

# Invocation

*Savitri*

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B H A V A N

*Study notes No. 28*

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**SAVITRI BHAVAN  
AUROVILLE 605101, TN  
INDIA**

*Telephone: 0413-2622922  
e-mail: savitribhavan@auroville.org.in*

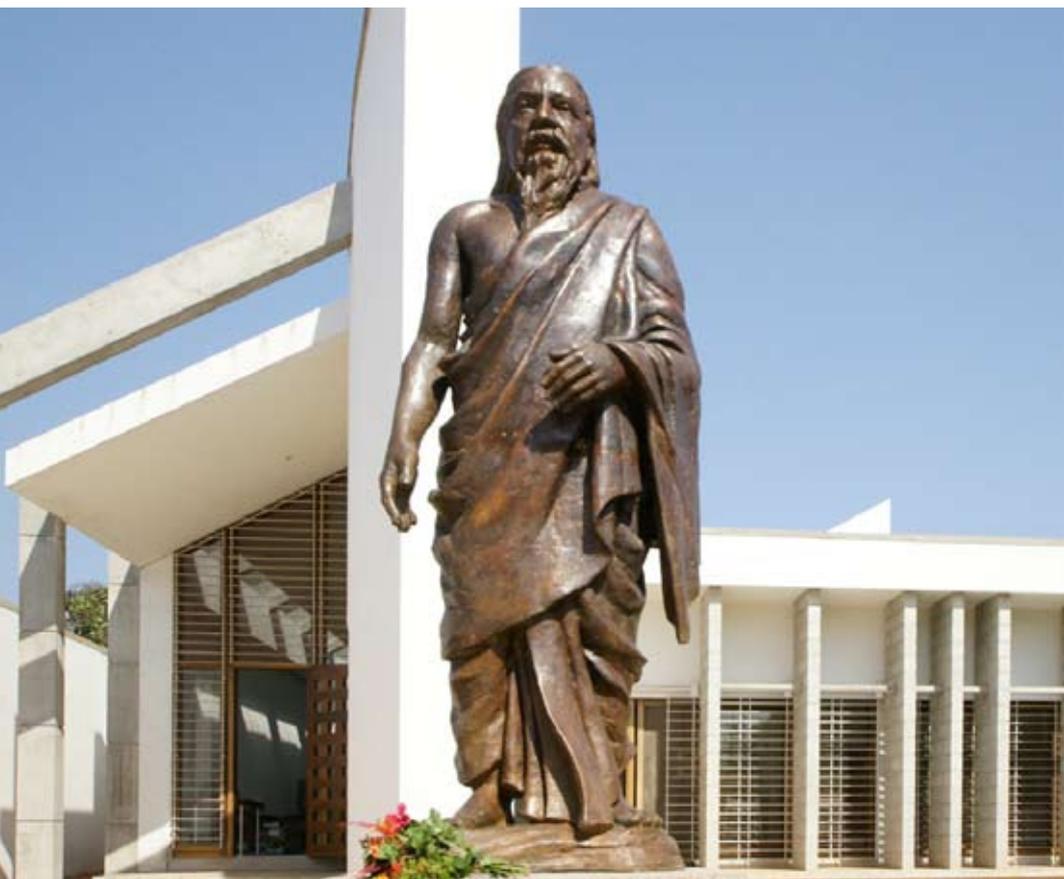
## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

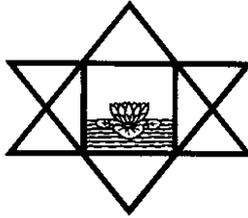
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*He drew the energies that transmute an age.*

*Savitri, Book One, Canto Three*

# *Spiritual and Occult Truths*

*as revealed by the Mother to Huta*

*(Continued from issue no. 27)*

From the beginning of 1956 the Mother started introducing my soul to me. She saw numberless visions of my true self which she related to me and asked me to paint. I did so according to her instructions. Then little by little I became aware of my psychic being.

On 9<sup>th</sup> January 1965 the Mother gave me a glimpse of my soul. I cannot possibly describe its luminosity and beauty. I informed her of what I had experienced. She wrote to me the next day:

Dear little child of mine,  
Yes, you went on a successful journey to your soul, that is why you are feeling better this morning.  
In eternal love.

I found how exact was the Mother's description of the psychic in *Questions and Answers*, 1950-51, p.86:

But even if you enter consciously into the psychic, it is dazzling; and it is within your reach because it is your own psychic being, and yet it is so different from your external consciousness that the first time you enter it consciously, it seems to you truly dazzling, something infinitely more brilliant than the most brilliant sunlight.

The psychic is what may be called 'the Divine within the reach of man'.

According to Sri Aurobindo, it is to the psychic that the Upanishads refer when we read:

The Purusha that is within us is no larger than the finger of a man: He is like a blazing fire that is without smoke, He

is lord of His past and His future. He alone is today and He alone shall be tomorrow.

This is That thou seekest.

*The Upanishads*, SABCL 12 : 256

The Mother did not let me lose the contact with my psychic despite my outer and inner struggles and sufferings.

From the beginning of 1970 onwards she and I used mostly to meditate when I went to her. Her voice was not up to the mark to recite *Savitri* and give her comments on it. Instead of the work she asked me to meditate with her. So for almost two years and five months we meditated together. During the meditation the Mother gave me countless experiences of my psychic being. As a matter of fact, she made my body conscious of the psychic, so that during our meditations. I was quite aware of its movements and its spontaneous response to the Mother's Light and to the sweetness of her Love. I was really having the most blissful and soothing experiences throughout. No words can do justice to the splendour and sublimity of the perfect interchange between the Supreme and the psychic.

I may attempt to express one of my experiences during our meditation.

It was 18<sup>th</sup> August 1972. I was called at 10.50 a.m. I offered her a garland of jasmines and five flowers of 'Transformation'. She kept one of these five and gave me back the other four, along with a lovely bouquet of white flowers of various kinds – and the inevitable white roses!

While giving me the bouquet, our fingers touched. Immediately I felt intense vibrations spreading all over my body. My psychic was wide awake and its comforting light stirred my heart.

I sat near the Mother's feet. No sooner did I settle than my subtle eyes opened and saw the flame of my psychic being. It was rising from the heart towards the head. I felt concretely the sensation of the vibrating light in both these places. My eyes were half closed. I was drowsy and intoxicated by the ethereal atmosphere. I saw the Mother in meditation with her open eyes watching all the movements of my psychic being. First she looked at my heart because the flame was there; after that, over my head and then gradually on my right side

because the psychic stood there. Wherever on my body her gaze fell, I felt it was charged with her radiating vibrations and force. I was completely oblivious of my existence – I became absolutely still and cool. Everything around me was blank and silent – everything was marvellously peaceful.

Now the Mother was utterly indrawn.

Suddenly it chimed 11 o'clock. She awoke from her profound trance and held my hands in hers. I kissed her hands. She caressed my head. She was very happy and passed some delightful remarks which I failed to grasp because I was still dazed by the heavenly atmosphere. I truly wished this experience to be prolonged. I did not want to get out of this wonderful state, nor did I like to leave the Mother's room. I realized how one felt when one's mind becomes silent.

As soon as I went out, my eyes brimmed with tears because I had still to face the roughness of the physical world.

I recall one of the Mother's letters which she wrote to me on a pretty card showing snow-clad mountains and underneath them a small church. The date was 27<sup>th</sup> November 1956:

Bonjour

To my dear little child,

To my sweet Huta,

Here is the pure silence of the heights – when the soul comes to the front and the mind becomes quiet and still.

My love and blessings along with the Divine Grace are constantly with you.

The Mother never said anything which she did not mean. And she did not go back on her words. She has given so much. I am afraid I have still much to assimilate – still to aspire to make me worthy of her Grace and Love. The inner knowledge is not enough for my soul. Nevertheless, the Mother gave me the golden opportunity to sit near her and meditate, for which I am eternally grateful.

My memory travels back to one of the Mother's letters which she wrote to me on 12<sup>th</sup> October 1964:

Dear little child of mine,  
With all my heart I want you conscious, peaceful and happy,  
one with your soul. And my force and help are with you to  
make this possible.  
In the Lord's love.

The Mother always used to give the flowers of 'Transformation' –  
Millingtonia Hortensis, Indian Cork Tree. She gave the meaning of  
the flower: "The goal of creation." About this flower she has explained  
in *Questions and Answers*, 1950-51, pp.346-47:

You do not know that there are three principles: the  
transcendent, the universal and the individual or personal?  
No? – the transcendent which is above creation, at the origin  
of creation; the universal which is the creation; and the  
individual, which is self-explanatory. There is a transcendent  
Divine, a universal Divine and an individual Divine. That is,  
one may put oneself in contact with the divine Consciousness  
within oneself, in the universe and, beyond all forms, in the  
transcendent. So these three aspects are also the three aspects  
of the divine Mother: transcendent, universal and individual.  
Do you know the flower I have called 'Transformation'?  
Yes. You know it has four petals; well these four petals are  
arranged like a cross: one at the top which represents the  
transcendent, two on each side: the universal, and one at the  
bottom: the individual.

*The petal at the top is divided into two.*

Exactly, the transcendent is one and two (or dual) at the  
same time. This flower is almost perfect in its form. This  
was the original meaning of the cross also, but that was not  
as perfect as the flower, for it was one, two, and three. It was  
not so good – the flower is perfect.

I had been aspiring for the divine Peace since 1956.

I wrote a letter to the Mother on 18<sup>th</sup> June 1963: "Only last night I  
became aware in my sleep about the hints you had given me regarding

‘liberation’. Mother, you had also asked me to go within my true being – forgetting everything of this wretched world and to remain absolutely quiet and peaceful.”

The Mother wrote back:

It is true that since two nights I have made a special concentration to show you how to withdraw inside and get out of the turmoil.

With all my love.

Sri Aurobindo has written in Volume 24, *Letters on Yoga*, p.1096:

The psychic being is always there, but is not felt because it is covered up by the mind and vital; when it is no longer covered up, it is then said to be awake. When it is awake, it begins to take hold of the rest of the being, to influence it and change it so that all may become the true expression of the inner soul. It is this change that is called the inner conversion. There can be no conversion without the awakening of the psychic being.

The Mother had been telling me about the Supramental and the Transformation since 1956. On 22<sup>nd</sup> April 1956, she said:

These days (February to April) are good for everybody to make progress. So you must understand everything clearly, disregard all lower elements and make a firm resolution to progress. Then only can you be free from all oppositions and know happiness. What I am telling you is right.

She relapsed into silence for a moment or two, then said with an amused gleam in her blue-grey eyes:

Child, if you do not listen to the devil, you will surely become happy and healthy. You see, I do not want the devil to become fat!

And she laughed. A quick smile flickered on my lips at the word “fat”, in spite of my somber face.

The Mother went on:

Truly, if you do not respond to him, you will certainly progress little by little – one step at a time towards the realisation – to your goal.

Afterwards she leaned forward from her couch and put her hands on my temples and pressed them firmly but tenderly. I hardly took the trouble to find out the true meaning of her powerful words. At that period I was totally involved in a psychological struggle, and life seemed completely disorganized.

The next morning the Mother sent an attractive card with a quotation from one of her Messages:

It is the Divine Presence that gives value to life. This presence is the source of all peace, all joy, all security. Find this Presence in yourself and all your difficulties will disappear.

She continued on the same card, referring to 24<sup>th</sup> April:

Let this day of supramental New Birth put an end to all past obstacles and inaugurate for you a new life and a new consciousness exclusively consecrated to the Divine.

The next day, that is on 24<sup>th</sup> April, in the morning the Mother distributed this Message to people:

The Manifestation of the Supramental upon earth is no more a promise but a living fact, a reality.

It is at work here, and one day will come when the most blind, the most unconscious, even the most unwilling shall be obliged to recognize it.

The Mother has expressed a central truth in the *Bulletin*, November 1972, p.42:

Sri Aurobindo came upon earth to announce the manifestation of the supramental world and not merely did he announce this manifestation but embodied also in part the supramental force and showed by example what one must do to prepare oneself for manifesting it. The best thing we can do is to study all he has told us and endeavour to follow his example and prepare ourselves for the new manifestation.

Sri Aurobindo has also announced:

The Supramental is a truth and its advent is in the very nature of things inevitable.

On 6<sup>th</sup> October 1956 I received an elegant card indicating red flowers – Scarlet Sage – from the Mother. She wrote:

Here is “Matter consenting to be spiritualised”. Is it not good? We are going fast towards it.

My love and blessings along with the Divine Grace never leave you even for a moment.

That very evening I saw the Mother in her room at the Playground. She held my hands and said with a delightful smile:

Child, let us meditate on the physical body which will be transformed – penetrated by the Supramental Light, Force, Consciousness, Harmony, Truth and Love.

Then we meditated for quite a long time. I was bewildered and was completely ignorant about the transformation of the physical body. What I really felt happy about was only her closeness, which was soothing, sweet and loving.

Sri Aurobindo has written in *The Mother*, Volume 25, p.49:

Yes, Her embodiment is a chance for the earth-consciousness to receive the Supramental into it and to undergo first the transformation necessary for that to be possible. Afterwards

there will be a further transformation by the Supramental, but the whole earth-consciousness will not be supramentalised – there will be first a new race representing the Supermind, as man represents the mind.

The Mother has written in *Questions and Answers*, Volume 3, pp.175-176;

One of the greatest victories of this ineffable humility of God will be the transformation of Matter which is apparently the most undivine. Supramental plasticity is an attribute of finally transformed Matter. The supramental body which has to be brought into being here has four main attributes: lightness, adaptability, plasticity and luminosity. When the physical body is thoroughly divinised, it will feel as if it were always walking on air, there will be no heaviness or *tamas* or unconsciousness in it. There will also be no end to its power of adaptability: in whatever conditions it is placed it will immediately be equal to the demands made upon it because its full consciousness will drive out all that inertia and incapacity which usually makes Matter a drag on the Spirit. Supramental plasticity will enable it to stand the attack of every hostile force which strives to pierce it: it will present no dull resistance to the attack but will be, on the contrary, so pliant as to nullify the force by giving way to it to pass off. Thus it will suffer no harmful consequences and the most deadly attacks will leave it unscathed. Lastly it will be turned into the stuff of light, each cell will radiate the supramental glory. Not only those who are developed enough to have their subtle sight open but the ordinary man too will be able to perceive this luminosity. It will be an evident fact to each and all, a permanent proof of the transformation which will convince even the most sceptical.

The Mother sent me a beautiful card showing the red flowers – Mexican Fire Plant – and underneath them she had written:

The Divine's love manifested in the vital.

She wrote further on the same card:

Bonjour  
To my dear little child,  
To my sweet Huta,  
Yes, my child, I will teach you not only what is Divine Life  
but also how to live it so that you will realize in yourself  
that true divine life.  
My love and blessings and presence of the Grace are  
constantly with you.

This letter, which came on 29<sup>th</sup> December 1956, was the most encouraging and promising one I had received from the Mother. But at the same time I must not forget Sri Aurobindo's luminous words, which the Mother sent me on a lovely card in 1968:

Fix not the time and the way in which thy ideal shall  
be fulfilled. Work and leave time and way to God all-  
knowing.

To try to describe and interpret the Supramental World according to our petty conceptions is sheer stupidity. While doing the paintings of *Savitri*, Book One Canto Four – The Secret Knowledge, the Mother read out this passage twice and laughed heartily at the absurdity of human beings:

*A few shall see what none yet understand;  
God shall grow up while the wise men talk and sleep;  
For man shall not know the coming till its hour  
And belief shall be not till the work is done.*

Here I recollect the letters written by a European to me, who considered himself a supreme being – working from the supramental plane! He used to write thirty, forty or sometimes fifty pages – all sheer nonsense. As a matter of fact, I had never seen him, never heard of him. I had no notion where I figured in this matter since I knew nothing. I got really fed up. Finally I took one of his letters to the Mother and told her in a nutshell its contents – the man's claim that

he was working from the supramental world and that from there he would destroy me if I did not agree to be his spiritual companion. He had also written that he was very much in love with me, and concerned about my welfare and wanted to help me

First of all the Mother had a good laugh and then told me seriously:

Child, do not be afraid. He cannot do anything to you. Those who want to destroy you will be destroyed themselves. Give this letter to me. He will himself be destroyed. This fellow is not to be allowed here in the Ashram.

And she pressed my hands so as to give me confidence.

Later, after the Mother had left her body, the man came here. I hardly used to leave my home. He sought me out. One day by chance, while I was returning from the Samadhi, I happened to meet him near the door of my elder brother Laljibhai's office, The New Horizon Sugar Mills Pvt. Ltd., which was on the ground floor of our house. He introduced himself to me and asked me whether I had received his latest letter. He said: "Now I have obtained such a mighty occult and spiritual power that I can enter even peoples' bones: I can enter your bones, too. I work from the supramental world. And I am superior to the Mother and Sri Aurobindo."

At this I lost my temper and told him severely: "You have no power. You are nothing but a lunatic. You take filthy drugs and see queer things from the lowest vital plane and you believe that you have achieved the Supramental World. Nonsense. You imagine all sorts of things from the most inferior level. The Mother and Sri Aurobindo are the Supreme and they are with me. You cannot enter my bones, nor can you touch me. Get out of my sight."

Somehow he started to tremble. Then he suddenly turned on his heels and went away. He never approached me again.

But in fact, after the Mother had passed away, I felt on several occasions the hostile forces trying to destroy me. I was saved by her perpetual Grace and Protection.

I remember that I received a letter from the Mother on 16<sup>th</sup> June 1965, which has given me strength:

My dearest little child Huta,  
Your soul is there conscious and active in your body, and  
your soul is strong of the Lord's strength.  
That will protect you against any bad-will that others can  
throw upon you.  
Now you will feel that the Truth is sure to conquer.  
My love and force are around you.

The man's appearance was somewhat like that of the ghastly beings I had seen in my dream. He also reminded me of Rasputin of Russia, who had called himself an occultist and priest and had run riot in his select circle. I believe Rasputin was one of the first incarnations of the lower vital beings just before the First World War broke out.

The Mother explains in *Questions and Answers* 1953, pp.306-307, 376-377:

If you are telling me about the goodwill among human beings, this is in the psychic, there's no shadow of a doubt about it. But there is a kind of vital interdependence, quite considerable, more than the physical, I believe. For instance, the First World War was the result of a tremendous descent of the forces of the vital world (hostile forces of the vital world) into the material world. Even those who were conscious of this descent and consequently armed to defend themselves against it, suffered from its consequences. The world, the whole earth suffered from its consequences. There was a general deterioration from the vital point of view, I could say, which was inevitable even for those who consciously knew whence the force came, whence the deterioration came, and who could therefore fight against it consciously – they could not prevent certain effects being produced in the earth atmosphere. Naturally, men do not know what happened to them; all that they say is that everything has become worse since the war. That was all that they could affirm. For example, the moral level went down very much. It was simply the result of a formidable descent of the vital world: forces of disorder, forces of corruption, forces of

deterioration, forces of destruction, forces of violence, forces of cruelty.

But the one who does the greatest harm is the “Lord of Falsehood”. He it is indeed who is the biggest obstacle in the universe, this constant negation of the truth. And he has a very strong hold on the terrestrial world, on the material world. Besides, here (on the earth), those who see him, see him as an absolutely marvellous, splendid being. He entitles himself the “Lord of Nations”, and he appears formidable, luminous, powerful, very impressive. Historically, he was the inspirer of certain heads of State, and he proclaims himself the Lord of Nations because it is he who governs the peoples. He is evidently, at the source, the supreme organizer of these last two wars. It was on that occasion that he manifested himself as the Lord of Nations. And he declared, besides, that he would never be converted. And he knows that his end will come – naturally, he will try to make it as late as possible. And he declared that he would destroy all he could before being destroyed. We may expect all possible catastrophes.

The Mother has also written in *Questions and Answers*, Vol. 3, p.7:

Ambition has been the undoing of many Yogis. That canker can hide long. Many people start on the Path without any sense of it. But when they get powers, their ambition rises up, all the more violently because it had not been thrown out in the beginning.

Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have mentioned and stressed in several places that at present in the world the main factors are Money, Power and Sex, which are the very root of all evils.

The Mother has also said in *Questions and Answers* 1950-51, pp. 267-69:

The vital world is a world of horrors; well, all the horrors of the vital world had descended upon earth, and upon earth

they are still more horrible than in the vital world, because in the vital world, if you have an inner power, if you have the knowledge, if you have strength, you act upon them – you act, you can subdue them, you can show yourself stronger. But all your knowledge, all your power, all your strength is nothing in this material world when you are subjected to the horrors of a war. And this acts in the terrestrial atmosphere in such a way that it is very very difficult to efface it.

Naturally men are always anxious to forget. There are always those who have begun to say, “Are you quite sure it was like that?” But those who have gone through that, do not want it to be forgotten; so the places of torture, massacre – hideous places which go beyond all the worst that human imagination can conceive – some of these places have been preserved. You can go and visit the torture-chambers the Germans built in Paris, and they will never be destroyed, I hope, so that those who come and say, “Oh! you know, these things have been exaggerated” (for one does not like to know that such frightful things have happened), could be take by the hand and told, “Come and see if you are not afraid.”

This forms character. If it is taken in the right way (and I think there are people who have taken it in the right way), this may lead you straight to yoga, straight. That is, one feels such a deep detachment from all things in the world, such a great need to find something else, an imperious need to find something which is truly beautiful, truly fresh, truly good... then, quite naturally, this brings you to a spiritual aspiration. And these horrors have, as it were, divided men: there was a minority which was ready and rose very high, there was a majority which was not ready and went down very low. These wallow in the mud at present, and hence, for the moment, one does not get out of it; and if this continues, we shall go toward another war and this time it will truly be the end of this civilization – I don't say the end of the world, because nothing can be the end of the world, but the end of this civilization, that is to say, another will have to be built.

You will perhaps tell me that this would be very well, for this civilization is in its decline, it is on the way to perish; but after all, there are very beautiful things in it, worthy of being preserved, and it would be a great pity if all this disappeared. But if there is another war, I can tell you that all this will disappear. For men are very intelligent creatures and they have found the means of destroying everything, and they will make use of this, for what's the good of spending billions to find certain bombs, if one might not use them? What is the use of discovering what can destroy a city in a few minutes if it is not for destroying it! One wants to see the fruit of one's effort! If there is war, this is what will happen.

There we are, I am telling you things which are not very cheerful, but it is sometimes good to put a little ballast in the head to make one think.

It was 4<sup>th</sup> of October 1963. I went to the Mother in the morning for our work on *Savitri*. I happened to show her the Message given by her, which I had come across:

What have you given to the Lord or done for Him that you ask the Mother to do something for you? She does only the Lord's work.

I asked the Mother: "This Message is interesting. But I wonder what the Lord can want when He has everything. What can be done for Him who is omnipotent?"

She looked into my eyes and answered with a warm smile:

The Lord does not demand anything except Surrender. Your wish, your want, your will, your thoughts, feelings, you must offer to Him without reserve. And let His Will, Thoughts, Feelings, Wishes and Wants become yours. In fact, let His Vibrations become your vibrations. Then there is no question of such miseries and troubles. You get the Lord and you get everything. But it can only be done when you surrender totally to Him and to Him alone. Not otherwise. Well, I do

not say that the complete surrender is very easy. To give up everything is indeed difficult.

Nevertheless, give everything – your sorrows, pains, difficulties and sufferings – to the Lord and tell Him: “These are Yours, take care of them, they are Your responsibility and not mine.” Try this and you will find the difference. Surrender everything to Him and say: “Thou, Thou, only Thou, O Lord.”

The soul, who is the delegate of the Divine, represents the Divine. It tries to gather the whole being’s substance together and to offer it to the Divine for transformation. The soul is a portion of the Divine. And the sufferings of the soul are always in proportion to its strength. These sufferings and pains are not only for the soul but for the whole world, because nothing is separate – the whole world is one single thing. When beings suffer, the whole world suffers, the soul suffers and the Divine suffers too. But the Lord does not want anybody to suffer. He wants everyone to be happy. It is human beings who make things difficult.

This Mother (*pointing to herself*) has a physical body with only two hands, two eyes and so on. But her Consciousness is vast. She sends answers at once without opening people’s letters. But unhappily, most people are not aware and cannot receive her answers, her Force and her Consciousness. Otherwise, the work would be easier for the Mother. However, her work is to lead everyone to his Goal.

This world is a condensation of energy. What we human beings see – animals, trees, plants, etc. – are merely a condensation of energy and nothing else. Recently scientists have tried to find out all about the material world and have come to the conclusion that everything is made of elementary particles – electrons, protons that are nothing but condensed energy – but of course, energy is really a conscious energy and behind everything there is only ONE – the great Conscious Power, the Supreme who holds everything in

Him and wills to carry everyone to his Goal and manifest in all. Thus the world ought to become only Him who is Everything.

In *Essays on the Gita*, Vol. 13, p.351, when Sri Aurobindo conveys Sri Krishna's message, we have the same truth driven home:

Take it thus, that I am here in this world and everywhere, I am in all and I constitute all: there is nothing else than I, nothing without Me. I support this entire universe with a single degree of My illimitable power and an infinitesimal portion of My fathomless spirit; all these worlds are only sparks, hints, glintings of the I Am eternal and immeasurable.

The dreadful dreams still persisted. At the same time the Mother used to tell me numerous things – by word of mouth, signs and writings. But unfortunately, I could not possibly capture them all. I felt ashamed and sorry. She wrote on 3<sup>rd</sup> January 1964:

I can say that most of the dreams come from the subconscious. It is old movements trying again to manifest. To answer to these undesired movements by the Name of the Lord is certainly the best thing to do and the most effective way to get rid of them.

As for the other night activities and the things I tell you during your sleep, they will become more clear to you, and one day you will remember them quite clearly and exactly.

She wrote another letter on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 1964 in connection with what she told me during my sleep:

It is a fact that the night before yesterday I have told you in detail my answer to your questions.

Now I must write it down – and when it is ready I shall send it to you.

Indeed to receive things directly and remember makes life easier. This comes by a persistent attempt.

With the Love of the Lord.

It was, I think, in 1964 or so, that there was a scarcity of milk in the Ashram. I did not know about this till I had a dream-vision of a huge, buxom, dark and ugly woman pulling human beings towards her and forcing them to suck her breasts which were dripping with milk. In that plane I saw many familiar faces. I observed that all of them enjoyed the milk!

The horrid woman looked at me sharply and tried to drag me and compel me to do as the others did. I freed myself violently and fled from that awful place. When I got up in the morning, I actually found my arms aching.

I could not restrain myself from telling this peculiar experience to the Mother. She was extremely concerned about the entire episode. She drew me very close to her and asked me to repeat the dream. I did so. Then she said solemnly:

Child, it is good on your part to have told me. Now I know the whole thing, now I can visualize the situation of human beings. Did you drink the milk?

I answered: “No, Mother, first of all I cannot stand milk. Secondly, the formidable woman was such a disgusting sight that I had a strong feeling of nausea. Thirdly, I thought that it would be odd for a grown-up woman like me to be suckled....”

A faint smile touched the Mother’s lips. But I felt from her expression that she did not take this dream lightly, because she was absolutely aware of the entanglement of human beings with the vital forces. Otherwise she would not have asked me to relate the incident a second time.

After that the Mother went into a deep trance. When she awoke, she told me:

Child, now I shall work out everything from the occult point of view. It is good that I am informed. Also it is fine that you did not drink the milk. I advise you that you must never, never take anything – either food or drink – from the vital beings when you go into the vital world. Otherwise you will fall terribly ill.

Once again the Mother entered into a trance for a while. I could not really make out anything, except that I should bear in my mind never to accept a single thing from the spiteful beings of the vital world in case I went there.

The Mother explains in *White Roses*, pp.77-78:

The vital world is inhabited by vital beings who are not human, some are very beautiful and resemble gods, some are hideously ugly, but all or almost all are antidivine and try always to turn human beings from their Divine Goal.

On 15<sup>th</sup> June 1965, after the work on *Savitri*, the Mother held my hands tenderly and looked deeply into my eyes for a moment or two, and said with a pleasant smile:

Ah! here is a little message for you. You shall have true vision, true understanding. There is an opening.

Then she leaned forward and kissed my forehead. I felt an indescribable thrill run through my whole being. Our eyes met and we smiled happily.

Nonetheless, I was quite aware that the true spiritual life is not child's play. One has to cross innumerable layers of consciousness before one finally attains the zenith of the brilliant Truth and Love.

This line from *Savitri*, Book Two Canto Eight, p.227 is appropriate:

*None can reach heaven who has not passed through hell.*

The dire dreams still harassed me. When I met the Mother on 13<sup>th</sup> December 1965, I told her about them. She said with all her compassion:

My child, you go into the subconscious. First of all it is necessary to have the subconscious cleaned. That is why you go there. It is no use going straight away into the higher worlds, leaving the subconscious unpurified. The progress

has to be made step by step, with the lower parts – elements  
– cleaned first.....

Then after a pause, she said with a smile:

But I know that you are very strong inwardly.

My eyebrows were raised. I smiled to myself about my countless weaknesses. The Mother shook my hands, gave her sparkling smile and said firmly:

Yes, indeed, you are strong.

And she laughed softly. A quick colour rose to my cheeks. I had accepted what she had said.

The Mother also wrote in a letter to me on 19<sup>th</sup> July 1963:

Most of the dreams are in the subconscious or in the vital  
– they can be useful for the inner progress if properly understood.

I wrote to the Mother on 16<sup>th</sup> December 1965 about the existing state of the inner consciousness. She answered:

At present the sadhana is bringing down the higher forces (forces of Truth and Love) into the material planes to prepare the Transformation. That is why so much work is done in the Subconscious; and after the Subconscious will come, last, the Inconscious which will be prepared to become conscious, and with the end of the Inconscious will dawn the time of the Transformation which will bring with it not only the knowledge but also the experience of all the worlds, even the highest.

So, you can be sure that your aspiration will be fulfilled.

The Mother has expressed the fundamental step towards this ideal in the *Bulletin*, August 1950, p.9:

We want an integral transformation of the body and all its activities. But there is a first step, absolutely indispensable, which has to be completed before anything else can be undertaken; it is the transformation of the consciousness. The starting-point, it goes without saying, is the aspiration towards this transformation and the will to realize it; without that nothing can be done. but if to the aspiration is added an inner opening, a kind of receptivity, then one can enter at a bound into this transformed consciousness and remain there.

On the night of 26<sup>th</sup> June 1967 I got up with a start from my sleep. I felt vividly that a powerful hand was pressing my left shoulder. My heart was beating fast. I took a deep breath to steady myself. Then once again I dropped off into an uneasy sleep.

I wrote to the Mother about this unpleasant dream. She answered:

Your so-called dream of last night, was not at all a dream – you became conscious of the resistance and refusal in your own subconscious – but if you had strongly called me at that time with reliance and faith, it would have gone – that is to say that you would have conquered this resistance and made a great progress. It will have to be done another time. For if you want to study occultism as you say, this mastery of your own subconscious must be done first; to be able to move freely and without danger in the invisible worlds.

The first essential condition is fearlessness.

With all my love.

To acquire self-mastery was the toughest and severest of all examinations in this world. What else could it be when something occult is involved? I was very much caught in this new adventure. There was no way for me to escape. I had to prepare myself to gamble on the subject.

*(To be continued)*

# *The Challenge of Death and Conquest of Immortality*

*Talk by Dr. Alok Pandey, November 11, 2007*

Good evening friends. Thank you for giving me this opportunity to be here. In the last two years I have seen this place growing marvellously. Really the whole atmosphere is so charged that even before reaching Savitri Bhavan I was feeling such a constant pressure that I was wondering whether speaking would be some kind of a blasphemy, corrupting the silence of this place which is so pregnant, so beautiful.

As human beings we have one faculty which we are meant to use, but most often misuse: the power of speech, which is supposed to communicate something of the Word that lies in the higher spheres, but which we too often end up making an instrument for all that is low and ugly, all that is full of doubt, despair, denial. Death speaks through us at such times, and that is the sad part.

But the other part is expressed by one of the lines in *Savitri*, where she refers to the human spirit. When Savitri asks for boons, after Death is transformed and she goes to that highest status where a boon is granted ‘*for earth and men*’, she asks a boon ‘*for the mighty spirit of man on earth*’ – it is so touching. We are so used to believing in ourselves as ephemeral creatures, as waves on Time’s inconscient sea, we are so used to believing that we are powerless, helpless, weak. And yet, that is the beauty of it all, there is something in us which always wants to wrestle and is always full of hope, in spite of the darkest night. There is something in us – as a race, a species, not individually – which strives towards something more than what we are. That is ‘*the mighty spirit of Man*’. And sometimes one wonders whether it would have been really mighty, if all was too easy. If immortality were served to us on a platter and we were told, ‘Take it’, would we really deserve it? In one of his writings – it is a deeply moving writing, it shakes us to the very core, it is called *The Way* – Sri Aurobindo speaks about

the supramental yoga, and its many difficulties. He says:

*Hell will vomit its hordes to oppose and enring and wound and menace; Heaven will meet thee with its pitiless tests and its cold luminous denials. ... But thou sayst God's hand will be with me and the Divine Mother near with her gracious smile of succour? And thou knowest not then that God's Grace is more difficult to have or to keep than the nectar of the Immortals or Kuvera's priceless treasures?*

Kuvera is the Lord of Wealth, who holds all the wealth in the world. More difficult than to hold those treasures is to hold Grace. And then after all this, he sums it up very beautifully:

*Nay, then, is immortality a plaything, to be given lightly to a child, or the divine life a prize without effort or the crown for a weakling?*

SABCL 17:39-40

It is really the worthy prize of a worthy soul. That is the whole truth about the human struggle. In fact if we look at human life we can always see this paradox. It is as if we always live a double existence. On one hand, our body is a fragile vase in which we hope to plant the flowers whose fragrance never fades, flowers that bloom in heaven; we want to plant them in the fragile vase of this human body. We hope to find a love which would never, ever die. And yet we are constantly surrounded by love turning into hatred, malice, and all its very opposite. Our thoughts want to reach out to the Infinite, and yet how brief-lived are our hopes, almost like illusory gleams. We soon turn back to doubt. And yet our thoughts want to grasp the unknowable. Our passion wants to grasp at a bliss that it will never again have to forfeit to pain, and yet how short-lived, how brief, how passing our happiness is. This is the paradox of human life. Sri Aurobindo very beautifully sums it up in *Savitri* when he says:

*A link between the demigod and the beast, ...  
A strange antinomy is his nature's rule....  
Freedom he asks but needs to live in bonds,*

If today you ask anyone “What do you want: freedom or bondage?” Instinctively everyone will reply “Freedom!” But then tell them, “OK.

From today you are free: no bonds, no trappings” and most people will say, ‘That is all right, but freedom can wait.’

*Freedom he asks but needs to live in bonds,  
He has need of darkness to perceive some light  
And need of grief to feel a little bliss;  
He has need of death to find a greater life.* p. 337

Nowhere else do we see this paradox more acutely than in the fact that we know that death walks by our side all the while: as a shadow it chases us; before noon the shadow is behind, and as the noon passes we see the shadow falling in front of us; and yet something in us always believes, instinctively, it is an instinct: ‘This can’t happen to me.’

Except for some people who get into a pathological state, most of us live as if instinct with immortality. It is very strange. We know the well-known story, when Yudhisthira is asked all kinds of questions and gives his replies. Then he is asked the master-question: ‘What is the greatest wonder, the most surprising thing?’ He says ‘Every day we see men die, yet we believe we are immortal.’ The story is often interpreted in a superficial way, as reminding us that everybody has to die: we know it, yet we are foolish enough to believe that we are immortal. But if we go a little deeper, the story touches this paradox: we believe that we are immortal because something in us *is* immortal. There is something in us which just refuses to believe in death – and something in us which even uses death as a goad to discover our own immortality!

If we look at many of the most beautiful things that have happened in life we wonder whether, if death were not there as a goad, if there was no death and man had a lot of time at his disposal, would they have had the same value? Now I am nearing 48 and the other day I was just thinking, how much more time before one can be fully rooted in the Divine all the time? And then I was wondering, if I was told ‘You have 500 years to live’ would I still feel the same way, or would I say, ‘Oh, I have a lot of time, I can wait. Maybe after a hundred years I’ll think about it.’? It is something very strange, that death serves as a goad, a spur.

*Although a dim bystander at man’s start ...*

Death starts from our very birth. Cells start dying from the moment we are born. Age catches up, time begins to fly.

*A dim bystander at the body's start  
And a last judgment on man's futile works,  
Other is the riddle of its ambiguous face:*

What is that other mystery?

*Death is a stair, a door, a stumbling stride  
The soul must take to cross from birth to birth,* p. 600

Death is a passage to immortality. In fact the Upanishad speaks of it very cryptically: “*By death they discover immortality.*” It is a very interesting question: why there is death and how it appears to us at different levels, posing, as we say, a kind of challenge. But if we go behind the appearances we see that beyond this dark and hideous mask still there is only one thing, the smile of the eternal Beloved – because there is nothing else in this universe, so what else can death be but a mask?

In another place Sri Aurobindo writes that if at all there was an eternal Hell, God would make it out of love, because he knows only to love; there can be no other logic behind it. Yet we meet the stark paradox: we want immortality, we want eternal love, we want bliss, we want unchanging truth – and all the time we are met by a force that breaks and shatters everything as if it has one single goal, one single agenda, just to break our dreams. And sometimes it can act with such ruthlessness that we wonder whether it isn't, to use a phrase from *Savitri*, a cruel and blind god that is Destiny's architect. You are having a good time and have things you cherish, and something is snatched away from you which you cherished so much. But actually if we go behind the mask we see it is a reminder. Probably we have been clinging to our imperfections, we won't let go, to use a modern phrase. And Death comes to remind us that what we are clinging to is truly something imperfect, it is not yet perfect. Even ideals, philosophies .... Death takes Savitri through the symbol realms where it shows her, ‘Look here, all these philosophies, all these intellectual debates, all that you have been seeing, they are nothing but words! And many people have come and said beautiful things and look what has happened to this lineage of prophets, there they are in my symbol realm, and I reign over them. I Death am Lord.’

What is the thing which Death is really trying to tell Savitri or ask from her? He is trying to say, “Are they mere words?” The other day I was sharing with Shraddhavan that I always feel a little reluctant about speaking. The reason is that these are high truths that need to be experienced and lived. We have to become them, and sometimes when we speak about them, and more so when speaking becomes a way of life, we are apt to forget that it is one thing to speak about them, it is quite another to experience and live them. It is easy to say, we hear it in the traditions and we learn, that there is a psychic being, and we can give a beautiful lecture on the psychic being, we can speak on it and talk about it, but that is not what impresses Death. It knows how to test us. So it stands one day and says, “Oh, you have been giving talks all your life on the psychic being. Show me, show me: where is it?” Can we say at that time, as Savitri says to Death, ‘*Conscious of immortality I walk*’?

It is very interesting, very powerful, this one line. Death gives Savitri all kinds of logical arguments: ‘This is Matter, you are built of this matter and what are you talking about – bringing God into matter? Are you talking about love, high things? What is it? It is mud: ‘*A frail mud engine*’ for temporary use.’ Savitri doesn’t reply to this logic by another logic. She could have given a whole theory of physics and replied, ‘No, no, you are calling it mud, but actually it is energy and if you see, it is a dance of energy, and energy doesn’t disintegrate and therefore it is immortal ...’ She doesn’t say a word about all that. She could have said that. She simply says one line: ‘*O Death, conscious of immortality I walk.*’ Finished: ‘I don’t need all your logics about whether it is mud or not – I know what is mud, but I know what is soul.’ Who can say that?

If you look at the whole Debate of Love and Death, when does it start? Often of course we want to reach that point very fast. But it starts after Savitri has already undergone the basic yoga. She has realised her soul, all her centres have opened in full bloom, she has realised Nirvana and the All-Negating Absolute, she has known Being and Non-being, and, as Death acknowledges later on, she has risen above both the contempt of form and the snare of form.

In the spiritual traditions we find that there are two snares which we must rise beyond if we really want to establish immortality here upon earth. One is the snare of forms. The snare of forms we know

very well – we just see the form and are identified with it. And form is not only physical. There are forms of philosophy, intellectual ideas, opinions, feelings, passions, desires, impulses – everything is a form. So the snare of forms means that we are too much attached to the form and we don't know what is behind it. This snare holds us with a very tight knot around us. In the Upanishadic language it is called *avidya*. We are caught up in the trap of *avidya*, the multiplicity.

But there is another snare. When we begin to detach ourselves from the snare of forms there is another snare that attracts us – the snare of the contempt of forms. We have had spiritual traditions, great in their own right, but which all talk about the beyond. There is a contempt for forms: 'This transient unhappy earth'. That is how even the Overmind look upon this earth is. A scripture as great as the Gita speaks about this world as '*anityam asukham lokam* – this transient unhappy world'. This is the look one has even standing on the borders of the Overmind. When we look at this world we see it as transient. A being as great as the Buddha, as heroic and mighty in spirit as the Buddha, looks upon this world and he speaks about it as a sorrowful world, an ignorant world, moved by desire, created out of the womb of desire. That is the other snare, the snare of the contempt of forms. And Death tests both. In *Savitri* we see that Death first tests Savitri to see whether she is attached to the form and mistaking it for something true. Because words can easily deceive: we are always used to using very beautiful words, and we think 'No, in my case it is different.' Mother says it very beautifully when she speaks about how people can easily get deceived. She says 'People get deceived, this power of deception is so powerful in human mind and they know all this, but when it comes to them they say 'No, no, no – my case is different. My love is true love. I know there is a vital love, a mental love, there is a physical love, but my love is true love.' It is so easy to get deceived, so difficult to be sincere. That is why if there is one word that strikes repeatedly throughout in Mother's writings, prominent from beginning to end, it is Sincerity: the capacity to look at things just as they are and not to be deceived by appearances. Yet we can be deceived by appearances, and Death comes to see, if we are using a word, what is its meaning. So Savitri says, 'I want my other self, Satyavan. Give him back to me.' And Death responds, 'Oh, you are talking of

love! I know what love is – there has been a scientific study done in Harvard University and they have just discovered what love is. It is a secretion in the glands, and lately some psychiatrists are talking about neuro-transmitters ... that's all. Don't talk about love! And I also know that some poets write very beautiful poetry on it, nice words, ethereal. Yes, yes, it gives a little happiness sometimes, but I know what happens to love: *it dies within the lover's breast.*' And he says, 'You should thank me that I am taking Satyavan. If he would have lived, love would have died within your heart – that has been the history.' What is he really doing through all this whispering? He is testing Savitri. He is the great tester. It is the most difficult task. That is why Mother says that it is very good to remember that you are being tested, but we should never ever assume the role of a tester in anybody's life – because it means that we are identified with the great Adversary. It is his task. God has given him this dreaded task, to test, and every time we criticise, pass harsh judgments on others, we are basically assuming the role of Death. But that is not our role. Our role is to be on the side of the Divine. And when we are asked, can we say, like Savitri, '*My love is not a hunger of the heart, / My love is not a craving of the flesh;*'?

One may not have a craving of the flesh, there may be a heart's need that wants to clutch at the joy. Can we say that love has undergone its full evolution within us? What is that evolutionary journey? When Death challenges her and says, 'You talk about love, I know what love is and I have seen all the stories of Romeo and Juliet right down to our ages, and I know what happens to them, they ultimately come to my lap and sleep', Savitri has something very beautiful to say. She says, 'Then you know not how love blossoms and grows and evolves.'

*Love that was once an animal's desire,  
Then a sweet madness in the rapturous heart,  
An ardent comradeship in the happy mind,  
Becomes a wide spiritual yearning's space.  
A lonely soul passions for the Alone,*

p. 632

The whole evolutionary journey of love she has mapped: 'My love comes from God and returns to him.' The day we realise this truth, that everything is a mask of the One Beloved, then we can confront Death and say, 'Who are you? You too are a mask, and I can see

behind your mask, and see that same unchanging smile.’ That is the whole evolutionary journey.

So Death comes to test us. We use words, we use philosophies, we use very nice language – and Death says, ‘OK, tell me – what is the sense you put into it? What is the sense of ‘Matter’? Savitri speaks about it. She says, ‘I see that Matter is crammed with spiritual signs, everywhere: this world is written in the script of Matter.’ What do we find here? This world is crammed with spiritual signs. One has to really look around and one will see. The very structure of the atom is nothing but a reflection of the One around whom the stars move. It is so interesting: that gets reflected right into the atom. Sri Aurobindo sees even in the electron Shiva’s fiery chariot. That is the vision that has to be developed: when we look at Matter actually as a robe of the spirit, and a robe that must become worthy of the wearer. It doesn’t mean ‘Matter is a robe of the spirit, so I shall disrobe the spirit and go back.’ The robe has to become worthy of the wearer, and that is how Spirit works upon Matter. When we start to have that view, then things begin to become different. It is not because of any attachment to the form, it is because one knows that It is here, in this place.

The next challenge is the contempt of forms. We can get detached from the snare of forms with a little bit of yoga and a whole lot of experience of life – because there is a subconscious yoga in life: what yoga doesn’t do for us, sometimes the experience of life does for us, and we begin to become free of the snare of forms, if we look at life a little perceptively. But then there is the possibility of a swing to the other side: contempt of forms, contempt of this world. And Death gives a very interesting reasoning: it says, ‘OK, fine, you speak about God. But what is God?’ And he defines God. He says, ‘Your God is nothing but a cold impersonal Void, and you call it God. But I know that God. Matter is standing on that Void, and that God can’t help you. Why do you talk about love and other things? OK, you have your God – choose him! Go into That and merge. Where is the question of divinising earth, where is the question of changing life, where is the question of immortality? I know what God is – a cold impersonality into which everything returns, out of which everything is born. Maybe he is beyond me, although I believe that I am that God.’ Death makes it categorical.

So we may use the word God. Again Death tests Savitri. What do you mean by the term? Do you have the experience? And then Savitri describes who is this God. She says, “*My God is Love and sweetly suffers all.*” What a touching line! It is not God as an impersonality. Sri Aurobindo says what is the goal of his yoga. He says that the goal of his yoga is that beyond the Personal and the Impersonal there is the supreme infinite Personality of the Divine, and we want to manifest that personality into the human. So there is that side of the Divine – the Divine as Being. Death would concede the Non-being, the Impersonality, but it would not accept that there is a Being. There is this other kind of lure and temptation: ‘OK, merge into the Impersonal.’ But Savitri speaks about the God she has experienced, and she says ‘I have seen him smile through many a mask, I have seen him triumph in the flower, I have seen him speak through the birds in the morning, heard him call from every bough, I know who this is. He is the one from whom I have come upon earth.’

Then Death says, ‘Fine – your God is very great, maybe he is some kind of transcendent being. Then go to him. Why do you want to do something here? He is too great for this earth.’ And Savitri answers something very very beautiful. She says, ‘That is why I am here: because this is the difficult task. It is very easy to go up there, but much more difficult to build immortality with mortal things, perishable stuff, with gross things. We want to build something beautiful here.’

When we look at this approach, the whole attitude, the whole inner life of Savitri is being tested thoroughly by Death – because he is not to be deceived by appearances. That is why he is also called, in Indian mythology, Dharmaraja. He is the Guardian of the Law. And what is the Law? Everything has been put into certain limits, and it must live within those limits, it cannot exceed those limits, because if it exceeds those limits everything will collapse. Creation runs by that whole machinery. If an animal begins to live for many more years than its average life-span it would upset the balance, even if in one species this happens, the balance is so delicate. So he is the Guardian of the Law. But in Man there is an incorrigible impulse to break the law. You make a law – it’s the surest way to make sure that somebody will find a way to break it. This is a human impulse – we unnecessarily blame poor animals, because really they

are very nice. If you put a little fence around a lion or a tiger, it is amazing! You really wonder – you see a lion sitting there, not just one but seven or eight of them, and that small little man with his whip ... and those animals, if they wanted they could just get out of the frame. But so many times it has happened. Even if, once in a while, you really leave the door open and something disastrous happens, they would not break from the law. Generally animals are like that, they will not break the law of their species. Whatever law is fixed for them they will live within that. When they are hungry they will eat, but not just like that. But Man tries to break the law. This is something incurably right or wrong in him. This impulse is there. It is very interesting that this breaking of the law is actually to expand the boundaries and limits, to test the boundaries: ‘How far can I go?’ At every level man tests the boundaries.

Here we see the ancient Upanishadic sense of Death. Death is in a sense the natural consequence of being finite. And immortality, in its widest sense, is infinity of being. Finiteness of being leads to death, because by its very nature, whatever is finite will have a beginning, it will have an end. But if it is infinite it has neither a beginning nor an end. So one way is to jump from finiteness into infinity, the other way is – it sounds almost an impossible task, but that is the work one is here to do – to fill the finite with the infinite. These are lines used in *Savitri* :

*A Power that lives upon the heights must act,  
Bring into life's closed room the Immortal's air  
And fill the finite with the Infinite.*

p.315-16

That is the sense of Death and Immortality. Death is about living in boundaries; so we test the boundaries. Every time Man tries to exceed the boundaries, he becomes a claimant to immortality. It is very interesting: what is the path to immortality? By gradually expanding the limits and the boundaries. And if we look at it from that point of view, we see that throughout the history of evolution, though we may say that Death is the last victor, ultimately that is not true. If we look at it closely we see that Life is the victor. When the first living beings appear, the boundaries of Matter are pushed a little further, and rigid matter begins to become pliable matter, breathing matter. There is a pushing of the boundaries. Again when Man comes, the boundaries are pushed back further. *Savitri*

gives this logic to Death, saying ‘Look how every time boundaries are being pushed back – again now with human beings.’

There is a natural urge to push at the limits of things, and especially now in our own age we see this coming up in a very big way, whether at the level of Science, of Art, Music.... Everywhere we want to break the norms and push beyond them. And every effort to push back the boundaries, every effort to exceed the limits, every effort to go beyond the law – not just to break the law, but to go beyond the law and exceed it – is essentially a step that humanity takes towards immortality. That is the great labour in which the Ancient Mother is engaged.

So Death, when Savitri speaks about all this – that is the context which we are speaking about – he asks her, ‘What is the purpose of all this?’ And she gives the whole story of creation, of how you, Death, have been born: it is the Divine who has plunged into this darkness and is rescuing consciousness out of this darkness. The first sign of this rescue is that Matter is born. The second sign is the rescue of Life, then comes the rescue of Mind. And now, following that inevitable process of logic, Sri Aurobindo comes to rescue the eighth sun of Aditi, the Supramental, which is also plunged into this darkness, hidden in its dark cave. He is rescuing it. That is the whole labour.

In every life, the moment a psychic being is born into matter, some consciousness, however little it be, is increased upon earth. That is the little victory that each one wins. Mother speaks about this. She says, ‘Well, your little victories may not lead to the universal victory right away, but that is what is given to us, and we must do that. And if we do that, we add to the sum of the victory of the universe.’

It is very beautiful to live with that divine humility. It is really not so necessary for our individual body to become immortal. It is amazing that, even Mother, at the level she had reached, the level from which She came, even at the very highest, could say, ‘It doesn’t matter. It doesn’t matter whether it is this body or some other’ She could have that humility, to say, ‘It doesn’t matter’... She, armed with all the knowledge and the power, armed with such a wonderful preparation, could say, ‘It doesn’t matter whether it is going to be this body or some other body’.

Of course the ego has a penchant for taking every statement that the Divine gives, and twisting it. Ego can reflect and say, ‘Some other body – maybe mine is the one’. We should be very careful about these

whispers, how death deceives us. ‘Some other body’ she says, with that humility.

But everything that is achieved, every little victory, is a victory for the earth. It is that sense of the collective in which one has to live – that whatever little is stamped upon matter, whatever little truth one can bring down, whatever little light, contributes to the forward movement of the whole.

One is beautifully reminded of a little story, when all this talk is going on about *Ramasetu*. In the Ramayana, when the bridge is being built between India and Lanka, the story goes that great monkeys come and take the name of the Lord and write it over huge stones and throw them into the sea and the stones float. There is a little squirrel, it rolls itself in the mud and goes into the sea, takes a dip and comes back. So Rama asks her, ‘What are you doing? You may get crushed! Don’t you see all these great monkeys and bears? What are you up to?’ She says, ‘I don’t know. I know they are building a bridge for you, so I too want to help. But I can’t lift big rocks like these fellows. What I can do is to bring a few grains of sand. I can roll myself around on the sand, and put them into the sea. Maybe the sea will be a little more accessible for you.’ And Rama, full of compassion, runs his fingers over the back of the squirrel, and as the Indian legend goes, that is why we see three stripes on the squirrel’s back. It is a very touching story. We need not all be the great monkeys who lift up big rocks and throw them in, but we can always be little squirrels, roll into a little sand, this earth, and this little earth, this mud of which we are made, offer it to the Divine and say, ‘Take it, this is yours. Do with it what you will’ and leave it to him. If we can do that, we have done our bit in the conquest of immortality.

Immortality is not just waking up one day and seeing ‘I am never going to die.’ In fact, Death says that such an immortality will be a pain. Perhaps I have already recounted the story of the professor who became immortal overnight. He received a card from Death: ‘Professor So and So, it has been decided by consensus in the land of Death that thou shalt not die.’ The Professor is very happy, and all the media gather around him: CNN, IBN, BBC ... everybody. ‘You have become immortal?’ ‘Yes sir, yes sir, I have got this card as proof.’ ‘Oh, very good!’ And there are a lot of interviews and parties, and he overeats and gets indigestion. One night he is troubled because

of this indigestion. First he wakes up his wife, his wife says, ‘Stop, don’t disturb me at night, I know nothing is going to happen to you. Quietly go off to sleep, don’t disturb my sleep. You are immortal, I am a mortal being.’ He calls his doctor and the doctor says, ‘Oh, you are the same man? OK, don’t bother – anyway nothing is going to happen to you, even if an ulcer bursts you are not going to die.’ That immortality is a curse. In the Mahabharata we have Aswatthama, who is accursed because of his immortality – he cannot die, although he has a wound over his head, a reminder of his deeds.

The first immortality that we have to gain is to become conscious of the One; that is the immortality of the soul. There is a beautiful line in Sri Aurobindo’s poem ‘The Divine Worker’:

*I face earth’s happenings with an equal soul;  
In all are heard Thy steps; Thy unseen feet  
Tread Destiny’s pathway in my front. Life’s whole  
Tremendous theorem is Thou complete.*

So he goes on describing that. He says, ‘*Thy Force in me labours at its grandiose plan*’. Then the punch line comes:

*No power can slay my soul; it lives in Thee.  
Thy presence is my immortality.*

SABCL 5: p.143

That is the first immortality, the immortality of the immortal being in us.

When we think about immortality, we straightaway think about immortality of this personality. But Sri Aurobindo says, it will be very boring! Who would like to be the same outer personality forever? It is going to be sickening – even for one life it is so difficult to be the same, same, same! Sometimes you wish you had a change. Now the fellow comes with a ticket, saying ‘OK – I am going to give you a change.’ What does Death do normally? It comes with a ticket: ‘I have brought you a free ticket, with a gift hamper, and in the next life you will be going there, and to boot it all, you will forget about all this.’ When we go on holiday we don’t want to remember all the business meetings and the problems and the issues at home, we want to forget everything. So normally Death tells us, ‘Here we are, I am going to

give you a change.’ Very nice – where do I go? ‘Well, pick and choose. Do you want to go to such and such a place, have a nice time? OK.’ But what about phone calls and all? He says, ‘Don’t worry. I’ll switch off your phone for good, change your numbers – even your identity I am going to change. Don’t bother – just be there, enjoy, relax ... and when you feel like, call me again. Or maybe from time to time I’ll visit, I’ll come and ask you, ‘Do you want a change?’ If you say, ‘Yes I want a change’ – OK, fine, come over.’ That’s the normal plan of death – to give us a chance and an opportunity for a change.

Sri Aurobindo says that this is one of the reasons. There are several reasons why death exists and we must counteract each of these reasons, because unless we take care of those issues, immortality cannot be given just like that. One reason why death is there is because we live by the separative sense of the ego and even if something within us is free from that, matter and the physical form lives by the ego. There is a physical ego. There is a vital ego, there is a mental ego. And of course there is also a spiritual ego, and we need not talk about it. And we live with all these egos as masks and caps. Not only do we live by them, we are really happy about these masks and caps. We think ‘That’s me’, and if one cap is taken off we feel very hurt. ‘I am Mr. So and So – how could he speak to me so casually, so rudely? How could he ask a gate-pass from me? Doesn’t he know who I am? Right from my childhood I have been here and done so much work, and this fellow has the cheek to ask a pass!’ And there we go and give way our Ignorance at the first test and death smiles and says, ‘There I come.’

We may say, it is an opportunity to be immortal. We are still identified with this frail stuff, and yet think that we are a claimant to immortality. These are the identities we wear around us, and the first thing is to discover our true identity – so much so that all the time we can feel and be conscious: ‘*No power can slay my soul, it lives in Thee. / Thy presence is my immortality.*’ It is a twin meditation: one, Thy presence within me; second, I live in Thee. This double meditation: Thy presence, everywhere,: ‘*In all are heard thy steps*’; and second, ‘*I live in Thee.*’ If we can practice these two meditations, it is a very practical way of doing it – and to live by that sense, that in everything there is the Divine Presence, even in these terrible masks. Sri Aurobindo has actually practiced it. It is not just theory. If we

take it at the level of theory, it doesn't work out. We may know all the theories in the world, but no theory can save us, no philosophy can rescue us. It is only being, living, doing .... And the second is that we live constantly in Her presence, whatever happens, however difficult the circumstances, we live by the sense that we live in Her, we live by her, we live for her.

The second thing is that the life-force in us seeks infinite experiences because it comes from the infinite. So Death says, 'OK, I am going to provide this to you.' And as long as we have this kind of an aircraft or vehicle, we will need to change vehicles. But supposing we have a vehicle which is so plastic that it obeys the inner will – and I suppose that is the beauty of the Pushpak Vimana, only it is in the wrong hands. In the story, the Pushpak Vimana is in Ravana's hands. It should be in the right hands. It is the *yaan*, the vehicle, this body is described as the vehicle. This vehicle does not obey the spiritual will. How often does it not happen that we take beautiful resolutions in the morning, or of course on 31<sup>st</sup> December or January 1<sup>st</sup>, and it takes just a few hours before we are breaking them. I have seen diabetics ... just a few days ago we had a whole lot of tests done in our Nursing Home and some people were found to be diabetic. Some of them took the resolution, 'I will not eat sweets any more.' Hardly a week has passed and somehow they are already at it again.

Matter does not carry you forward, it pulls you back, because it is born from the womb of inconscience: habits, laws, habits most of all. In fact, what are laws? They are just simply habits, Mother says, and death is one of the worst habits. It is not a law: because Matter is born, it has a tendency to collapse back into the inconscience. Again and again it comes, because it is pulled. One can almost have a visual picture of it: that the psychic being, a being of light, plunges ... the immortal being plunges into the darkness, and pulls out something. That something is resisting, wanting to go back. But the psychic being pulls and pulls, and by the Grace of the Divine pulls it more and more, and after a while, the rest of it is not able to follow pace. It breaks and collapses. But still, something has been extracted and that develops around the soul as the psychic personality, some experience of contact with the earth.

We have all lived here a million times and of course Death claims us. Why does it lay that claim? It says, 'I am the one from which

Matter is born, you are just a newcomer.’ And as long as we believe that we are just a newcomer and live in that consciousness, it can’t work out. For Death says, ‘I am created long before you, I have created all this.’ And it is true of the mind of Man, it is true of the embodied being. But what of the soul? It existed before there was Time, before there was birth, before there was non-birth, it was there. It is that we must find. That is the first step. Its very substance is immortal. And then by a constant infusion of that substance it is percolating into all the layers of our being, its constant aspiration waking up in every part of our being, to unite with the Divine, so that one day humanity will – there is not a shadow of doubt about it – or rather, God in the mask of humanity will reclaim this earth for himself.

That is truly what is called ‘the redemption of matter’ or what is called in a lot of traditions ‘the second coming’. There are many traditions about the second coming, in Buddhism, in Christianity, and there are various ways of looking at it. What really is the second coming? It is very interesting. Why, having come, does God have to depart again? We come directly to the subject of Mother and Sri Aurobindo’s departure. This is the month in which apparently, outwardly, they left the physical body.

What really is this talk of the second coming? What is the first coming? It is God taking birth in Matter. So the question is, he is omnipotent, omniscient, all-powerful – why does he have to leave? Why can’t he stay forever upon earth as an embodied being? How beautiful and simple it would be!

The other day somebody was telling me that it used to be so easy, that even for putting a child in a particular hostel, one wrote to the Mother. One didn’t have to use this head to decide. You know now one talks about this hostel being better, or that one. One wrote to the Mother, Mother said, ‘Put him in this hostel’ and the matter was over. Now you have to go inside, get a feel, you have to think, you have to use all these machineries. The first coming: the Divine comes in Matter and for some reason, various reasons, we won’t go into that, Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have spoken about it, it leaves again. One reason is, as he says:

*Hard is it to persuade earth-nature’s change;  
Mortality bears ill the eternal’s touch:*

*It fears the pure divine intolerance  
Of that assault of ether and of fire;  
It murmurs at its sorrowless happiness,  
Almost with hate repels the light it brings;*

p. 7

But how do we respond when God is here? We throw heaps of doubt and anguish and all that. We do not even spare him the stones! So, on one side we think that God is slow; from the side of God, he thinks that man is slow! That's how it is. And the second coming is, in all the traditions that we have, that when the Divine comes, he doesn't have to leave again. When we speak about the second coming, it is a coming forever. It is as if this coming will establish the divine reign upon earth – even that is said.

What does it mean, the Divine reign upon earth? It is not about the victory of a particular religion, or a universal religion spreading over all other religions. It is very simple: it is the victory of the Divine upon earth, the victory of godhead in Matter, Matter divinising itself, and discovering its own spiritual substance. Because it is then and then alone that the embodied Divine need not leave the earth. That is the second coming. That is, as the Mother says, the true resurrection. It is Matter being lifted up to its true status. That is the coming for which we wait, and Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have made it very, very clear, they have not left any iota of doubt that this is the work we have to do, and it doesn't matter whether it takes 100 years, 1000 years, 10,000 years, a million years. Have we not been engaged in it for a million years? In a very beautiful poem of Sri Aurobindo, *Meditations of Mandavya*, he says:

*I will not faint, O God. There is the thirst,  
And thirst supposes water somewhere. Yes,  
But in this life we may not ever find;  
Old nature sits a phantom by the way,  
Old passions may forbid, old doubts return.  
Then are there other lives here or beyond  
To satisfy us? I will persist, O Lord.*

SABCL 5:89

This is the perseverance required for the seeker of immortality: what does it matter? We have left behind a hundred thousand lives, even

if we have to go through a hundred thousand lives more, we'll have the joy of the labour. If there is something to be done, this is it. And this is the fire that the Mother, I suppose, has awakened in earth. How beautifully she says, this should be the fire with which we should approach. What is that fire? She says, 'When you feel that this is the thing you are meant to do, and you don't want to do anything else, this alone attracts you, no longer for your own sake.' Not that this little personality will become immortal, that everybody knows as Mr. X or Mr Y. – that would be an absurdity, for in all the masks of various personalities is it not the One alone playing with Himself! But the work of the triumph of the Divine in Matter, the redemption of Matter by the touch divine. That is the task, a task worthy of being Man. And what does it matter how many times we have been born, how many times we have died, how many times death has claimed our bodies, our lives, our minds? How many times this has happened, and yet there is something it cannot claim – and that is what we truly are. That something, and the Grace Divine, will rescue Matter one day out of its inertia and somnolence, and upon this earth will bloom the heavenly Rose, the deathless Rose. Then will the seed of immortality bloom upon earth and then will the divine family be born!

To summarise we may say that there is a double immortality to which man can aspire. The first is to discover his immortal self, the individual soul, and through its doors the eternal Self. The second is to discover the possibility of divinising nature and the stuff of which our mortal sheaths are made. The first has been achieved by rare seers and sages of Truth in different ages of mankind. It is now even more easily accessible because of the coming of the New Force that is awakening matter and helping man in his godward aspiration. But the second is yet to be realised and it is only through a progressive change of the earth consciousness and as its spearhead, of human nature, that this too will become possible one day: for man to enjoy the immortality of the gods. Of course if we take the universal scale, then there is no death, whether at the material, vital or other levels there is no death, only a change of status and condition of organisation in individual beings. But the individual sheaths do dissolve since like their universal counterparts they partake of the nature of Ignorance. When this Ignorance disappears that divides these sheaths from the One who is their secret origin and Master, then they would not

have any reason to disintegrate. Then mind would discover its own supramental infinities and Light and Truth, then life would recover its home of Bliss and Conscious Power from where it has strayed into the dark depths of Inconscience to create and to endure, then matter itself would wake up from the Inconscient's spell and remember that it is, like everything else, in its origin Divine, a fall from the one and only true Existence. Then shall the spell of Death be broken and we may say not only of our soul but also of our nature that all is indeed divine and shares his infinity and eternity.

*Dr. Pandey ended his talk here, and then gave the following answers to questions – unfortunately the questions were not recorded:*

1: Sri Aurobindo always made it clear that there is nothing like an individual endeavour to become an individual supramental being. He himself never tried it. In fact Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have said that at one point of time there was a choice – whether to go ahead and become supramental themselves, or to carry everything together. And then he says, the choice was instantaneous, spontaneous and obvious: to carry everything together. What it means is that as long as we seek for an individual victory in the yoga it is again, in some way or another, the ego asserting itself. It is hiding under the guise of yoga, under the guise of spirituality. And at some point, Death is sure to knock it. You see, it is very interesting, the last victory is won not by knowledge, but by the authentic power. He says to Savitri, 'Knowledge is with thee, Truth speaks through thy words – but who art thou?' At that time we see the individual being of Savitri melting into the World-Mother's. She immediately brings out that: 'You think that I am just a little woman who is living for this man. Here you see who I am.' And when she is one with the being of the World-Mother, Death not only concedes but is licked up by that Light. So that should be the sense. What I means is that yes, every little task ... there in that story, Rama, or let's say a divine incarnate being, is at the centre and everybody is weaving his life around that; and if we all could live with that sense of the collective, and not just a human collective, which can be a collective ego, but where we work together for the Divine and centre our lives around the Divine, and each individual unit is conscious that in the background, who is there but a child of

the Supreme! There is a nice story, a true event, about someone whose wife was very ill in bed and she started seeing beings of death, and she was very afraid. So her husband told her, “Tell them when they come near to you that you are the Mother’s child and they have no right over you.” And she could say that, and those beings went away, and she went on to live for a few more years. Of course she did depart. The point is that we don’t go to death: we come from Light and go to Light, and we should live constantly by that awareness. It is my conviction, based on certain experiences and things I have heard from others, that those who know that very clearly and are identified with the Divine in some way or the other in their heart, in their aspirations, we don’t go to the land of death – we go to Her, we come back from Her. That is what Sri Aurobindo speaks about in the Durga Stotra: ‘We come from you, age after age to do thy work and return to you.’ When we live in that consciousness then anyway the sting of death is lost. All that we do is, we move from her bosom to her garden; and when we go to the garden we may hold a little blade of grass, a little work, or we may plant a little seed, or maybe we are just sitting against a tree and just enjoying, but the whole thing makes a garden. And when we are drawn back, we go back to the breast of the One in whom all Her children are safe. From the garden we move on to her heart, and back to this workplace.

2: When we live identified with the surface being, then Death just comes like a wave and washes us away. It is like the tsunami. But if you have held yourself anchored in some depth, then yes, you know that it is there, it’s a brooding shadow you can feel and sense, you can confront it, and if you want, have a dialogue with it, but not a very pleasant dialogue. But it is that, basically one should be anchored within. But that is the whole journey: if we live conscious of our souls, conscious of our immortality, conscious of the divine Presence, then we can see it and there are yogis who know when they have to depart, for whatever reasons, and they talk about it. But for that, this awareness has to come in this very life.

3: The way Death is conceived in Indian mythology is in a certain limited sense. Sri Aurobindo has given it a much wider sense. The way Sri Aurobindo has looked at the being of Death, it evolves. If we see *Savitri*, as Death stands in the Eternal Night, it simply assumes a

dreadful form and says ‘This is fragile matter, and who are you?’ In Book Ten, as they move into the twilight zone it changes, its language changes. It begins to mix Truth with Falsehood. It begins to pervert. At first it is dark denial, then it is distortion, perversion of truth. In fact Savitri says, ‘You speak the truth, but truth that slays’. And it goes still further: as they move into the higher realms of Mind, Death assumes a different voice again. Initially it says, ‘There is no god.’ Next it says, ‘I am god.’ Then it says, ‘There may be an impersonal god.’ Last, it says, ‘There may be a transcendent god, but nothing can happen here, you go back to Him.’ I think that in Indian mythology we will not find anything like this. It is very wide, but still limited when we compare with Sri Aurobindo’s vision. In *Savitri* he has put so much into the figure of Death, so many things. But if I look at it from the little Sanskrit that I understand, I would feel that the word Yama carries a lot of meaning. It gives me the feeling almost of the Sun concealing itself, and I think that is the story of how Yama comes into being. It is the sun which goes and hides in the darkness, and Yama becomes the guardian of this world, and Surya the guardian of the higher worlds. But Sri Aurobindo brings all this out with so much force of light and truth. This is my feeling.

4: Every time one is born, as Mother says, one takes a plunge into the inconscient and it is true that even a very great being has to struggle before he can recapture something of the state he had reached in the previous life. So to that extent there is a certain amount of loss, of waste of energies, and in one place Death is described as the one who eats the cold remnants of the sun. There are two ways of facing this. One is of course the way of knowledge, which always has its pluses and minuses. For example we know of a young lady who had died and Dilip Kumar Roy was asked “Why did such a fine flower have to fade away so soon?” That reply is there in Sri Aurobindo’s letters. I think it was Uma Devi, known as ‘The Nightingale of Bengal’, who died of throat cancer at the age of 21. She was a very fine lady with all the noble qualities. Sri Aurobindo said something very interesting. He said that she had arrived at the highest she could develop in this life, as a singer, at a sattwic stage of development, and to take her journey further was not possible in this body. One can understand, she was quite famous and she would probably have got caught into the

cycle of fame and name, and something in her being wanted to take a leap, so she chose the door of death. The problem is, I have seen that this kind of knowledge is also not enough. Because as long as we only know intellectually, it doesn't work. So in our life we must try to go beyond this intellectual knowledge and strive to translate it, to the best of our ability, into actual living experience, because then to a large extent we become conscious. Intellectual knowledge does not suffice. But still further, there is the aspect of the power, which is so important.

Having seen so many people who have gone through this kind of pain I have pondered on this question: what would be the ultimate way that humanity will come out of this difficulty? At our present stage you cannot do much beyond offering what is probably cold comfort, a solace, saying 'Time's grace heals it.' But ultimately, it is only when human beings reach a point of development where they can see the soul just as we see the body. There can be no other way than a complete rending of the veil of ignorance. Right now, we cannot see, we are so badly identified, that is the collective consciousness of the race. Those individuals who are free have always been free of the sting. Some young person in the Ashram drowned. The Mother was asked about it and she said "He came to me, and he wanted to leave." As simple as that: So and so came and said 'I am going'. Another person who died in an accident – Mother described it in such a way, it is amazing: Some people would say it is a very traumatic death, a young death. But Mother said, 'Oh, the moment he was free from the body he came running to me and said 'I am free, I am free, I am free!' He was happy.' Now if we were to see with that vision, where would the sting be? And that is why I feel that the real triumph is to grow in experience – there is no other way. And we should press hard for that individually. It is hard, it is a long road, a difficult journey, but then we remember: "Is the cup of immortality for the weak?" So maybe it will take a few lifetimes – it doesn't matter.

But we should not be satisfied with intellectual knowledge. I think one of the big problems, especially with those of us who have this upper storey active, is that we read something and we understand something, we don't know whether what we read and what we understand is the same thing or not, but the trap is that we believe that because we have intellectually understood – and worse still we

can make others understand – we have no further work to do. This is very dangerous. So one has to constantly work towards experiencing and realising (not to seek experiences: that Sri Aurobindo says very clearly) but on the path one should move forward, beyond the mind into something which is beyond. This is the whole path of Yoga. Till we can reach that point where we see the soul as we see the body – and the Mother has said that day will come – human beings have to follow that road, where as Narad says, “*O mortal, bear this great world’s law of pain, Make of thy daily way a pilgrimage, / For through small joys and griefs thou mov’st towards God.*” Perhaps if one goes through grief it becomes a kind of subconscious tapas. It is a sad thing, but that is the reality, and in a way serves to press us. If we look from the other standpoint, if the pain was not there, ‘*If the heart were not forced to want and weep, the soul would have lain down content, at ease.*’ This is the problem with us: if we are not shaken in our circumstances, if we are too happy we very easily forget the One. You remember that line in *Savitri* :

*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.* p. 316

We do that all the time. So, unfortunately, at one point the shake-up really becomes necessary. Perhaps it is a short cut to Heaven’s gate.

# *Sri Aurobindo's first major spiritual experience*

*Presentation by Shraddhavan, January 7, 2008*

## **1 : Chronology**

When, last October, I learned that it had been decided that the Centenary of Sri Aurobindo's realisation of the Silent Brahman would be celebrated by all the Sri Aurobindo Centres of Gujarat on the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> of January 2008, I was puzzled.

Of course I had heard of this major realisation of Sri Aurobindo; and I knew that it had happened in Baroda. I had always assumed that it had taken place during Sri Aurobindo's stay in what is now the Sri Aurobindo Nivas, the house he lived in during his stay in Baroda. But Sri Aurobindo left Baroda in 1906 to take up the principalship of the National College in Calcutta. So I wondered why the centenary of this important realisation was happening now, in January 2008?

This question launched me on an interesting research project. Tonight I would like to share with you some of the stages of my exploration, and some of the things I found on the way.

First I turned to Volume 30 of the Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library – the Index and Glossary. There I made my first startling discovery.

In December 1907, Sri Aurobindo was in full political action, meeting nationalist groups and giving speeches. On December 21 he left Calcutta for Surat to attend the Indian National Congress. Most of us who know a little about the major events of Sri Aurobindo's life know that the Surat Congress was a very important point in his political work. Working with some enthusiastic young Nationalists, he managed to disrupt the Congress, which until then had been dominated by so-called "Moderates" who hesitated to demand full Independence for India from British rule. As a result of the activities of those few momentous days at the end of December 1907, the Moderates lost influence in the Nationalist Movement,

and the goal of full Independence became the official policy of the Indian National Congress. Nirodbaran and others have written in detail about the role played by Sri Aurobindo in this major change of policy. I do not want to go into more detail about it here. What surprised me was to learn how closely in time this major stage in his political action coincided with the first major realisation of his spiritual path.

Sri Aurobindo remained in Surat from December 24<sup>th</sup> to the 31<sup>st</sup>, when he left for Baroda – not so very far away. He was going there expressly to meet Vishnu Baskar Lele. In the first week of January 2008 Sri Aurobindo stayed at a friend's home, along with the yogi, and then accompanied him first to Poona and then to Bombay. In Bombay they parted company, Sri Aurobindo returning to Calcutta. They met only once again, a few months later – at which time Lele, says Sri Aurobindo in a letter, “*was alarmed, tried to undo what he had done and told me that it was not the Divine but the devil that had got hold of me.*” (SABCL 26:79)

## **2: Sri Aurobindo's own words about this event**

I turned next to see what Sri Aurobindo himself had said or written on various occasions about this event. In *Letters on Yoga* (SABCL 22-23-24) I found only a few references to it, but one very significant one, which I intend to share with you later. In *On Himself* (SABCL 26) I found many more, some of which we can have a look at now. Here is a passage dictated by Sri Aurobindo:

From 1904 onwards Sri Aurobindo began practising Yoga on his own account, starting with *pranayama* as explained to him by a friend, a disciple of Brahmananda. Afterwards, faced with difficulties, he took help of Lele who was called for the purpose from Gwalior by Barindra – this was after the Surat Congress, in 1908.

SABCL 26:19-20

Sri Aurobindo mentions this point in several of his letters or dictated clarifications : that he first started practicing sadhana in 1904, but that he was not able to make much progress; and that it was Lele who helped him to make the needed breakthrough, in January 1908.

Here is another passage dictated by Sri Aurobindo :

Before he met Lele, Sri Aurobindo had some spiritual experiences, but that was before he knew anything about Yoga or even what Yoga was, – e.g., a vast calm which descended upon him at the moment when he stepped first on Indian soil after his long absence, in fact with his first step on the Apollo Bunder in Bombay: (this calm surrounded him and remained for long months afterwards); the realisation of the vacant Infinite while walking on the ridge of the Takht-i-Suleman in Kashmir; the living presence of Kali in a shrine on the banks of the Narmada; the vision of the Godhead surging up from within when in danger of a carriage accident in Baroda in the first year of his stay, etc. But these were inner experiences coming of themselves and with a sudden unexpectedness, not part of a Sadhana. He started Yoga by himself without a Guru, getting the rule from a friend, a disciple of Brahmananda of Ganga Math; it was confined at first to assiduous practice of *pranayama* (at one time for 6 hours or more a day). There was no conflict or wavering between Yoga and politics; when he started Yoga, he carried on both without any idea of opposition between them. He wanted however to find a Guru. He met a Naga Sannyasi in the course of this search, but did not accept him as Guru, though he was confirmed by him in a belief in Yoga-power when he saw him cure Barin in almost a moment of a violent and clinging hill-fever by merely cutting through a glassful of water crosswise with a knife while he repeated a silent Mantra. Barin drank and was cured. He also met Brahmananda and was greatly impressed by him, but he had no helper or Guru in Yoga till he met Lele, and that was only for a short time.

SABCL 26:50-51

As we have seen already, Sri Aurobindo was in full political action at the time that he met Lele, and it seems that from the outset he made clear to Lele what his aims were :

When I told him [*Lele*] that I wanted to do Yoga but for work, for action, not for Sannyasa and Nirvana, – but after years of spiritual effort I had failed to find the way and it was for that I had asked to meet him ... his first answer was, “It would be easy for you as you are a poet.”

SABCL 26:279

Sri Aurobindo has also repeatedly spoken of the importance and value of this encounter for his development; for example, this dictated clarification:

Sri Aurobindo never took any formal *diksha* from anyone. He started his Sadhana at Baroda in 1904 on his own account after learning from a friend the ordinary formula of *pranayama*. Afterwards the only help he received was from the Maharashtrian Yogi, Vishnu Bhaskar Lele, who instructed him how to reach complete silence of the mind and immobility of the whole consciousness. This Sri Aurobindo was able to achieve in three days with the result of lasting and massive spiritual realisations opening to him the larger ways of Yoga. Lele finally told him to put himself entirely into the hands of the Divine within and move only as he was moved and then he would need no instructions either from Lele himself or anyone else. This henceforward became the whole foundation and principle of Sri Aurobindo’s Sadhana. From that time onward ... and through many years of intensive experience at Pondicherry he underwent no spiritual influence from outside.

SABCL 26:61

In a letter, Sri Aurobindo states:

The Brahman experience came when I was groping for a way, doing no Sadhana at all, making no effort because I didn’t know what effort to make, all having failed. Then in three days I got an experience which most Yogis get only at the end of a long Yoga, got it without wanting or trying

after it, got it to the surprise of Lele who was trying to get me something quite different.

SABCL 26:77-78

Again :

After four years of *pranayama* and other practices on my own, with no other result than an increased health and outflow of energy, some psycho-physical phenomena, a great outflow of poetic creation, a limited power of subtle sight (luminous patterns and figures, etc.) mostly with the waking eye, I had a complete arrest and was at a loss. At this juncture I was induced to meet a man without fame whom I did not know, a Bhakta with a limited mind but with some experience and evocative power. We sat together and I followed with an absolute fidelity what he instructed me to do, not myself in the least understanding where he was leading me or where I was myself going. The first result was a series of tremendously powerful experiences and radical changes of consciousness which he had never intended – for they were Adwaitic and Vedantic and he was against Advaita Vedanta – and which were quite contrary to my own ideas, for they made me see with a stupendous intensity the world as a cinematographic play of vacant forms in the impersonal universality of the Absolute Brahman. The final upshot was that he was made by a Voice within him to hand me over to the Divine within me enjoining an absolute surrender to its will – a principle or rather a seed force to which I kept unswervingly and increasingly till it led me through all the mazes of an incalculable Yogic development bound by no single rule or style or dogma or Shastra to where and what I am now and towards what shall be hereafter.

SABCL 26:78-79

Or again :

In my own case I owe the first decisive turn of my inner life to one who was infinitely inferior to me in intellect, education and capacity and by no means spiritually perfect

or supreme; but, having seen a Power behind him and decided to turn there for help, I gave myself entirely into his hands and followed with an automatic passivity the guidance. He himself was astonished and said to others that he had never met anyone before who could surrender himself so absolutely and without reserve or question to the guidance of the helper. The result was a series of transmuting experiences of such a radical character that he was unable to follow and had to tell me to give myself up in future to the Guide within with the same completeness of surrender as I had shown to the human channel.

SABCL 26:80

What was the method by which this extraordinary result was achieved?  
In one letter, Sri Aurobindo mentions :

It was my great debt to Lele that he showed me this. "Sit in meditation," he said, "but do not think, look only at your mind; you will see thoughts coming into it; before they can enter throw these away from your mind till your mind is capable of entire silence." I had never heard before of thoughts coming visibly into the mind from outside, but I did not think either of questioning the truth or the possibility, I simply sat down and did it. In a moment my mind became silent as a windless air on a high mountain summit and then I saw one thought and then another coming in a concrete way from outside; I flung them away before they could enter and take hold of the brain and in three days I was free. From that moment, in principle, the mental being in me became a free Intelligence, a universal Mind, not limited to the narrow circle of personal thought as a labourer in a thought factory, but a receiver of knowledge from all the hundred realms of being and free to choose what it willed in this vast sight-empire and thought-empire.

SABCL 22-23-24 : 1257

"Sit down," I was told, "look and you will see that your thoughts come into you from outside. Before they enter,

fling them back.” I sat down and looked and saw to my astonishment that it was so; I saw and felt concretely the thought approaching as if to enter through or above the head and was able to push it back concretely before it came inside.

In three days – really in one – my mind became full of an eternal silence – it is still there.

SABCL 26:82-83

And what was the outcome of this silence in the mind? One of the places where Sri Aurobindo expresses his experience in most detail is in a letter he dictated in 1947 to be sent to the British writer Aldous Huxley, in response to a review the latter had written of *The Life Divine*. There Sri Aurobindo states :

After three years of spiritual effort with only minor results he [*Sri Aurobindo*] was shown by a Yogi the way to silence his mind. This he succeeded in doing entirely in two or three days by following the method shown. There was an entire silence of thought and feeling and all the ordinary movements of consciousness except the perception and recognition of things around without any accompanying concept or other reaction. The sense of ego disappeared and the movements of the ordinary life as well as speech and action were carried on by some habitual activity of Prakriti alone which was not felt as belonging to oneself. But the perception which remained saw all things as utterly unreal; this sense of unreality was overwhelming and universal. Only some undefinable Reality was perceived as true which was beyond space and time and unconnected with any cosmic activity, but yet was met wherever one turned. This condition remained unimpaired for several months and even when the sense of unreality disappeared and there was a return to participation in the world-consciousness, the inner peace and freedom which resulted from this realisation remained permanently behind all surface movements and the essence of the realisation itself was not lost. At the same time an experience intervened: something else than himself

took up his dynamic activity and spoke and acted through him but without any personal thought or initiative. What this was remained unknown until Sri Aurobindo came to realise the dynamic side of the Brahman, the Ishwara, and felt himself moved by that in all his Sadhana and action. These realisations and others which followed upon them, such as that of the Self in all and all in the Self and all as the Self, the Divine in all and all in the Divine, are the heights to which Sri Aurobindo refers and to which he says we can always rise; for they presented him no long or obstinate difficulty. The only real difficulty, which took decades of spiritual effort to work out towards completeness, was to apply the spiritual knowledge utterly to the world and to the surface psychological and outer life and to effect its transformation both on the higher levels of Nature and on the ordinary mental, vital and physical levels down to the subconsciousness and the basic Inconscience and up to the supreme Truth-Consciousness or Supermind in which alone the dynamic transformation could be entirely integral and absolute.

4.11.1946

SABCL 26:85-86

Another striking description of the first major spiritual experience is given in another letter :

My first major experience – radical and overwhelming, though not, as it turned out, final and exhaustive – came after and by the exclusion and silencing of all thought – there was, first, what might be called a spiritually substantial or concrete consciousness of stillness and silence, then the awareness of some sole and supreme Reality in whose presence things existed only as forms but forms not at all substantial or real or concrete; but this was all apparent to a spiritual perception and essential and impersonal sense and there was not the least concept or idea of reality or unreality or any other notion, for all concept or idea was hushed or rather entirely absent in the absolute stillness. These things

were known directly through the pure consciousness and not through the mind, so there was no need of concepts or words or names.

SABCL 26:87

In another letter, Sri Aurobindo mentions :

Such a realisation . . . does not usually come at the beginning of a Sadhana or in the first years or for many years. It comes so to a very few; mine came fifteen years after my first pre-yogic experience in London and in the fifth year after I started Yoga. That I consider extraordinarily quick, an express train speed almost, although there may no doubt have been several quicker achievements.

SABCL 26:76-77

I think that this brief overview of what Sri Aurobindo experienced in Baroda in January 2008 might convince us of the value of celebrating the Centenary of this event. For it evidently opened up the way for all the fundamental realisations that became the basis for Sri Aurobindo's development of his own unique yoga – without which none of us would be here today.

Now I would like to close this part of my presentation by reading in full the first letter which I came across in the course of my search – one which perhaps brings the topic closer to each of us, and provides a bridge to the second part of this talk. Sri Aurobindo wrote :

One cannot be a fully developed mental being if one has not a control of the thoughts, is not their observer, judge, master,—the mental Purusha, *manomaya purusa*, *saksi*, *anumanta*, *isvara*. It is no more proper for the mental being to be the tennis-ball of unruly and uncontrollable thoughts than to be a ship in the storm of the desires and passions or a slave of either the inertia or the impulses of the body. It is more difficult because man being primarily a creature of mental Prakriti identifies himself with the movements of his mind and cannot at once dissociate himself and stand free from the swirl and eddies of the mind whirlpool. It is

comparatively easy for him to put a control on his body, at least on a certain part of its movements; it is less easy but still very possible after a struggle to put a mental control on his vital impulsions and desires; but to sit like the Tantric yogi on the river, above the whirlpool of his thoughts, is less facile. Nevertheless, it can be done; all developed mental men, those who get beyond the average, have in one way or other or at least at certain times and for certain purposes to separate the two parts of the mind, the active part which is a factory of thoughts and the quiet masterful part which is at once a Witness and a Will, observing them, judging, rejecting, eliminating, accepting, ordering corrections and changes, the Master in the House of Mind, capable of self-empire, *samrajya*.

The yogi goes still farther; he is not only a master there, but even while in mind in a way, he gets out of it as it were, and stands above or quite back from it and free. For him the image of the factory of thoughts is no longer quite valid; for he sees that thoughts come from outside, from the universal Mind or universal Nature, sometimes formed and distinct, sometimes unformed and then they are given shape somewhere in us. The principal business of our mind is either a response of acceptance or a refusal to these thought-waves (as also vital waves, subtle physical energy waves) or this giving a personal-mental form to thought-stuff (or vital movements) from the enviroing Nature-Force.

It was my great debt to Lele that he showed me this. "Sit in meditation," he said, "but do not think, look only at your mind; you will see thoughts coming into it; before they can enter throw these away from your mind till your mind is capable of entire silence." I had never heard before of thoughts coming visibly into the mind from outside, but I did not think either of questioning the truth or the possibility, I simply sat down and did it. In a moment my mind became silent as a windless air on a high mountain summit and then I saw one thought and then another coming in a concrete way from outside; I flung them away before they could enter

and take hold of the brain and in three days I was free. From that moment, in principle, the mental being in me became a free Intelligence, a universal Mind, not limited to the narrow circle of personal thought as a labourer in a thought factory, but a receiver of knowledge from all the hundred realms of being and free to choose what it willed in this vast sight-empire and thought-empire. I mention this only to emphasise that the possibilities of the mental being are not limited and that it can be the free Witness and Master in its own house. It is not to say that everybody can do it in the way I did it and with the same rapidity of the decisive movement (for, of course, the latter fullest developments of this new untrammelled mental power took time, many years) but a progressive freedom and mastery of one's mind is perfectly within the possibilities of anyone who has the faith and the will to undertake it.

SABCL 22-23-24 : 1257

### **3 : Mental Control**

Something about this letter reminded me strongly of some of the Mother's talks. Indeed she has taken up the topic of Thought Control in addressing many groups, from her pre-Pondicherry days in Paris onwards. But I was specially reminded of her *Commentaries on the Dhammapada*.

After Sri Aurobindo left his body the Mother became more active than ever with the young people who were students of the Ashram school – the institution she wished to develop as the Sri Aurobindo International University Centre, as a memorial to him and as a ground for the continuation of his work. One of the first books she took up to read with them in French, in her classes in the Playground, was a translation of the essential Buddhist text the *Dhammapada*. The first few verses of this scripture deal with the importance of thought-control, not only for spiritual advancement but for simple human happiness. Four main movements are mentioned :

1. Observing one's thoughts – stepping back, separating oneself from one's thoughts in order to be able to see them.
2. Watching over one's thoughts – this means to distinguish between the good and the bad, between thoughts that are useful and those that are harmful, between constructive thoughts that

lead to victory and defeatist thoughts which turn us away from it: the power of discernment.

3. Controlling one's thoughts : Once the enlightened judge of our consciousness has distinguished between useful and harmful thoughts, the inner guard will come and allow to pass only approved thoughts, strictly refusing admission to all undesirable elements. With a commanding gesture the guard will refuse entry to every bad thought and push it back as far as possible. It is this movement of admission and refusal that we call thought-control
4. Having mastery over one's thoughts.

She encouraged her young students to practice these steps towards mental mastery, telling them :

I believe it is a practice to be recommended to everyone: to keep a certain time every day for trying to make the mind quiet, even, still.

I hope you may agree that there is a meaningful connection between these words of the Mother and the letter of Sri Aurobindo with which we began this second stage of our journey. While the total silencing of the mind which can bring the experience of the Silent Brahman is the exceptional achievement of those who are fit to undertake yoga practice, the first steps towards achieving the necessary mental mastery are not only within the reach of all somewhat developed mental beings – being ready to take up such an effort is a mark of full humanity. Let us listen once again to Sri Aurobindo's words :

One cannot be a fully developed mental being if one has not a control of the thoughts, is not their observer, judge, master,—the mental Purusha, *manomaya purusa*, *saksi*, *anumanta*, *isvara*. It is no more proper for the mental being to be the tennis-ball of unruly and uncontrollable thoughts than to be a ship in the storm of the desires and passions or a slave of either the inertia or the impulses of the body.

All developed mental men, those who get beyond the average, have in one way or other or at least at certain times

and for certain purposes to separate the two parts of the mind, the active part which is a factory of thoughts and the quiet masterful part which is at once a Witness and a Will, observing them, judging, rejecting, eliminating, accepting, ordering corrections and changes, the Master in the House of Mind, capable of self-empire, *samrajya*.

A progressive freedom and mastery of one's mind is perfectly within the possibilities of anyone who has the faith and the will to undertake it.

SABCL 22-23-24 : 1257

The first two steps indicated by the Mother in her *Commentaries on the Dhammapada* are steps of witnessing : first observing, then discriminating. The second two steps involve the Will aspect which Sri Aurobindo mentions – first controlling, and finally, by continuous practice of control, attaining complete mastery.

#### **4 : The Realisation of the Silent Self in *Savitri***

Interestingly enough, we find these four stages of mental control described, in a very detailed way, in the part of *Savitri* which seems to give the fullest account of an experience comparable to that which Sri Aurobindo had in Baroda in January 1908 with the help of Vishnu Bhaskar Lele. As a result of being able to follow Lele's instructions, and thus totally silence his mind, Sri Aurobindo had an overwhelming experience :

The realisation of the silent, spaceless and timeless Brahman gained after a complete and abiding stillness of the whole consciousness and attended at first by an overwhelming feeling and perception of the total unreality of the world, ...

SABCL 26:64

This experience of the Silent Brahman, he also sometimes referred to as his 'Nirvana' experience :

Nirvana in my liberated consciousness turned out to be the beginning of my realisation, a first step towards the

complete thing, not the sole true attainment possible or even a culminating finale. It came unasked, unsought for, though quite welcome. I had no least idea about it before, no aspiration towards it, in fact my aspiration was towards just the opposite, spiritual power to help the world and to do my work in it, yet it came—without even a “May I come in” or a “By your leave”. It just happened and settled in as if for all eternity or as if it had been really there always. And then it slowly grew into something not less but greater than its first self.

SABCL 22-23-24 : 50

In Sri Aurobindo’s epic poem *Savitri : a legend and a symbol* this state seems to be referred to in several places. But the most detailed evocation of it is to be found in Canto 6 of Book Seven, the Book of Yoga. The Canto is entitled ‘Nirvana and the All-Negating Absolute’. The second and third sections of this canto show Savitri, following the injunction of a guiding Voice from above, following the four stages of thought control mentioned by the Mother in her *Commentaries on the Dhammapada*, and achieving a state which seems to correspond very closely to that described by Sri Aurobindo in his statements about his first major spiritual experience. This evocation continues on into the 7<sup>th</sup> and last canto of Book Seven, where we see how the overwhelming sense of impersonality and unreality referred to by Sri Aurobindo as the first result of the Nirvana experience gives way, after several transitional developments, to the Discovery of the Cosmic Spirit and the Cosmic Consciousness – the experience which he himself had in Alipore jail, within a year of the first ‘Nirvana’ experience.

The evocation of the experience starts with the second section of Canto 6 of Book Seven, beginning on page 538, with a description of Savitri taking the position of a witness and observing all her inner movements, without any intervention :

*Aloof and standing back detached and calm,  
A witness of the drama of herself,  
A student of her own interior scene,  
She watched the passion and the toil of life*

*And heard in the crowded thoroughfares of mind  
The unceasing tread and passage of her thoughts.  
All she allowed to rise that chose to stir;  
Calling, compelling nought, forbidding nought,  
She left all to the process formed in Time  
And the free initiative of Nature's will.*

Then she turns her attention particularly to 'the birth of thought'. This leads her to the second stage mentioned by the Dhammapada – that of discrimination. This is described on the following pages starting from line 257 on page 539, and continuing up to page 543, line 396. Savitri beholds '*the many births of thought*', and sees too that everything that forms in our surface mind '*is made, not born, a product perishable / Forged in the body's factory by earth-force.*'

*Our greater truth of being lies behind:  
Our consciousness is cosmic and immense,  
But only when we break through Matter's wall  
In that spiritual vastness can we stand  
Where we can live the masters of our world  
And mind is only a means and body a tool.  
For above the birth of body and of thought  
Our spirit's truth lives in the naked self  
And from that height, unbound, surveys the world.*

p. 542-43, l.388-96

It is only that greater truth of ourselves that can really control the lower movements effectively. So in order to achieve her aim Savitri rises up into her higher being:

*Out of the mind she rose to escape its law  
That it might sleep in some deep shadow of self  
Or fall silent in the silence of the Unseen.  
High she attained and stood from Nature free  
And saw creation's life from far above,  
Thence upon all she laid her sovereign will  
To dedicate it to God's timeless calm:*

p. 543, l. 397-403

In this effort of control, four stages are described :

1<sup>st</sup> result

p. 541, lines 404 - 411

*Then all grew tranquil in her being's space,  
Only sometimes small thoughts arose and fell  
Like quiet waves upon a silent sea  
Or ripples passing over a lonely pool  
When a stray stone disturbs its dreaming rest.  
Yet the mind's factory had ceased to work,  
There was no sound of the dynamo's throb,  
There came no call from the still fields of life.*

2<sup>nd</sup> result

p. 541, lines 412-21

*Then even those stirrings rose in her no more;  
Her mind now seemed like a vast empty room  
Or like a peaceful landscape without sound.  
This men call quietude and prize as peace.  
But to her deeper sight all yet was there,  
Effervescing like a chaos under a lid;  
Feelings and thoughts cried out for word and act  
But found no response in the silenced brain:  
All was suppressed but nothing yet expunged;  
At every moment might explosion come.*

3<sup>rd</sup> result.

p. 541-2, lines 422-460

*Then this too paused; the body seemed a stone.  
All now was a wide mighty vacancy,  
But still excluded from eternity's hush;  
For still was far the repose of the Absolute  
And the ocean silence of Infinity.*

*Even now some thoughts could cross her solitude;  
These surged not from the depths or from within  
Cast up from formlessness to seek a form,  
Spoke not the body's need nor voiced life's call.  
These seemed not born nor made in human Time:*

*Children of cosmic Nature from a far world,  
Idea's shapes in complete armour of words  
Posted like travellers in an alien space.  
Out of some far expanse they seemed to come  
As if carried on vast wings like large white sails,  
And with easy access reached the inner ear  
As though they used a natural privileged right  
To the high royal entries of the soul.*

It is the following passage, describing the fourth stage of the controlling process, which seems to correspond most closely with Sri Aurobindo's own description of the method indicated to him by Lele :

“Sit in meditation,” he said, “but do not think, look only at your mind; you will see thoughts coming into it; before they can enter throw these away from your mind till your mind is capable of entire silence.” I had never heard before of thoughts coming visibly into the mind from outside, but I did not think either of questioning the truth or the possibility, I simply sat down and did it. In a moment my mind became silent as a windless air on a high mountain summit and then I saw one thought and then another coming in a concrete way from outside; I flung them away before they could enter and take hold of the brain and in three days I was free.

SABCL 22-23-24 : 1257

This seems to me to suggest that already at that time, ‘sitting in meditation’ meant for Sri Aurobindo applying the first three steps of thought control.

Savitri's experience of the final stage is described in a most beautiful and evocative way:

*Then looking to know whence the intruders came  
She saw a spiritual immensity  
Pervading and encompassing the world-space  
As ether our transparent tangible air,  
And through it sailing tranquilly a thought.*

*As smoothly glides a ship nearing its port,  
Ignorant of embargo and blockade,  
Confident of entrance and the visa's seal,  
It came to the silent city of the brain  
Towards its accustomed and expectant quay,  
But met a barring will, a blow of Force  
And sank vanishing in the immensity.*

*After a long vacant pause another appeared  
And others one by one suddenly emerged,  
Mind's unexpected visitors from the Unseen  
Like far-off sails upon a lonely sea.*

*But soon that commerce failed, none reached mind's coast.  
Then all grew still, nothing moved any more:  
Immobile, self-rapt, timeless, solitary  
A silent spirit pervaded silent Space.*

p.544, lines 441-460

She sees the thoughts coming from outside, maintains her insistence on silence, and soon the thoughts stop coming. As Sri Aurobindo says of his own experience :

... he was able to establish complete silence of the mind, attaining to the experience of the Silent Brahman.

SABCL 30:10

The subsequent steps of the experience, Sri Aurobindo has outlined in another letter :

1. There was an entire silence of thought and feeling and all the ordinary movements of consciousness except the perception and recognition of things around without any accompanying concept or other reaction.
2. The sense of ego disappeared and the movements of the ordinary life as well as speech and action were carried on by some habitual activity of Prakriti alone which was not felt as belonging to oneself.

3. But the perception which remained saw all things as utterly unreal; this sense of unreality was overwhelming and universal.
4. Only some undefinable Reality was perceived as true which was beyond space and time and unconnected with any cosmic activity, but yet was met wherever one turned.
5. This condition remained unimpaired for several months and even when the sense of unreality disappeared and there was a return to participation in the world-consciousness, the inner peace and freedom which resulted from this realisation remained permanently behind all surface movements and the essence of the realisation itself was not lost.
6. At the same time an experience intervened: something else than himself took up his dynamic activity and spoke and acted through him but without any personal thought or initiative.
7. What this was remained unknown until Sri Aurobindo came to realise the dynamic side of the Brahman, the Ishwara and felt himself moved by that in all his Sadhana and action.

4.11.1946

SABCL 26:85-86

Each of these stages too can be found described in the following section of Canto 6, and the first section of Canto 7 of Book Seven.

**1a: An entire silence of the thought and all ordinary movements of consciousness :** p. 545, lines 461-486

*In that absolute stillness bare and formidable ...  
 Even the nude sense of self grew pale and thin:  
 Impersonal, signless, featureless, void of forms  
 A blank pure consciousness had replaced the mind. ...  
 This was self-seeing; in that intolerant hush  
 No notion and no concept could take shape,  
 There was no sense to frame the figure of things,  
 A sheer self-sight was there, no thought arose.  
 Emotion slept deep down in the still heart*

*Or lay buried in a cemetery of peace:  
All feelings seemed quiescent, calm or dead,  
As if the heart-strings rent could work no more  
And joy and grief could never rise again.  
The heart beat on with an unconscious rhythm  
But no response came from it and no cry.  
Vain was the provocation of events;  
Nothing within answered an outside touch,  
No nerve was stirred and no reaction rose.*

**1b: The perception and recognition of things around without any accompanying concept or other reaction :** p. 546, 1.502-07

*A pure perception was the only power  
That stood behind her action and her sight.  
If that retired, all objects would be extinct,  
Her private universe would cease to be,  
The house she had built with bricks of thought and sense  
In the beginning after the birth of Space.*

**2: The persistence of the action of Prakriti :** p. 545 1.487-501

*Yet still her body saw and moved and spoke;  
It understood without the aid of thought,  
It said whatever needed to be said,  
It did whatever needed to be done.  
There was no person there behind the act,  
No mind that chose or passed the fitting word:  
All wrought like an unerring apt machine.  
As if continuing old habitual turns,  
And pushed by an old unexhausted force  
The engine did the work for which it was made:*

**3: The overwhelming sense of Unreality :** p. 546-47, 1.510-543

*This seeing was identical with the seen;  
It knew without knowledge all that could be known,  
It saw impartially the world go by,  
But in the same supine unmoving glance  
Saw too its abysmal unreality. ...  
  
All seemed a brilliant shadow of itself,  
A cosmic film of scenes and images:*

*The enduring mass and outline of the hills  
Was a design sketched on a silent mind  
And held to a tremulous false solidity  
By constant beats of visionary sight.*

*The forest with its emerald multitudes  
Clothed with its show of hues vague empty Space,  
A painting's colours hiding a surface void  
That flickered upon dissolution's edge;  
The blue heavens, an illusion of the eyes,  
Roofed in the mind's illusion of a world.*

*The men who walked beneath an unreal sky  
Seemed mobile puppets out of cardboard cut  
And pushed by unseen hands across the soil  
Or moving pictures upon Fancy's film:  
There was no soul within, no power of life.  
The brain's vibrations that appear like thought,  
The nerve's brief answer to each contact's knock,  
The heart's quiverings felt as joy and grief and love  
Were twitchings of the body, their seeming self,  
That body forged from atoms and from gas  
A manufactured lie of Maya's make,  
Its life a dream seen by the sleeping Void.*

*The animals lone or trooping through the glades  
Fled like a passing vision of beauty and grace  
Imagined by some all-creating Eye.*

**4: Omnipresent unknowable Reality : p.547, 1.544-552 and ff.**

*Yet something was there behind the fading scene;  
Wherever she turned, at whatsoever she looked,  
It was perceived, yet hid from mind and sight.  
The One only real shut itself from Space  
And stood aloof from the idea of Time.  
Its truth escaped from shape and line and hue.  
All else grew unsubstantial, self-annulled,  
This only everlasting seemed and true,  
Yet nowhere dwelt, it was outside the hours.*

**5: Liberation** : p. 548 l.585-86, 591-595

*It cancelled the convincing cheat of self;  
A truth in nothingness was its mighty clue. ...*

*A formless liberation came on her.  
Once sepulchred alive in brain and flesh  
She had risen up from body, mind and life;  
She was no more a Person in a world,  
She had escaped into infinity.*

**6 : Something else than himself took up his dynamic activity  
and spoke and acted through him but without any personal  
thought or initiative** : p.553, l.70-93

*Something unknown, unreached, inscrutable  
Sent down the messages of its bodiless Light,  
Cast lightning flashes of a thought not ours  
Crossing the immobile silence of her mind:  
In its might of irresponsible sovereignty  
It seized on speech to give those flamings shape,  
Made beat the heart of wisdom in a word  
And spoke immortal things through mortal lips.  
Or, listening to the sages of the woods,  
In question and in answer broke from her  
High strange revealings impossible to men,  
Something or someone secret and remote  
Took hold of her body for his mystic use,  
Her mouth was seized to channel ineffable truths,  
Knowledge unthinkable found an utterance.*

**7: What this was remained unknown until the realisation of the  
dynamic side of the Brahman** : p. 554, l.130-162 ff.

*All was, all lived; she felt all being one;  
The world of unreality ceased to be:  
There was no more a universe built by mind,  
Convicted as a structure or a sign;  
A spirit, a being saw created things  
And cast itself into unnumbered forms*

*And was what it saw and made; all now became  
An evidence of one stupendous truth,  
A Truth in which negation had no place,  
A being and a living consciousness,  
A stark and absolute Reality. ...*

*It was her self, it was the self of all,  
It was the reality of existing things,  
It was the consciousness of all that lived  
And felt and saw; it was Timelessness and Time,  
It was the Bliss of formlessness and form.  
It was all Love and the one Beloved's arms,  
It was sight and thought in one all-seeing Mind,  
It was joy of Being on the peaks of God.*

*An individual, one with cosmic self  
In the heart of the Transcendent's miracle  
And the secret of World-personality  
Was the creator and the lord of all. ...*

*All was one single immense reality,  
All its innumerable phenomenon.  
Her spirit saw the world as living God;  
It saw the One and knew that all was He.*

## **5. Concluding remarks**

I would like to close our exploration with another remarkable statement by Sri Aurobindo himself.

*[By the time that he left Calcutta for Chandernagore in February 1910, that is to say only two years after the experience in Baroda] Sri Aurobindo had already realised in full two of the four great realisations on which his Yoga and his spiritual philosophy are founded. The first he had gained while meditating with the Maharashtrian Yogi Vishnu Baskar Lele at Baroda in January 1908; it was the realisation of the silent, spaceless and timeless Brahman gained after a complete and abiding stillness of the whole consciousness and attended at first by an overwhelming*

feeling and perception of the total unreality of the world, though this feeling disappeared after his second realisation which was that of the cosmic consciousness and of the Divine as all beings and all that is, which happened in the Alipore jail and of which he has spoken in his speech at Uttarpara. To the other two realisations, that of the supreme Reality with the static and dynamic Brahman as its two aspects and that of the higher planes of consciousness leading to the Supermind, he was already on his way in his meditations in the Alipore jail.

SABCL 26:64

How amazing, that only two years after that fundamental first realisation achieved with the unwitting help of Vishnu Baskar Lele, Sri Aurobindo had found his way on to the foundations of his unique Purna Yoga and all his subsequent work! As he says in another letter:

These realisations and others which followed upon them presented ... no long or obstinate difficulty. The only real difficulty which took decades of spiritual effort to work out towards completeness was to apply the spiritual knowledge utterly to the world and to the surface psychological and outer life and to effect its transformation both on the higher levels of Nature and on the ordinary mental, vital and physical levels down to the subconsciousness and the basic Inconscience and up to the supreme Truth-Consciousness or Supermind in which alone the dynamic transformation could be entirely integral and absolute.

4.11.1946

SABCL 26:85-86

This was the work which occupied the rest of his life in the physical body, and which is still continuing ... and as a result of which all of us are here together today, trying to grasp just a little of the significance of that momentous event which took place in Baroda, a hundred years ago. All gratitude to Sri Aurobindo!

## *Vedic imagery in Savitri (Part 2)*

# ***The Symbol of Dawn***

*by Vladimir Iatsenko*

*(Continued from issue no. 26)*

According to Sri Aurobindo, the Myth of Dawn is one of the foundation stones of the Vedic Vision. Dawn, according to the Veda, comes from the transcendental realms bringing into the terrestrial life of man the Light of the Supreme, indicating to him his goal, and thus leading him out of Night, her twin sister (*naktoshasau*), which on the other hand helps him to accommodate a new light into the depth of his being: mind, vital and body. The importance of the Dawn lies in her function of intrusion into the realms of Darkness, bringing with her the Immortal Light into our mortality.

*Above mind's twilight and life's star-led night  
There gleamed the dawn of a spiritual day.<sup>1</sup>*

*uṣo bhadrebhīr ā gahi divāścid rocanād adhi /<sup>2</sup>*

*“O Dawn, come with your blessings, from beyond the shining Heaven!*

*idam śreṣṭham jyotiṣām jyotir āgāc citraḥ praketo ajaniṣṭa vibhvā  
“The best light of all lights has come. Bright Vision is born widely spreading.”<sup>3</sup>*

It is the Dawn who creates light,<sup>4</sup> clears up the original darkness, *abhva*, and heals all things distorted by it, restoring the presence of the Divinity in the lower hemisphere.

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1 *Savitri*, p.26

2 RV 1.49.1

3 RV 1.113.1

4 RV 1.48.8

*upa mā pepiśat tamaḥ / kṛṣṇam vyaktam asthita / uṣa ṛneva yātaya*  
“The darkness (tamaḥ) painting thick approached me, dark and palpable, O Dawn, clear it away, like debts!”<sup>5</sup>

*pratyarcī ruśad asyā adarśi vi tiṣṭhate bādgate kṛṣṇam abhvam!*<sup>6</sup>  
“Her shining flame appeared removing and destroying black non-being!”

*Into being's gap scooped out as empty Space  
In which she had filled the place of absent God,  
There poured a wide intimate and blissful Dawn;  
Healed were all things that Time's torn heart had made  
And sorrow could live no more in Nature's breast:  
Division ceased to be, for God was there.  
The soul lit the conscious body with its ray,  
Matter and spirit mingled and were one.*<sup>7</sup>

Therefore she is the symbol of the Divine Mother in the Veda.  
“Usha as the mother of the cows can only be a form or power of this supreme Light, of this supreme Consciousness, of Aditi. And in fact, we do find her so described in I.113.19, *mātā devānām aditer anīkam* “**Mother of the gods, form (or, power) of Aditi**” says Sri Aurobindo in *The Secret of the Veda*.<sup>8</sup>

She is always ancient and young at the same time; she is Immortal:  
*purāṇī devi yuvatīḥ ... uṣo devy amartyā*<sup>9</sup>

She is a Mistress of the Universe, free in her movement:  
*bhuvanasya patnī*<sup>10</sup> *uṣā yāti svasarasya patnī*<sup>11</sup>

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5 RV 10.126.7

6 RV 1.92.5

7 *Savitri*, p. 232

8 *The Secret of the Veda*, CWSA 15:131. Cf also the Mother's explanation in *About Savitri* Part 1, Pondicherry 1972.

9 RV 3.61.1-2

10 RV 7.75.4

11 RV 3.61.4

Sri Aurobindo in his *Savitri* is often using this rich imagery of the Dawn, defining her as the Divine Mother. When the Lord speaks to Savitri, after she has defeated Death, tempting her to withdraw from her demands on transformation of earthly life, He calls her the World Mother and the Dawn:

***O too compassionate and eager Dawn,  
Leave to the circling aeons' tardy pace  
And to the working of the unconscious Will,  
Leave to its imperfect light the earthly race:  
All shall be done by the long act of Time. ...  
Be one with the infinity of my power:  
For thou art the World-Mother and the Bride.***<sup>12</sup>

*But Savitri answered to the radiant God:  
"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,  
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."*<sup>13</sup>

These are the three main actions of the Divine Mother which have their correspondences with the Dawn in the Veda:

- (1) "to raise the world to God",
- (2) "to bring God down to the world", and
- (3) "to change the earthly life to life divine".

These three tasks are differently rendered in the Veda using appropriate symbolism of that time and system of knowledge. Let us have a brief look. Kutsa Angirasa in his hymn to Usha depicts similarly the three actions of the Dawn.

*uṣo yad agnim samidhe cakārtha vi yad āvaś cakṣasā sūryasya /*

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12 *Savitri* p.690.

13 *Savitri* p. 692

*yanmānuṣān yakṣyamāṇān ajīgastad deveṣu cakṛṣe bhadram apnaḥ*  
“O Dawn, by kindling the Fire and opening wide (the world above)  
by the Eye of the Sun, and by awakening men, who are eager to grow  
in their consciousness (who want to participate in the Sacrifice for the  
Divine), by that you have created a supreme good in the gods!”<sup>14</sup>

From the point of view of Vedic vision, it is basically all that the Divine Mother should have done: (1) to kindle the Fire in the lower hemisphere which is aspiring and rising to the greater realization of Consciousness, (2) to create a wide vision of the Sun from above for the Supreme to descend, and (3) to awaken those who want to participate in this creation and progress, seeking their growth in light within the darkness: the Sacrifice, who themselves want to become the carriers of the Divine Consciousness in the material body.

There is another significant passage of Vasishtha, depicting the action of the Dawn in the symbols of the Sacrifice:

*ajījanan sūryam yajñam agnim apācīnam tamo agād ajuṣṭam*  
“You (Dawns) have created Sun, Yajna, Fire, (and) away the unwanted  
darkness went.”<sup>15</sup>

These three Surya, Yajna (=Vayu) and Agni are very important for the understanding of whole Vedic Vision. There are many related texts explaining the relation of these three.

The Aitareya Brahmana explains that Yajna consists of Vac, Speech, belonging to the Earth of which Agni is the essence, and Manas, Mind, belonging to the Heaven, of which Surya is the essence,<sup>16</sup> and by this Speech and Mind, (= earth and heaven), the space in between: Prana, Life-Energy is created, which belongs to Antariksha, the middle world, of which Vayu is the essence, therefore Vayu Pavamana is Yajna.<sup>17</sup>

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14 RV 1.113.9

15 RV 7.78.3

16 ChUp. 4.17.1

17 AitBr 25, 8-9

This general scheme of the Vedic ritual is a key to the symbolism of the Sacrifice. Agni, the lower pole, and Surya, the upper pole, create the energetic field in between: Vayu, or the Yajna. Moreover Yajna is the only way to connect Agni and Surya, Earth and Heaven.

There is another interesting passage in the Taittiriya Aranyaka explaining the relation of these three. It starts with an exclamation:

*āpam āpām apah sarvāḥ asmād asmād ito 'mutaḥ /  
agnir vāyus ca sūryas ca saha sañcaskara-rddhiyā*

*“I have gathered all nourishing powers of Consciousness, from here, from there and from the beyond; Agni and Vayu and Surya I have combined for the Growth!”<sup>18</sup>*

This union of all the levels of existence from below and from above was seen as a key to the concept of sacrifice, which is to be done for the Universal and the Individual Growth, the condition of which is a simultaneous and united existence with Agni, Vayu and Surya. When the Rishi says that Usha has created Agni, Yajna and Surya, then this concept is rising in mind.

The Aprisukta hymns also mention two hotars after the verses dedicated to the Night and Dawn. These two hotars are considered by Sayanacharya to be Agni and Surya as two representatives of Light in the night and in the light, earth and heaven.

*daivyā hotārā prathamā viduṣṭara rju yakṣataḥ samṛcā vapuṣṭarā /  
devān yajantāv ṛtuthā samañjato nābhā pṛthivyā adhi sānuṣu triṣu*

*“Two Prime Divine Hotars, the best in Knowledge, most beautiful in their shapes, they sacrifice straight with Hymn. They sacrifice to the Gods, arranging all according to the proper time and space, one is in the navel of the Earth and the other is [in the sky] above the three hills.”<sup>19</sup>*

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18 Taittiriya Aranyaka 1.1.1,2

19 RV 2.3.5

## The Dawn and Angirasa Rishis.

It is interesting to mention here that the Dawn is often called in the Veda *aṅgirastamā*, the best of *Angirasa Rishis*,<sup>20</sup> also *Indratama*, the best of Indra's qualities, who broke the rock of Vala and freed the herds of light together with other Powers. Sri Aurobindo explains this imagery in the Secret of the Veda that the Angirasa Rishis are the "sons of Agni, the original Angiras, forces of the symbolic Light and Flame, and even to coalesce into a single seven-mouthed Angiras with his nine and his ten rays of the Light, *navagve angire dashagve saptasye*, on and by whom the Dawn breaks out with all her joy and opulence."<sup>21</sup>

There are many passages in the Veda where the light of the Dawn is identified with the light of Angirasa Rishis, for both of them follow the same path of the Sacrifice:

*kuvit sa devīḥ sanayo navo vā yāmo babhūyād uṣaso vo adya  
yenā navagve angire daśagve saptāsye revatī revad ūṣa*

*"O goddesses, should it be your ancient or new path today, by which, O rich ones, the riches were revealed in Angiras, Navagvas, Dashagvas and Saptasya?"*<sup>22</sup>

*satyā satyebhir mahatī mahadbhir devī devebhir yajatā yajatraiḥ  
rujad ḍṛḥāni dadad usriyāṇām prati gāva uṣasam vāvaśanta*

*"The True with true ones, the Great with great ones, the Goddess with Gods, the Worthy of Sacrifice with those who are most worthy of Sacrifice, (she) broke the hard places of the cows, to the Dawn the kine bellow!"*<sup>23</sup>

She is thus a Creatrix of a new heaven: Svar, the emerging Supramental World:

*svaṛ janantī ... antād divaḥ papratha ā prithivyāḥ*

*"She is bringing to birth the Supreme Heaven!*

*She has spread over Heaven and Earth!"*<sup>24</sup>

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20 RV 7.75.1

21 CWSA 15 : 163

22 RV 4.51.4

23 RV 7.75.7

24 RV 3.61.4

The Creator Savitar, the God of Sun, the symbol of Supramental manifestation, by propelling the dawns and by following their paths into the lower hemisphere enters it:

*ṛtasya budhna uṣasām iṣaṇyan  
vṛṣā mahī rodasī ā viveśa*

*“In the foundation of the Truth hastening the Dawns,  
the Bull (Savitar) entered the great firmaments: Heaven and  
Earth!”<sup>25</sup>*

Then Agni is approaching her, begging for the treasure:

*āyātīm agna uṣasam vibhātīm vāmam eṣi **draviṇam** bhikṣamānaḥ  
“The Dawn, shining wide, O Agni, you approach, begging her for  
the substance full of delight!”<sup>26</sup>*

In relation to men, who are, according to the Veda, the offspring of the Angirasa Rishis or Pitris, Forefathers, the Dawn is called *mānuṣī*, “of the nature of man”.<sup>27</sup> The dawn creates the path for man to follow: she is enlightening his inner journey:

*atāriṣma tamasas pāram asyoṣā ucchantī vayunā kṛṇoti/  
“We have crossed to the other side of darkness, and the Dawn is  
shining and making the paths (clear for us)!”<sup>28</sup>*

*uṣo yad adya bhānunā vi dvārāvṛṇavo divaḥ/  
“O Dawn, today with your light you have opened wide the gates of  
heaven (for us)!”<sup>29</sup>*

*Often a lustrous inner dawn shall come  
Lighting the chambers of the slumbering mind;  
A sudden bliss shall run through every limb*

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25 RV 3.61.7

26 RV 3.61.6, *vāmam draviṇam* can be interpreted in several ways, *draviṇam* is something substantial, it can be translated as valuable thing: treasure, etc. *vāmam* indicates pleasure, delight.

27 RV 7.75.2

28 RV 1.92.6

29 RV 1.92.15

*And Nature with a mightier Presence fill.*<sup>30</sup>

In relation to Panis, the robbers of the spiritual light, it is said that they should continue to sleep when the Dawn comes, for otherwise they would steal the treasures and lock them in the cave.<sup>31</sup>

*ucchantīr adya citayanta bhojān...*

*acitre antaḥ paṇayaḥ sasantv abudhyamānās tamaso vimadhye*

*“The Shining ones today showed (us) the Delight*

*Let the Panis sleep inside the lightless place, they shouldn't wake  
from within the Darkness!”*<sup>32</sup>

The fight between the lords of darkness and of light constitutes the very meaning of the Vedic conquest of Truth and thus of Immortality. It is with the help of the Dawn that the Angirasa Rishis break the cave of Darkness and free the hidden light, the steeds and herds of the Dawn, all those treasures which were stolen from Her and stored in the Darkness over the whole time from the beginning of Creation.

*(To be continued)*

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30 *Savitri* p.710

31 Sri Aurobindo in *The Secret of the Veda* (p.233) explains the nature of Panis: “The word paṇi means dealer, trafficker, from paṇ (also pan, (Sayana takes *pan* in Veda—to praise, but in one place he admits the sense of *vyavahāra*, dealing. Action seems to me to be its sense in most passages. From *paṇ* in the sense of action we have the earlier names of the organs of action, *pāṇi*, hand, *pāda* foot or hoof, Lat. *penis*, cf. also *pāyu*.) cf. Tamil *paṇ*, Greek *ponos*, labour) and we may perhaps regard the Panis as the powers that preside over those ordinary unillumined sense-activities of life whose immediate root is in the dark subconscious physical being and not in the divine mind.”

32 RV 4.51.3

# *News of Savitri Bhavan*

(November 2007 – March 2008)

## **Regular Activities**

During this period our Regular Activities continued as usual, as follows:

Sunday Morning	10:30 –12:00 pm	<i>Savitri</i> Study Circle
Evening	5:00 – 6:00 pm	<b>Foundations of Indian Culture</b> , led by Kittu Reddy
Monday & Tuesday	3:00 – 4:00 pm	Cultivating Concentration, led by Jai Singh
Tuesday	6:00 – 7:30 pm	<b>OM Choir</b>
Thursday	4:00 – 5:00 pm	The English of <i>Savitri</i> , led by Shraddhavan
Friday	5:00 – 6:30 pm	<i>The Synthesis of Yoga</i> , led by Sraddhalu

In addition a new *Savitri*-study programme in Tamil has been taking place on Tuesdays, 5–6pm, since August 2007, led by Mr. Sudarshan and Mrs Bhuvanandari, formerly of the Sri Aurobindo Society Centre in Madurai and now residing in Auroville. This programme is much appreciated by a faithful group of regular attenders.

In January 2008 the programme of the Mother's recorded talks was resumed, also on Tuesday afternoons, with recordings of the Mother's *Commentaries on the Dhammapada*. She took up study of this important Buddhist text with the young people of the Ashram in the early 1950s, and we are fortunate that recordings are available of her luminous comments. The talks were of course given in French. Leaflets providing the transcriptions in French and their translations into English are made available for each talk.

Other new regular courses are being given by Vladimir, on the Upanishads in the light of Sri Aurobindo's writings, and by Nishtha on Sanskrit grammar.

All readers of *Invocation* are welcome to participate in all Savitri Bhavan activities, if they happen to be in the area.

## New publications

Recently we were able to publish Tamil and French translations of a talk by Sraddhalu Ranade entitled “Auroville, Human Unity and the Future of Mankind”. A limited number of copies are available free on request.

## Special Events

Special Events that occurred during this period are shown in the calendar below:

November – December 2007 : Exhibition of *Meditations on Savitri* paintings by Huta, Book Nine ‘The Book of Eternal Night’ and Book Ten ‘The Book of the Double Twilight’.

November 11<sup>th</sup> : ‘Remembering our Sweet Mother’ – Francois Gautier, Chris Grey and others shared their memories.

November 18<sup>th</sup> : ‘About Savitri’ – a 35-minute film prepared by Peter S. on a selection of passages from *Savitri* read and commented on by the Mother, accompanied by paintings of Huta inspired by the Mother’s comments

November 22<sup>nd</sup> : ‘The Challenge of Death and Conquest of Immortality’ – talk by Dr. Alok Pandey; an edited transcript appears in this issue.



*Exhibition ‘Mother and Auroville’ in celebration of Auroville’s 40<sup>th</sup> birthday*

- January 5<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> 2008 : Exhibition ‘The Art of Kirikane’ showing the work of the late Sayoko Eri, one of Japan’s national ‘living treasures’ and mother of Aurovilian Jyoti Eri: exquisite traditional craftsmanship applied in a modern way.
- January 7<sup>th</sup> : ‘Sri Aurobindo’s first major spiritual experience’ – talk by Shraddhavan; text appears in this issue.
- February 9<sup>th</sup> – March 4<sup>th</sup> : Exhibition ‘Mother and Auroville’, organised by Loretta in celebration of Auroville’s 40<sup>th</sup> birthday.
- February 18<sup>th</sup> : A musical event in the moonlight – ‘Eight songs from *Savitri*’ composed and recorded by Hans Vas of the Netherlands.
- February 21<sup>st</sup> : ‘Mother’s Darshan’ – a 27-minute film made from Darshan photos taken between November 1967 and February 1973 by Sudha Sundaram was shown outside under the full moon.  
Later in the evening the new statue of Sri Aurobindo, was brought to Savitri Bhavan from Pondicherry and installed outside the main entrance, in the presence of a joyful gathering of Aurovilians and Ashramites.
- February 24<sup>th</sup> : ‘Srinvantu vishve amritasya putra’ – a musical offering for Auroville’s 40<sup>th</sup> birthday by an ensemble from the Ashram, led by Ratna Chakravarti and Suresh De.



*‘Srinvantu vishve amritasya putra’*

- February 28<sup>th</sup> : *Savitri* reading in front of Sri Aurobindo's statue, led by Manoj Das Gupta, Managing Trustee of the Ashram, Jhumur Bhattacharya of the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education and other friends from the Ashram.
- February 29<sup>th</sup> : Collective concentration in front of Sri Aurobindo's statue, followed by a first tour of the new wing, led by architect Helmut.
- March 30<sup>th</sup> : Dedication of Sri Aurobindo statue and inauguration of new wing by Dr. Karan Singh, Chairman, Auroville Foundation.

### **Statue of Sri Aurobindo**

The last time that Dr. Karan Singh was in Auroville, at the end of September 2007, he chose the location for installation of a large bronze statue of Sri Aurobindo, at the Main Entrance of Savitri Bhavan. The statue, like similar ones now standing in the Parliament Building in New Delhi, and in Sri Aurobindo's birthplace in Kolkata, was prepared by a team of artist-craftsmen under the direction of Lalit Verma of Pondicherry. The beautiful statue was moved to Auroville under the



*Dr. Karan Singh garlanding the statue of Sri Aurobindo on March 30, 2008*

auspicious rays of Guru Purnima, on the Mother's birthday February 21<sup>st</sup>, 2008. Sri Aurobindo's presence amongst us in this new form is deeply moving, and was celebrated on Auroville's birthday, February 28<sup>th</sup> by a visit of a small group from the Ashram, including Managing Trustee Manoj Das Gupta accompanied by Jhumur Bhattacharya and others. We gathered under the trees in front of the statue for reading passages from *Savitri* for half an hour. Later our guests enjoyed visiting the special exhibition prepared for Auroville's 40<sup>th</sup> birthday, in the main building. This was a deeply moving and happy occasion for all. A photograph of the statue appears as the frontispiece of this issue of *Invocation*.

### **Construction**

During this period too, the new wing of Savitri Bhavan has been nearing completion, financed by a Grant from the Government of India, Ministry of Human Resources, under the SAIIR Development Scheme. Chairman of the Auroville Foundation, Dr. Karan Singh, performed the official inauguration on the morning of Sunday March 30, 2008, as well as dedicating the statue.



*Dr. Karan Singh viewing a display of Huta's Savitri paintings on March 30<sup>th</sup>*

## *The Dream of 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.

## **HOW TO SUPPORT THE WORK OF SAVITRI BHAVAN**

**Savitri Bhavan is entirely dependent on donations and financial help from all well-wishers is most welcome. Please consider in what way you can help the Dream of Savitri Bhavan to become a reality**

Please note that from October 1, 2006 onwards all cheques or drafts should be made payable to

### **Auroville Unity Fund (SAIER)**

They may be sent to Savitri Bhavan at the address below.

If you live abroad and would like to send your offering by SWIFT Transfer, please note the following new code :

**SWIFT Code : SBININBB474**

**State Bank of India, Branch Code 03160**

**Auroville International Township Branch**

**Kuilapalayam, Auroville - 605101 INDIA**

**Auroville Unity Fund Foreign Account No. 10237876508**

**Purpose "SAVITRI BHAVAN"**

**For all correspondence, please contact :**

Savitri Bhavan

Auroville 605 101

Tamil Nadu, INDIA

e-mail : [savitribhavan@auroville.org.in](mailto:savitribhavan@auroville.org.in)

[www.auroville.org/education/edu\\_centres/savitribhavan\\_main.htm](http://www.auroville.org/education/edu_centres/savitribhavan_main.htm)

*Savitri*  
*is a Mantra*  
*for the transformation*  
*of the world*

The Mother