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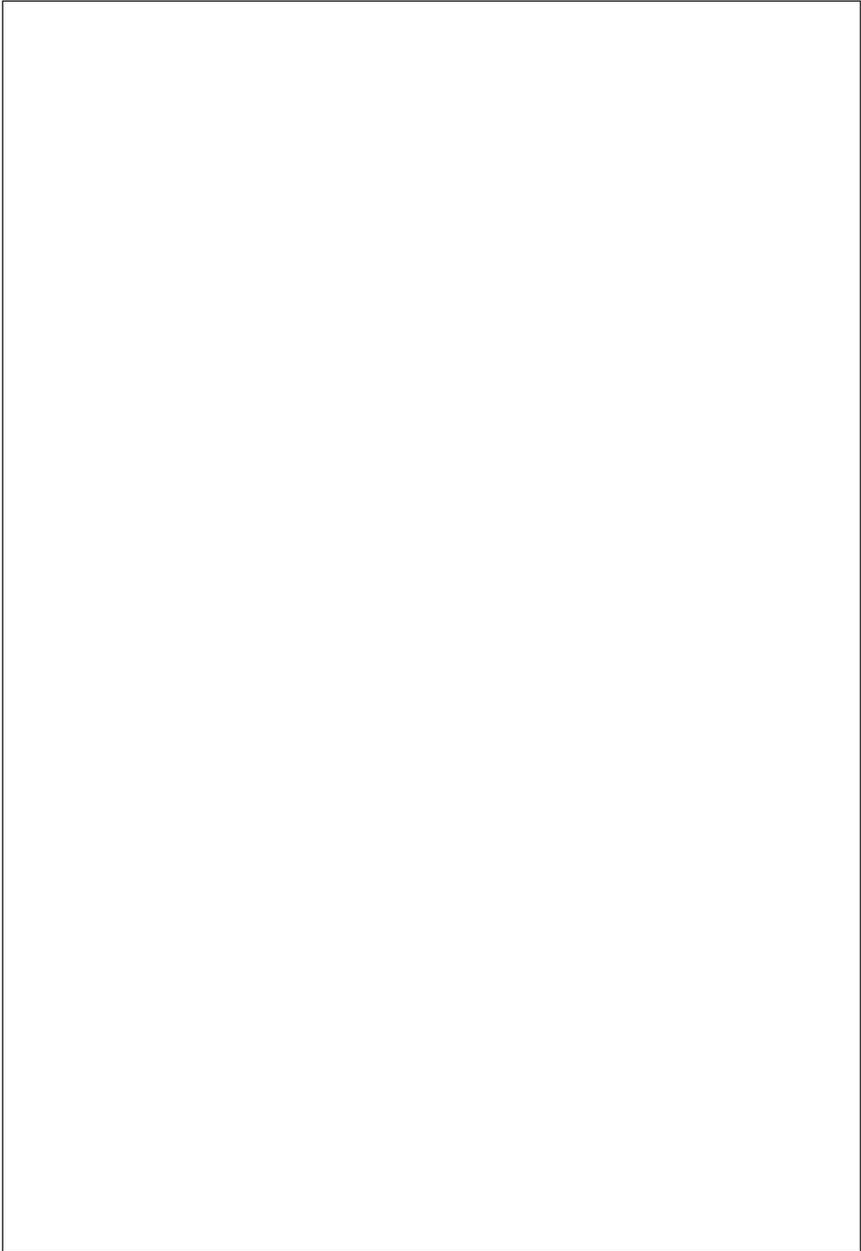


Photo by Ireneo Guerci

Reading Savitri under the banyan tree at the centre of Auroville, 1993

Savitri Bhavan:

a brief history

This fifth issue of Invocation is appearing in November, marking the completion of one year of the journal's existence. November 24th is also the anniversary of Savitri Bhavan, and this seems an appropriate opportunity to outline a brief history of this project, which is gaining the interest and encouragement of more and more well-wishers.

Aurovilians have been reading *Savitri* together since the very earliest days. Narad (Richard Eggenberger), Rod Hemsell, Shyamsunder and others were given blessings by the Mother to read *Savitri* in groups. For several years in the late 1980s and early 1990s a group used meeting regularly under the great banyan tree at the centre of Auroville.

On November 24, 1994 the Auroville Savitri Study Circle was started at the initiative of Mr. Suresh Dey, then Secretary of the Auroville Foundation. The circle met weekly in different locations according to availability, and in addition to *Savitri* reading they added study and discussion of the text, inviting guest speakers to give talks and share their insights.

Out of this study circle was born the dream of Savitri Bhavan - a place where all kinds of materials and activities for study, research and concentration on Sri Aurobindo's revelatory epic could be gathered and made available. A site was granted in the International Zone of Auroville, between the Bharat Nivas and the Matrimandir.

The Foundation Stone for the complex was laid by Nirodbaran, Sri Aurobindo's scribe for *Savitri*, at a ceremony attended by many well-wishers from the Ashram and Auroville, on November 24, 1995.

After the Foundation ceremony, the gatherings of the Study Circle were held under the trees on the site of the future complex. Later, construction of a temporary shelter on the site allowed a greater range of activities. It became possible to store books and other materials, and to hold a variety of classes in the evenings, in addition to the regular Sunday morning gatherings. The talks by guest-speakers became a regular monthly feature, and transport was provided for people from Pondicherry who wished to attend.

In May 1998, at the initiative of our team-member Dr. Beena Naik and with the support of her family in Gujarat, it was possible to organise a a

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benefit performance in Navsari by Mme. Hema Malini and her troupe. This gave a great impetus to fundraising for the realisation of the complex planned to house Savitri Bhavan.

By September 1998 sufficient funds were available to enable us to decide to start construction of a first phase of the complex: a multi-purpose hall, office, and archive/storage space, as a physical base for the further development of the Bhavan. The first brick ceremony took place on December 13, 1998.

This first phase building was completed by August 1999, and Nirodbaran performed the inauguration ceremony on August 8th. First he planted a sapling of “Supramental Sun” (*kadamba, Anthocephalus indicus*), then cut the garland across the door of the building, and lit the ceremonial lamp, before giving a brief address (*see page ?*). This was followed by a silent concentration, then distribution of prasad.

After the ceremony everyone moved into the garden where refreshments were served. Among the 350-odd people from Auroville, Pondicherry and

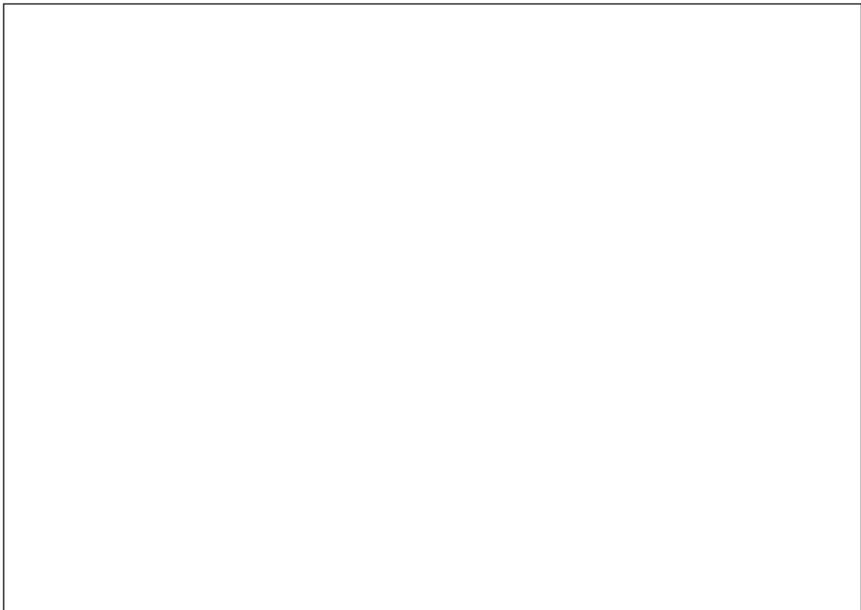
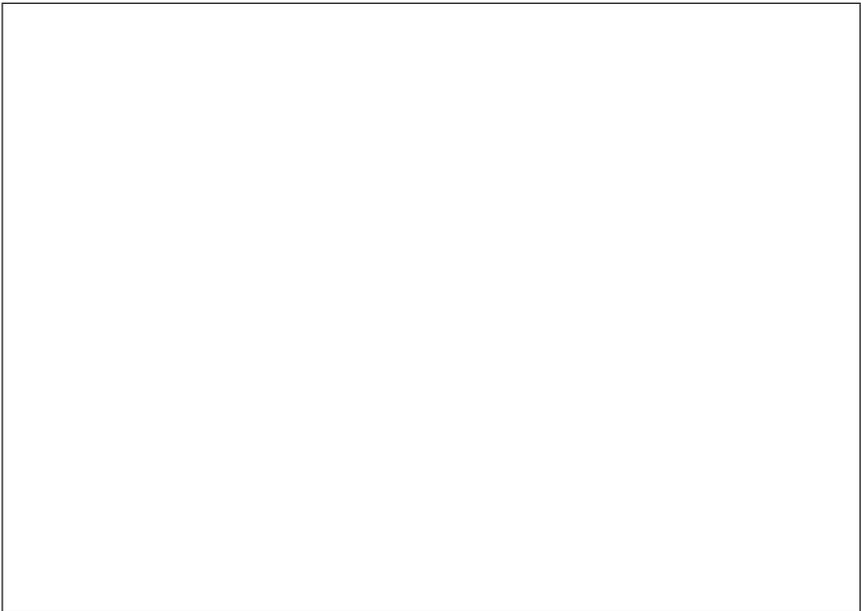


Photo by Helmut

The new building view from the East

elsewhere who attended the function were Shri Manoj Das Gupta of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust; Mr. Balabaskar IAS, Secretary of the Governing Board of the Auroville Foundation, Mrs. Jyoti Mankod, also a member of the Governing Board, Dr. M.V. Nadkarni, Professor Arabind Basu, Shri Madanlal Himatsingka, Kumudben, who looks after the Mother's room in the Ashram, Sunilda's niece Jhumur, and many other friends. The seniormost guest, who delighted us by arriving unexpectedly direct from the airport, was Shri Amba Premi Shah of the Sri Aurobindo Nivas, Baroda, still in full vigour in his 97th year.

As the guests left the compound, the fourth, August 1999 issue of *Invocation* was distributed. Then only a few Aurovilians lingered chatting under the trees, until it was time to clear away the borrowed furniture and refreshment equipment. As dusk fell, 101 candles, placed to outline the form of the building, were lit to burn on into the night, carrying our prayers and aspiration for the continuing intimate presence of the Master and the Mother, and the transforming power of Savitri.



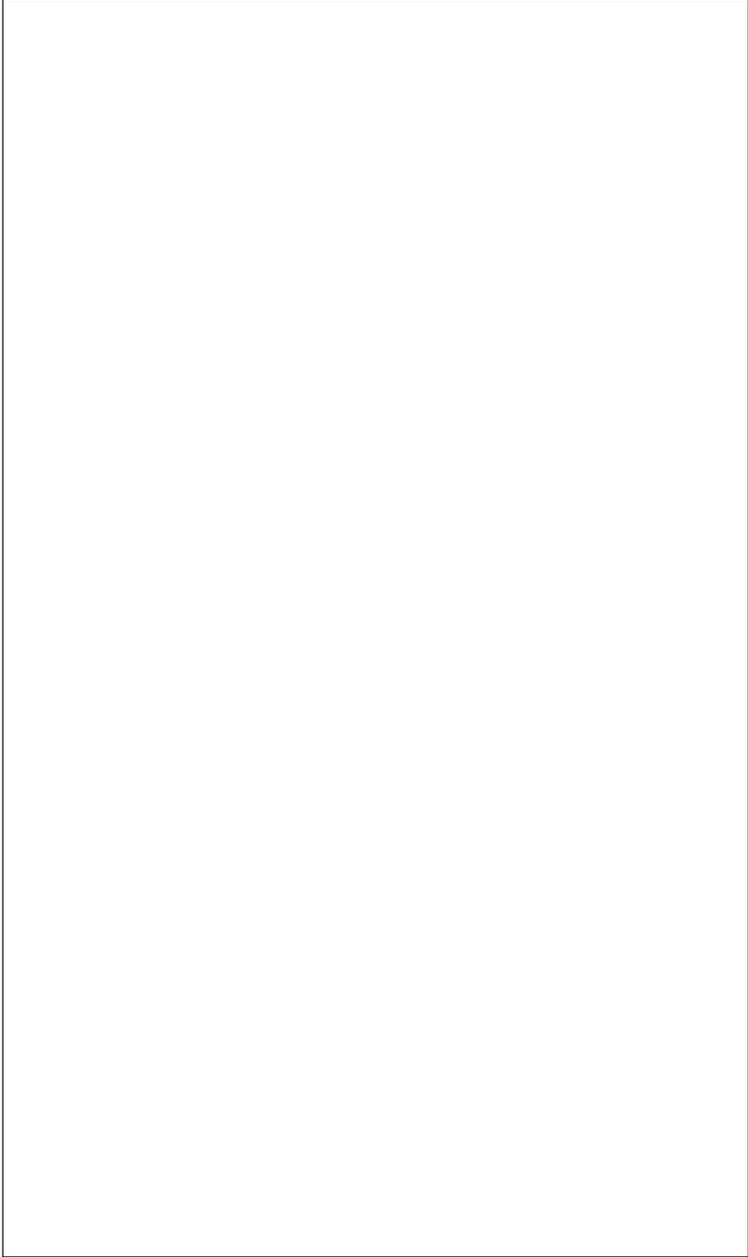


Photo by Lakshminarayan

Nirodbaran cutting the ribbon at the inauguration

Nirodbaran's talk at the inauguration of Savitri Bhavan on August 8, 1999

Dear Friends, Savitri Bhavan team-members particularly – We were very happy to receive your invitation, and share your happiness at the completion of the first section of the complex, your successful endeavour. It reminds me of the year when you invited me to lay the Foundation Stone of the Savitri Bhavan. This time the Bhavan has become a building, and once again I have the honour of inaugurating it ... because I was ‘the scribe of *Savitri*’ - as it says here on the invitation. But I’m not sure what a scribe has to do with the inauguration. The answer may follow, if I have found the right one.

Some of you may be curious to know – here on the invitation it mentions Dr. Nirodbaran. So what has Dr. Nirodbaran got to do with the scribe? I remember when I first came to meet Sri Aurobindo as a doctor, after his accident: he said, “Nirod is no doctor to me. He has come to serve me.” Those were his very words. How I have served, well or ill, I don’t know who will judge. But I have done my best, in spite of many pitfalls and errors.

Now we come to the next step, when I became a scribe. It happened because, as you know, after all his voluminous writing Sri Aurobindo’s eyesight was failing. He could not see properly, he could not see even the big clock on the wall. So then Mother came to the rescue as she always does and said, “Nirod will help you. You will dictate and Nirod will write now.” I don’t think she used the word scribe. So from then on, Sri Aurobindo used to dictate, I would write down his words, copy them, and then the

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mater would go to Nolinida, to make a fair copy or to type. This was the procedure. I have written about all this [in *Twelve Years with Sri Aurobindo*], but still quite a number of you may not know all these interesting details.) And then when it was almost finished, Sri Aurobindo asked me, if I remember correctly, “Is there anything more to be done?” I answered, “Yes – the Book of Death.” He said, “That we shall see later.” That is the way in which, avoiding the straight answer, he kept us in suspense. But he knew that he would not see it again: whatever remained, remained.

This is what he has done. And this are the two things he has said about me: first – “He has come to serve me”; and second – “Nirod is no doctor to me.”

So doctoring I did, scribe I have also been, in the best way I could. I have the satisfaction, whatever anyone may say, that I have done the scribing to the best of my capacity. Today you know, there is a big storm going on in India: people are saying that the sanctity of Savitri has been lost, because we have interfered here and there. You know what is happening, but we don’t care for it. We have done our work, and we are responsible to the Mother and to Sri Aurobindo. This is the way the thing has been done. That is all I have to say.

I am very happy to see that a large number of people have responded to the invitation from these wonderful workers, very sincere people, who have done their best, so that as we can see in a very short time the Savitri Bhavan is coming up. And there is no doubt about it that the Savitri Bhavan will go on growing, and soon we shall all be very happy to receive again another invitation in four or five years time. But I’m sorry, by that time my soul will be, I hope, with the Lord. That is all I have to say.



Photo by Franz

Nirodbaran speaking at the inauguration on August 8, 1999

Sri Aurobindo's Gayatri Mantra

तत्सवितुर्वरेण्यं
रूपं ज्योतिः परस्य
धामणि ।
यन्न सत्येन दीपयेत् ॥

*Tat savitur varam rupam jyotih parasya dhimahi,
yannah satyena dipayet*

Let us meditate on the most auspicious (best)
form of Savitri, on the Light of the Supreme
which shall illumine us with the Truth.

Invocation to the yet-unrisen Sun

During the meditation at the inauguration ceremony of Savitri Bhavan on August 8, we heard Sunil Bhattacharya's composition accompanying the recording made by Huta of the Mother's recitation of passage no 6 from Book Four, Canto 2 of *Savitri*:

*A key to a Light still kept in being's cave,
The sun-word of an ancient mystery's sense,
Her name ran murmuring on the lips of men.*

(p. 367)

These lines refer to the name of Savitri. As guidance to Huta when she was preparing the "Meditations on Savitri" paintings, for this passage the Mother simply wrote the name. Savitri's name itself is a mantra, a key to a light that has not yet emerged, that is still kept secret in the dark cave of being, waiting for its hour to emerge. Sri Aurobindo refers to Savitri's name as "sun-word", for Savitri is "the Divine Word, daughter of the Sun ...", the power of inspired speech which can bring the illumination of the supreme Truth, "... who comes down and is born to save." This sun-word belongs to or carries the meaning of "an ancient mystery" - perhaps a mystery in the sense of a body of esoteric knowledge that can be revealed only to an initiate. In the Author's Note to his epic, Sri Aurobindo points out that the legend of Savitri is "one of the many symbolic myths of the Vedic cycle." And elsewhere he has shown how the images and symbols of the Vedas always had a dual significance - an outer meaning that was accessible to the surface understanding, and an inner, esoteric and psychological sense which revealed itself to the vision of an inner knowledge.

In this symbology, the Sun represents the plenary light of Divine Consciousness. The legend of the golden herds of the Sun, its glorious bright rays, being captured by the powers of darkness and imprisoned in a cave, from which they have to be released and once more revealed, is found not

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only in the Vedas, but in several other ancient traditions. That light reveals itself progressively in human time, as dawn succeeds dawn, bringing ever fresh illuminations to the race.

In Sanskrit the Sun has many names: Surya, Ravi, Pushan, Dinkar, etc. each connected with a particular hour of the day, and expressing a particular function. Savitar, from whom Savitri gains her name, is the Sun that has not yet risen above the horizon; and it refers to the function of setting things in motion, creating, producing, or impelling.

Since Vedic times Savitar has been invoked by countless worshippers in India every morning before sunrise with the “Gayatri mantra”, attributed to Rishi Visvamitra:

*“Tat savitur varenyam
bhargo devasya dhiimahi
dhiyo yo nah pracodayaat”*

*“Let us meditate on that most excellent
light of the divine Sun,
that it may illumine our minds.”*

So Savitri, “the Truth that has come from the Sun”, takes birth in human time to bring a new light, one that has never been seen before, a new illumination carrying a new understanding of the supreme Truth, a new power to save. Awareness of this gives an added resonance to Sri Aurobindo’s choice of this legend as the vehicle for the supreme expression of his vision and work, and to his treatment of it, beginning with The Symbol Dawn, and closing with the dawn of a new era. This theme was uniquely appropriate for him, since the bringing of a new Light and Force to earth was precisely the work for which he and the Mother had taken birth.

Sri Aurobindo gave his own Gayatri mantra:

In a talk at Savitri Bhavan, R.Y.Deshpande pointed out:

“Sri Aurobindo’s Gayatri mantra invokes the Divine light into all the parts and planes of our being. That is how Sri Aurobindo defines Gayatri – as the Word of the Supreme, coming and descending and establishing itself in us, in all the parts of our being.

This Gayatri mantra is slightly different from the traditional one of Vishwamitra, where the invocation of the goddess Gayatri is for the illumination of our intuition, of our perception, of our understanding of things. In Sri Aurobindo's mantra, the emphasis is on the auspicious form — *varam rupam*. It invokes Gayatri in her most auspicious form to come and be in us, amongst us, within us. This is the difference between the two — the first invokes a spiritual perception, the second invokes her as a form in us.

The entire emphasis in Sri Aurobindo's yoga is to deal with form, rather than with intuition, howsoever high it be, for unless that intuition works on a material plane and establishes itself here, it does not become Sri Aurobindo's Gayatri. As his story unfolds, this drift becomes more and more clear to us.

The Vedic rishis certainly had an intuition of the power of the goddess Savitri working in the mortal world, *mrityu loka*, on the earth, the place where we have the evolutionary possibilities that do not exist in other worlds at all. But they may not have had the knowledge of the mechanism, the dynamism, the means to accomplish that transformation in the mortal world. Perhaps it was a little too early for that thing to happen.

With Sri Aurobindo the main difference is that by his yoga — *tapasya* he has prepared the ground required for Savitri to be present in her full form and glory here upon the earth, in the mortal world.

Sri Aurobindo's Gayatri mantra consists of 3 times 8 syllables — 24 syllables in all whereas the original Gayatri mantra of Viswamitra has only 23. I feel that this is pretty significant, this fulfilment of one more completing syllable that has been added by Sri Aurobindo. In this sense a new realm of light is opened out in Sri Aurobindo's Gayatri.

The first question we have to ask is, Who is this Savitri? What is her role, what is her function? The expressive power of the Supreme — what Sri Aurobindo would call Supermind as the creator. It is through the agency of Supermind that the world has come into being. When we are invoking Savitri onto the earth-plane, we are invoking that supreme creative power here into the mortal world, asking her to make it her habitation, a place for her to live, a place where divinity can find itself at home. The Divine can't be very happy with the world as it is now. But now he has sent his power of

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ॐ आनन्दमायि चैतन्यमायि सत्यमायि परमै

OM anandamayi chaitanyemayi
satyamayi parama

Ari Anubhava

OM - She, the Delight
She, the Consciousness
She, the Truth
She, the Supreme

Savitri into the world to accomplish the task. She will prepare the necessary ground here for him to come and inhabit this world.”

All this makes clear why, in composing his music for this particular passage relating to the name of Savitri, Sunil was inspired to arrange two wonderful mantras: first Sri Aurobindo’s Gayatri, followed by evocation of the Supreme Mother.

The Mother’s recitation, accompanied by this powerful music, set a sublime keynote for the life of Savitri Bhavan, which is dedicated to providing a physical base in Auroville for the radiation of the new light. Through the lives of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo, the Dawn of a new Sun has “buried its seed of grandeur in the hours” of earthly time. Though the bearers of the new Dawn have had to withdraw, since “Only a little the god-light can stay”, they have brought “The prescience of a marvellous birth to come”: the new Sun they prepared and heralded is beginning, inevitably, to rise. It will flood the whole earth-life with its glorious golden rays.



Photo by Franz

Dr. Mangesh V. Nadkarni speaking at Savitri Bhavan on August 25, 1999

Savitri's Yoga

*Talk by Dr. Mangesh V. Nadkarni at Savitri Bhavan
on August 25, 1999*

In this session we are concluding the study of the last three Cantos of Book VII of *Savitri* which we started about 8 days ago in the Beach Office of the Sri Aurobindo Society in Pondicherry. But before I take up the last couple of pages set aside for this session, I would like to point out that it is very appropriate that we should hold our concluding session here, because as we shall see, this passage that I am going to present to you today describes a consciousness that Savitri attains towards the end of her Yoga — the Cosmic Consciousness. Savitri has already attained the Gnostic or Supramental Consciousness, and then, when she goes on to attain the Cosmic Consciousness, she feels that the whole world exists within herself. And this is the Reality, this is the Truth. You and I, Auroville, Savitri Bhavan, the whole world, the French and the English and the Indians and Americans and Russians - we all exist in the being of Savitri, and for us she is the Mother. The Divine Mother has done this yoga and Auroville itself primarily exists in her consciousness, it is growing in her consciousness, and there we all belong. And when we talk about the Mother's consciousness, we should remember that the final central truth about it is Unity, Oneness. This whole universe is all a manifestation of the Supreme Divine — that is the experience Savitri has in this last canto of Book VII, and what better place could we ever have to read about that wonderful experience than at Savitri Bhavan situated on the soil of Auroville!

It's also significant that this Study Camp we are concluding today marks the tenth year of our collective *yajna* (sacrifice) in the form of the study of *Savitri*. We began in 1989 and this is 1999, and I feel that the Divine Mother has amply rewarded our *tapasya* (askesis) by bringing into existence Savitri Bhavan and also this building, and many, many receptive minds and hearts in Auroville who are always happy and eager to welcome our study camp.

In fact what has been happening up to now was that on the day that I concluded the Savitri Study Camp in Pondicherry, I used to come out here

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and give a talk at the invitation of friends from Savitri Bhavan; and when this was announced in Pondicherry, busloads of people also used to come out here on their own initiative. This is happening formally for the first time today, but it has been happening informally for several years. Since it was happening informally, we thought why shouldn't we give it a formal shape, so when I came here in March last, we decided in consultation with the members of the Savitri Bhavan team that this time we would hold the concluding session here. And by the Mother's Grace everything has come right for this meeting of ours, including the weather.

It's difficult to talk about the seven cantos of Book VII even in a summary fashion in one brief session. This Book describes Savitri's Yoga. Let us see backtrack a little and begin by considering what Savitri received as a commandment from the Supreme seated within her heart. If you remember, this commandment was given to her in Canto 2. I'll read a few relevant lines from the text. The commandment Savitri receives is in fact the yoga of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother in a nutshell, as it was revealed to Savitri by a Voice which came from the highest levels of her own being. For those of you who have a copy of the text with them, this is on page 476:

*The Voice replied: "Remember why thou cam'st:
Find out thy soul, recover thy hid self,
In silence seek God's meaning in thy depths,
Then mortal nature change to the divine.*

...

*Conquer thy heart's throbs, let thy heart beat in God:
Thy nature shall be the engine of his works,
Thy voice shall house the mightiness of his Word:
Then shalt thou harbour my Force and conquer Death."*

From this point on, we have the description of various kinds of yoga that Savitri pursues one after the other. During my discussion of these, I pointed out that it was Savitri's mission to try out various yogas, to rid them of their excesses and prepare them, as it were, for the modern man. So she follows yogas of various kinds, but the central place is given to the yoga of the Psychic. That is the yoga that Savitri follows, and that is the yoga that she

has given to mankind, and it is described in Canto 5, which is “The Finding of the Soul”, where we read how Savitri finds her soul.

In Canto 2, for example, we are given a very clear description of the Parts and Planes of Being, for one of the aspects of Savitri’s yoga is that the yogi must be aware of the various parts and planes of his or her own being.

In Canto 3 we are given the yoga of the inner mind, the inner vital, the inner being, and we are shown how these inner centres have to be opened up so that they receive the Light, the Knowledge and the Ananda from above - all this is beautifully described.

Then we come to Canto 4, in which Savitri meets the three Madonnas, the Madonna of Compassion, the Madonna of Power and the Madonna of Light. I tried to point out that Savitri must have met these Madonnas on the overmental level – these are goddesses of the Overmental. The problem here is that these goddesses are triple – they are not triune. They cannot combine their Light, Compassion and Power together. If Power goes one way, Wisdom goes another, and then Compassion goes a third way, the result is, as we can see, that each of these powers becomes ineffective in its manifestation on earth and even breeds a perverted version of herself in the earth-consciousness. Savitri sees the three Madonnas, and also their perversions, and assures the Madonnas that one day she will come back and bring a force that can combine all their strengths together, so that as a kind of triune power they will be able to bring succour, help, redemption for the whole of mankind.

Then Savitri proceeds, and in Canto 5 we get a beautiful description of Savitri’s soul or psychic being uniting with the *jivatman*. In Savitri’s case the *jivatman* is none other than the Adishakti, the Supreme Mother herself. Their union is described, and as a sequel to this union, we are also given the yoga of the Kundalini. Sri Aurobindo has stated that in his yoga he has brought together the Vedantic and the Tantric paths. He has pointed out that the Tantric yogas were necessary because the Tantra had some of the secrets of transforming human nature. He says that that is why he has made use of the tantric techniques in his Integral Yoga, but not in the way they are found in the tantric text-books ... he modified them to suit his purpose. In the tantric path there is the deliberate raising of the Kundalini. In Sri Aurobindo’s

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path the raising of the Kundalini is not a physical exercise, here the raising of the Kundalini is left to the will of the Divine Mother and she does it in her own way. You do not have to physically arouse the Kundalini through *pranayama* or any other exercises; instead the Supreme Mother, Mahakundalini herself, comes into your being and then causes the Kundalini to rise. The rising of the Kundalini and the blooming of all the lotuses, and the Kundalini from the *muladhara* merging or meeting with the Shakti in the *sahasradalapadma* at the crown of the head — all these things are important, necessary, and Sri Aurobindo says he has incorporated them in his Yoga. So although he doesn't use the old tantric techniques, he has assimilated the principles involved in the Tantra into his Integral Yoga. We see this happening to Savitri in Canto 5, and by the end of it she has achieved the Supramental consciousness and also offered her *prakriti*, the whole of her natural being, for transformation: as an individual she has achieved perfection.

But, as I have very often said, the aim of Sri Aurobindo's yoga was never to prepare a perfect freak — somebody who has achieved marvellous yogic siddhis in his or her individual life. Sri Aurobindo was always asking the question, "What more has to be done to enable humanity to acquire this siddhi?" So now Savitri has achieved this tremendous thing called the Gnostic Consciousness. Does that ensure that other human beings will automatically benefit from it? And the answer was 'no'. So Savitri had a further responsibility, and the Voice tells her, "Please don't expose whatever you have won, hide it within your heart and try to work for the achievement of a gnostic community." Until a gnostic community is established, the full Divine manifestation will not take place. And you have been born here not for the sake of any personal triumph, so that one person could rise higher than anyone else in the entire spiritual history has ever done before — that's not the glory that the Mother and Sri Aurobindo wanted. What they wanted is that as a result of their tapasya, humanity should be able to accept and follow this path. And how to achieve that? Savitri then follows what is described in Canto 6 — a yoga of purification, of emptying herself. She empties herself totally and becomes a pure conduit, a pure channel for the Divine Force to descend through, and the Superconscious Force descends on humanity through Savitri's being. So as Sri Aurobindo says in *The Mother*,

you have the aspiration that calls from below and the Supreme Grace that answers from above, but in addition to these two, something else is needed — and that is the Mother's Presence, the Mother's Power. In what way that is necessary is described in Canto 6 where we are given the yoga of Nirvana. Sri Aurobindo emphasises that the yoga of Nirvana is a necessary step for certain purposes. Savitri goes through this. Her aim is not to lose herself, not to merge herself entirely into the Supreme Consciousness, but this yoga of Nirvana enables her to purify and empty herself.

You see, one of the things that I have been talking about over the last seven or eight days is that when you do tapasya, in whatever field it may be, whether in sports or teaching or anything else, you get some siddhis. And the same thing is true in spiritual life — we all get siddhis. But then we tend to become so enamoured of our own siddhis that we begin to hug them and don't want to give them up. And if you hug your siddhis, you become a frozen saint and there is no more spiritual progress for you. So one of the essential things this yoga demands is a constant growth, a constant giving-up, a constant surrender, a constant emptying — and the great necessity for this is what is emphasised at this stage in Savitri's yoga.

And in Canto 7, which we are studying now, we are shown how, now that Savitri has opened herself to a gnostic consciousness, to a consciousness that is beyond what the Gita calls the *kshara* and *akshara*, the being and the non-being are fused, from this level she experiences the Cosmic Consciousness. And that is what the passage I am going to present to you talks about, what the Cosmic Consciousness is like. Please turn to page 556.

*Her spirit saw the world as living God;
It saw the One and knew that all was He.*

The Cosmic Consciousness can be achieved at various levels. You can achieve it at the vital level, at the mental level, at the levels above the mind ... and depending on the level at which you achieve it, there are corresponding siddhis. Savitri achieves it at the gnostic level, at the supramental level. And as a result,

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Her spirit saw the world as living God;

As I was pointing out during the morning session, the cosmic consciousness is needed because when you withdraw your consciousness from the surface reality of this world, what is called the world of *kshara*, the world of becoming, which changes every minute, which is never the same, when you withdraw yourself, you come to another level of consciousness which is described as the consciousness of the Eternal, the *akshara*. Now this consciousness of the *akshara* is wonderful, except that if you take your poise there for far too long, you lose your contact with the real world. So how can you maintain this inner detachment from the real world, focus in the consciousness of the One, and yet be able to deal with the Many of the real world? How do you do that? In the traditional yogas the way has been to try for the cosmic consciousness, so that your consciousness is made so wide, so universal, that there is no possibility of its becoming once again tainted by the ego and therefore narrow, even when you are dealing with the world. Once you have achieved the cosmic consciousness you are dealing with the world, not from the old egoistic consciousness, but from a wider consciousness which sees the whole world as one manifestation of the supreme Divine; and you yourself are one of the faces of the Divine, one of the centres of the Divine. This is the traditional reason for trying to achieve the cosmic consciousness.

In Savitri's case that experience has now come to her in a very stupendous way, and she finds that

*Her spirit saw the world as living God;
It saw the One and knew that all was He.*

Now for Savitri this was not a mental formation — this was a direct experience: the whole world for her now was the supreme Divine. There is no imperfection in this world, there are no scars in this world, everything is the Supreme Lord, everything is throbbing with God's presence.

She knew him as the Absolute's self-space,

Now as we read *Savitri* we come across lines and passages, where the only appropriate comment, as I sometimes say, is *maunam* — silence, a silent contemplation of the lines. Just read the passages, read them a second time, and listen to the words and let them sink into your consciousness and open their import to you. We don't want any other commentary than that. Here we come to a passage of that nature.

*She knew him as the Absolute's self-space
One with her self and ground of all things here
In which the world wanders seeking for the Truth
Guarded behind its face of ignorance:
She followed him through the march of endless Time.
All Nature's happenings were events in her;*

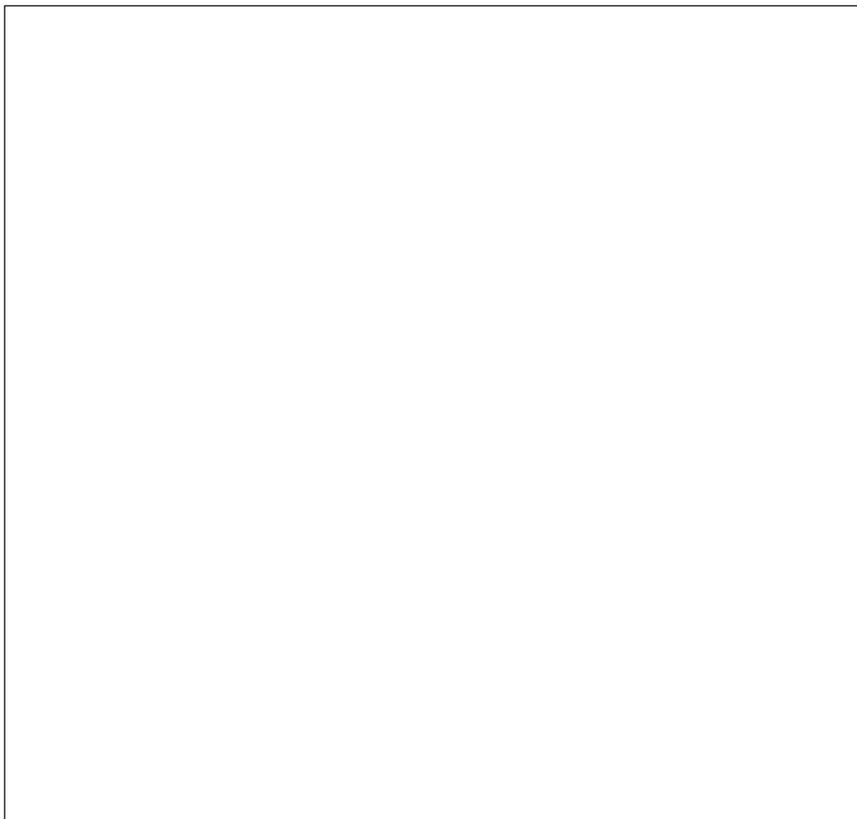
If bombs are dropped somewhere in Europe, a person who has the cosmic consciousness will feel that they are being dropped within him — that is the kind of identification with the whole world that comes with the cosmic consciousness. So Savitri felt that

*All Nature's happenings were events in her;
The heart-beats of the cosmos were her own,
All beings thought and felt and moved in her;*

Everybody lived and felt in her, within her own being.

*She inhabited the vastness of the world,
Its distances were her nature's boundaries,
Its closenesses her own life's intimacies.
Her mind became familiar with its mind,
Its body was her body's larger frame
In which she lived and knew herself in it
One, multitudinous in its multitudes.*

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She was one in the multitude, and everyone in the multitude was herself. This is a kind of feeling that is difficult to capture or describe in words. The English language has not so far been used to describe this kind of an experience. Sri Aurobindo is pulling it by its tail, as it were, and trying to enrich its resources and use it for descriptions of this kind.

*She was a single being, yet all things;
The world was her spirit's wide circumference,
The thoughts of others were her intimates,*

Any thought which arose in anyone else was also intimate to her.

*Their feelings close to her universal heart,
Their bodies her many bodies kin to her;*

There were experiences like this when the Mother was in her body in the Ashram; when certain things happened anywhere in the Ashram, eruptions would appear on the Mother's body. She didn't have to be told that such and such a person had done such and such a thing — her body responded automatically to tell her that this thing which ought not to have happened was happening. This is not make-believe, this is not fiction, this is the result of the cosmic consciousness.

*The thoughts of others were her intimates,
Their feelings close to her universal heart,
Their bodies her many bodies kin to her;
She was no more herself but all the world.*

She was no longer just one individual, she was the whole world itself.

*Out of the infinitudes all came to her,
Into the infinitudes sentient she spread,
Infinity was her own natural home.
Nowhere she dwelt, her spirit was everywhere,
The distant constellations wheeled around her;*

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She felt all the stars, the planets, as parts of her being, and that the entire movement of the universe was taking place with her at its the centre.

*The distant constellations wheeled around her;
Earth saw her born, all worlds were her colonies,*

Her colonies were not restricted to the earth alone, but all the mental worlds, the vital worlds, the subtle worlds, she felt as colonies of her own being.

*The greater worlds of life and mind were hers;
All Nature reproduced her in its lines,
Its movements were large copies of her own.
She was the single self of all these selves,
She was in them, and they were all in her.
This first was an immense identity
In which her own identity was lost:
What seemed herself was an image of the Whole.*

Then comes a beautiful passage where

She was a subconscious life of tree and flower,

When a tree blossomed, or a rose blossomed on a bush, Savitri would feel that the rose blossomed within her own being, within her own consciousness. She identified herself with the sap of the tree rising up its trunk, and felt that sap was rising in her. This means that her identification was not just with the human world. Her identification was with the entire sentient world — trees, birds, animals, everywhere.

*She was a subconscious life of tree and flower,
The outbreak of the honied buds of spring;
She burned in the passion and splendour of the rose,*

If the rose has any splendour, if the rose has any passion, Savitri felt that the rose was manifesting, expressing her own inner splendour, her own inner passion.

*She was the red heart of the passion-flower,
The dream-white of the lotus in its pool.*

Now these are not very distant things. In the Mother's *Prayers and Meditations*, there is a particular prayer I would like you to read to see how close this passage is to an experience the Mother once described. It comes in *Prayers and Meditations*, April 7, 1917. [see page 27]

*She was a subconscious life of tree and flower,
The outbreak of the honied buds of spring;
She burned in the passion and splendour of the rose,
She was the red heart of the passion-flower,
The dream-white of the lotus in its pool.*

It was not for nothing that when Sri Aurobindo was writing *Savitri*, very often the next morning he would come to the Mother and read out to her some of the passages he had written the previous night — and you know what the Mother used to say. She used to protest, “O Lord, you have exposed all my secrets!” All the secrets of her own sadhana, of her own yoga, were there.

Now it is very tempting, as I have said before in my talks, to extrapolate from *Savitri* to the Mother's life, and taking help from the information about her sadhana based on other material now available, to build various kinds of theories about Mother's life. But I desist from doing this after a point, because it is not a healthy occupation. *Savitri* after all is poetry and while the truth of *Savitri* described in it is the truth of the Mother who lived with us, trying to apply every line from here to the life of the Mother is not, I think, a very wise occupation. *Savitri* also has its special place as a work of art. As I said, the inner truth of *Savitri*'s life was the truth also of the Mother's life. But still this is a work of art, there is a fictional element, Sri Aurobindo had a certain framework which he had to use, he didn't want to take too-great liberties with the legend and so on. Therefore if events from the Mother's life shed more light and enable you to gain a better understanding of some passages from *Savitri*, that's the thing that's worth doing — not trying to go

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back and say, “Oh, this is what is said in *Savitri*, so this must have happened to the Mother.” That I think is a very risky kind of game, because none of us is really a yogi of such a height that we can say “This is exactly where the Mother was, I know for sure”. So *Prayers and Meditations* is a very good companion book to *Savitri*, there are many, many passages in it which mention the kinds of experiences that Savitri herself also goes through.

So let us continue. I will make sure to conclude well before four so that those of you who want to go to Matrimandir for a darshan, for a visit, will be able to stand in the queue by 4.30 and won't feel disappointed.

*She was a subconscious life of tree and flower,
The outbreak of the honied buds of spring;
She burned in the passion and splendour of the rose,
She was the red heart of the passion-flower,
The dream-white of the lotus in its pool.
Out of subconscious life she climbed to mind,
She was thought and the passion of the world's heart,
She was the godhead hid in the heart of man,
She was the climbing of his soul to God.*

The evolution starts from dead matter, and then manifests life, then manifests more and more complex forms of life, and then we come to mind, and from mind it is rising beyond the mind, and Savitri now felt it is she who is rising along the evolutionary route.

*Out of subconscious life she climbed to mind,
She was thought and the passion of the world's heart,
She was the godhead hid in the heart of man,
She was the climbing of his soul to God.
The cosmos flowered in her, she was its bed.
She was Time and the dreams of God in Time;*

Time is the field for the manifestation. When you talk about the manifestation, then you think of Time and Space. Manifestation, the becoming,

becomes possible because of the Mother — she makes the becoming possible.
So the poet says

*She was Time and the dreams of God in Time;
She was Space and the wideness of his days.
From this she rose where Time and Space were not;*

She goes beyond this, to a level where there is no Time and no Space.

*The superconscient was her native air,
Infinity was her movement's natural space;
Eternity look out from her on Time.*

Now here we conclude our reading, our study of Canto 7, Book VII. It has been a very exciting journey for us, following Savitri's yogic path. And as I pointed out, in one of her prayers the Mother says, "O Lord, you are asking me to try out various paths of yoga, so that ultimately I may be able to bring them together and offer a kind of a synthetic yoga." (These are my words, the Mother's words are different). This is what we have seen in the various kinds of things that Savitri experiences in the course of her yoga which is described in this book.

You have been listening to me for the last 8 days, two and a half hours or two hours every morning. I must now conclude this session. But before I do so, I would like to read out to you a prayer that is a favourite of many people here, to express our gratitude to the Divine Mother.

And I would also like to add that those of us who have been participating in this Savitri Study Circle, and we have been doing this for the last 10 years, feel very grateful for the privilege given to us to come here and hold our concluding session. This Savitri is that spirit which unites, and so wherever you belong - to the Ashram or anywhere else, to this country, that country, as I said in the beginning, we all live in the Mother's consciousness; and if we live in the Mother's consciousness there is in fact no reason for us to feel any difference between ourselves. If you feel any difference, you are yourself driving yourself out of the Mother's consciousness. So Unity is the name of this game, and we are all

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united in the Mother's consciousness and Savitri is the presiding spirit of this consciousness and we feel happy to be here.

Now I will conclude with this last prayer:

O Thou, whom at first sight I knew for the Lord of my being and my God, receive my offering. Thine are all my thoughts, all my emotions, all the sentiments of my heart, all my sensations, all the movements of my life. Each cell of my body, each drop of my blood. I am absolutely and altogether thine, thine without reserve. What thou wilt of me, that I shall be. Whether thou choosest for me life or death, happiness or sorrow, pleasure or suffering, all that comes to me from Thee will be welcome. Each one of thy gifts will be always for me a gift divine bringing with it the Supreme Felicity.

The Mother's meditation of April 7, 1917

(Sri Aurobindo's translation)

A deep concentration seized on me, and I perceived that I was identifying myself with a single cherry-blossom, then through it with all cherry-blossoms, and, as I descended deeper in the consciousness, following a stream of bluish force, I became suddenly the cherry-tree itself, stretching towards the sky like so many arms its innumerable branches laden with their sacrifice of flowers. Then I heard distinctly this sentence:

“Thus hast thou made thyself one with the soul of the cherry-trees and so thou canst take note that it is the Divine who makes the offering of this flower-prayer to heaven.”

When I had written it, all was effaced; but now the blood of the cherry-tree flows in my veins and with it flows an incomparable peace and force. What difference is there between the human body and the body of a tree? In truth, there is none: the consciousness which animates them is identically the same.

Then the cherry-tree whispered in my ear:

“It is in the cherry-blossom that lies the remedy for the disorders of the spring.”

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We dream of an environment in Auroville

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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

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