside covers.

“Meditations on Savitri” videos

Savitri Bhavan has now been given responsibility for Indian distribution of the video films of the “Meditations on Savitri” paintings made by Huta under the Mother’s guidance from 1961 to 1967, covering the whole of Savitri. These films were prepared, with the Mother’s blessings, by Michel of Filmaur. Twelve videos cover all the 468 paintings of the series, along with the Mother’s readings of the selected passages recorded by Huta, and the Mother’s own organ music. We are authorised to distribute copies of these videos in India only. People in other countries who would like to obtain copies may contact:

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Announcement

The Ascent of Sight in Sri Aurobindo's *Savitri* by Jugal Kishore Mukherjee

*Published by the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education,
Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry September 2001*

This is an illuminating and original study of *Savitri*, by a highly respected author who has been a lover and student of Sri Aurobindo's revelatory epic for more than 50 years. Since 1967 he has also been guiding in-depth study of the poem with a number of senior students in his capacity as a teacher in the Higher Course at the SAICE. In this monograph he explores the multitude of different types of sight and vision described in *Savitri*, taking as a starting point the line: "*A progress leap from sight to greater sight.*" The book costs Rs. 70 and can be obtained through SABDA.

Savitri Bhavan is a project of SAIER (Sri Aurobindo International Institute of Educational Research). Donations by cheque or draft may be made payable to 'SAIER' and sent with a covering note specifying that the amount is meant for Savitri Bhavan. You may also specify whether you would prefer your donation to be used for construction or activities. Contributions from within Auroville may be made through the Auroville Financial Service, account no. 230247.

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Savitri
is a Mantra
for the transformation
of the world

The Mother