

# Invocation

*Savitri*

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B H A V A N

*Study notes No. 33*

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in Auroville. All correspondence may be addressed to:*

**SAVITRI BHAVAN  
AUROVILLE 605101, TN  
INDIA**

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

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Lord, this morning Thou hast given me the assurance that Thou wouldst stay with us until Thy work is achieved, not only as a consciousness which guides and illumines but also as a dynamic Presence in action. In unmistakable terms Thou hast promised that all of Thyself would remain here and not leave the earth atmosphere until earth is transformed. Grant that we may be worthy of this marvellous Presence and that henceforth everything in us be concentrated on the one will to be more and more perfectly consecrated to the fulfilment of Thy sublime Work.

*The Mother*

*7 December 1950*



# Savitri *Book Two, Cantos 10 and 11*

By Dr. Alok Pandey

*Dr. Alok Pandey conducted his Savitri Study Camp at the Sri Aurobindo Society Beach Office in Pondicherry from 16<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> August 2010. The concluding session, by time-honoured tradition, was held at Savitri Bhavan. The Grace of abundant rain prevented us from holding the event in the amphitheatre, instead it took place in the Hall. Dr. Pandey gave a fascinating summary of two cantos in Book Two of Savitri, in which Sri Aurobindo reveals the nature of different levels of Mind.*

We are grateful to Sri Aurobindo for giving us *Savitri*. If we really go back a few decades, to those moments when we hardly had the privilege of this kind of Light, while the world was full of the noxious fumes emanating from the Second World War, with all the grumblings and complainings of us human beings, Sri Aurobindo was busy pouring the perfume of another world onto this one. This perfume would one day spread far and wide and fill our hearts and minds and lives. This is the gift of *Savitri*.

We are also grateful for this wonderful exhibition<sup>1</sup>. As one came inside – of course this is the kind of feeling one shares at Savitri Bhavan – the spontaneous state that came about was that a deep inner truth becomes concrete and real. That deep inner truth is that the Divine is not only within us but surrounding us, enveloping us. Here it is as if we are surrounded, most physically, most concretely, by Their Atmosphere; and He is not only surrounding us but, beyond the limited arc of our vision, standing majestically. This is the wonderful atmosphere that we find in Savitri Bhavan. Thanks to Shraddhavan and all the team for this. It is Her Grace.

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<sup>1</sup> ‘*Laying Down the Foundation*’, an exhibition prepared by the Sri Aurobindo Archives to mark the Centenary of Sri Aurobindo’s arrival in Pondicherry. It was on display in Savitri Bhavan during August 2010.

We shall start with a small Prayer of the Mother where a deep profound Truth has been stated so simply and so briefly – this is the beauty of the Mother’s writings. This is her prayer from January 3rd, 1914:

*It is always good to look within oneself from time to time and see that one is nothing and can do nothing, but afterwards one must turn one’s eyes to Thee, knowing that Thou art all and Thou canst do all.*

Then comes the profound mantra, the most profound formula of life that can ever be uttered – and yet in such simple words, so much so that we almost take it for granted:

*Thou art the life of our life  
and the light of our being,  
Thou art the master of our destinies.*

Behind this limited cramped-up life there stands a greater life, and behind this greater life stands a diviner life, waiting for its hour. Behind this limited mind with all its conceptions and cognitions and opinions, behind its limitations and littleness there stands a greater mind, waiting for its hour; and beyond and behind this greater mind stands That of which both are simply a projection, a brilliant reflection or a dull shadow. This is what we have been covering during the last week, the journey from the Little Mind, through the Greater Mind.

It is interesting because we stand precisely at this juncture of our evolutionary journey. Evolution has carried us so far, and now it is going to carry us further, into those domains which have so far been concealed to man. They have acted from time to time, in some rare moments of some human beings whom we know by various names as Saints and Sages and Heroes and Vibhutis, the great ones who have led the way. This Greater Mind has acted through them and in them, from time to time. But a still greater and a larger light has remained hidden within, waiting for its hour. Sri Aurobindo comes at precisely this evolutionary juncture when a radical change has to take place, from the Little to the Greater and from the Greater, a still greater leap into the very Highest.

The great mystery of life is not death – often we think that death is a mystery; the greatest mystery of life is birth, and seen from both poles it appears a mystery. When we are at this end, when we do

not know what is behind these appearances and this facade called the universe, then it appears mysterious that there is anything in this universe : out of nothing, all this is emerging. The beauty is that if we cross over to the other side, the mystery becomes deeper, because then we wonder, how has That which is so beautiful, so delightful, so wonderful, the Glory of Glories, become this Something? This is the great mystery and it is given to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother to give us the link between these two poles. The infinite becomes the infinitesimal, and the infinitesimal, through a process of successive transmutations, must recover its lost infinity, without annulling the finite. This is the great challenge, the great puzzle, which the Divine has taken upon himself.

It is easy to recover infinity by annulling the finite, and it has been done. Traditional yogas have done it. From any point of finiteness or finite experience which the mind provides, we can jump into the infinite and completely annul this. There are ways of annulling it. It is like cutting the knot, rather than solving the problem. But Sri Aurobindo brings us another solution: that this finite must be more and more transmuted, until it recovers its infinity but without losing the finite. This is something very interesting, it makes the play really very interesting if we take it as a challenge and a puzzle – as the Mother says ‘I invite you to the great adventure. There are people who love adventure.’ It is really a very fascinating puzzle and only the Divine can solve this puzzle, because it is not at all easy; even to conceive of it is so difficult. And yet she has taken upon Herself to do it, to do it for Earth, to do it for the Divine; for this is the very purpose of Creation.

It is this process of transmutation, this successive transmutation of the infinitesimal to the infinite, that we in our ignorance call death – because it is only through death of the past that the future is born. That is why one way to look at the present moment, through which we are all passing, is that it is a History of the Future. Normally we have history in the past, but the present is a history of the future – because the future is settled and decided. It is a decisive action, yet events and circumstances will unfold it. So what we are living at this point of time is the history of something which is already decided, which is bound to be. This has to come about through a series of transmutations. Each transmutation involves a leaving behind of that which humanity or earth has no more need of, and moving to something which is greater,



higher, better. This passage, to begin with, is a narrow passage, often a dark and difficult passage, and that is what we call death.

*Savitri* is solving this enigma for us; and we will just go quickly through all that we have done in this week, as a kind of concluding session.

Sri Aurobindo last time revealed to us the taste of Paradise – the Paradise of the Life Gods. This was a wonderful high point of Life, the Life Worlds; and yet Sri Aurobindo starts the next canto, Canto 10, with four very powerful lines :

*This too must now be overpassed and left,  
As all must be until the Highest is gained  
In whom the world and self grow true and one:  
Till That is reached our journeying cannot cease.* p. 238

This is the Highest Self which we have to arrive at, not the Self that annuls life but the Self that fulfils life. For indeed all these things that we see, experience, even though they are appearances, yet it is the Self that has become all this, and we must find the point where the two are integrated, where the two become one, where God and World grow true and one.

This is the journey. Because of this, Aswapati steps out of the wonderful boundaries of the Life Heavens, which are so captivating, so glorious; and this, as we see, is the great sacrifice and renunciation of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. When we speak of ‘renunciation’, I think the word does not apply to any of us, for we renounce the lower for the higher: we renounce the ugly for the sake of the beautiful; but what is this renunciation which renounces the beautiful for the sake of something which is far greater? – for the sake of a labour which we can never fathom.

We are at page 240. I shall just read a few passages. Essentially Sri Aurobindo divides this movement of Mind into two basic movements, the Little Mind and the Greater Mind. The Vedic rishis followed this same division more or less, speaking of the *alpa* and the *bhuma*, the little and the vast. The Little Mind is entangled in appearances, lost in the finite; and within itself there is a triple movement. This mind which is completely lost in the smallest, in the infinitesimal,

in fact if we see things from above it is the cause of the Infinite appearing as finite. It is the action of Mind which makes the One appear as many – and then it identifies with the many so completely that it is lost in the processes of what it has created. Sri Aurobindo describes it so beautifully. It is almost like one makes a little room out of this vastness – the earth is one, the sky is one, but one makes a little room and then one shuts oneself in it. So actually we create something small and then we limit ourselves to that smallness and then we must safeguard it and we don't allow anything to intrude into it because 'this is my space'. Almost like that, this Little Mind works upon matter and earthly life. It limits it, it cuts the infinite into small small bits; after that it identifies with it and then, at a human level, it clings to it, and it would not let go of its boundaries which are so very dear to it. That is why this mind is one of the greatest difficulties in the process of transformation. And yet this mind must change into a truer action. In fact we have in Mother's *Agenda* this very interesting episode narrated, where Shiva comes and wants to break the layer of the physical mind, and Sri Aurobindo says 'No, we do not want that, we want transformation.' It is something which is so difficult to conceive of, because it is so easy to break it – this mould is so small, so narrow, why not break it and enter into the vastness? But to fill this, to expand it, to lead it slowly and slowly, steadily, enlarge its boundaries, that is the difficult task.

This Little Mind in its earliest stirrings is beautifully described on page 245. This mind is lost in matter and identified with matter, and regards only form and appearance as everything. The beauty is that it has built the form and appearances, and it has got trapped into it.

*A pigmy Thought needing to live in bounds  
For ever stooped to hammer fact and form.  
Absorbed and cabined in external sight,  
It takes its stand on Nature's solid base.*

So this mind is completely tied to appearances.

*A technician admirable, a thinker crude,*

Why is this mind required? Because in dealing with matter, in handling matter, we need this mind. Sri Aurobindo uses a wonderful

phrase where he says, ‘a material interim diplomacy of Truth’ – Truth diplomatically allows this mind. This mind has a wonderful capacity to deal with matter because it can forget – in fact it has forgotten – all other things which are in the background. Therefore it can work so beautifully upon matter. It is the mind of the technocrat.

*A riveter of Life to habit's grooves,  
Obedient to gross Matter's tyranny,  
A prisoner of the moulds in which it works,  
It binds itself by what itself creates.* p.245

We have several examples of this mind in today's life; one classic example is when we discover something and become its slave – we don't realise that this is just a habit, a habit of nature and we think it is a gospel truth. That is why the Mother says that when people go to a doctor, one of the big problems is that before you go, you have just a few symptoms, and you could actually get over it. But the moment you go into a hospital setting, and especially to a highly qualified doctor with a very active physical mind, he fixes the illness. A very nice neat label gets stuck to it. The moment the label is stuck on, with all the paraphernalia, that this may happen, that may happen, the mind gets completely convinced about it. Basically there is no such law, but its impress is so strong, its hold is so strong upon earth and the material reality that it becomes so difficult to shake it off. This is a constant experience that people have after coming out from a clinic: while on one side they feel reassured, now they have come out with a nice neat label, which is written on the prescription, and this label sticks to them almost throughout life, and is so difficult to get rid of: ‘You are diabetic, you are hypertensive ...’ This goes on mechanically in the mind and it is creating its own law – that is the difficult part. It moves mechanically in a certain groove and through that movement it reinforces itself. The real movement should be the other way round, but it keeps on reinforcing itself, and each visit to the doctor we shed some more money from our pocket and we once again get the label stamped on, fixed very firmly on the consciousness. This mind makes us prisoner of the mould in which it works. What we see is a set of processes. Each process is simply a habit of nature. For example, if we take something, something will happen. It is nothing, but in the process of evolution nature has evolved it. But there is within us the Master of Nature, the Lord of Nature, and

it can be undone, a Greater Mind can undo it. But it is very difficult to convince because we keep observing this process again and again and again and it gets fixed, it is a mould.

*It binds itself by what itself creates.  
A slave of a fixed mass of absolute rules,  
It sees as Law the habits of the world,  
It sees as Truth the habits of the mind.*

*It lives content with the common and the known.  
It loves the old ground that was its dwelling-place:  
Abhorring change as an audacious sin,*

*p. 245*

So this mind also works in the extreme conservative, in the traditionalist who doesn't want change at all, for whom the only surety is what was, and what is or what can be is a very difficult, almost impossible thing. How much Sri Aurobindo must have laboured, and still continues to labour against this mind which cannot conceive, cannot imagine that really it is possible for Man, who is right now crawling like an ant and an animal, to grow into the Godhead he is meant to be.

*Distrustful of each new discovery  
Only it advances step by careful step*

*p. 245*

So this is the first kind of mind, its role in earthly life and its hold. We can see that it has its own importance: from the motions of the planet to the atomic configuration, this mind has gone into fixing each thing within its limits and boundaries; and these limits and boundaries are because this mind has immersed in matter and completely fixed things within certain limits. So much so, that even a species doesn't feel like moving beyond its limits – not because it cannot: if it did it would create chaos in the world, and yet it lives within those limits, simply because this mind is very active in matter and has a great hold on matter.

Yet, because evolution demands an emergence and not a fixity, along with this mind another mind begins to emerge out of matter, and in matter's sleep there emerges dream. This mind that dreams of things that are seemingly not possible, things which are not there – they emerge as a wish, a desire, an impulsion, as a movement to

expand, to grow, to do the impossible, to leap towards that which is unknown – this is the vital mind, the fiery spirit that Sri Aurobindo describes on page 247:

*It burns all breasts with an ambiguous fire.*

So this seed of dissatisfaction is sown in earth. This is also a kind of grace, because if everything was satisfied with what is, then there would have been no movement forward ever.

*A radiance gleaming on a murky stream,  
It flamed towards heaven, then sank, engulfed, towards hell;  
It climbed to drag down Truth into the mire  
And used for muddy ends its brilliant Force;  
A huge chameleon gold and blue and red  
Turning to black and grey and lurid brown,  
Hungry it stared from a mottled bough of life  
To snap up insect joys, its favourite food,*

*p. 247*

So this mind stirs matter with all kinds of impulsions; it gives its movement and dynamism. In matter it is concealed as a kinetic energy, but it begins to express itself in the insect world, the flower world, bringing colours. What really are colours, and different types of variations we find in Nature? They are nothing but dreams of Nature. She is trying to dream and in her dream she fills all this with colour and joy and the many moods of Life. And yet, although this mind is not tied to appearances like the physical mind, it jumps from one appearance to another, because it is ever in search of something which it cannot find. So it tries to leap from one appearance to another. Sri Aurobindo says, on the next page :

*Ardent to find, incapable to retain,  
A brilliant instability was its mark,  
To err its inborn trend, its native cue.  
At once to an unreflecting credence prone,  
It thought all true that flattered its own hopes;  
It cherished golden nothings born of wish,  
It snatched at the unreal for provender.  
In darkness it discovered luminous shapes;  
Peering into a shadow-hung half-light*

*p. 248*

This mind is still restricted and limited to the formula of the ego, so it wants to see in the world a magnified image of its own self, and therefore it paints everything with its own wishful thinking. We are very familiar with this movement also: those people are very good, very near and dear to us, who tell us very nice things, who always flatter us, who always say, ‘You are so good, so kind.’ And our foes are the difficult ones whom we do not like, who are the bad ones, who do not flatter our hopes, who would say things which are critical about us. This mind is very active in the common human lot, and all of us succumb to it. This is because this mind is moving from one appearance to another, seeking to flatter itself. It dreams, it wishes, it hopes, it imagines – but always keeping itself at the centre: this is the problem of this mind. Therefore it is prone to error, it hopes violently and despairs swiftly. This is the second level which appears in the process of mind emerging from matter.

Then comes the third level, the rational mind. This mind comes to study the appearances and go deeper into them. While the physical mind fixes, binds itself with appearances, clings to them, limits itself by them, and the vital mind jumps from one appearance to another and tries to throw its own shadow onto everything, the rational mind tries to probe into the appearances to try to find out what is there inside, what is behind. On page 249 we have :

*Of all these Powers the greatest was the last. ...  
Came Reason, the squat godhead artisan,  
To her narrow house upon a ridge in Time.  
Adept of clear contrivance and design,*

*p. 249*

And, on page 252 Sri Aurobindo describes the limitations of this mind. This mind tries to study appearances and infer what may lie inside. By its very nature it is a mind that seeks. So long as the rational mind has not emerged, the physical mind is satisfied with what is. So the strong traditionalists are always happy and satisfied with the fixed formulas of life – what they have received from their parents and grandparents, the legacy of tradition. They do not question it. That is why it is good that in today’s times children have begun to question everything. But the traditional mind that is so much governed by the physical mind does not question anything: the customary is true; whatever is conventional is the only thing which is and it should

not change. The vital mind throws fanciful images into dream. But the rational mind tries to understand what is really there behind the appearances, it tries to probe into them to discover what formula of truth it may find. It also has its problem: it looks only at a small piece, it cannot look around, it cannot look above, it cannot look below. So we have these lines on page 252 :

*An inconclusive play is Reason's toil.  
Each strong idea can use her as its tool;  
Accepting every brief she pleads her case.  
Open to every thought, she cannot know.  
The eternal Advocate seated as judge  
Armours in logic's invulnerable mail  
A thousand combatants for Truth's veiled throne  
And sets on a high horse-back of argument  
To tilt for ever with a wordy lance  
In a mock tournament where none can win.* p.252

Here again, as we have been observing throughout, Sri Aurobindo shows such a subtle humour. Such is the nature of the rational mind that it must argue. Eventually it wins, but wins only unto itself. It never convinces another person. This is an unfortunate thing that we learn with so much pain – that no amount of argument really helps. It only creates a greater and greater gulf, it only makes the fortress of separation more and more strong. By its very nature the fallacy is that each one argues from his own standpoint, on the basis of his own premise. The other person is arguing from his own standpoint, his own premise. Unless we assume that premise, which means getting out of the ego – because this is also a kind of clinging: to opinions, ideas, premises – so unless we completely get out of that and change our premises we cannot understand the other person's point of view. That is also not desirable, because both are premises of Ignorance. We have to ascend beyond Reason.

Yet, when we fix ourselves to a particular premise we can logically explain anything and everything. In several of his aphorisms Sri Aurobindo speaks of this. For example he says 'Whom am I to believe? My own experience, what I have seen, or the arguments of the scientists ?' – because depending on the premise we can prove anything.

Recently – this is a question which I used to have, and I was very happy that recently somebody has taken it up, a question about the directions: about East and West and North and South and how do we fix it? This movement of the earth goes on – why the directions don't change? I never got a satisfactory answer. I don't know about physics much, but recently I heard that somebody has sent a theory to NASA, and NASA has apparently invited this theory. They say 'We don't accept it but it is an interesting concept, so please put it across'. He has given something very strange, a geocentric view on which he is trying to explain why the directions don't change ... because it is very amazing. The logical mind tells us that it should happen. Depending on the premise we can understand anything and everything. We can even prove that east is west and west is east. It all depends on your premise. One single premise and on that we can build a whole logical system.

The second problem of Reason is that it is too much dependent on its ignorant Minister. We have this image of the courtroom, where the judge is blindfolded. The advocate is not blindfolded, he makes sure that the blindfold on the eyes of the judge becomes tighter and tighter. It is supposed to be a place where truth must win – but he makes sure that anything else will win except the truth. Truth is too difficult to see. Sri Aurobindo is bringing that out so beautifully. In fact, no offence meant to anyone, this is a joke from Sri Aurobindo, when someone used the word 'lawyers' he said 'In Punjab they pronounce it 'liars'.' We can argue out anything, depending on a premise. This is one problem of Reason. And yet, this is the joke of it all :

*Assaying thought's values with her rigid tests  
Balanced she sits on wide and empty air,  
Aloof and pure in her impartial poise.  
Absolute her judgments seem but none is sure;  
Time cancels all her verdicts in appeal.*

p. 252

Whatever Reason has won, proved conclusively ... if we go back a thousand years and see how Science itself has evolved. About 200 years ago people used to do blood-letting and it was supposed to be the most effective treatment. In fact the best specialists were those who could do blood-letting to perfection. As today we have



the cardiologists and amongst them the arhythmia specialists, the blood-letters were the greatest doctors – and in fact that is how they parted from homeopathy. It is a big story. The interesting part of it is that, if I am not mistaken, it was George Washington who died because of that. He had a simple sore throat and they did the blood-letting and he felt more weak – so they thought that the infection is becoming worse, so they did more blood-letting and in the process removed more than one and a half litres of blood, and the poor man, no wonder, in an hour or so he was gone. And yet they were regarded as specialists. Their theories were considered as really perfect – the blood was impure and you had to remove it, it was as simple as that: when you remove the blood, everything will be fine. Logically it is wonderful – but something else was missed out: that in this impure blood there is also vitality, there is also health which is circulating: if we remove the whole thing en masse, even that would be diminished. Based on the premise, Reason proves anything.

The other problem of Reason is that it is bound to the senses – they are the only data for Reason. It doesn't know anything about the play of forces which lies behind the sensory world. When the Second World War was going on, Sri Aurobindo said that this is the problem with the intellectuals – they don't know about the play of forces, and therefore all their conclusions are based on appearances which are fed by the senses. The senses feed data, and Reason can weigh only that. What it has not seen, what it cannot experience, it cannot believe in. This is the second difficulty with Reason.

The third difficulty, which now is changing, as Sri Aurobindo would reveal to us, is that it believes that Matter is the sole reality. These are the three main problems: one, in its very nature Reason is something which picks up a premise and argues on that basis; two, it regards sensory evidence, the evidence provided by the senses, as the sole evidence; and three, its main premise is that Matter is the sole reality. Sri Aurobindo takes a dig at all of these, on the next page, page 253 :

*As if she knew not facts are husks of truth,*

What we see, this world of appearances, the real truth is inside it. In one of her talks where Mother speaks of the Supramental world she says ‘ You know, my child, what is the impression that one has from

that standpoint? One sees that everything here is so artificial.’ She says that the only thing that is true is what goes on deep inside the human being – that is the only thing which is true. All the rest is layers and layers ... that is why we live in a world of falsehood. We breathe it by its very nature, because this world doesn’t express the Divine. That which is inside is the true thing. Even when we communicate, in terms of thought, often thought is simply a medium: we express a state of consciousness through a body of words and sounds. Human mind is attuned to sounds and words, and not to the consciousness which is inside. How much chaos is created simply because we give importance to sound and word and not to what is inside, what is within. So the problem of Reason is that it sees the husks, and thinks that this is the truth; the real thing which is inside, it throws aside: a cause of so much misery. Often people fight; if you ask each one individually, each one will say ‘I have so much love’; the other person also will say, ‘I have so much love.’ Then why are you fighting? ‘So and so says this, does this ...’ all the list of things on the surface – deep inside there is something which is true and beautiful, but it remains hidden. Reason throws out the truth :

*The husks she keeps, the kernel throws aside.*

*An ancient wisdom fades into the past,*

*The ages’ faith becomes an idle tale,*

*God passes out of the awakened thought,*

*An old discarded dream needed no more:*

*Only she seeks mechanic Nature’s keys.*

*p. 253*

It is like someone who sees a car and takes great pains to understand it. Having understood the car, he doesn’t care who is the driver, who will sit in it, where it will go – that is irrelevant. It keeps the car and marvels at it, but it never imagines that this car has a purpose, that it has been built and is meant to carry someone. This is the problem of Reason. Further down on the same page :

*The mystic’s lore was a fancy or a blind;*

*Of soul or spirit we have now no need:*

*Matter is the admirable Reality,*

*The patent unescapable miracle,*

*The hard truth of things, simple, eternal, sole.*

*p. 253*

Because Reason is dependent on the senses. The only data the senses can give us is what the senses themselves have viewed. This is the interesting part, that this world is a creation of two things : a consciousness within, and the mind and the sense play upon that consciousness and create an image, and then the being is trapped in that image and looks at all that is around and thinks ‘This is me.’ At present what we can see and understand is matter, and we think that this is the sole reality. Then of course Sri Aurobindo says that this kind of a rational world could go on and create a very precise and exact machine. Just as Reason looked at this universe and discovered all the processes and saw in this universe nothing but a machine, behind which there was a mechanical intelligence, or an unconscious intelligence, if one may use the paradoxical terms, which was working and operating mechanically, in the same way it may create a just society, but driven by certain fixed rules. And yet we are reaching the end of the rational curve, as Nolini-da puts it very beautifully: ‘The age of reason is over, we are entering the age of luminous faith.’ The Mother very interestingly reveals that the new species which is going to come is likely to follow the pattern of the previous emergence. Each time there is a new emergence, that which was the strongest point of the previous species is lost and then the new emergence takes place. When creatures emerged from the water to become land animals, they lost the ability to breathe in water, they lost the ability to live in water. This was their strength, and they lost it. So also, when the crawling creature has to fly, it must lose all the thousand little feet with which it crawled so swiftly on the ground and then it begins to fly – it can crawl no more. It must suffer that loss, in order to be able to fly. So also the bird’s wings are clipped for it to run on the plains, and the swift and strong vitality of the animal must be reduced and cabined for human intelligence to emerge. Then she says, this rational faculty of which man is so legitimately proud and yet so vainly proud – he has to lose it to grow into the next, intuitive, cycle – in the sense that the Reason has to become subordinate. This loss does not mean becoming irrational, but the Reason becoming subordinate to the action of a higher force. How it will come about, that is also revealed in *Savitri* – it is a book of Revelation : page 256 – this rational world may be the last outpost of Ignorance, unless :

*So might it be if the spirit fell asleep;  
Man then might rest content and live in peace,  
Master of Nature who once her bondslave worked,  
The world's disorder hardening into Law,—*

The only way that Reason can govern this world is through rules and laws. And because these rules and laws are based on appearances, after a time it begins to become a disorder. Societies where there are too many rules become extremely hypocritical, because deep inside there is something else which is going on. Because there are too many rules, this deeper thing expresses itself in ways and means which are very disorderly, and yet there is a facade. That facade Sri Aurobindo is expressing so beautifully :

*The world's disorder hardening into Law,—*

There is chaos and disorder in the inner life, but outwardly there is a facade of order and law. But this would be only :

*If Life's dire heart arose not in revolt,  
If God within could find no greater plan.  
But many-visaged is the cosmic Soul;  
A touch can alter the fixed front of Fate.  
A sudden turn can come, a road appear.  
A greater Mind may see a greater Truth,  
Or we may find when all the rest has failed  
Hid in ourselves the key of perfect change.     ...  
For not by Reason was creation made  
And not by Reason can the Truth be seen                     p. 256*

This is the first movement, where Sri Aurobindo takes us on the journey of the mind from its first crawl within matter, or self-loss in matter, right up to its emergence in man.

In the next movement, he takes us to the mind which has not yet lost its touch with the Oneness, but is advancing further and further from it towards the separativeness. This is the Greater Mind. We have these two movements of the mind – one where it has completely lost itself in matter and in the appearances; the other where there is still some touch, a lingering memory, however faint, of that Light from which it has emerged. Even though it is advancing towards separativeness

that Light is there in the background. This is the Greater Mind, and its operations are naturally very different. The Little Mind turns towards matter, it must pick up data from the senses, work upon it and conclude things, infer, analyse, conclude and thereby arrive at truth – but it cannot arrive at truth because the data itself is deficient. The Greater Mind on the other hand simply turns towards the Spirit and, because that Consciousness is in all things, all-pervading, it arrives at truth by a contact of consciousness. This is its means of arriving at Knowledge. It touches something deep inside, and the truth emerges. When one dwells in those regions, it is effortless; that kind of effort through the intellectual mind, through inferences, analysis, categorisation – that is all gone. That goes away, and instead of that the spontaneous knowledge begins to emerge. Sri Aurobindo describes this so beautifully on page 260.

*There ceased the limits of the labouring Power.  
But being and creation cease not there.  
For Thought transcends the circles of mortal mind,  
It is greater than its earthly instrument:  
The godhead crammed into mind's narrow space  
Escapes on every side into some vast  
That is a passage to infinity.*

*p. 260*

As we emerge into this Greater Mind the mode of knowledge begins to change: we are no longer dependent on sense-data alone, instead we are informed by a contact of consciousness. New faculties of knowing begin to emerge, out of which as one ascends higher and higher Sri Aurobindo reveals four main faculties of which the Vedic seers were seekers and aspirants: Truth-Vision, Truth-Hearing, Truth-Touch, and Truth-Action. Truth-vision is of course the Truth-sight: the whole thing is revealed as if in a flash. Behind appearances, behind thought, there is an Idea and this Idea clothes itself in symbolic significances. Suddenly the symbolic sense is revealed within, intuitively. This revelation becomes the key to understanding the phenomenon. It is an understanding of the phenomena from inside out, and not from outside in. The apparently disparate movements of Time and seemingly separate objects in Space are all linked in a rhythmic sense. Similarly there is the Inspiration, the dawning or the downpour of knowledge from above, through concentration and

stillness: as the mind grows still and quiet and opens to something above, then just one moment of concentration on an object and its secret truths start being revealed through Inspiration. The third faculty is Truth-seizing, where immediately the true significance of anything is seized by a greater thought, so it is Truth-touch. The fourth is Truth-action: what needs to be done, what has to be done at a given point of time, becomes a spontaneous law of being – we begin to become closer and closer to what in the Vedas is called *rta* – the right action, the right arrangement of things. The mind, if it really tries to find the right law of action, cannot find an absolute law because it is always weighed with probabilities, possibilities, this data, that data .... This is right from this point of view, it is not right from another point of view; so the mind gets confused in action. If we really rationally try to find the right course of action, and if we are really impartial, it is very difficult – because the more the data flows in, the more confused we become. That is why it is not always because Courts are bad – the judges really cannot decide; years pass but they cannot decide, because the more the data comes in, the more the witnesses, the more confused it becomes: is this right? is that right? There is no absolute certainty, so most of them keep retiring because nobody wants to take the onus of responsibility – until one day somebody comes, after the matter has dragged in the court for ten or twenty years, and eventually pays off the whole process – because the Reason cannot know. Its play is inconclusive. But Dakshina, the faculty of Truth-action, is inspired by the *rta*, which is the right arrangement of things. There is an inner law by which things should be arranged. The beauty of this inner law is that it spontaneously relates the individual to the totality. Therefore this Truth-action reveals to us what is the right thing to be done at a given moment, in relation not only to the totality of things arranged in Space, but also in terms of Time. When we act, we are seeing only the immediate good; but this *rta* reveals itself in terms of the past and the future. This begins to emerge, we keep on growing into a greater and greater light and suddenly there is a sense as if one has come up out of a well in which one was imprisoned.

As we were seeing, the physical mind is like being at the bottom of a well where there is no light and all that it knows is what is inside the well. The vital mind is inside the well, but closes its eyes and dreams

what may be around; one doesn't quite know, sometimes one dreams rightly but many times it is just a guess. The rational mind is nearer the top of the well, but still looking down; if at all it turns upward it sees a strip of blue with an odd bird crossing it. It cannot make sense of what it sees. The moment we step out of the well into the Greater Mind there is a larger, vaster consciousness: a sense of wideness, calm, beatitude, ananda, sweetness begins to emerge. This Greater Mind is not just a greater cognition and understanding, another way of thought and knowing. It is these things but also something more. It carries within itself a beatitude, a peace and joy; so any discovery at the level of the Greater Mind carries with it joy and peace. That is its characteristic action. In fact one can differentiate even a right inspiration from a wrong one on that basis. Depending on the joy and peace and wideness one is experiencing within, one knows whether one is keeping to the right track or not. They become indicators of where the car of life is going.

This is one of the ways that the higher consciousness begins to act, and Sri Aurobindo reveals its workings in Canto Eleven – The Kingdoms and Godheads of the Greater Mind. He takes us further and further – and yet, even at its peak, where we begin to live in a greater intuitive sense, there is something which is still missed out, even in the Greater Mind, because still it is a mind that divides, though it moves in large spaces of time. What it misses is the crucial element through which all else can be understood. That is '*the Mighty Mother's whims and lightning moods.*' (p. 270) Because it is mind, it still tries to give a formal structure to the great unfolding. But the great unfolding is simply an unfolding of the divine Delight. The mind has to give it structure and form – that is its purpose, that is how creation emerges out of the Formless, the Infinite, the Unmanifest. But in the very act of giving form and structure, it misses out something behind: the infinite Vastness which is simply unrolling itself.

*The mighty Mother's whims and lightning moods  
Arise from her all-wise unruled delight  
In the freedom of her sweet and passionate breast,  
Robbed of their wonder were chained to a cause and aim;  
An idol of bronze replaced her mystic shape  
That captures the movements of the cosmic vasts,* p. 270

This is the mind at which we have the highest intensity of speech, the mantra, the deities, the *bij* mantras, the *mandalas*, the occult laws ... all these are natural discoveries of this Greater Mind which is right now occult and foreign to us. And yet, even at its highest it misses out something:

*Yet was their wisdom circled with a nought:  
Truths they could find and hold but not the one Truth:  
The Highest was to them unknowable.  
By knowing too much they missed the whole to be known:  
The fathomless heart of the world was left unguessed  
And the Transcendent kept its secrecy.* p. 271

This mind also has to be overpassed. Sri Aurobindo leads us to this. Just as last time we paused with the Paradise of the Life Gods, the highest heavens of the Mind, where Ideas are leashed forth into a million forms and activities, this is what we read yesterday and finished with that. It is in this Mind that we have the four great gods. In that exhibition we have Motilal Roy's reminiscences, where Sri Aurobindo spoke of these four great gods, which in the Vaishnava tradition are given the names of Anirudha, Pradyumna, Vasudeva and Shankarshan. There are other names also. They are the four great luminous ones which stand as guardians of the Light: Varuna, Mitra, Aryaman and Bhaga – each representing an aspect of the Divine, and each one creating worlds and worlds and worlds, because each can expand and expand and expand its energy into a vastness that seems almost to merge into the Infinite. This is the Overmind consciousness. In the Overmind consciousness we have these two sides of the divine Reality, what in Indian thought is regarded as Saguna and Nirguna. We can approach from one side and see all the flaming intensities and qualities of the Divine and realise it as Saguna Brahman. We can approach it from the other side and see it as void of all qualities, featureless and absolute, nothing but Silence, and realise the Nirguna Brahman. But this division is also an arbitrary division. There has to be a greater ascent, which we would be taking up next time. In that greater ascent these two aspects of one single Divine, the Saguna and the Nirguna, the manifold activities and dynamism of the One Truth, and its silent passive witness impersonal universal Support, they are One, not two.



We are running short of time so we shall pause with the Heavens of the Ideal and we shall skip on to pages 281 to 82.

Even in these high intensities, something was missing :

*All there was an intense but partial light.  
In each a seraph-winged high-browed Idea  
United all knowledge by one master thought,* p. 281

One Idea was taken as a clue, and the entire universe was built according to that. Take Love – the God of Love sees everything as that, Strength sees everything as that, Knowledge sees everything according to that basis. Each Idea builds a world, and that is how as it went down into the universe the quarrel began to emerge. The Puranic gods quarrel: Love begins to quarrel with Strength, not in its originating sphere where it has the power of Oneness still with it but as it comes down into more and more rigid and narrow moulds. But in that Overmind consciousness each is allowed its space and term. They can continue without any interference from the other gods and they work in harmony. But as they come down, each idea begins to war with another idea, so much so that each of us, when we embody predominantly one particular aspect it tends to come into conflict with other aspects of the same divine consciousness. That of course is because of the ego-identification, but in this Overmind consciousness there has to be a freedom from the ego and emergence into the Cosmic Consciousness. This was what we were reading yesterday.

*Persuaded all action to one golden sense,  
All powers subjected to a single power  
And made a world where it could reign alone,* p. 281

But this too is not enough. What the Mother wants to bring down, and has brought down, is a yet greater consciousness where all these gods are married harmoniously in a single house.

*Yet were there regions where these absolutes met  
And made a circle of bliss with married hands;  
Light stood embraced by light, fire wedded fire,  
But none in the other would his body lose  
To find his soul in the world's single Soul,  
A multiplied rapture of infinity.*

*Onward he passed to a diviner sphere:  
There, joined in a common greatness, light and bliss,  
All high and beautiful and desirable powers  
Forgetting their difference and their separate reign  
Become a single multitudinous whole.  
Above the parting of the roads of Time,  
Above the Silence and its thousandfold Word,  
In the immutable and inviolate Truth  
For ever united and inseparable,  
The radiant children of Eternity dwell  
On the wide spirit height where all are one.            pp. 281-82*

These are the highest levels of the Mind, the Overmind consciousness, from which we must emerge into a still greater consciousness where all these are harmoniously brought together.

We have had to rush through all this to summarise what we have covered in the past whole week. It is too brief a summary, yet nevertheless ....

We may close with a beautiful prayer of the Mother, which reveals this Truth wherein all these great gods, each bringing out a power from the Infinity of the Divine, come together. She brings them together, harmonises them, and leads them. This beautiful prayer brings out this experience and revelation in its fullness. It is dated September 30, 1914 :

*Lord, Thou hast broken down the barriers of thought and  
the realisation has appeared in all its amplitude.*

The Mother is speaking of that state of consciousness, that experience, wherein all the last barriers of thought are broken down, the thought has melted and merged into That Infinity. Therefore she can experience that plenitude. She is now bringing out that realisation in terms of thought, for us.

*Not to forget any of its aspects, to carry out their  
accomplishment at the same time, without neglecting any  
of them, not to allow any limitation, any restriction to come  
in the way and delay our march, this is what Thou wilt  
help us to do through Thy supreme intervention. And all  
those who are Thyself, manifesting Thee in the perfection*

*of some particular activity, will also be our collaborators,  
for such is Thy Will.*

And then she brings the secret of this journey :

*Our Divine Mother is with us and has promised us  
identification with the supreme and total consciousness —  
from the unfathomable depths to the most external world  
of the senses.*

That consciousness has to be found which marries the infinitesimal and the infinite. Right now in our journey we have to keep on moving forward, leaving behind the lesser for the sake of the higher. But then there comes a time when these two poles of existence unite and come together, the mundane and the supra-mundane, Matter and Spirit, World and God, become true and one. The Law changes then, but right now we are involved in an ascending march.

*And in all these domains Agni assures us of the help of  
his purifying flame, destroying all obstacles, kindling the  
energies, stimulating the will, so that the realisation may  
be hastened.*

Agni, the Divine Will, the purifying energy, manifesting in man as aspiration towards Truth and Light, is the help that is given to us. He is the firstborn, the first god, and also the last one. He is the Firstborn who carries this evolution upward. As he rises, the planes do not collaborate, they do not want the emergence to go further, and yet Agni will remove all obstacles. Along with Agni there is someone else:

*Indra is with us for the perfection of the illumination in  
our knowledge; ...*

He is variously described as the Divine Mind, as well as the Illumined Mind.

*... and the divine Soma has transformed us in his infinite,  
sovereign, marvellous love, bringer of the supreme  
beatitudes ....*

As one goes up and up, the oxygen of the earth becomes less and less. We need some other oxygen to sustain ourselves. Normally our

earthly life is run by the fuel of desire. When desire begins to lose its hold and the senses begin to fade away, what would engage us with this world? Sri Aurobindo says that the fuel that we begin to get as we ascend further is the spontaneous Delight of Being. That sustains the journey and leads us further and further. That is Soma, the supreme beatitude.

*O divine and sweet Mother, I bow to Thee with a rapt, ineffable tenderness, and with infinite trust.*

*O splendid Agni, Thou who art so living within me, I call Thee, I invoke Thee that Thou mayst be more living still, that Thy brazier may become more immense, Thy flames higher and more powerful, that the entire being may now be only an ardent burning, a purifying pyre.*

*O Indra, I venerate and admire Thee, I implore Thee that Thou mayst unite with me, that Thou mayst definitively break down all the barriers of thought, that Thou mayst bestow upon me the divine knowledge.*

*O Thou, Sublime Love, to whom I gave never any other name, but who art so wholly the very substance of my being, Thou whom I feel vibrant and alive in the least of my atoms even as in the infinite universe and beyond, Thou who breathest in every breath, movest in the heart of all activities, art radiant through all that is of good will and hidden behind all sufferings, Thou for whom I cherish a cult without limit which grows ever more intense, permit that I may with more and more reason feel that I am Thyself wholly.*

*And Thou, O Lord, who art all this made one and much more, O sovereign Master; extreme limit of our thought, who standest for us at the threshold of the Unknown, make rise from that Unthinkable some new splendour, some possibility of a loftier and more integral realisation, that Thy work may be accomplished and the universe take one step farther towards the sublime Identity, the supreme Manifestation.*

So this was the highest point that past human effort could achieve, which the Vedic Rishis aspired for, which we see realised in the life of one of the great ones, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, who could reach a state of consciousness where all these great gods could be

brought together and harmonised. It was a world of religions, as the Mother says, because each great god, as he unleashed his energies more and more upon earth, became fixed at the level of the higher mind into a system of thought and way of life. Yet now the time has come to go beyond this into a greater and more sublime adventure, a more harmonious and integral splendour. Standing on the threshold of the highest that human consciousness has ever achieved, the Mother invokes something yet to come, beautifully closing :

*And now my pen falls mute and I adore Thee in silence.*



*Dr. Alok Pandey viewing the Meditations on Savitri paintings  
in the Picture Gallery, 22.08.2010*

## ***The English of Savitri (2)***

*Book One, Canto One, lines 35–139*

*by Shradhdhavan*

*(continued from issue no. 32)*

Last time we started this new series : we had a look at the title, the Author's Note, the title of the first canto, and we just read the first 34 lines, which tell about 'the hour before the Gods awake'. The huge foreboding mind of Night is lying there across the path of the approaching Dawn, resisting its approach, longing to go back to sleep, back into the nothingness of the Inconscience. Today we shall start from line 35.

*A throe that came and left a quivering trace,  
Gave room for an old tired want unfilled,  
At peace in its subconscious moonless cave  
To raise its head and look for absent light,  
Straining closed eyes of vanished memory,  
Like one who searches for a bygone self  
And only meets the corpse of his desire.*

We remember that Sri Aurobindo is describing here the approach of the Dawn, the physical dawn on the day when Satyavan must die, but at the same time this is a Symbol Dawn. He shows us first the resistance of all the darkness, all the psychological darkness which overcomes us, which overcomes the world, and how in spite of that something wakes up somewhere and moves, stirs. Last time we read the Mother's words to Huta about this sentence, in which she said that this small movement in the darkness is like the first movement of Aspiration. Now, here at the very beginning of the next sentence, Sri Aurobindo uses the word 'throe'. It indicates a kind of brief spasm or convulsion – a sudden small movement which comes for a moment and then is gone. That is the 'nameless movement' Sri Aurobindo spoke of in the previous sentence. It only lasts for a moment, but

it leaves a trace : after the movement is over, something continues quivering behind it. When an animal or a person moves through the forest or the desert, it leaves a trace – an experienced hunter or tracker will find the trace and be able to tell you what sort of animal or person passed there. The movement and its trace make room for something to wake up : ‘an old tired want’ – something that has been there for a very long time, some dissatisfaction, some need. It has been lying there ‘At peace’ – it was asleep ‘in its subconscious moonless cave’: deep in the subconscious, where there was no moon, no light of any kind. The moon is a symbol of mind, which has no light of its own, only a reflected light from a higher consciousness. Now, with that throe, that little movement which, as the Mother says, is like the very beginning of something that can become an aspiration, that old tired want raises its head and wonders – where is the light? The eyes are still closed, Sri Aurobindo says, the eyes of memory – it is trying to remember something, but cannot recall what it is – there is a faculty of remembering, but no content – the memory has vanished, disappeared. It is like somebody who is searching for a past self, something that it has been in the past – ‘a bygone self’. Sometimes we say ‘Let bygones be bygones’ – those things that have happened in the past, let us forget about them and move on to the future. But we have bygone selves – what we have been in previous lives; even if we strain to remember those past selves, those bygone selves, we cannot recall them. In the same way here this someone cannot remember – ‘he only meets the corpse of his desire.’ – the dead form of whatever that old tired unsatisfied want or need was.

*It was as though even in this Nought's profound,  
Even in this ultimate dissolution's core,  
There lurked an unremembering entity,  
Survivor of a slain and buried past  
Condemned to resume the effort and the pang,  
Reviving in another frustrate world.*

Even in the depths of this Nothingness – this word ‘profound’ is usually used as an adjective meaning ‘deep: somebody perhaps has profound thoughts; but here Sri Aurobindo has used it as a noun, meaning ‘depth’, ‘depths’ – even in the depths of this Nothingness,

even in the core, the very centre, the heart of this ultimate dissolution – ‘dissolution’ is when everything dissolves: in a state of complete dissolution, all the elements fall apart and disappear – there is no form, no life, no mind, but still something is lying hidden there in the darkness: an ‘unremembering entity’. Something has survived from a past that is dead and gone long ago. And now that something, that entity has to wake up again. It was at peace there, asleep, but now it has to wake up again. It is condemned – it has no choice in the matter: whether it wants or it doesn’t want, it has to again take up the effort and the pain of waking up, of reviving, coming alive again, in another frustrate world. With the words that he uses, ‘condemned’, ‘frustrate’ Sri Aurobindo lets us know how that entity is feeling: it is resisting, refusing, it feels, ‘I am being condemned to do this’ – like a prisoner who has no choice; and it feels that all this effort and pain of living is just useless, it is being forced to live ‘in another frustrate world’ – one that will be without result, without success, without fulfilment – just like the previous one. Yet there was that little movement of aspiration, that stirring of something like the very beginning of an aspiration, as the Mother told us.

*An unshaped consciousness desired light  
And a blank prescience yearned towards distant change.  
As if a childlike finger laid on a cheek  
Reminded of the endless need in things  
The heedless Mother of the universe,  
An infant longing clutched the sombre Vast.*

So in the darkness there is an unshaped consciousness – without form, without life or mind, and yet somehow conscious – and it desires light; ‘a blank prescience’ is there, a kind of foreknowledge; ‘prescience’ means ‘knowing in advance’. ‘Science’ means ‘knowledge’, ‘knowing’, and the prefix ‘pre’ means ‘before’, ‘ahead’. In that consciousness there is something that looks ahead and feels that change must come – but it is ‘blank’, empty – it does not know what will come; and yet it ‘yearns’ – it longs for that change to come, though it seems very very far away, distant.

And that desire, that yearning for change, for the coming of light, Sri Aurobindo says, is like a child, laying its finger on its mother’s



cheek. The Mother of the universe has not been paying attention, she was 'heedless'; but now this small blind movement of consciousness reminds her of the endless unsatisfied need in things.

The 'sombre Vast' – that huge darkness that is occupying the universe feels the clutch of 'an infant longing' – a small, helpless longing, that has just been born ... but the clutch, the grasp of a small baby can be surprisingly strong, can't it? You must have experienced how a tiny baby will clutch your finger, with what strength.

This small movement comes from below, in the darkness. And that is very significant. Sri Aurobindo tells us that always two movements are needed: an aspiration that calls from below, and the Divine Grace from above that answers. So here, if we remember what Mother told us, in that tremendous, all-encompassing blackness, all that resistance, it is as if there is a tiny little movement of something like aspiration; and in response, something comes from above. It starts imperceptibly, 'insensibly', but, as we shall see, it becomes something very big compared with that small movement, something tremendously significant. But to start with the change is very small and slight :

*Insensibly somewhere a breach began:  
A long lone line of hesitating hue  
Like a vague smile tempting a desert heart  
Troubled the far rim of life's obscure sleep.*

Here at last is a first sign of light. If we wanted to make a film of *Savitri* – and I hope that in the future some great artist will do that – up to this point we would be in total darkness. But in response to that first movement of aspiration, in response to that childlike reminder to the Mother of the universe, there comes an opening in the thick veil of darkness. The word 'breach' is used of an opening in a defense of some sort – a breach in a dam, through which water can pour out, a breach in the defensive line of an army, where the enemy can break through, a breach in a fence, where the goats and cattle can pass through into the cornfield or the vegetable patch .... Here there is an opening in the resistance of that deep darkness. It begins 'insensibly' – in such a subtle way that no-one could say where and how it starts. But the opening grows and the first faint light appears in the form of a faint line on the horizon: '*A long lone line of hesitating*

*hue*. ‘Hue’ means colour; but the hue of this light is ‘hesitating’ – as if it is shy to creep into all that darkness. It is something very very pale and delicate, so that one can hardly say what colour it is. If we are on a sea-shore or a hill-top, watching for the dawn, can we see when it begins? We can’t really tell. Sri Aurobindo says that it comes ‘*Insensibly somewhere ...*’: our senses cannot tell us exactly when that breach begins, that opening in the darkness. It is as if the Night is lying there resisting, but a breach begins, light begins to penetrate her defences, her resistance.

Sri Aurobindo says that this line of pale faint light is like a smile, a faint, vague smile. That smile is ‘*tempting a desert heart*’ – a heart that is empty of all life, all feeling, something very desolate. When that faint smile comes, the heart begins to feel a little bit of attraction, it begins to wake up. And in a way, that is troublesome : Life is in a deep dark sleep and it does not want to wake up, it is disturbed by that faint movement, that tempting smile, on the far-off edge of its awareness, troubling ‘*the far rim of life’s obscure sleep*’ – the deep sleep of the whole of nature.

Then there is a new development: sometimes when the dawn light begins to break through clouds on the horizon, it takes the form of an eye. So now Sri Aurobindo shows us that an eye starts peering through all that darkness. It is an ‘eye of deity’ – a divine eye, which has come from very far away:

*Arrived from the other side of boundlessness  
An eye of deity peered through the dumb deeps;  
A scout in a reconnaissance from the sun,  
It seemed amid a heavy cosmic rest,  
The torpor of a sick and weary world,  
To seek for a spirit sole and desolate  
Too fallen to recollect forgotten bliss.*

That eye has come from very far away, in fact from another plane ‘from the other side of boundlessness’. ‘Boundless’ means ‘without bounds, without limits’. Sri Aurobindo has said that our material universe is not infinite, but it is boundless : in this dimension in which we live in our physical bodies, we can never reach the end of the material universe. This eye is looking for something;

it is a scout – a scout is someone sent out to explore unfamiliar territory ahead of an expedition or party of soldiers. He has to do a reconnaissance – to find out and gather information about what lies ahead. So it is like that, as if the sun, the Divine Consciousness, has sent this eye of light to look into the darkness, to find something or someone. The scout has been sent out in response to that tiny stir of movement, that first stirring of aspiration, and now it is looking for the soul from which that movement came – that poor spirit, lost, alone in the midst of a sick and weary world, so fallen that it cannot even remember the bliss from which it has come. That spirit is all alone, and ‘desolate’ – it has no happiness in it, almost no feeling, no life at all, it is hopeless, sad, despairing, and does not even know why it is like that, what it has lost, what it is missing. The eye has to peer through ‘*the dumb deeps*’, the ‘*heavy cosmic rest*’ – the whole universe is all in a heavy deep sleep. ‘To peer’ means to look, to see, with difficulty, to strain, make an effort to see. If you have bad eyesight and you have lost your glasses, you have to peer around until you can find them. And this sleep is not just an ordinary sleep – Sri Aurobindo says ‘torpor’ – ‘*the torpor of a sick and weary world*’. If you are sick, you might get into this very heavy unconscious state, in which the consciousness is as if drugged, or dimmed by fever, so that it is numb, insensitive, unfeeling. And somewhere in the midst of all that heavy sleepy unconsciousness is that poor lost spirit. It has come from a world of bliss, but it has fallen into this sick and weary world and lost all sensitivity, all capacity to feel or know.

*Intervening in a mindless universe,  
Its message crept through the reluctant hush  
Calling the adventure of consciousness and joy  
And, conquering Nature’s disillusioned breast,  
Compelled renewed consent to see and feel.*

That eye of deity, that ray of light, that scout, that messenger from the Sun, from the Divine Consciousness, is bringing something new into this mindless universe – a message. That message ‘intervenes’ – it interferes with, changes the fixed process of things, changes the way things have been going on.

That first stir of unconscious aspiration was such a small movement, a tiny hopeless movement in all that blackness, but when the response comes from above, things move very quickly, surprisingly quickly – it is not just a gradual change. That is how the Divine Grace acts, in response to our small movements of aspiration.

That message from the Sun creeps through ‘*the reluctant hush*’ – the silence of the sleeping world, that does not want to wake up. It is announcing ‘*the adventure of consciousness and joy*’. When we are reluctant to wake up and face the day, the thought of something interesting ahead may be enough to get us out of bed. So here, that message overcomes all the resistance, the reluctance in Nature: ‘*conquering Nature’s disillusioned breast ...*’. Nature is ‘disillusioned’ – she has felt excited and enthusiastic in the past, and been disappointed; now she feels that all effort is useless, in vain, everything is taking far too long – ‘*the tardy process of mortality*’. But that message from the sun, that awakening light, overcomes her resistance, compels her to agree, to consent, to accept, yet again, to see and to feel – to wake up and live. It is a very interesting thing that, if you are in a very dark place, even the tiniest little light compels you to see.

*A thought was sown in the unsounded Void,  
A sense was born within the darkness’ depths,  
A memory quivered in the heart of Time  
As if a soul long dead were moved to live:  
But the oblivion that succeeds the fall,  
Had blotted the crowded tablets of the past,  
And all that was destroyed must be rebuilt  
And old experience laboured out once more.*

When Nature agrees again to wake up and see and feel, the first thought comes in: ‘*A thought was sown in the unsounded Void,*’ – a thought is planted like a seed in the bottomless emptiness. ‘Unsounded’: in the past, when sailors were passing through unfamiliar waters, they would take ‘soundings’ to find out how deep the water was, to see whether it was safe for their ship to pass. They would fix a weight on a rope. The rope would be marked with measurements – probably knots would be tied at regular intervals; those intervals were called

‘fathoms’ – it is the measurement used for the depth of water. So ‘unsounded’ is similar in meaning to ‘fathomless’ – we read that word last time. No one has ever been able to measure how deep that Void, that emptiness is; but now a thought has been planted in it, like a seed, and probably it will sprout and grow. The first expression of consciousness in matter is through ‘sense’: ‘*A sense was born within the darkness’ depths,*’ – sense is our way of feeling, of relating to things that are outside our own bodies. Even the most primitive life-forms show ‘sense’ – the capacity to feel what is around them and react to it. Nature has accepted to ‘see and feel’. And a memory ‘quivers’ – gives a little movement, a little sign of awareness, of life – and with memory comes a sense of time, of being surrounded by Time, of being ‘*in the heart of Time.*’

It is as if these things are the expression of a soul that has been dead a long time but has now decided or accepted to take birth again, to live again. But at the very moment of accepting to live again, there is some vague memory of what has been, and the feeling that so much has been lost, and will have to be built up again. Mother has spoken about what happens when the soul succumbs to unconsciousness like that. She says that when it comes into the physical birth, very often it is as if it falls from a great height and lands on its head. It is completely stunned, knocked out. It takes time for it to recover. Here Sri Aurobindo says that ‘*the oblivion that succeeds the fall, ...*’ – ‘oblivion’ means forgetfulness; the forgetfulness that comes as a result of that fall down into the material universe, ‘*Had blotted the crowded tablets of the past,*’ In ancient times people used tablets for writing on, tablets of clay, or wooden tablets holding a layer of wax. They used a pointed stick, a stylus, for writing on the damp clay or on the wax. If what was written there was very important, they would bake the clay tablets and keep them. Archaeologists find these clay tablets, for example in Iraq, and read what those ancient people had written. But once the message had been read, if it was not important to keep it, the tablet could be wiped clean and used again. There is the Latin expression, *tabula rasa*, a razed tablet, a tablet that had been written on and then wiped clean. It is similar in meaning to our phrase ‘making a clean slate’, or ‘turning over a new page’, meaning to make a fresh start, to let the past go and start again. So in a lifetime, a soul, an individual consciousness, can accumulate a

lot of information, knowledge, experience. But when the soul leaves the body, most of all that has been accumulated in a lifetime gets dissolved. The ancient Greeks used to say that the soul would cross the river of forgetfulness – Lethe. Here, this soul, as it is waking up, being moved to live again, feels that everything has been dissolved. Whatever was experienced, whatever had been achieved, has been wiped out, forgotten. So all that has to be ‘*laboured out once more*’, all that was destroyed has to be built up again.

So here too Sri Aurobindo conveys a feeling of weariness : the soul feels, ‘Oh now I am beginning to wake up again, but it is such an effort, there is so much to be done.’

*All can be done if the god-touch is there.  
A hope stole in that hardly dared to be  
Amid the Night’s forlorn indifference.*

In response to that feeling of difficulty, even impossibility, comes this wonderful line of assurance and promise. ‘*All can be done if the god-touch is there.*’ And that eye of deity has come looking for that lost and fallen entity – surely it is going to help. As a result, hope enters. It comes in imperceptibly, like the dawn-light itself – we don’t know where it comes from or how. In several significant places in *Savitri* Sri Aurobindo uses this verb, ‘to steal in’, meaning to enter very very quietly and inconspicuously, without being noticed. This hope almost does not have the courage to exist in the midst of all the hopelessness of the Night. Sri Aurobindo says ‘*The Night’s forlorn indifference*’. ‘Indifference’ is a state of not caring – it is not responding to the message of hope that the scout from the sun is bringing. ‘Forlorn’ means feeling lost, abandoned, sad at being alone, unhelped. That is how we feel when we lose touch with the Light – even if the Light comes looking for us, we may not notice it at first, in our despair and hopelessness. Nevertheless, the hope has come, something is going to change.

*Q : Please say something more about the line,  
‘All can be done if the God-touch is there’.*

Well, there was the sense of difficulty of starting again to labour out all the old experience of the past, which has to be built up again ...

it seems so difficult, impossible even, too much even to attempt. It harks back to the first page, where the Mind of Night turns away from ‘*the insoluble mystery of birth and the tardy process of mortality*’ – it is just too difficult. It is like the way we feel sometimes, waking up in the morning: we wish we could go back to sleep, because the day ahead seems too much effort to face. But then Sri Aurobindo reminds us that, even though it all feels so impossibly difficult, everything can be done ‘*if the god-touch is there*’. And the God-touch has come – that eye has come looking for the poor lost spirit that has forgotten everything. So because of that, hope creeps in, steals in, like the dawn light just beginning to brighten.

*As if solicited in an alien world  
With timid and hazardous instinctive grace,  
Orphaned and driven out to seek a home,  
An errant marvel with no place to live,  
Into a far-off nook of heaven there came  
A slow miraculous gesture’s dim appeal.*

This is a rather difficult sentence. Fortunately Sri Aurobindo has written a letter to explain it for us<sup>1</sup>.

The subject of the sentence is ‘*An errant marvel*’. ‘Errant’ means ‘wandering’, even ‘lost’ – wandering here and there. This ‘marvel’, this wonderful thing, has no place to live, because it is ‘orphaned’ – it has lost its parents, it has lost its native place, it has been driven out to look for a home. The picture is almost like a little beggar girl who is appealing for help, she is ‘soliciting’. Here she is in an alien world – our world is a strange place to her. She is timid, shy to ask, she feels hesitation to ask for anything. Sri Aurobindo uses the word ‘hazardous’ which suggests danger – as if that lovely lost being feels in danger, she is running some kind of risk – and yet she has to appeal for help. And in the gesture that she makes there is an ‘*instinctive grace*’ – an inborn, natural, spontaneous gracefulness which children have sometimes, or small animals who are lost – they know just how to touch your feelings. This picture is an image for the way that first dawn-light is coming in, very timid and hesitating, but full of grace

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<sup>1</sup> See p. 50

and loveliness; it comes faintly *'Into a far-off nook of heaven'*. A 'nook' is a corner : the light comes like *'A slow miraculous gesture'* appearing in a faraway corner of the sky, like some lovely lost being appealing for help. And he says that it is a *'dim appeal'* – something very faint and unobtrusive – there is not a lot of light. And yet that appeal is persistent.

What makes this sentence a little difficult to understand is that the word 'solicited' comes at the beginning of the sentence. It could be a participle, a past participle used as an adjective – and then we wonder who is being solicited, who is being called, appealed to; we may not notice at first reading that it is an active verb – because its subject, the one who is doing the soliciting, is mentioned only a few lines down; but if we are attentive, we will notice the word 'appeal' at the end of the sentence, and then we can begin to unravel the unusual structure of the sentence and to grasp the image that Sri Aurobindo is showing us, of the first faint light appearing in the darkness, shyly asking, with a graceful gesture, to be allowed to remain, to be received and appreciated and responded to.

*The persistent thrill of a transfiguring touch  
Persuaded the inert black quietude  
And beauty and wonder disturbed the fields of God.*

That gesture and that touch – it is as if there is a touch – persists, and gives a thrill. The touch is 'transfiguring', Sri Aurobindo says – it has the power to reveal the deeper truth of things. When something is 'transfigured' it is revealed in its truest, most glorious form, quite different from its ordinary everyday appearance. So the thrill of that transfiguring touch persists, it continues for some time, it does not stop or withdraw – and it has the effect of persuading all that resisting, unresponsive, unmoving black silence – quietude – a state of stillness and silence. As a result, *'beauty and wonder disturbed the fields of God.'* 'The fields of God' – such a beautiful poetic expression for the skies. They have been dark and silent – but now *'beauty and wonder'* have come in, disturbing that black silence: something new and wonderful is going to happen. You have to get up very very early in the morning to possibly catch a glimpse of this gesture, and this slow imperceptible creeping in of the beauty and wonder of the pre-dawn light.



*A wandering hand of pale enchanted light  
That glowed along a fading moment's brink,  
Fixed with gold panel and opalescent hinge  
A gate of dreams ajar on mystery's verge.*

Here is another image : it is as if a hand of light is opening a gate, a window, onto hidden worlds. The hand moves, it is made of pale magical light, it glows, he says '*along a fading moment's brink*'. 'Brink' is one of the many words we find in the poem that mean an edge or a borderline – rim, edge, marge, verge – he finds so many suggestive words! We speak about the brink of the ocean, or the brink of a cliff – if we take one more step, we shall be over the edge. That glowing hand of light is seen just for a moment, and it fixes '*A gate of dreams ajar on mystery's verge.*' 'Ajar' is a word we use for a window or a door which is not fully open, but it is not closed. It is just slightly open, in the state where it is still touching the door-frame. If someone leaves the door ajar and there is a breeze, a little wind, we will hear the door banging against the frame – 'jarring'. But if a door is ajar, it is not locked, if we want to go through, we can open it – it is almost an invitation to open the door and see what is on the other side.

The panel, the main part of the gate, is gold, and the hinge, the part that allows the door to swing on its frame, is 'opalescent' – another very beautiful suggestive word. An opal is beautiful gemstone – they come from Australia. If you look into an opal it is opaque – not transparent; and in it are all sorts of beautiful colours, which move as you move the stone. Some opals have quite deep intense colours, blue and green and red, but the most beautiful ones have pastel tones, milky whites and pinks and pale blues and greens, perhaps with a hint of fiery orange somewhere in the depths, all mixing together; 'opalescent' means 'glowing like an opal' – with all those beautiful mingling colours, such as we may see in the dawn sky.

*One lucent corner windowing hidden things  
Forced the world's blind immensity to sight.*

That 'gate of dreams' is like one corner of the sky that is full of light. 'Lucent' means 'full of light'. It is like a window onto the invisible worlds, and it is allowing their magic light to enter our world. That

little glow of light in a far-off nook of heaven ‘*Forced the world’s blind immensity to sight.*’ Now that the gate of dreams has been opened, even though only ‘ajar’, only a little bit open, the light can pour through, and that is enough to force all that huge blackness of the sleeping world to see. If everything is dark, we cannot see anything, however much we strain our eyes and peer into the shadows to make out something. But as soon as there is a little light, we cannot avoid seeing, whether we want to or not. Again Sri Aurobindo gives a hint of the reluctance of the dark side of Nature that would prefer to remain blind and asleep and unconscious.

*The darkness failed and slipped like a falling cloak  
From the reclining body of a god.*

Then another beautiful image : it is as if that darkness is just a thin covering over the light. A ‘cloak’ is a big garment made of cloth that we can wrap around us if it is cold or raining. We can hide ourselves in it. Here the cloak falls away and reveals the body of a god lying down. This is an image from the Vedas. There it is said that the darkness falls away and reveals the beautiful limbs of Usha, the goddess of the Dawn<sup>1</sup>.

*Then through the pallid rift that seemed at first  
Hardly enough for a trickle from the suns,  
Outpoured the revelation and the flame.  
The brief perpetual sign recurred above.*

A ‘rift’ is a break or even a tear. We can think of the fabric of the dark cloak being torn – at first that tear seems very small and pale: ‘pallid’ means pale. That small pale gap in the darkness seem hardly big enough to allow even a trickle – a small thin stream – to pass through from all those suns that are behind. But, surprisingly, much more than a trickle comes: ‘*the revelation and the flame*’ pour out – the full presence of the Dawn appears.

Sri Aurobindo says ‘*The brief perpetual sign recurred above.*’ Above, in the sky, comes again – as it does every morning, with

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<sup>1</sup> See Professor Subbian’s article on p. 53

every dawn – a sign. It does not stay long, it is ‘brief’ – shortlived; and yet this sign is ‘perpetual’ – it is repeated again and again, as if for ever.

*A glamour from unreached transcendences  
Iridescent with the glory of the Unseen,  
A message from the unknown immortal Light  
Ablaze upon creation’s quivering edge,  
Dawn built her aura of magnificent hues  
And buried its seed of grandeur in the hours.*

Now comes something magical – ‘glamour’ suggests something with a magical power of attraction. It comes ‘*from unreached transcendences*’. What is ‘transcendent’ is beyond everything that we know or can know, beyond the whole creation. So this light of the symbol dawn comes not just from the other side of the earth or the other side of the solar system or the universe, but from completely other dimensions that we know nothing about. It is ‘iridescent’. This is another word that is similar in its suggestion to ‘opalescent’ – it means ‘shining with all the colours of the rainbow’. Iridescent colours may be more vivid and bright and intense than opalescent ones, which are shimmering and milky and pale. This magic that comes is ‘*Iridescent with the glory of the Unseen,*’ – the Unseen with a capital U, suggesting the ultimate unseen existence beyond all the forms of the manifestation. It is a message, ‘*A message from the unknown immortal Light*’ – it comes to express something from the highest form of Light, the undying Light that is ‘*Ablaze upon creation’s quivering edge,*’ – on the very edge of creation, where the manifest and the unmanifest, the transcendent existence beyond, are very close together. Dawn brings that message of new light every day.

That is where this light of the symbol dawn has come from, and arriving here, in our world, the Dawn goddess builds up her aura, her beautiful atmosphere of glorious colours, ‘hues’. And a seed of that glory, that grandeur, all that wonderful Light, she buries in the hours – in our time. If we bury a seed in the ground it may lie there dormant for a long time, but when its time comes, it will sprout and grow. It is as if the Dawn is bringing a seed of light that gets planted in the soil of our time – when the moment is right, it will emerge and blossom.

*An instant's visitor the godhead shone.  
On life's thin border awhile the Vision stood  
And bent over earth's pondering forehead curve.*

That godhead, the beautiful Goddess of the Dawn, is a visitor, she only stays with us for an instant – a moment; the moment of dawn does not last long. Sri Aurobindo says that she stood ‘*On life's thin border ...*’ If we think about life on earth, there is this huge mass of matter which constitutes our globe, and everything that is living is just a very very thin layer covering its surface. There she stands, ‘awhile’ – just for a short time, and bends ‘*over earth's pondering forehead curve*’. The area of your face between your eyebrows and your hairline, is your forehead. It is curved. Sri Aurobindo, as if taking a viewpoint from out in space, sees the curve of earth's surface like a forehead, with the Vision, the Dawn Goddess, much larger, bending over that curve. And he says that the curve, which is like a forehead, a brow, is ‘pondering’. That means ‘thinking’, ‘musing’. On the earth's surface, there is not only a thin layer of of life – there is also a layer of mind.

*Interpreting a recondite beauty and bliss  
In colour's hieroglyphs of mystic sense,  
It wrote the lines of a significant myth  
Telling of a greatness of spiritual dawns,  
A brilliant code penned with the sky for page.*

‘Recondite’ means ‘secret’ or ‘little known’, ‘hidden away’. The Vision is interpreting: as I am trying to interpret to you the recondite beauty of Sri Aurobindo's wonderful images, she is interpreting a secret beauty and bliss that are hidden away behind the veil of appearances, expressing the beauty and bliss of the higher subtle planes in a language of symbolic significant colours – colours that have a ‘*mystic sense*’, a mystic meaning.

He says that the colours are hieroglyphs. This is the word that we use for the Ancient Egyptian writing, picture writing. The word actually means ‘sacred signs’. Not everybody could read that writing, much less actually write it. It was a kind of secret writing for people who had been specially educated to understand it. In the same way, maybe we need some special teaching, some initiation, to be able to

understand the mystic meaning of the symbolism of the colours that dawn brings into the sky.

The Dawn Goddess uses the colours to write ‘*the lines of a significant myth*’. In his poem *Savitri* Sri Aurobindo is re-telling us this significant myth, this ancient Vedic symbolic story of the inner meaning of Dawn, the meaning of the Sun, its return to our sky that has been dark, moonless and starless. What do these things mean? They are like images, hieroglyphs, that have a deep inner significance. So at this moment, in the early morning, chasing away the darkness, the coming of Dawn is writing the lines of that significant myth that tells of ‘*a greatness of spiritual dawns*’.

That is the inner sense of this whole passage which we can follow – not reading it like this, in a group, but if we read it to ourselves very very quietly, alone, indrawn in a meditative mood, we may experience some kind of inner dawn within our own consciousness. The physical dawn is the symbol of such spiritual dawns. ‘Code’ is secret writing. The vision is using the whole sky as a page on which to write the lines of the significant myth of Dawn, in code, in the secret language of symbolic colours and lines.

*Almost that day the epiphany was disclosed  
Of which our thoughts and hopes are signal flares;  
A lonely splendour from the invisible goal  
Almost was flung on the opaque Inane.*

It has been such a terribly dark night, but now Sri Aurobindo seems to suggest that it is a particularly beautiful dawn. Every day the dawn comes, but he says that on that day, it was almost as if ‘*the epiphany was disclosed ...*’. An epiphany is when we see the Divine revealed. It is a Greek word, but its meaning is similar to our Indian word ‘Darshan’ – we see the Divine revealed. And Sri Aurobindo says that our thoughts and hopes are like ‘*signal flares*’ – signs of that epiphany, that revelation, signs that the Divine Presence exists somewhere. When you are lost at sea, if you are well-prepared you have a rocket with you and you can send it up to signal ‘I am here’. So those lights that come up in us, our highest thoughts, our deepest hopes, are signal flares indicating that the Divine Presence is there, waiting to be found.

That is our goal of course, that epiphany is the invisible goal of our human journey. So on this very special morning, this particularly beautiful ‘Symbol Dawn’, it is as if some sign of that glory is seen: ‘*A lonely splendour from the invisible goal / Almost was flung on the opaque Inane.*’ ‘Flung’ means ‘thrown’; we could think of the glorious radiance of the dawn being projected, as if onto a screen. A screen has to be opaque – that is, it should not let the light pass through, but must reflect it back, so that the picture can be seen. (We read this word before – it came on the very first page, in the third sentence of the poem.) And here the screen is ‘the Inane’. The way we normally use this word is for something meaningless, stupid. But here it is with a capital letter I. So that makes us think, as Sri Aurobindo very often makes us think, of the original root meaning of the word. The root of this word is from Latin, ‘anima’ – the soul: something that is inane is without soul, soul-less. Here it refers to that blankness of the empty universe before the coming of the dawn – but now, it is as if some wonderful expression of the supreme Light which is the goal of the journey of evolution is projected onto that blank opaque soullessness.

*Once more a tread perturbed the vacant Vasts;  
Infinity’s centre, a Face of rapturous calm  
Parted the eternal lids that open heaven;  
A Form from far beatitudes seemed to near.*

There is a Presence : once more a tread – a footfall, a step, ‘perturbed’ – that footstep of the Dawn Goddess troubles, disturbs, those vast vacant spaces : this is the Divine Event which the foreboding mind of Night has been dreading, this disturbance brought by the coming of the light, compelling it to see and feel again, when all it wants to do is to fall back into unconsciousness. So here she is, her footstep is heard or felt, she is coming.

Then her face is seen – a face that seems to be the very centre of Infinity. It is a paradoxical idea, isn’t it? How can Infinity, which is limitless, without any beginning or end, how can it have a centre? But this Face seems to be the centre of infinite extension in all dimensions. It is a Face of rapturous calm. ‘Rapture’ is intense delight, bliss. This face is calm, still, at peace, and yet full of intense delight.

The eyes open. ‘Lids’ here is a poetic reference to ‘eyelids’. So the eyelids part, the eyes open. These are eternal eyes, and when they open, heaven opens.

First the step, then the face, the eyes, and then a form – the whole body of the goddess seems to come near to earth; it has come from ‘far beatitudes’ – ‘beatitude’ is the state of heavenly bliss, ananda. She has come from faraway states of blissfulness, of ananda.

*Ambadress twixt eternity and change,  
The omniscient Goddess leaned across the breadths  
That wrap the fated journeyings of the stars  
And saw the spaces ready for her feet.*

The Dawn goddess, Sri Aurobindo says, is an ‘Ambadress’. An ambassador is a person who is sent to represent one country to another. There is an Indian Ambassador in each capital city of every important country of the world – he represents India there. And if the French government have any message to send to the Indian government, they send that message through their Ambassador in New Delhi, or through the Indian Ambassador in Paris. In a more general sense it can mean simply one who carries a message. Here Sri Aurobindo uses the feminine form, because the one carrying the message is the Dawn Goddess. She is carrying a message between (‘twixt’ is a poetic word meaning ‘between’) the realms of Eternity, and the world of change that we live in. We may wonder whether there is any connection between the eternal world and our world of constant change. Here Sri Aurobindo says that the Dawn Goddess comes as an ambadress: she brings something of eternity here, perhaps she carries back some message of aspiration and hope from the material world to the eternal planes.

Sri Aurobindo says that she is ‘omniscient’ – all-knowing, all-seeing. And he pictures her as so vast, leaning across the ‘breadths’ – the broad spaces – ‘*that wrap the fated journeyings of the stars*’ – that enclose or envelop all the orbits of the stars. He says that those journeyings of the stars are ‘fated’. This suggests two things: first that the orbits of the stars are fixed, determined by some inevitable laws of fate; but also it reminds us that human beings often feel that the movements and relationships of the stars carry some power of fate or

destiny, which may be significant in our lives and the circumstances of our lives. That is why people turn to astrologers, to try to get some light on their individual fate or destiny. There are such broad, wide spaces in which the stars move – the Dawn Goddess looks at them, and sees where she can next place her feet. Sri Aurobindo paints this picture on such a vast scale – he takes us away from the flat earth we normally live on and out into those vastnesses and makes us see the Goddess moving there.

*Once she half looked behind for her veiled sun,  
Then, thoughtful, went to her immortal work.*

It is such a beautiful picture – she gives a glance behind to see whether the sun is following her. The sun is still veiled – it will rise, unveiled, only after the Dawn has passed on. I think this ‘veiled sun’ is the sun as Savitr – the sun before it rises above our horizon. And then Dawn moves on – her immortal work continues elsewhere.

*Earth felt the Imperishable’s passage close:  
The waking ear of Nature heard her steps  
And wideness turned to her its limitless eye,  
And, scattered on sealed depths, her luminous smile  
Kindled to fire the silence of the worlds.*

Then Sri Aurobindo brings us back to earth and shows us that there is a response, here, to the passing of the Dawn Goddess. Earth is the symbol of the material world, and the base for the evolutionary adventure of consciousness. Earth feels that passage of the Goddess – Sri Aurobindo says, ‘the Imperishable’ – things that perish do not last long. We talk about ‘perishable goods’ – milk and vegetables, things which will spoil quickly; and we are all perishable creatures – our bodies do not last very long. But those who belong to higher planes are made of a different kind of substance that does not perish, which does not age and spoil, but remains ever young and beautiful. Earth, the home of perishable creatures, feels that Imperishable presence passing very close to it. Something in the natural world wakes up and hears her footsteps passing. All the wide spaces of the earth turn and look at that beautiful face and form in the sky. And the lovely



luminous smile of the Goddess, Sri Aurobindo says, is ‘*scattered on sealed depths*’ – scattering is what we do with seeds, when we want them to grow in soil. She spreads and scatters her smile, and it is as if, in deep closed places within the earth, little flames are lighted. ‘To kindle’ means to get a fire going. These are fires of aspiration, as if lit in the depths of matter by the passing of the Goddess, who signals the arrival of the Sun, the symbol of the full divine Presence and Power and Light.

*All grew a consecration and a rite.  
Air was a vibrant link between earth and heaven;  
The wide-winged hymn of a great priestly wind  
Arose and failed upon the altar hills;  
The high boughs prayed in a revealing sky.*

The sense of that passing presence of the Dawn Goddess, bringing that promise of new light, awakens a response in everything in nature. There is a sense of a sacred meaning in everything. ‘Consecration’ means ‘making sacred’. When we offer ourselves to the Divine, we make all the apparently ordinary things sacred, they have a sacred significance and meaning. A ‘rite’ is a ritual of worship – actions done in a special way, for the purpose of honouring and invoking the Divine. And here, this is not a human thing – the human beings and animals are still sleeping. This is Nature’s response. Air becomes a vibrant link between earth and heaven. The air is vibrating and connecting the earth and the sky, linking the material world with all the higher planes. There is a wind that arises and sinks again on the hills. Sri Aurobindo says that the wind is like a priest – the one who performs the rite and offers the sacrifice; and the sound of the wind is a ‘wide-winged hymn’ – a great chant of adoration and praise of the Divine. The hills are like the altar in a temple, even the trees are praying. ‘Boughs’ means branches; the trees are as if lifting their branches like arms towards the sky in prayer. The sky which was so opaque and dark has become a revealing sky, because of the light of Dawn. It is no longer hiding the Divine but revealing it.

Sri Aurobindo says that we should not think of these things as just beautiful poetic images. He says that something like this really happens, that he has really experienced that the trees pray, and the

air becomes vibrant, and the sound of the wind on the hills is like a priest chanting the sacred words. This is not just a beautiful thought or imagination, but a very exact and powerful description of something that happens and that can be seen and experienced if we become sensitive to the deeper truths and movements in Nature. We shall stop here for today.

*(to be continued)*



*The Savitri Bhavan team – August 7, 2010*

# *From Sri Aurobindo's Letters on Savitri*

## *Comments on passages from the opening section*

I am not here building a long sustained single picture of the Dawn with a single continuous image or variations of the same image. I am describing a rapid series of transitions, piling one suggestion upon another. There is first a black quietude, then the persistent touch, then the first 'beauty and wonder' leading to the magical gate and the 'lucent corner'. Then comes the failing of the darkness, the simile used [*'a falling cloak'*] suggesting the rapidity of the change. Then as a result the change of what was once a rift into a wide luminous gap, — if you want to be logically consistent you can look at the rift as a slit in the 'cloak' which becomes a big tear. Then all changes into a 'brief perpetual sign', the iridescence, then the blaze and the magnificent aura.

*Letters on Savitri p.735*

*As if a childlike finger laid on a cheek  
Reminding of the endless need in things  
The heedless Mother of the universe,  
An infant longing clutched the sombre Vast.*

It is not intended that the two images "finger laid" and "clutch" should correspond exactly to each other; for the void and the "Mother of the universe" are not the same thing. The "void"<sup>1</sup> is only a mask covering the Mother's cheek or face. What the "void" feels as a clutch is felt by the Mother only as a reminding finger laid on her cheek. It is one advantage of the expression "as if" that it leaves the field open for such variation. It is intended to suggest without saying it that behind the sombre void is the face of a mother.

*Letters on Savitri p.750*

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<sup>1</sup> Sri Aurobindo has somehow come to use "void" instead of the "vast" that is actually there in the line. It may be mentioned that, in the passage where this line and the other three occur, the Vast is also called the void.

*As if solicited in an alien world  
With timid and hazardous instinctive grace,  
Orphaned and driven out to seek a home,  
An errant marvel with no place to live,  
Into a far-off nook of heaven there came  
A slow miraculous gesture's dim appeal.*

... The word “solicited” is the past tense and the subject of this verb is “an errant marvel” delayed to the fourth line by the parenthesis “Orphaned etc.” This kind of inversion, though longer than usual, is common enough in poetical style and the object is to throw a strong emphasis and prominence upon the line, “An errant marvel with no place to live.” That being explained, the rest about the gesture should be clear enough. ... If I may not expect a complete alertness from the reader, — but how without it can he grasp the subtleties of a mystical and symbolic poem? — he surely ought to be alert enough when he reads the second line to see that it is somebody who is soliciting with a timid grace and it can't be somebody who is being gracefully solicited; also the line “Orphaned etc.” ought to suggest to him at once that it is some orphan who is soliciting and not the other way round: the delusion of the past participle passive ought to be dissipated long before he reaches the subject of the verb in the fourth line. The obscurity throughout, if there is any, is in the mind of the hasty reader and not in the grammatical construction of the passage.

*Letters on Savitri p.751*

Then there is the phrase “A face of rapturous calm”:<sup>7</sup> he seems to think it is a mere trick of language, a substitution of a prepositional phrase for an epithet, as if I had intended to say “a rapturously calm face” and I said instead “a face of rapturous calm” in order to get an illegitimate and meaningless rhetorical effect. I meant nothing of the kind, nothing so tame and poor and scanty in sense: I meant a face which was an expression or rather a living image of the rapturous calm of the supreme and infinite consciousness,—it is indeed so that it can well be “Infinity's centre”. The face of the liberated Buddha as presented to us by Indian art is such an expression or image of the calm of Nirvana and could, I think, be quite legitimately described as

a face of Nirvanic calm, and that would be an apt and live phrase and not an ugly artifice or twist of rhetoric. It should be remembered that the calm of Nirvana or the calm of the supreme Consciousness is to spiritual experience something self-existent, impersonal and eternal and not dependent on the person or the face which manifests it.

*Letters on Savitri* p. 792

*All grew a consecration and a rite.  
Air was a vibrant link between earth and heaven;  
The wide-winged hymn of a great priestly wind  
Arose and failed upon the altar hills;  
The high boughs prayed in a revealing sky.*

The critic thinks that I imagined the wind as having a winged body and then took away the wings from its shoulders and clapped them on to its voice or hymn which could have no body. But I did nothing of the kind; I am not bound to give wings to the wind. In an occult vision the breath, sound, movement by which we physically know of a wind is not its real being but only the physical manifestation of the wind-god or the spirit of the air, as in the Veda the sacrificial fire is only a physical birth, temporary body or manifestation of the god of Fire, Agni. The gods of the Air and other godheads in the Indian tradition have no wings, the Maruts or storm-gods ride through the skies in their galloping chariots with their flashing golden lances, the beings of the middle world in the Ajanta frescoes are seen moving through the air not with wings but with a gliding natural motion proper to ethereal bodies. The epithet “wide-winged” then does not belong to the wind and is not transferred from it, but is proper to the voice of the wind which takes the form of a conscious hymn of aspiration and rises ascending from the bosom of the great priest, as might a great-winged bird released into the sky and sinks and rises again, aspires and fails and aspires again on the “altar hills”. One can surely speak of a voice or a chant of aspiration rising on wide wings and I do not see how this can be taxed as a false or unpoetic image. Then the critic objects to the expression “altar hills” on the ground that this is superfluous as the imagination of the reader can very well supply this detail for itself from what has already been said: I do not think this is correct,

a very alert reader might do so but most would not even think of it, and yet the detail is an essential and central feature of the thing seen and to omit it would be to leave a gap in the middle of the picture by dropping out something which is indispensable to its totality. Finally he finds that the line about the high boughs praying in the revealing sky does not help but attenuates, instead of more strongly etching the picture. I do not know why, unless he has failed to feel and to see. The picture is that of a conscious adoration offered by Nature and in that each element is conscious in its own way, the wind and its hymn, the hills, the trees. The wind is the great priest of this sacrifice of worship, his voice rises in a conscious hymn of aspiration, the hills offer themselves with the feeling of being an altar of the worship, the trees lift their high boughs towards heaven as the worshippers, silent figures of prayer, and the light of the sky into which their boughs rise reveals the Beyond towards which all aspires. At any rate this “picture” or rather this part of the vision is a complete rendering of what I saw in the light of the inspiration and the experience that came to me. I might indeed have elaborated more details, etched out at more length but that would have been superfluous and unnecessary; or I might have indulged in an ampler description but this would have been appropriate only if this part of the vision had been the whole. This last line is an expression of an experience which I often had whether in the mountains or on the plains of Gujarat or looking from my window in Pondicherry not only in the dawn but at other times and I am unable to find any feebleness either in the experience or in the words that express it. If the critic or any reader does not feel or see what I so often felt and saw, that may be my fault, but that is not sure, for you and others have felt very differently about it; it may be a mental or a temperamental failure on their part and it will be then my or perhaps even the critic’s or reader’s misfortune.

*Letters on Savitri p. 795-96*

# *Two lines from Savitri : a Vedic Echo*

(Reprinted from Invocation no. 11)

*We thank our reader Professor C. Subbian of Chennai for the following contribution:*

The darkness failed and slipped like a falling cloak  
From the reclining body of a god

*Book One, Canto One, p. 3*

With consummate skill, Sri Aurobindo explains the vision and the experience behind these two inimitable lines in *The Secret of the Veda*:

## **THE DIVINE DAWN**

As the Sun is image and godhead of the golden Light of the divine Truth, so Dawn is the image and godhead of the opening out of the supreme illumination on the night of our human ignorance. Dawn, daughter of Heaven and Night her sister are obverse and reverse sides of the same eternal Infinite. Utter Night out of which the worlds arise is the symbol of the Inconscient. That is the inconscient Ocean, that the darkness concealed within darkness, out of which the One is born by the greatness of His energy. But in the world of our darkened mortal view of things there reigns the lesser Night of the Ignorance which envelops heaven and earth and the mid-region, our mental and physical consciousness and our vital being. It is here that Dawn the daughter of Heaven rises with the radiances of her Truth, with the bliss of her boons; **putting off the darkness like a black woven robe, as a young maiden garbed in**

**light,**\* this bride of the luminous Lord of beatitude unveils the splendours of her bosom, reveals her shining limbs and makes the Sun ascend upon the upclimbing tier of the worlds. ... For the divine Dawn is the force or face of Aditi; she is the mother of the gods; she gives them birth into our humanity in their true forms no longer compressed into our littleness and veiled to our vision.

(SABCL 10:429-30)

When a change was suggested in this line, Sri Aurobindo wrote:

... about the cloak, I maintain my position. ... my partiality for these lines may be due to an unjustified personal attachment founded on the vision which they gave me when I wrote them. Again, there are always differences of poetical appreciation due either to preconceived notions or to different temperamental reactions. Finally, it may be that my vision was true but for some reason you are not able to share it. For instance, you may have seen in the line about the cloak only the objective image in a detailed picture of the dawn where I felt a subjective suggestion in the failure of the darkness and the slipping of the cloak, not an image but an experience.

(Letters on Savitri, SABCL 29:754 ...)

We may close with the observation that darkness is not a positive principle, but only the absence of light, as a lie is not a false fact but simply a non-fact or an untruth.

We have to develop vision if we are to read *Savitri*, and not be satisfied with metaphysical conceits. *Savitri* is a revelation, a meditation, a quest of the Infinite, the Eternal – as the Mother pointed out. In it we can find echoes from other passages of the Vedas, the Upanishads, and other poets such as Homer, Dante and so on.

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\* Emphasis added



## *A Dawn Prayer of the Mother*

November 28, 1913

In this calm concentration which comes before daybreak, more than at any other moment, my thought rises to Thee, O Lord of our being, in an ardent prayer.

Grant that this day which is about to dawn may bring to the earth and to men a little more of pure light and true peace; may Thy manifestation be more complete and Thy sweet law more widely recognised; may something higher, nobler, more true be revealed to mankind; may a vaster and deeper love spread abroad so that all painful wounds may be healed; and may this first sunbeam dawning upon the earth be the herald of joy and harmony, a symbol of the glorious splendour hidden in the essence of life.

...

A silent hymn of praise rises from my heart like the white smoke of incense of the perfumes of the East.

And in the serenity of a perfect surrender, I bow to Thee in the light of the rising day.

MCW 1:37

*Meditations*

*on*

*Savitri*

Book One – The Book of Beginnings

Set of 6 DVDs

We are very happy to announce that the first set of films of the paintings prepared by Huta under the guidance of the Mother has now been published by Havyavahana Trust and is available from SABDA.

At Huta's request these films have been prepared at Savitri Bhavan by Manohar (Luigi Fedele) from digital photographs of the original paintings taken by Giorgio Molinari.

The soundtrack consists of recordings made by Huta of the Mother's recitation of the passages from Sri Aurobindo's poem which correspond to the paintings, along with music played by the Mother on her organ.

These six films cover the whole of Book One of *Savitri* : Canto One, Canto Two, Canto Three, Canto Four Part One, Canto Four Part Two, and Canto Five. The total duration is about 3.5 hours

# ***The Poetry of Sri Aurobindo : Mantra, Metrics and Meaning***

*By Rod Hemsell*

*References to Savitri*

*(continued from issue no. 32)*

*From September to December 2008, our Aurovilian brother Rod Hemsell gave a series of twelve lectures for the University of Human Unity on Sri Aurobindo's poetry, entitled The Poetry of Sri Aurobindo: Mantra, Metrics and Meaning. The lectures were held at Savitri Bhavan and recorded on video. Transcripts were prepared from the recordings. From these Rod has kindly allowed us to make a selection of passages that relate specifically to Savitri.*

## ***Savitri as Yoga Mantra***

I would like to approach the understanding of *Savitri* in a way that is different from either metrics, meaning, or music. It is difficult to do that, to make that step while at the same time being immersed in *Savitri*. As soon as we get immersed in *Savitri* we are not *understanding*: we are seeing and hearing.

We now have an idea about Sri Aurobindo's form and structure, his theory of poetics and application of theory to creating a powerful, beautiful, meaningful poetry. We know something about the meaning that is conveyed – particularly the meaning of a spiritual vision of existence, and the meaning of sacrifice: the meaning of emptiness, and the meaning of cosmic consciousness. These are the meanings conveyed through Sri Aurobindo's application of the poetics of inspired inner vision. These meanings get conveyed *mantrically* to us. That gives us some knowledge of how the epic form has been used by him to reveal the path of yoga. He has shown the experience of transformation and the path of yoga through mantric epic verse.

Now we have the option to enter into yoga with Savitri as a guide. This means to begin to understand Savitri as a living power that works in us and through us to take us along a path of transformation of consciousness, our own. At this point Savitri ceases to be an epic poem, and it becomes no longer possible to look at Savitri as an epic poem. We must look at Savitri as a being, radiating from a higher plane of consciousness into a lower plane of consciousness, with us as the intermediary.

When we get to “The Book of Everlasting Day”, which consists of one long Canto, we find an interplay of all the movements of the epic journey of the soul again, and several times over again. It is possible to take three or four hour-long sessions to fully explore this teaching, which is the culmination of the previous teachings and a recapitulation of all of the teachings and all of the movements of the journey. Here Sri Aurobindo recreates the sacrifice, the call, the descent, and the dwelling in luminous emptiness. There is a re-sacrificing, and the re-confronting, once again, all of the things previously confronted and surpassed on the road to transformation, a re-sacrificing and re-calling, and again receiving and affirming. This movement of *Savitri* that we learn, is shown to us throughout the progression of Cantos and Books, and is again shown throughout the progression of this particular and ultimate Canto.

We can see this very clearly here in a fragment from “The Book of Everlasting Day” where once again that same offering made by Aswapati to the Divine Mother, that same call and that same instruction to not precipitate too quickly the change on Earth, and the assurance that it will come in its own time, is given to Savitri. And again there is the reaffirmation of the stillness, the surrender, which we heard again in “The Book of Yoga”: the same instruction to withhold the power, to hide behind the realization, and to dwell in the emptiness. Here again, for the third time or for the nth time, we confront exactly the same movement. The Emptiness, the Void, in which both Aswapati and Savitri dwell for a cyclic hour, or for years of there being no change; and then even after she has the realization of the Divine Mother in her, again she dwells in the emptiness. Cosmic Consciousness is possible to Savitri only after dwelling in the emptiness. And even after the descent of the Divine Mother in her there is nothing there, there is no person left.

In all of these movements there is the repetition of the rejection of thought, the rejection of life-force, the rejection of sensation, the dwelling in the absolute oneness, the absolute silence of everything. What we have is an opportunity to approach an understanding of this movement by dwelling in the repetition of this cycle as we read and as we re-commit to that process of reading, hearing, feeling, sacrificing, allowing that emptiness to follow those words in us until we take a stand in the consciousness of Savitri, and then our understanding is real. And that is the only point of the whole thing. At this point, at the end of the epic, the ultimate stillness and rejection is death. So she dwells in a state of death, and continues to call. In all of those other stages of the yoga of Aswapati and the yoga of Savitri they dwell in a state of death in life, – yoga it is called. This is dwelling in yoga. It is being conscious but not identifying with nature while being in nature, absolute detachment. But, at the same time there is the opportunity to channel life-force and nourish the body and radiate cosmic power – so this is where we have been, the journey we have taken already.

In this last movement, Satyavan has died long ago and Savitri has been dwelling with death for many cantos. It requires a lot of practice of yoga while being alive, in order to be able to dwell with death after the body decides to stop functioning. If we learn to dwell with death in the living body comfortably, then we can dwell with death after the body ceases to function. This is yoga. There is no break in consciousness as a result of death. The Mother is fully conscious without the body and active in our transformation without the body. This is the point of yoga. There can be no transformation of life until there are transformed consciousnesses that are able to move from life to life without a break. This is the ultimate teaching. In “The Book of Everlasting Day”, after death has been unmasked and we are shown that death is a veil of the divine only, and behind the veil stands revealed supreme love, Savitri, dwelling in death, is united with the absolute divine love, and she is still calling for a decree to return to life without death, to transform life, to have the will, power, grace, and the command to return now from this conscious death into immortal life. That is her mission.

At this point, all has been achieved, and still she is dwelling with unmasked luminous divine death, in the absolute stillness of death,

which she learned to do in yoga with Satyavan alive, and she lived through his death experience without any change whatsoever in her state. That is looking back at the myth – the story, but we need to be finished with the myth and dwell in the understanding of the movement of yoga. We refer back to the myth because it is a kind of story. But, we also know that it is not a story: it's the epic of the transformation of consciousness that is given to us in a somewhat storyfied form, but not much, because Sri Aurobindo has said from the start that using the epic as a mantric form is not about storytelling. It is about conveying directly the experiences of the soul, especially spiritual experiences. So if we are really going to learn and understand something from *Savitri*, we need to get beyond the idea that *Savitri*, the poem, is a story about something. Now in these lines, we will see a recapitulation of the call and the instruction, and of the dwelling in the stillness. The supreme is now revealed to her and is speaking to her.

*O living power of the incarnate Word,*

Listen carefully to each of these words: living, power, incarnate, Word. This is Savitri.

*O living power of the incarnate Word,  
All that the Spirit has dreamed thou canst create:*

What you have just heard **is** Savitri, not what is written on the screen or page there, projected from this book which we see with our eyes and tells us a story about something. That **sound** you just heard **is** Savitri, and it has a meaning. The meaning is that this goddess-force embodied in speech has this power to create a new consciousness in us. It only requires a voice – which we all have. The timbre doesn't matter, each voice has a different timbre, but it is the call, the expressed intention, and the surrender.

*Thou art the force by which I made the worlds,  
Thou art my vision and my will and voice.*

Sri Aurobindo has done a yoga of transformation which was based upon the principle that the Overmind could become a channel for

a supramental descent and manifestation, and the Overmind is the world of the gods, of divine forces and especially, in this case, divine transformative speech. So it is possible for him to say that this Word is the force with which I created the worlds. He is speaking from that plane, sending, projecting, identifying, making real and transmitting from that plane through these words and this truth – now at this moment. Savitri is now.

*O living power of the incarnate Word,  
All that the Spirit has dreamed thou canst create:  
Thou art the force by which I made the worlds,  
Thou art my vision and my will and voice.  
But knowledge too is thine, the world-plan thou knowest  
And the tardy process of the pace of Time.  
In the impetuous drive of thy heart of flame,  
In thy passion to deliver man and earth,  
Indignant at the impediments of Time  
And the slow evolution's sluggard steps,  
Lead not the spirit in an ignorant world  
To dare too soon the adventure of the Light,  
Pushing the bound and slumbering god in man  
Awakened mid the ineffable silences  
Into endless vistas of the unknown and unseen,  
Across the last confines of the limiting Mind  
And the Superconscient's perilous border line  
Into the danger of the Infinite.*

p. 693

So do we know, now, why this transformation doesn't go faster than it does? Because she is commanded to take care of these fragile humans.

*But if thou wilt not wait for Time and God,  
Do then thy work and force thy will on Fate.  
As I have taken from thee my load of night  
And taken from thee my twilight's doubts and dreams,  
So now I take my light of utter Day.  
These are my symbol kingdoms but not here  
Can the great choice be made that fixes fate*

*Or uttered the sanction of the Voice supreme.  
Arise upon a ladder of greater worlds  
To the infinity where no world can be.  
But not in the wide air where a greater Life  
Uplifts its mystery and its miracle,  
And not on the luminous peaks of summit Mind,  
Or in the hold where subtle Matter's spirit  
Hides in its light of shimmering secrecies,  
Can there be heard the Eternal's firm command  
That joins the head of destiny to its base.  
These only are the mediating links;  
Not theirs is the originating sight  
Nor the fulfilling act or last support  
That bears perpetually the cosmic pile.  
Two are the Powers that hold the ends of Time;  
Spirit foresees, Matter unfolds its thought,  
The dumb executor of God's decrees,  
Omitting no iota and no dot,  
Agent unquestioning, inconscient, stark,  
Evolving inevitably a charged content,  
Intention of his force in Time and Space,  
In animate beings and inanimate things;  
Immutably it fulfils its ordered task,  
It cancels not a tittle of things done;  
Unswerving from the oracular command  
It alters not the steps of the Unseen.  
If thou must indeed deliver man and earth  
On the spiritual heights look down on life,  
Discover the truth of God and man and world;  
Then do thy task knowing and seeing all.  
Ascend, O soul, into thy timeless self;  
Choose destiny's curve and stamp thy will on Time."*  
*He ended and upon the falling sound  
A power went forth that shook the founded spheres  
And loosed the stakes that hold the tents of form.* p. 694-95

Do you see what happened? An opening was given, a possibility won, at last. And then, yet again, there is the silence.



*Then in its rounds the enormous fiat paused,  
 Silence gave back to the Unknowable  
 All it had given. Still was her listening thought.  
 The form of things had ceased within her soul.  
 Invisible that perfect godhead now.  
 Around her some tremendous spirit lived,  
 Mysterious flame around a melting pearl,  
 And in the phantom of abolished Space  
 There was a voice unheard by ears that cried:  
 "Choose, spirit, thy supreme choice not given again;  
 For now from my highest being looks at thee  
 The nameless formless peace where all things rest.  
 In a happy vast sublime cessation know,—  
 An immense extinction in eternity,  
 A point that disappears in the infinite,—  
 Felicity of the extinguished flame,  
 Last sinking of a wave in a boundless sea,  
 End of the trouble of thy wandering thoughts,  
 Close of the journeying of thy pilgrim soul.  
 Accept, O music, weariness of thy notes,  
 O stream, wide breaking of thy channel banks."  
 The moments fell into eternity.*

p. 695-96

The moments fell into eternity. That is what we mean by dwelling in the emptiness, the emptiness which is Being. There is nothing else. This world of thought and sensation is an illusion. And as long as we don't know that we don't know yoga, we are not in yoga. Yoga is being in Being, period. But this being in Being manifests the worlds, and is All that it manifests. The question is, does it continue to manifest worlds of ignorance, or can it manifest another way of being? So, she is offered once again, for the zillionth time, the ultimate liberation in absolute divine bliss. She has been offered it repeatedly, she has stood in it, been it, seen it, known it, and so shall we. It will appear to be the ultimate option of existence. But always there is the call.

*But someone yearned within a bosom unknown  
 And silently the woman's heart replied:  
 "Thy peace, O Lord, a boon within to keep*

*Amid the roar and ruin of wild Time  
For the magnificent soul of man on earth.  
Thy calm, O Lord, that bears thy hands of joy.”  
Limitless like ocean round a lonely isle  
A second time the eternal cry arose:  
“Wide open are the ineffable gates in front.  
My spirit leans down to break the knot of earth,  
Amorous of oneness without thought or sign  
To cast down wall and fence, to strip heaven bare,  
See with the large eye of infinity,  
Unweave the stars and into silence pass.”  
In an immense and world-destroying pause  
She heard a million creatures cry to her.  
Through the tremendous stillness of her thoughts  
Immeasurably the woman’s nature spoke:  
“Thy oneness, Lord, in many approaching hearts,  
My sweet infinity of thy numberless souls.”  
Mightily retreating like a sea in ebb  
A third time swelled the great admonishing call:  
“I spread abroad the refuge of my wings.  
Out of its incommunicable deeps  
My power looks forth of mightiest splendour, stilled  
Into its majesty of sleep, withdrawn  
Above the dreadful whirlings of the world.”  
A sob of things was answer to the voice,  
And passionately the woman’s heart replied:  
“Thy energy, Lord, to seize on woman and man,  
To take all things and creatures in their grief  
And gather them into a mother’s arms.”*

*Solemn and distant like a seraph’s lyre  
A last great time the warning sound was heard:  
“I open the wide eye of solitude  
To uncover the voiceless rapture of my bliss,  
Where in a pure and exquisite hush it lies  
Motionless in its slumber of ecstasy,  
Resting from the sweet madness of the dance  
Out of whose beat the throb of hearts was born.”*

*Breaking the Silence with appeal and cry  
A hymn of adoration tireless climbed,  
A music beat of winged uniting souls,  
Then all the woman yearningly replied:  
"Thy embrace which rends the living knot of pain,  
Thy joy, O Lord, in which all creatures breathe,  
Thy magic flowing waters of deep love,  
Thy sweetness give to me for earth and men."* p. 696-97

Well, that is why Aswapati brought her to birth in the first place. And so she lived and lives and pulsates and speaks – to bring a power of divine sweetness to earth and men.

When Sri Aurobindo began this epic journey in the early chapters of *The Future Poetry*, he said that mystical and philosophical and prophetic sight and speech were not, properly speaking, the substance of poetry. The substance of poetry he said was power, beauty, and delight. And the origin of all poetry was the Overmind whose inspiration gets diluted by all the planes of mind and life and so on. But, by entering into the yoga of transformation and having established himself in this Overmind consciousness, he began to use that power of poetic speech to convey mystical knowledge and experience and philosophy and prophecy. All of the lower planes of mental activity – inspired mind, and philosophic mind and occult vision – were raised by this Overmind power to the level of inspired mantric expression. Then poetry became the vehicle for revelation, instruction, wisdom, transformational practice. And finally, around 1947, he wrote a long letter – not about the Overmind as something toward which to aspire and from which to receive, but about the Overmind as the body of consciousness itself. Everything seen and known and said was from that plane only. From there, he said, his task was to bring down the Supermind, which is a power that is being shown here in a distant way to this Overmind Being – Savitri – whose job is then to bring it down here. This luminous divine speech, and all that it represents and all that it brings into play becomes the creation of that plane of consciousness which becomes completely accessible to us. That vibration has been created with such substance that it is completely accessible to us, and it can create in us a vehicle for that higher manifestation, which even

at that time was distant for that person doing this yoga, as he narrates the process, but it was possible to build a vehicle of its power and light and beauty and knowledge, – an immortal being of revelatory word-music. It will always be here. Savitri will always be here as a force of linkage with that world of origin, the Overmind, until it becomes the norm of experience. She is the guide, she is the teacher, the force itself. She is the consciousness which can manifest wherever there is a willing instrument.

*O Savitri, thou art my spirit's Power,  
The revealing voice of my immortal Word,  
The face of Truth upon the roads of Time  
Pointing to the souls of men the routes to God.* p. 703

This is a transmission of knowledge about soul-experience and spiritual experience. The soul has only to confront this divine emptiness and wait there until there is a sufficient channel for the divine force to flow through it. She can teach us that; her being can teach that waiting and that preparation and that aspiring and show to the soul that being of power: the possibility of infinite bliss and of transforming material time and space. Savitri is “about” going to that place and seeing that possibility. Until we do that, it can’t happen. She is able to move our will out of its normal channels into her will, and to teach our will to abdicate itself and adopt her will. But it is nothing that ever happened, that is being told about, like a story: why did she do this and how did he do that; that is not *Savitri*. The question is only between the soul and the spirit, and as the two become familiar, we see what happens, we hear what happens, and then we begin to experience what happens. So, it is the happening, and ultimately entering into the dialogue with death, entering into the process of transforming life, experiencing of the infinite and eternal emptiness and bliss and the dwelling there, the call and the response; and at some point, according to this example, the soul is ready to receive that power. Until it is ready, and prepared by the journey, that power cannot descend.

*(concluded)*

# *The Longest Sentence in English Poetry*

*By Amal Kiran*

The longest sentence in English poetry – 143 words and, if a compound is counted as two, 144 – is in *Savitri*, Book IV, Canto 3, p. 375.

We must understand, of course, that true sentence-length does not really depend on putting a full-stop as late as possible and substituting commas and semi-colons and colons for it wherever we can. The true length is organic. The construction is such that the components, however independent-seeming, are grammatically inseparable. Many of them are really subordinate clauses or else contain words that internally link them together, as against mere external linkage by means of ands, which add mechanically rather than organically to the length of a sentence. In the instance from *Savitri* we have an ultra-Homeric simile, a long-drawn-out comparison whose sense, beginning with “As”, is completed only when the full comparative picture has been painted and then the central situation which the simile illuminates is stated. If a sentence starts with an “As”, it cannot be complete until there is a “so also” or its equivalent in some form at the other end to introduce the main theme.

Further, in a truly long sentence, not only is the syntax organic: the very organicity has what we may call a living limitativeness which practically ensures that the sentence would assimilate within its vital system only the right amount of detail necessary to unfold the central meaning: a limit is intrinsically imposed upon the length, rendering this length, and no other, vitally significant. Such organicity is different from that of a passage where to enrich the theme one can go on drawing the length out with illustrative minutiae. In short, with organicity itself there can be a certain type of mechanical additiveness. Thus *A Nocturnal Reverie* by Anne, Countess of Winchelsea (1660?–1720), cast in heroic couplets, consists of one long sentence running into 50 lines and 367 words or, with each of its four compounds rating as two words, 371. The main clause does not appear until the forty-sixth line; most of the poem up to this point is a series of qualifying clauses. But the structure has no living limitativeness in the strict sense. The poem starts with:

*In such a night, when every louder wind  
Is to its distant cavern safe confined –*

and continues with particular on particular of imagery intended to create an atmosphere of peace, all the images introduced by the conjunction “when.” The images do serve a single mood or impression, but they are not dictated by any palpable necessity which would exclude others – nor are they even in direct spatial relationship among themselves. There is no internal reason why, with more abundant observation, the poet should not have gone on adding many more than she had already done. In the sentence from Sri Aurobindo we have no open-endedness of this sort. The theme demands a special restricted development: nothing except a number of relevant details can be brought in within the organic form, giving it its length.

Sri Aurobindo’s theme is: how, on hearing some words from her father Aswapathy, Savitri wakes up to the sense of her true mission:

*As when the mantra sinks in Yoga’s ear,  
Its message enters stirring the blind brain  
And keeps in the dim ignorant cells its sound;  
The hearer understands a form of words  
And, musing on the index thought it holds,  
He strives to read it with the labouring mind,  
But finds bright hints, not the embodied truth:  
Then, falling silent in himself to know  
He meets the deeper listening of his soul:  
The Word repeats itself in rhythmic strains:  
Thought, vision, feeling, sense, the body’s self  
Are seized unalterably and he endures  
An ecstasy and an immortal change;  
He feels a Wideness and becomes a Power,  
All knowledge rushes on him like a sea:  
Transmuted by the white spiritual ray  
He walks in naked heavens of joy and calm,  
Sees the God-face and hears transcendent speech:  
An equal greatness in her life was sown. p. 375*

(Extract from *Sri Aurobindo – The Poet*, 1999, pp. 361-63)  
*On Savitri – Part One, Essays* by Amal Kiran (K.D. Sethna) pp. 118-20

# On Sri Aurobindo's *SAVITRI*

Writings by  
AMAL KIRAN  
(K.D. Sethna)

## Part One : Essays

November 25, 2010 is the 106<sup>th</sup> birthday of Sri Aurobindo's disciple Amal Kiran. To mark the occasion, this compilation of his writings on *Savitri* is being published by the Clear Ray Trust.

Amal Kiran, (K.D. Sethna) is acknowledged to be one of the greatest authorities on Sri Aurobindo's revelatory epic poem *Savitri: a legend and a symbol*, which was first introduced to the public by an article of his published in 1946. Yet although he has been a prolific author, with 52 published books on a wide range of topics, he has never dedicated an entire book to the poem with which he had such a special relationship. His writings on it have appeared over more than 50 years in various books and journals. The intention behind this compilation is to make easily available to the general interested reader everything written by Amal Kiran on Sri Aurobindo's epic and published by him during his long active career.

This collection has been prepared at Savitri Bhavan by Shraddhavan and Tatiana Tasheva, in two parts. The first, which appears in this volume, consists of complete essays which have appeared in full as chapters or sections of books or as independent articles in journals. The second part contains passages relating to *Savitri* that have been extracted from articles or letters authored by Amal, and it is hoped that it can appear next year.

This book contains 400 pages, including two indexes, and is available from SABDA.

# *The Activities of Savitri Bhavan*

## *April – October 2010*

The regular programme of weekly activities continued throughout the period.

On each Full Moon at 7pm a gathering was held in front of Sri Aurobindo's statue with a recorded message of the Mother with her organ music, *Savitri* reading, singing of Sri Aurobindo's mantra, silent concentration, and Sunil-da's music.

Some new courses were added: in July and August, our friend Anandi Fernandez from Argentina gave classes in her innovative 'Mudra Chi' movements, on the front lawn every Saturday at 5 pm. Ashesh Joshi held weekly introductory workshops on the Integral Yoga. Starting from August 3<sup>rd</sup>, Patricia Henry, from the USA, offered '*Speaking English*' sessions to practice English pronunciation and build vocabulary with *Savitri*. From September 6<sup>th</sup> onwards Dr. Ananda Reddy held a new class '*On the Mother*' on Mondays 6-7pm. From September 13<sup>th</sup> a new set of 3-month courses sponsored by the University of Human Unity began: on Mondays, *Study of the Bhagavad Gita in the light of Sri Aurobindo* led by Vladimir and *Study of the Rig Veda in the light of Sri Aurobindo: The Hymns to Brihaspati*, led by Nishtha; on Wednesdays, *A brief introduction to Classical and Modern Physics in the light of Sri Aurobindo* led by Keka Chakraborty, and *Study of the Rig Veda in the light of Sri Aurobindo: The Hymns to the Adityas (Mitra and Varuna)* led by Vladimir.

### **Exhibitions, Films and Special Events**

#### **APRIL**

In the Picture Gallery : *Meditations on Savitri* Book Two: The Book of the Traveller of the Worlds, Cantos 1 – 15. 93 paintings made by Huta under the guidance of the Mother. This exhibition remained on display throughout April, May and June



Two events were held celebrating the Centenary of Sri Aurobindo's Arrival in Pondicherry 1910-2010 :

4<sup>th</sup>: *Seer Deep-Hearted* : A programme consisting of a solo violin performance of the Partita in B minor by J.S.Bach played by Holger, along with autobiographical poems of Sri Aurobindo read by Shraddhavan, accompanied by image projections by Leonard.

7<sup>th</sup>: Musical offering to Sri Aurobindo – songs in Sanskrit, Hindi, and Gujarati performed by Mohan Mistry.

17<sup>th</sup>: *Sri Aurobindo and the Future of Man* : film about Sri Aurobindo's five dreams.

April 25: *For Earth and Men* : power-point presentation on Sri Aurobindo's vision of and for the Earth and our role as human beings in fulfilling it.

## **MAY**

*From Aurobindo Ghose to Sri Aurobindo* : exhibition created by Paulette as part of the celebrations of the Centenary of Sri Aurobindo's arrival in Pondicherry. This remained on display in the main building until the end of July.

16<sup>th</sup>: *New Perspectives in Higher Education* : multi-media presentation by Anuradha from The Gnostic Centre, New Delhi.



*'From Aurobindo Ghose to Sri Aurobindo' exhibition for the Centenary of Sri Aurobindo's arrival in Pondicherry.*

## JUNE

19<sup>th</sup>: *The Auroville Charter* : talk by Sraddhalu Ranade, organised by Newcomers for Newcomers.

## JULY

In the Picture Gallery : *Meditations on Savitri*, Books Three, Four, Five and Six. This exhibition remained on display until the end of October.

19<sup>th</sup>: *Sri Aurobindo and the Future of Man* : film about Sri Aurobindo's five dreams.

## AUGUST 2010

*Laying Down the Foundation* : exhibition prepared by the Sri Aurobindo Archives, Pondicherry in celebration of the Centenary of Sri Aurobindo's arrival.

16<sup>th</sup>: Film : *Meditations on Savitri – Books Eight and Nine* : the latest DVD of Huta's paintings prepared by Manohar.

18<sup>th</sup>: Solo Violin Recital by Ladislav Brozman – Sonatas by J.S. Bach and Honegger

22<sup>nd</sup>: Talk on *Savitri* Cantos 10, 11 and 12 by Dr.Alok Pandey : Concluding Session of the Darshan Study Camp in the Sri Aurobindo Society, Pondicherry.

23<sup>rd</sup>: *The Genius of India* : film based on Sri Aurobindo's text, prepared by Auroville Press



*Ladislav Brozman – musical offering to Sri Aurobindo on 18.08.2010*

## SEPTEMBER

From September 1<sup>st</sup> a new facility was opened in the Reading Room : the ‘Listening Space’, where the many audio and video recordings made at Savitri Bhavan or collected from elsewhere can be comfortably accessed for individual use.

‘*Dreams of Nature*’ : exhibition of photographs by Dr.Susil Pani with lines from *Savitri*.

20<sup>th</sup>: Film : *The Mother reading Sri Aurobindo’s ‘The Mother’ Chapters 1 - 5*

## OCTOBER

18<sup>th</sup>: Film : *The Mother reading Sri Aurobindo’s “The Mother” Chapter 6*

### TWELVE YEARS OF INVOCATION

This issue of Invocation, no. 33, marks the completion of 12 years since the very first issue appeared in November 1998. A moving tribute has been received from our long-time reader, supporter and friend, Mr. Prabhakar Nulkar of Solapur, himself the editor of a newspaper. Unfortunately we are not able to print his informative article in full for lack of space, but we hope that all our readers will feel like echoing his opening and his closing words :

“Hundreds of Savitri lovers, spread over 45 countries, will be pleased to note that their esteemed journal Invocation is completing twelve years of its fruitful and inspiring existence in November this year. Twelve years is not a small period for a serious spiritual journal like Invocation to survive and sustain. ... Now it is high time for the regular readers of Invocation to recall their binding association with the journal. For them it is not just a normal periodical, but their friend, philosopher and guide for the on-going journey on the Sunlit Path. It will riot be an exaggeration to say that Invocation is a sort of umbilical cord between Savitri Bhavan and Savitri lovers at large – hence celebrating twelve years with Invocation is fully justified. ... On behalf of all its appreciative readers we wish to Invocation a happy anniversary and a long life to come.”

#### **Savitri Bhavan on the Internet**

Over recent months the Savitri Bhavan webpage on the Auroville website has undergone a much-needed renovation. We invite our readers to check out the new version, which we intend now to keep updated monthly. The address is:

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

## *Savitri Bhavan Hostel*

As announced in our last issue, the 'First Brick' ceremony for our long planned Hostel building took place in the early morning on March 29, 2010.



This Hostel has been a part of the Master Plan for the Savitri Bhavan complex since the beginning, and it is a great joy that a specified donation has enabled us to make a start on it at last. The aim is to be able to provide very simple temporary accommodation for visiting speakers and teachers, students and researchers, and volunteers offering their services at Savitri Bhavan. The Hostel comprises 9 rooms with attached bathrooms, plus a kitchen and dining area. There are 7 single rooms and 2 double rooms, making it possible to accommodate 11 people.

The construction is progressing well, and it is hoped that the raw structure can be completed in January 2011 with the funds currently available. For finishing the building to make it fully functioning



*The entrance area, seen from Sri Aurobindo's statue, October 2010*

additional funds will be required. Your support is requested and all donations will be most gratefully appreciated. Please consider how you can help to take the Dream of Savitri Bhavan one step further towards completion.



*East front, showing the rooms, seen from the north – with the Picture Gallery in the background*

# *The History and Development of the OM Choir*

*By Narad (Richard Eggenberger)*

*The voice that chants to the creator Fire,  
The symbolled OM, the great assenting Word  
(Savitri, p. 310)*

*The OM Choir is a regular feature of our weekly programme,  
taking place on Tuesday evenings. Here its founder, Narad,  
tells how this unique activity has developed, under the Mother's  
inspiration.*

I have compiled some quotations of Sri Aurobindo's words on OM,  
and as an introduction I wrote the following:

'I have been seeking through sound the Divine Voice; not  
only to hear the heavenly music but to manifest its vibration  
in the collective body of those who are called to help the  
New World descend and by a supreme sympathetic vibration  
to establish a new harmony upon earth.'

My directive was given by the Mother in these words to me in  
1961,

'You must bring down a new music!'

I have come to realize that the New Music will be achieved through  
collective bodies (soul-groups descended upon earth for a specific  
work to advance the evolution) around the world whose prayer and  
intense aspiration will sing one sound, the most powerful word of all  
ages and all the languages of the world, OM, the effectuating word.  
The Mother has said that OM is the signature of the Lord.

The coming year, 2011, will mark fifty years since my first meeting  
with Mother, and Her adesh to me. The meeting lasted about one

hour and there are only a few things that are very clear, as a long time was spent in meditation with Mother. I was twenty-three years old. As I have said in my talk, *Remembering Mother*, after Mother gave me this adesh, I said to Her, 'Mother, I don't know anything about combining words and music.' Mother replied, 'No, no, you must go far above words and bring down the pure music.'

We began as a small group sitting in a circle as Mother had advised. At one point I wrote the following to Mother,

Dearest Mother,

We are meeting once a week, every Saturday evening, aspiring to bring down the new music. I have been thinking about the Mother's organ which is with Padma. Would You feel it to be a good idea for me to play the organ once or twice a week or is it better to work only with the voice at this time?

Mother replied,

It is better without the organ.

A few of us began in the Ashram. Anie remembers that she, Lisa Uberle, Mona and I began. I remember that Mother said

There is a music just above our heads, waiting to come down.

Anie recalls further that Mother said this music is ...

... looking for instruments who have the opening to bring it down and it should not be mental but spontaneous and as a result of meditation and direct opening.

In the very early days of Auroville, not long after we began the Matrimandir Gardens Nursery, we would meet in a part of Bharat Nivas, which was then under construction. It was a very powerful beginning with people from the Nursery, Alan Klass, Mary Helen, Shraddhavan and others. We gathered in a circle, standing, and each opened his or her soul to the Divine Presence and aspired through sound to be one channel for the new music. Certainly a New Music was descending but I had not yet received the inspiration that OM

would be the key and the transforming word. At times our group would sing OM or chant on a syllable while one person would recite lines from *Savitri* or other great poems. In those years I called our aspiration in chant, ‘The Meditation Choir’.

It was in 2003, I believe, that I was given the clear guidance that we should sing only OM and the OM Choir was born. In 2004 a small group would meet in Ashok Acharya’s Recording Studio. From there we would go from venue to venue, until the Video Room was completed in the Ashram and became the home of the OM Choir, and the Hall at Savitri Bhavan became our consecrated venue in Auroville.

Here then are some guidelines that have evolved during the past seven years. They have been revealed to me progressively as we go deeper and deeper and slowly awakened to the knowledge that we are one body, opening as a flower to the sun, to allow the descent of the New Music.

Not to be enamoured of one’s voice, or even of our collective voice, but to become truly an instrument for the Divine to sing His songs of love and transformation through our group soul, is one of the prerequisites, but only one. For here, in the OM Choir, one must leave all the past outside, past ideas of good and bad music, past ideas of harmony and disharmony, of what seems to the ear a discord, and also the feeling that one is doing the chanting.

The concept of singing in the Eastern or the Western tradition, too, must be abandoned. Yet this is not all, for one must prepare the body to be a fit instrument for the New Music that is descending. To build up one’s strength, one’s breath control, to learn how to produce the most beautiful sound of OM one can offer, to practice and develop flexibility, to take care not to strain the voice, are other areas that must be concentrated on to become a malleable, plastic, supple instrument for the Divine Music to descend. We utilize many exercises that have been given to singers for centuries to develop their voices, learn to focus tone, project the voice, to be able to control or completely eliminate vibrato, develop resonance, and a good sense of pitch by listening carefully and then reproducing it, and so forth. And yet many come who are ‘tone deaf’ or hearing impaired, either not hearing a



tone or not able to reproduce it. Still, it has been revealed to me that all are welcome. Some, over time, will develop the ear, some may not, but we are gathered as a collective body, as channels, and it is only the Divine who can judge the sincerity of our aspiration.

Then too, the sense of ego must be put aside. We are not singing, the music is being sent down through us, for ‘*If the kuja is full, how can anything be poured into it?*’ The OM choir is not a platform for individuals to display their voice, beautiful though it may be. It is an intense sadhana through music, using the human body as the instrument for its descent into humanity and into the earth, to heal and transform.

As we work on all these aspects we then enter an area that must be explored more deeply, i.e. the inner realization that we are a group soul called by the Divine to come down for His work in this very special time. One has only to read *The Hour of God* to understand the importance of this age. Then, as we aspire to know this consciously, we begin the process of the ‘inner listening’, as I have termed it, where we unite soul with soul and aspire for the perfection of blend, a higher harmony, a Oneness, achieving through OM the unity that we all are, but have not realized as yet outwardly.

As we open more and more we shall become like a vibrant harp of many strings, a single voice of infinite tones. There is no road map, but we have the constant inner guidance and the Divine Grace supporting our aspiration. Mother told us to sit in a circle and have no preconceived ideas as to what we would come to. One can read Her words about how She played the organ and it is exactly how she instructed me.

Recently I was given another small booklet in which Mother speaks of OM to Shoba-di, one of the finest singers in the Ashram. Here are some extracts from it :

### OM Chanting

One day, being deeply moved by Her formidable voice, I asked the Mother, “Mother, teach me how to chant OM”. The Mother became quite upright, closed Her eyes and started chanting OM. My words cannot express the

experience I had at that time! It was magnificent. I wish we had some recording facility to record both Her recitation and OM chanting. The Mother kept silent for a little while and then started speaking: “Choose an open space like the open sky or sit in front of the sea and chant OM – as I have shown you. If you do it sincerely it will certainly widen your consciousness. You will find a vaster, wider consciousness growing in you.”

She said on another occasion, “When you are ill or you are attacked by some unpleasant element which you want to get rid of – chant OM. It will disappear. You will find so much peace.”

On one of my birthdays I asked: “Mother, how to go within?”

Mother: “Ah! I have spoken about it many times.”

(She keeps silent for a very long time as if in trance then speaks again)

Mother: “Put your body in a comfortable position and start chanting ‘OM’. You will find that you are before a tunnel. A long, narrow tunnel. Go on chanting, go on chanting, intensely, wholeheartedly. You will find that tunnel slowly getting illumined. Go on, go on doing it as often as possible. You will find one day that you have come to the end of the tunnel, and at the core of your heart where the Lord is. It is a long process. But you are sure to arrive at it if you are sincere.”

In the book *Words of the Mother* – Vol. 15, page 37, a disciple asks the Mother,

‘It occurs to me to beg Thee for a key word for japa.’

Mother replies with only one word,

‘OM’

Next year I will be at the Center ‘fundación auromira’, in Colombia, South America, to work together with disciples of Mother and Sri

Aurobindo for an intense period of twelve days of OM Choirs held twice a day. Next month, in the Sri Aurobindo Ashram in Pondicherry a group of thirty people from a factory in Gujarat will come to go deeper into the opening to the New Music through OM. All of them work in one company and begin each day with an OM Choir. Imagine how the world would change if businesses and groups in all countries would begin OM Choirs at the start of their day.

Briefly then, to sum up a few points and describe the procedure of the weekly OM Choir: We gather in concentrated silence. There are now at times sixty to one hundred people attending.

At the center is a candle and around it flowers are arranged.

We begin with a brief but deeply focused meditation.

Next, we begin the exercises to ‘warm up’ the voice, always beginning with a hum. There are numerous exercises to develop flexibility, designed not to strain the vocal chords. After we have prepared our voices we have some moments of concentration.

Then, to heighten our aspiration, a few lines on music, sound, mantra, from *Savitri* or other works of Sri Aurobindo and Mother, are recited, followed again by some moments of concentration.

In the darkened hall, lit only by the pure flame of a single candle, a voice or a number of voices are heard; then, as if a symphony, they are joined by other voices, and the New Music descends and the room is filled with the sound-vibrations of OM. There comes a moment when the collective body feels the completion of the descent and there is again a deep concentration. After this a few lines are recited once more and we prepare for the next OM. Then, after the descent, once again silence, a few words from Mother or Sri Aurobindo, and then the third OM begins.

After some moments of deep concentration we stand for the fourth and final OM of the evening. Those who are unable to stand sit in an erect position.

Now the body is in its most receptive position and at times there is a tendency to sing loudly, forgetting the unity and harmony that must be always foremost in our consciousness. At other times it is a profound

experience of the New Music felt throughout the body, as is also true of the three OM descents when we are seated. In fact, the force is at times so powerful that people have had to leave the room as it was too strong for their body. Yet there are many ‘miraculous’ events of healing as well, but it is best not to go too deeply into this, or the visions that many experience. On the website [sriarobindoashram.info](http://sriarobindoashram.info) one can find more information on the OM Choirs.

There are no wrong notes.

There are no incorrect sounds.

If there is a seeming disharmony it is only harmony seeking for a higher expression.

If there is dissonance it is only consonance preparing to express a greater unity.

Be comfortable, but sit in an erect position. Let the body be at ease. If ego tries to come in push it gently but firmly away. Have no expectations, for it is the hour of the unexpected.

Aspire ardently as one voice for the New Music to come down through these voices gathered here and raised as one to the Supreme.

Lastly, forget about all forms of eastern or western music, forget about everything except the Divine, to whom we offer ourselves as the instruments for His song.



## **An Appeal**

### **Back issues of *Invocation***

If you have back issues of *Invocation* which you do not want to keep, please consider sending them back to us. Many people are approaching us for back issues, but most of them are out of print. We will be happy to receive your old copies, especially if they are in reasonably good condition and can be passed on.

Thanks for thinking of us!

## **Good News !**

We are happy to inform all our well-wishers that renewal of the 100% exemption for Indian tax-payers on donations for Social Sciences Research projects has been received. For information on how to send an offering, please see the back inside cover of this issue.

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

Savitri Bhavan is a project of SAIER  
(Sri Aurobindo International Institute of Educational Research)  
100% exemption is available for offerings from Indian tax-payers  
under section 35 (i) (iii) of the IT Act

Cheques and DDs should be payable to **Auroville Unity Fund (SAIER)** and sent to the address given below

If you have an Auroville Financial Service account, you can transfer an offering to account no. 240001, mentioning "Savitri Bhavan" as the purpose.

If you are offering Rs. 500 or less, please consider sending it by money-order or DD, since the charges for cashing out-station cheques have become very high. If you feel like sending a regular modest offering, it may be better to send it every three months rather than monthly, for the same reason.

### **If you live in India**

If you would like to send your offering through Internet Banking or direct transfer, it should be sent to **State Bank of India : Branch code No. 03160 : Account No. 10237876031**. If you do send an offering in this way, please inform us at the time of sending, so that we can check up with the bank and acknowledge receipt as soon as possible.

### **If you live Abroad**

To send your offering by SWIFT Transfer, please use the following 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 and queries, please contact

Savitri Bhavan, Auroville 605101, Tamil Nadu, INDIA

Phone : +91 (0)413 262 2922

e-mail : 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