

Invocation

Savitri
B H A V A N

No.17

Study notes and Newsletter

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The Adoration of the Divine Mother

*At the head she stands of birth and toil and fate,
In their slow round the cycles turn to her call;
Alone her hands can change Time's dragon base.
Hers is the mystery the Night conceals;
The spirit's alchemist energy is hers;
She is the golden bridge, the wonderful fire.
The luminous heart of the Unknown is she,
A power of silence in the depths of God;
She is the Force, the inevitable Word,
The magnet of our difficult ascent,
The Sun from which we kindle all our suns,
The Light that leans from the unrealised Vasts,
The joy that beckons from the impossible,
The Might of all that never yet came down.
All Nature dumbly calls to her alone
To heal with her feet the aching throb of life
And break the seals on the dim soul of man
And kindle her fire in the closed heart of things.
All here shall be one day her sweetness' home,
All contraries prepare her harmony;
Towards her our knowledge climbs, our passion gropes;
In her miraculous rapture we shall dwell,
Her clasp shall turn to ecstasy our pain.
Our self shall be one self with all through her.
In her confirmed because transformed in her,
Our life shall find in its fulfilled response
Above, the boundless hushed beatitudes,
Below, the wonder of the embrace divine.*

A Savitri Acronym

S = SRI

A = AUROBINDO'S

V = VISION

I = IN SUPRAMENTAL

T = TRUTH

R = REVEALED

I = INTEGRALLY

(contributed by Gopal Bhagavat of Yelahanka)

What does the Lord want ?

An Unpublished talk of the Mother to Huta

It was on 4th October 1963, when I went to the Mother. I showed her a message given by her :

*“What have you given to the Lord or done for Him that you ask the Mother to do something for You?
She does only the Lord’s work.”*

I wondered, what does the Lord want as He has everything? What can be done for Him, as He is capable of doing everything?

And here is the Mother’s reply :

“The Lord doesn’t demand anything except Surrender. Your wish, your want, your will, your thoughts and feelings, you must offer to Him without reserve, and let His will, thoughts, feelings, wish and wants become yours. In fact, let His vibrations become your vibrations. Then there is no question of such miseries and troubles. You get the Lord and you get everything. But it can only be done when you surrender totally to Him and to Him only. Not otherwise.

Well, I don’t say that the complete surrender is very easy. To give up everything is indeed difficult. Nevertheless, give everything : your sorrows, pains, difficulties and sufferings, to the Lord and tell Him, ‘These are Yours, take care of them, this is Your responsibility and not mine.’ Try this and you will find the difference. Surrender everything to Him and say, ‘Thee, Thee, only Thee, O Lord.’

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

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

And when I questioned, "This rough, ugly and wretched world, will it ever become a perfect golden divine world?" the Mother's answer was :

"It is bound to happen because it cannot be otherwise."

Further she said :

And when I questioned, 'This rough
become a perfect golden divine World ?

The Mother's answer is, "It is boun

Further She said, " This world is

animals, trees, plants etc.. etc. are m

Recently scientists have tried to ~~material world~~
~~human beings etc. etc.~~ and have come to
~~elementary particles (electrons, protons)~~ the
~~living creatures upon the earth are not~~
~~energy is really conscious energy and~~
~~behind the scene there is something~~
~~The great Conscious Power,~~
~~The Supreme Who holds everything in Him~~

Goal and to manifest Himself in all, an

He Who is everything." OM.

Facsimile of part of Huta's notes of the Mother's talk to her

This world is a condensation of energy. What we see - human beings, animals, trees, plants etc. etc., are merely a condensation of energy and nothing else. Recently scientists have tried to find out all about the material world, and have come to the conclusion that everything is made of elementary particles (electrons, protons) that are nothing but condensed energy. But of course energy is really conscious energy and behind everything there is only the One, the great Conscious Power, the Supreme who holds everything in Him and wills to carry everyone to his Goal and to manifest Himself in all, and thus the world ought to become only He who is everything."

OM.

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ugly and wretched world - would it ever

nd to be because it cannot be otherwise."
~~condensation of energy~~
~~an atom; what we see - human beings,~~ &
~~condensation of energy~~
erely ~~an atom~~ and nothing else. -

to find out all about the ~~material~~
~~everything is made of~~
the conclusion that ~~the earth and the~~
~~it are nothing but condensed energy~~
~~thing but an atom!~~ But of course!
~~behind everything there is only the One~~
~~there is only one the greater Power -~~
~~everyone to his~~
~~and wills to carry them all to their~~

and thus the world ought to become only

on October 4 1963, with the Mother's handwritten corrections.

Sri Aurobindo on Savitri

Extracts from a letter of 1947

*This long letter appears amongst the Author's Letters on Poem at the end of SABCL Vol. 29. It was written in response to a request from Amal Kiran, who had received comments on Sri Aurobindo's poetry from a literary friend in Bombay. It contains many interesting clarifications about Sri Aurobindo's intentions in writing *Savitri*, some of which we bring together here.*

He begins :

You have asked me to comment on your friend X's comments on my poetry and especially on *Savitri*. But, first of all, it is not usual for a poet to criticize the criticisms of his critics though a few perhaps have done so; the poet writes for his own satisfaction, his own delight in poetical creation or to express himself and he leaves his work for the world, and rather for posterity than for the contemporary world, to recognise or to ignore, to judge and value according to its perception or its pleasure. ... However, since you have asked me, I will answer, as between ourselves, in some detail and put forward my own comments on his comments and my own judgment on his judgments. It may be rather long; for if such things are done, they may as well be clearly and thoroughly done. I may also have something to say about the nature and intention of my poem and the technique necessitated by the novelty of the intention and nature. (p. 785)

At the end of the letter, he remarks :

I had intended as the main subject of this letter to say something about technique and the inner working of the intuitive method by which *Savitri* was and is being created and of the intention and plan of the poem ... That was to be the body of the letter and the rest only a preface. But the preface has become so long that it has crowded out the body. I shall have to postpone it to a later occasion when I have more time. (p. 801)

Here are a few extracts from the body of the letter :

The length of *Savitri* :

I have said that his objections are sometimes inapplicable. I mean by this that they might have some force with regard to another kind of poetry but not to a poem like *Savitri*. He says, to start with, that if I had had a stronger imagination, I would have written a very different poem and a much shorter one. Obviously, and to say it is a truism; if I had had a different kind of imagination, whether stronger or weaker, I would have written a different poem and perhaps one more suited to his taste; but it would not have been *Savitri*. It would not have fulfilled the intention or had anything of the character, meaning, world-vision, description and expression of spiritual experience which was my object in writing this poem. Its length is an indispensable condition for carrying out its purpose and everywhere there is this length, ... in every part, in every passage, in almost every canto or section of a canto. It ... aims not at a minimum but at an exhaustive exposition of its world-vision or world-interpretation. One artistic method is to select a limited subject and even on that to say only what is indispensable, what is centrally suggestive and leave the rest to the imagination or understanding of the reader. Another method which I hold to be equally artistic or, if you like, architectural is to give a large and even a vast, a complete interpretation, omitting nothing that is necessary, fundamental to the completeness: that is the method I have chosen in *Savitri*. (p. 791-92)

A legend and a symbol :

His objection of *longeur* would be perfectly just if the description of the night and the dawn had been simply of physical night and physical dawn; but here the physical night and physical dawn are, as the title of the canto clearly suggests, a symbol, through what may be called a real symbol of an inner reality and the main purpose is to describe by suggestion the thing symbolized; here it is a relapse into Inconscience broken by a slow and difficult return of consciousness followed by a brief but splendid and prophetic outbreak of spiritual light leaving behind it the “day” of ordinary human consciousness in which the prophecy has to be worked out. The whole of *Savitri* is, according to the title of the poem, a legend that is a symbol and this opening canto is, it may be said, a key beginning and

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announcement. So understood there is nothing here otiose or unnecessary; all is needed to bring out by suggestion some aspect of the thing symbolized and so start adequately the working out of the significance of the whole poem. It will of course seem much too long to a reader who does not understand what is written or, understanding, takes no interest in the subject; but that is unavoidable. (p. 792-93)

Poetic technique

The critic had objected to repetition of some phrases of a similar meaning, “sombre Vast”, “unsounded Void”, “opaque Inane” and “vacant Vasts” in the passage describing the Dawn in Canto One, and had especially condemned their occurrence in the same place at the end of the line. Sri Aurobindo comments:

What was important for me was to keep constantly before the view of the reader ... the ever-present sense of the Inconscience in which everything is occurring. It is the frame as well as the background without which all the details would either fall apart or stand out only as separate incidents. That necessity lasts until there is the full outburst of the dawn and then it disappears; each phrase gives a feature of this Inconscience proper to its place and context. ... (p. 793)

*In connection with the second point, Sri Aurobindo goes on to elucidate the kind of blank verse used in *Savitri*.*

As for the occurrence of the phrases in the same place each in its line, that is a rhythmic turn helpful, one might say necessary to bring out the intended effect, to emphasise this reiteration and make it not only understood but felt. It is not the result of negligence or an awkward and inartistic clumsiness, it is intentional and part of the technique. The structure of the pentameter blank verse in *Savitri* is of its own kind and different in plan from the blank verse that has come to be ordinarily used in English poetry. It dispenses with enjambment or uses it very sparingly and only when a special effect is intended; each line must be strong enough to stand by itself, while at the same time it fits harmoniously into the sentence or paragraph like stone added to stone; the sentence consists usually of one, two, three or four lines, more rarely

five or six or seven: a strong close for the line and a strong close for the sentence are almost indispensable except when some kind of inconclusive cadence is desirable; here there must be no laxity or diffusiveness in the rhythm or in the metrical flow anywhere, - there must be a flow but not a loose flux. This gives an added importance to what comes at the close of the line and this placing is used very often to give emphasis and prominence to a key phrase or a key idea, especially those which have to be often reiterated in the thought and vision of the poem so as to recall attention to things that are universal or fundamental or otherwise of the first consequence - whether for the immediate subject or in the total plan. It is this use that is served here by the reiteration at the end of the line. (p. 793-94)

The right inspiration and the right transcription of it :

He continues:

I have not anywhere in *Savitri* written anything for the sake of mere picturesqueness or merely to produce a rhetorical effect; what I am trying to do everywhere in the poem is to express exactly something seen, something felt or experienced; ... When the expression has been found, I have to judge, not by the intellect or by any set poetical rule, but by an intuitive feeling, whether it is entirely the right expression and, if it is not, I have to change and go on changing until I have received the absolutely right inspiration and the right transcription of it and must never be satisfied with any *à peu près* or imperfect transcription even if that makes good poetry of one kind or another. (p.794)

I have enough respect for truth not to try to cover up an imperfection; my endeavour would be rather to cure the recognized imperfection; if I have not poetical genius, at least I can claim a sufficient, if not an infinite capacity for painstaking: that I have sufficiently shown by my long labour on *Savitri*. Or rather, since it was not labour in the ordinary sense, not a labour of painstaking construction, I may describe it as an infinite capacity for waiting and listening for the true inspiration and rejecting all that fell short of it, however good it might seem from a lower standard until I got that which I felt to be absolutely right. (p.795)

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Critical appreciation of a new kind of poetry :

Savitri is the record of a seeing, of an experience which is not of the common kind and is often very far from what the general human mind sees and experiences. You must not expect appreciation or understanding from the general public or even from many at the first touch; as I have pointed out, there must be a new extension of consciousness and aesthesis to appreciate a new kind of mystic poetry. Moreover if it is really new in kind, it may employ a new technique, not perhaps absolutely new, but new in some or many of its elements: in that case old rules and canons and standards may be quite inapplicable; ... We have to see whether what is essential to poetry is there and how far the new technique justifies itself by new beauty and perfection, and a certain freedom of mind from old conventions is necessary if our judgment is to be valid and rightly objective. (p. 794-95)

One who has had the kind of experience which *Savitri* sets out to express or who, not having it, is prepared by his temperament, his mental turn, his previous intellectual knowledge or psychic training, to have some kind of access to it, the feeling of it if not the full understanding, can enter into the spirit and sense of the poem and respond to its poetic appeal; but without that it is difficult for an unprepared reader to respond, – all the more if this is, as you contend, a new poetry with a new law of expression and technique. (p. 797-98)

If you are right in maintaining that *Savitri* stands as a new mystical poetry with a new vision and expression of things, we should expect, at least at first, a widespread, perhaps a general failure even in lovers of poetry to understand it or appreciate; even those who have some mystical turn or spiritual experience are likely to pass it by if it is a different turn from theirs or outside their range of experience. It took the world something like a hundred years to discover Blake; it would not be improbable that there might be a greater time-lag here, though naturally we hope for better things. For in India at least some understanding or feeling and an audience few and fit may be possible. Perhaps by some miracle there may be before long a larger appreciative audience. (p. 799-800)

There may still be a place for a poetry which seeks to enlarge the field of poetic creation and find for the inner spiritual life of man and his now occult or mystical knowledge and experience of the whole hidden range of his and the world's being, not a corner and a limited expression such as it had in the past, but a wide space and as manifold and integral an expression of the boundless and innumerable riches that lie hidden and unexplored as if kept apart under the direct gaze of the Infinite as has been found in the past for man's surface and finite view and experience of himself and the material world in which he has lived striving to know himself and it as best he can with a limited mind and senses. The door that has been shut to all but a few may open; the kingdom of the Spirit may be established not only in man's inner being but in his life and works. Poetry also may have its share in that revolution and become part of the spiritual empire. (*p. 800-01*)

Study Notes

Responses to queries from readers

1. Arcturus and Belphegor grains of fire ...

A reader has asked about the meaning of two lines which occur in *Savitri* Book Seven, Canto 7, page 537 :

*Arcturus and Belphegor grains of fire
Circling in a corner of its boundless self ...*

In order to understand these lines, we have to see them in the context of the passage in which they are set. It forms part of a message spoken to Savitri by a Voice of Light, which comes to her after she has had a surprising experience of utter blackness, an “*intolerant Darkness*” which leaves “*her inner world laid waste*” – the “*kingdom of delight*” which she had experienced after the union of her individual soul with the Oversoul “*was there no more*”. Then the Voice of Light explains to her her mission, and the conditions for fulfilling it. Amongst other things, she is told :

*He who would save the world must be one with the world,
All suffering things contain in his heart's space
And bear the grief and joy of all that lives.
His soul must be wider than the universe
And feel eternity as its very stuff,
Rejecting the moment's personality
Know itself older than the birth of Time,
Creation an incident in its consciousness,
Arcturus and Belphegor grains of fire
Circling in a corner of its boundless self,
The world's destruction a small transient storm
In the calm infinity it has become.*

The two lines we have been asked about illustrate the soul-state Savitri will now have to attain. Her soul must become wider than the whole universe

and experience that the entire creation, the whole manifested universe, is just an incident, a small happening within its consciousness. In that vast consciousness, wider than the whole universe, those huge brilliant stars, perhaps not just suns but immense galaxies, which men call Arcturus and Belphegor, are only tiny fiery grains, orbiting in a small corner of the boundless self of Savitri. In that state, even the destruction of the whole world would seem like only a small passing storm in the infinite expanse of calm that is now her soul.

Then the great Voice goes on to tell Savitri how to make use of the experience of all-negating darkness she has just gone through, in order to attain that vast consciousness in which her soul is “*wider than the universe*” and feels “*eternity as its very stuff*” which will enable her to fulfil the great mission for which she has taken human birth – to save Satyavan, the Soul of Man, and thus to save the world.

2. Invoking the grace of rain

A reader writes :

“In many places this year the rainfall is not much, and particularly in Tamil Nadu people are suffering from need of water. Will you kindly help by mentioning from *Savitri* any particular Book, Canto, page number, so that we can invoke the Lord and Divine Mother and pray to them for rain ??”

Consulting the “*Savitri Concordance*” compiled by Jyoti and Prem Sobel, published by All India Books in 1984 and available from Vak Bookshop in Pondicherry, 19 references to “rain” were found in *Savitri*. Most of them were very beautifully evocative descriptions of inner experiences, referring to “golden rain”, “nectarous rain”, “magic rain” and “mystic rain”.

In two places Sri Aurobindo refers to the actual “rainy season” of India. The first is in Book Four, “The Book of Birth and Quest”, Canto One, “The Birth and Childhood of the Flame”, which begins with a wonderful description of the seasons of the Indian year, starting from Summer, followed by “Rain-tide”, then Autumn, Winter and Dew-time, and leading up to Spring and the birth of Savitri. Then in Book Seven, “The

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Book of Yoga”, Sri Aurobindo again evokes the seasons of the year following Savitri’s union with Satyavan, which takes place in the Summer. It is when the rains set in that Savitri begins to notice the passing of time, and to feel the grief of her forthcoming separation from Satyavan; and it is towards the end of the rainy season that a Voice from above instructs her to look within to find her soul, in order to conquer Time and Death.

The following passage from Book Eleven, “The Book of Everlasting Day”, Canto One, “The Eternal Day: the Soul’s Choice and the Supreme Consummation” might be found suitable for invoking the Lord and the Divine Mother, in order to pray to them for rain :

*There is a consciousness mind cannot touch,
Its speech cannot utter nor its thought reveal.
It has no home on earth, no centre in man,
Yet is the source of all things thought and done,
The fount of the creation and its works,
It is the origin of all truth here,
The sun-orb of mind’s fragmentary rays,
Infinity’s heaven that spills the rain of God,
The Immense that calls to man to expand the Spirit,
The wide Aim that justifies his narrow attempts,
A channel for the little he tastes of bliss.*

(p. 705)

Invoking that consciousness above the mind which is “*the source of all things thought and done*”, a prayer might be made for “*the streaming of God’s rain*” (p.104). One might then try to steep oneself in the essence of rain-tide as described by Sri Aurobindo, aspiring to bring it closer to present earth-reality :

*Rain-tide burst in upon torn wings of heat,
Startled with lightnings air’s unquiet drowse,
Lashed with life-giving streams the torpid soil,
Overcast with flare and sound and storm-winged dark*

*The star-defended doors of heaven's dim sleep,
Or from the gold eye of her paramour
Covered with packed cloud-veils the earth's brown face.
Armies of revolution crossed the time-field,
The clouds' unending march besieged the world,
Tempests' pronunciamentos claimed the sky
And thunder drums announced the embattled gods.
A traveller from unquiet neighbouring seas,
The dense-maned monsoon rode neighing through earth's hours:
Thick now the emissary javelins:
Enormous lightnings split the horizon's rim
And, hurled from the quarters as from contending camps,
Married heaven's edges steep and bare and blind:
A surge and hiss and onset of huge rain,
The long straight sleet-drift, clamours of winged storm-charge,
Throngs of wind-faces, rushing of wind-feet
Hurrying swept through the prone afflicted plains:
Heaven's waters trailed and dribbled through the drowned land.
Then all was a swift stride, a sibilant race,
Or all was tempest's shout and water's fall.*

(p.349 – 50)

A note of caution may be sounded, however. While at one time of drought the Mother had responded to requests from her children by giving some instructions on how they might call the beings who control rainfall, on a later occasion it seems that she advised that it is better not to interfere in these matters, which are the domain of the gods. Nevertheless a sincere prayer may always be offered to the Mother and the Master, provided we are prepared to take “No” for an answer!

3. Less than zero, more than one

A reader has asked us to throw some light on the following lines, especially the last two :

A charm drew near that could not keep its spell

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*An eager Power that could not find its way,
A Chance that chose a strange arithmetic
But could not bind with it the forms it made,
A multitude that could not guard its sum
Which less than zero grew and more than one.*

(p.173)

This passage occurs near the beginning of Book Two, “The Book of the Traveller of the Worlds”, Canto Six, “The Kingdoms and Godheads of the Greater Life”.

In his quest, Aswapati, the traveller of the worlds, mounting the “World-Stair”, “*the single stair to being’s goal*” passes from the plane of Subtle Matter to the worlds of Life. There he discovers that, despite the troubled face of Life that we know on earth, in truth

*Her moods are faces of the Infinite:
Beauty and happiness are her native right,
And endless Bliss is her eternal home.*

(p. 118)

In the second and third sections of Book Two Canto Three, “The Glory and the Fall of Life”, Aswapati is shown the blissful Kingdoms which are the glorious true eternal home of the Life Goddess. But

*This world of bliss he saw and felt its call
But found no way to enter into its joy.*

(p. 128)

When Life poured her blessings onto the evolving earth “*Hoping to fill a fair new world with joy*” some dark presence intervened and brought about a mysterious evil change in her. Life on earth is distorted and darkened, and though Aswapati can see its essential truth of bliss, he cannot enter into it.

So he sets out to find and know

*... the obscure cause
Of all that holds us back and baffles God*

In the jail-delivery of the imprisoned soul.

(p. 135)

This search leads him through the Kingdoms and Godheads of the Little Life (Book Two, Cantos Four and Five), and then onwards, through a threefold transitional zone, to the Kingdoms and Godheads of the Greater Life. It is part of this transitional zone which is being referred to in the passage we have been asked about. Escaping from the ‘grey anarchy’ of ‘*the vague Inconscient’s dark and measureless cave*’ Aswapati comes first into ‘*an ineffectual world*’,

*A purposeless region of arrested birth
Where being from non-being fled and dared
To live but had no strength long to abide.*

(p. 173)

But then Aswapati reaches a slightly more hopeful level :

*After denial dawned a dubious hope,
A hope of self and form and leave to live
And the birth of that which never yet could be,
And joy of the mind’s hazard, the heart’s choice,
Grace of the unknown and hands of sudden surprise
And a touch of sure delight in unsure things:
To a strange uncertain tract his journey came
Where consciousness played with unconscious self
And birth was an attempt or episode.*

(p.173)

It is here that we find the lines that our reader has asked about :

*A charm drew near that could not keep its spell,
An eager Power that could not find its way,
A Chance that chose a strange arithmetic
But could not bind with it the forms it made,*

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*A multitude that could not guard its sum
Which less than zero grew and more than one.*

(p.173)

We understand that these are levels in the manifestation of life-creation. In the regions before the World of Greater Life, there are these misty intermediate levels where life-forms are preparing to take birth. Elsewhere in this issue of *Invocation* we can find Shruti speaking about the “*madhyama vak*” and the Dream State, where the determining equations or organising formulas underlying the manifestation of forms are prepared. This space that Aswapati travels through seems to belong to that level. In it, the equations are not firm and clear. Here, the eager creative power does not find the way to manifest the charm it envisions. It has to operate through a process of random choices, resulting in “a strange arithmetic” – resulting in a multitude of forms that are always fluctuating in quantity, so that the sum of them becomes ‘*less than zero*’ and ‘*more than one*’.

Physicists tell us that in our world, matter, the substance of manifestation, is governed by some fundamental laws. The most fundamental one of all is that the total sum of matter in existence remains always the same – matter can change form, convert to energy and back again, but the sum-total remains always constant. This sum total of all the matter in our universe can be thought of as an integer: 1, the unity of matter. Nowadays physicists believe that at a very fundamental level of matter, at every instant, sub-atomic particles are constantly going out of existence and becoming ‘anti-matter’; but since at the same instant new ones are being formed, the constant balance of matter and anti-matter is maintained. That is the very basis of our world of solid forms. But we can imagine that at a much subtler level of manifestation, such as that described here by the poet, this balance between being and non-being is not constant, but on the contrary, fluctuates wildly, so that the sum-total of forms in existence can become less than zero, and more than one. This would result in a great instability of forms – forms cannot be bound, cannot be maintained in a steady state by this strange arithmetic. And that is precisely the character of the level which Aswapati is described as passing through at this point in his journey. Very soon he comes further, to a realm that is able to “*Half-manifest ... a veiled Reality*” (p. 176). But at this point he is still in a place where

*Nothing was solid, nothing felt complete:
All was unsafe, miraculous and half-true.
It seemed a realm of lives that had no base.*

(p.175)

4. A contrary Doom

Another query relates to the line,

A contrary Doom that threatens all things made, ...

The full sentence reads :

*A hidden Puissance conscious of its force,
A vague and lurking Presence everywhere,
A contrary Doom that threatens all things made,
A Death figuring as the dark seed of life,
Seemed to engender and to slay the world.*

(p. 202)

It lies near the beginning of Canto Seven of Book Two “The Descent into Night”. ‘Doom’ means ruin, catastrophe, fatality, death; ‘Doomsday’ in Christian cultures refers to the day of the Last Judgement and the end of the world. ‘Contrary’ means opposite, but also contradictory; the phrase “contrary motion” refers to a movement in two opposite directions. Here the Doom is not an event or a mere bad end, but a being, a Puissance, a Presence. This Doom is contrary, not only because it is opposing and threatening, but also because it contains a contradiction, a movement in two opposite directions: although it is a power of Death, it seems to be the seed and origin of life. It seems to ‘engender’, that is ‘father’ or give rise to the world, as well as to slay or destroy it.

5. Tripod

In the following Canto, “The World of Falsehood, the Mother of Evil and the Sons of Darkness’ we find this passage, which we have also been asked

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to elucidate :

*Thought sat, a priestess of Perversity,
On her black tripod of the triune Snake
Reading by opposite signs the eternal script,
A sorceress reversing life's God-frame.*

(p. 221)

The key to the image here is the word ‘tripod’. It literally means ‘three feet’ and refers to a three-legged stand. Small versions of these can be found in laboratories and are used to support retorts or flasks above a flame. In ancient Greece tripods were highly prized sacred objects, often made of bronze and given as ritual gifts. It seems that they may have been used to hold up offerings burnt for the gods. The ones I have seen in museums are not big enough to support a human being, but the word also refers to the stool on which the priestess at Delphi sat to deliver an oracle. This is the allusion here.

The shrine at Delphi was the most famous oracle of the ancient Greeks. When consulting the oracle, the priestess used to enter an underground cave and go into trance. Seated on a sacred tripod, she would communicate with the god and utter his message in strange sounds that had to be interpreted by priests, who gave the answer in human language, but often in a cryptic riddling form that might be misunderstood. The shrine was sacred to Apollo, the Sun-God, Lord of the Muses, and of Inspiration. But it seems that the oracle had been there long before the shrine. Legend tells that Apollo had to win control of that place of power by defeating its original ruler, a monstrous Python. And the priestess continued to be called the Pythia, or even the Pythoness, with the perjorative sense of a witch or sorceress.

Sri Aurobindo uses the word ‘tripod’ in two other places in *Savitri*, and all the three uses have a related significance.

The first occurs in Book One, Canto Three, “The Yoga of the King: the Yoga of the Soul’s Release”, and refers to one of the stages of Aswapati’s Yoga, a section which describes in detail the action of the goddess of Inspiration. It reads :

The inspiring goddess entered a mortal’s breast,

*Made there her study of divining thought
And sanctuary of prophetic speech
And sat upon the tripod seat of mind:
All was made wide above, all lit below.
In darkness' core she dug out wells of light,
On the undiscovered depths imposed a form,
Lent a vibrant cry to the unuttered vasts,
And through great shoreless, voiceless, starless breadths
Bore earthward fragments of revealing thought
Hewn from the silence of the Ineffable.*

(p. 41)

Aswapati's breast is the sacred cavern, the sanctuary of prophetic speech, which the inspiring goddess chooses as the place for revealing higher truths; his mind, silent and receptive, is the tripod seat on which she sits to make her revelations of light.

In a passage on page 371 the same image is used in relation to the condition of Mankind in the Ignorance.

*A spell is laid upon his glorious strengths;
He has lost the inner Voice that led his thoughts,
And masking the oracular tripod seat
A specious Idol fills the marvel shrine.*

(p. 371)

But in the passage on page 221, which we have specifically been asked about, we are in the World of Falsehood, where every divine power is turned into its dark opposite. There Thought, instead of being a priestess of light, is a priestess of Perversity, of twisted crookedness. Her tripod, her seat or support is “the triune Snake”. ‘Tri-une’ means ‘three-in-one’ or threefold. Writing of the symbolism of the triangle, with its three sides, Sri Aurobindo says :

In one position it can symbolise the three lower planes, in another the symbol is of the three higher ones. (23:955)

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In this context, this threefoldness is obviously of the lower planes. About the symbolism of the snake or serpent Sri Aurobindo has said :

The serpent is a symbol of force, very often a hostile or evil force of the vital plane.. (23:975)

Serpents indicate always energies of Nature, and very often bad energies of the vital plane. (10:977-78)

So this priestess of Perversity is supported by a threefold energy of the perverted vital planes. She interprets the eternal script, which records the presence and the action of the Divine in manifestation, by opposite signs, falsifying and denying its message. She is a sorceress who by her black arts turns upside down or inside out the Divine frame of life, giving it an opposite sense.

6. The red Wolf and the hounds of bale

*In menacing tracts, in tortured solitudes
Companionless he roamed through desolate ways
Where the red Wolf waits by the fordless stream
And Death's black eagles scream to the precipice,
And met the hounds of bale who hunt men's hearts
Baying across the veldts of Destiny,
In footless battlefields of the Abyss
Found shadowy combats in mute eyeless depths,
Assaults of Hell endured and Titan strokes
And bore the fierce inner wounds that are slow to heal.*

(p. 230)

Here the question has been particularly about the significance of ‘*the red Wolf*’ and ‘*the hounds of bale*’. In his solitary journey through the World of Falsehood Aswapati encounters inner enemies of different kinds. ‘*The red Wolf*’ reminds us of what Sri Aurobindo has mentioned about the significance of the wolf in the Vedic language, where it is

referred to as ‘vrka’ - the Tearer. The hungry savage animal who tears at its prey with sharp teeth – this was the predominant image of the wolf to our forebears. The Wolf encountered by Aswapati is clearly a Tearer from the dark perverted vital worlds. Red is the colour of *rajas*, passion and desire. We may remember that the Vital Mind is described in *Savitri* as ‘A hunchback rider of the red Wild-Ass’

*A hunchback rider of the red Wild-Ass,
A rash Intelligence leaped down lion-maned
From the great mystic Flame that rings the worlds
And with its dire edge eats at being’s heart.
Thence sprang the burning vision of Desire.*

(p. 247)

The red Wolf, lying in wait at a difficult point in the journey, the stream where there is no easy crossing, is a formidable enemy, backed up by black eagles (who also have beaks and talons that are strong for tearing their prey) threatening inner death and destruction. While these enemies attack in a mountainous inner landscape, in a different kind of setting, the ‘veldts’, or open unforested grasslands, the Seeker is pursued by packs of hunting dogs. These are the open fields of Destiny, and the hounds are no physical animals but symbolic ones representing ‘bale’ – misfortune and suffering.

7. The sessions of the triple Fire

Another reader has requested :

“Kindly refer to Book Two, Canto 15, page 299, lines 92 - 94

*On peaks where Silence listens with still heart
To the rhythmic metres of the rolling worlds,
He served the sessions of the triple Fire.*

I shall feel obliged if you can explain these lines, and especially the phrase ‘the triple Fire’.”

These lines occur in the Canto called “The Kingdoms of the Greater Knowledge”. At this high level, almost at the summit of the World Stair, Aswapati is able to see and understand the principles which maintain the cosmos. He has risen far above the worlds of Matter and of Life, and even above the sphere of Mind. ‘Sessions’, meaning ‘sittings’, is a word used of judges and tribunals. Magistrates ‘serve’ on ‘sessions’, when they have to take their place as judges and regulators of law and order. Here it sounds as if Aswapati has risen to a level where he has the knowledge and vision to assist in the process of cosmic regulation. But what is this *‘triple Fire’*? We might think either of the Fire principle active on the three main levels of manifestation: physical, vital and mental. Or we might think of the threefold action of the inner Fire, Agni: aspiration, purification, and Tapasya, all leading to transformation. Fire has a transforming, purifying, energising and uplifting action throughout the universe. Aswapati, now seated on this high level, is able to serve and assist this Fire principle in its universal action.

Some aspects of
Yoga in Savitri
Talk by Shruti
at Savitri Bhavan on August 18, 2002

Shruti, who was our guest-speaker in August, is a musician, a musicologist, an educationist, a teacher trainer, an exponent of Upanishads and Vedas and a researcher in the Vedic and other ancient sciences of sound (Nada, Mantra). In addition to this talk, she gave a four-day workshop on the Isha Upanishad at Savitri Bhavan, which was very well-attended and much appreciated.

OM!

*Sahanaaavavatu sahanau bhunaktu
Saha veeryam karavaavahai
Tejasvinaavadheetamastu
Ma vidvishaavahai
Om Shantih Shantih Shantih !*

Namaste! We just heard the mantra and it seeped into us, without the barriers of the mind. Today when we speak of Yoga in *Savitri*, we will hear with our hearts, not with the labouring mind, because as Sri Aurobindo says, when we hear ‘*with the labouring mind*’, we find ‘*bright hints, not the embodied truth:*’ So we shall hear it in our depths, in our silences beyond the mind, so that we may carry it back with us when we leave this space of togetherness.

To speak of Yoga in *Savitri* is really to speak of every page in this great epic poem, because every word of it is yoga. Every word is a push for our being on our journey of consciousness. Yet, today we will speak of just some of the aspects that our master Sri Aurobindo has brought forward to us, which light our path and show us the way to the Truth.

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The Fourfold Being

First, to understand what we are. In this Creation, we are nothing but holograms of the Divine. We are little forms of the divine, growing up to our true divinity. So let us begin with a description of the divinity, which is immanent in all creation. The Divine in creation presents himself as the Fourfold Being. Each one of us is this fourfold being, growing up to the awareness of these four folds. What are these four folds? We see that here in *Savitri* Sri Aurobindo echoes the thought of the Mandukya Upanishad as he speaks of '*the inexhaustible word*,' the Divine Word or AUM in which lies the Fourfold Being, or through which the Divine expresses his Fourfold Being in every aspect of creation, in every living form.

Before we read the passage, I would like to speak of what these four folds are and how they are manifest in everything that we do in our lives. This goes back to the concept of the whole world being vibration in different stages, which is also called 'Vak' – speech vibration, communication.

If we look at our own creativity – we being little parts of the Divine – how do we create something? We create out of the sea of potential which lies within us, the sea of infinite possibility.

From that potential comes forward an impulse, a vision.

From that vision, we come down to calculate the skills, the laws, the equations, required to manifest that particular possibility.

And through those equations, through those faculties and skills, we come down to the last, the fourth stage which is the stage of manifestation.

These were called the four stages of vibration, the four stages of speech, the four stages of Vak in creation. First, the stage of Paravak, the Omnipotent, the All-Potential, descending to the next stage of Pashyanti, meaning to see, to visualize, not yet part of the creative process, but just visualising, knowing the truth, having the truth. Then comes the stage of Madhyama, the stage where the laws and organisation take place, and then the stage of Vaikhari, externalising the final manifestation.

We ourselves, as beings growing up from the last stage to the first, understand first the last stage, which in the Mandukya is called the Waking State. We understand ourselves first in the Waking state, *Jagrit Sthana* as *Vaishwanarah*, the '*universal male*' who realises himself as *Virat Purusha*, '*king of kings*'. In the Mandukya this is called the state which has "nineteen mouths" (nineteen receptors) and seven limbs (the seven levels of

consciousness). What are these nineteen receptive faculties? First the five organs of knowledge, the *gyan indriyas*, then five organs of action, the *karma indriyas*, then the five *pranas* – the five breaths which work within us –, and then the four parts of our mental existence, *chitta*, *manas*, *buddhi* and *ahankara*. These are the nineteen receptors in the waking state of the fourfold being, and we first begin to understand our journey through this waking state, the first stage of the fourfold self.

Beyond that lies the Dream State, the *swapna sthana*, where the being manifests as *Taijasa* or *Hiranyagarbha Purusha*, the embryonic being, where all the occult equations and forms exist, which create what we see and express outwardly in the Waking state.

Beyond that is the Sleep State, the *sushupta sthana*, which remains always whether movement in time and space goes on or not. We can compare it with the DNA in our cells. The DNA remains even when we die. It carries the potential, the structure, the knowledge, the laws of all that comes after it.

Finally there is the state which transcends all, encompasses all, the All-potential, *samadhi* or *turiya*, in which the three other states lie.

Thus, there are four states: the Waking, the Dream, the Sleep and the Samadhi. The enlightened being knows all these states. Let us first read about that full fourfold being which is what we have to reach:

*In him the fourfold Being bore its crown
That wears the mystery of a nameless Name,
The universe writing its tremendous sense
In the inexhaustible meaning of a word.*

(p. 680)

That word is symbolised by the AUM in the Mandukya Unpanishad, where it is said that all these four states lie in the AUM, as ‘a’, ‘u’ and ‘m’ together manifest ‘Aum’ – AUM understood not just as a word that we hear, but as a symphony and sum of all vibrations and all frequencies in space. Sometimes we hear that, in silence. When we are in the space of silence, we hear the sound of that OM because that is the sum of all possible vibrations in space.

In him the architect of the visible world,

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*At once the art and artist of his works,
Spirit and seer and thinker of things seen,
Virat, who lights his camp-fires in the suns
And the star-entangled ether is his hold,
Expressed himself with Matter for his speech:
Objects are his letters, forces are his words,
Events are the crowded history of his life,
And sea and land are the pages for his tale.
Matter is his means and his spiritual sign;
He hangs the thought upon a lash's lift,*

The state being evoked here is the state which exists in the “*lash's lift*”, the waking state, where the being is externalised in its infinite capacities of manifestation, in all forms, on land and sea, in matter, in the thought, in the different pictures of thought, in every being, he “*lights his camp-fires in the suns*”. Camp fires come from the divine illuminating sun but are only a part of it, only a reminder of it. So the waking state is the state of infinite diversity, of infinite expression, which is called ‘*brhat*’ in the Veda. In the Veda too they speak of three states, which again correspond to the sleep, dream, and waking states: Satyam, Ritam, Brihat. Brihat is the vastness of all expression, of all knowledge in all things. Beyond that, just behind that, lies Ritam, the knowledge of all; and behind that lies Satyam, the truth which gives the knowledge, which leads to infinite expression.

Here Sri Aurobindo speaks of Virat, the outermost stage of manifestation in which we all live. However, we are living in a state of ignorance where we have not yet become consciously Virat, but are still ‘*Vaishvanarah*’, the Universal Male. We have not yet learnt the transmutability of our existence in this infinity, yet we carry its potential within us.

*He hangs the thought upon a lash's lift,
In the current of the blood makes flow the soul.*

Every nerve, every cell, every cell of our brain, every cell of our blood, is an expression of the infinity, of the fourfold being in his externalised waking state.

His is the dumb will of atom and of clod;

A clod is a lump of earth; so he is also the dumb will of the atom and of the clod.

*A Will that without sense or motive acts,
An Intelligence needing not to think or plan,
The world creates itself invincibly;
For its body is the body of the Lord
And in its heart stands Virat, King of Kings.*

The true expression of the Divine, what the Divine truly wants, is to express itself in every manifestation as the Virat Purusha. The goal of life is for every living being to become an expression of the infinite, transmutable into infinite form. But to become Virat we must know what lies just beyond that state. So we go back one step. We go back into the recesses of the self, to discover what governs the state of infinite existence, of infinite manifestation. We read:

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

(p.681)

Here Sri Aurobindo speaks of the occult realms and the occult equations that govern life and manifest before the external life is manifested. The Mother was a great occultist. She often spoke of those realms where all was known before it was manifest in the outer world. But if we look at ourselves,

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if we look at the truth of ourselves, if we look at the truth of every flower and every plant, we can see this truth and these levels in it – for instance, the equations of life, the numbers of life which govern existence. When we come down to the detail of the secret of our existence, just beyond what we see, we are governed by cycles and by numbers.

For instance, the petals of a sunflower are ordered by an interesting sequence of numbers. The petals in a sunflower fit perfectly because some of the petals spiral in a clockwise direction while others spiral in an anti-clockwise direction, in such a way that the ultimate picture is a picture of perfection, the ultimate manifestation is beautiful and perfect and optimum. What is the secret that makes it so perfect? We can discover the law of numbers that lies just behind it. It is called a Fibonacci Sequence, where the next number in the series is the sum of the preceding two numbers. So the first number is 1. The next number is $1 + 0$, which is 1. The next number is $1 + 1$ which is 2; then comes 3, then 5, then 8, then 13, and so on. It goes on like this to 54 and 89 and so on. In a sunflower the arrangement of the spirals of petals follows this sequence. One spiral goes to 89 and the other spiral will count up to 54. Each plant when it begins to bud follows this sequence, the Fibonacci Sequence. It is governed by that sequence of numbers which we do not see. We see it differentiated into petals and leaves and bark and sap and so on. But just behind lies a governing law, an occult equation.

This is one analogy from amongst the infinite number of analogies that we can find in nature, which show us this state, the embryonic state, Hiranyagarbha, which is controlling the outer manifestation. Still behind that is the third seed state which we will come to later.

Armed with the golden speech, the diamond eye,

With the opening of the third eye, which here Sri Aurobindo calls '*the diamond eye*' we become knowers of that which lies just behind the surface.

*His is the vision and the prophecy:
Imagist casting the formless into shape,
Traveller and hewer of the unseen paths,
He is the carrier of the hidden fire,*

The golden embryo is ‘*the carrier of the hidden fire*’. This hidden fire we will speak of a little later in more detail.

*He is the voice of the Ineffable,
He is the invisible hunter of the light,
The Angel of mysterious ecstasies,
The conqueror of the kingdoms of the soul.*

When man knows, when he has the sight of that state which makes him what he is, then he reaches the level where he can play with those laws, transmute them and transform them into perfection.

To recapitulate, the first state, the state of infinite expression, the waking state, is the state where we take in and give out through our senses. That state is called *jagrat sthana*: the waking state. Then there is the *swapna sthana*: the dream state which governs the laws, which is equated with the Madhyama stage which I spoke of earlier, the Madhyama Vak.

Beyond the dream or embryonic state we come to the third state, the level of the Seed, which is also called the Sleep State or *sushupta sthana*, which he now describes:

*A third spirit stood behind, their hidden cause,
A mass of superconsciousness closed in light,
Creator of things in his all-knowing sleep.
All from his stillness came as grows a tree;
He is our seed and our core, our head and base.
All light is but a flash from his closed eyes:
An all-wise Truth is mystic in his heart,*

This third state is the vision which does not take part in the movement but holds the key to the movement, the Seed or Sleep state, *sushupta sthana*.

We can find that secret in ourselves, in the DNA. The DNA is that part of our cells which is enclosed within the nucleus of the cell. DNA stands for “Deoxy ribonucleic Acid. It has missing one atom of oxygen, that is why it is called De-oxy ribonucleic acid. This substance contains the secret of what we are. It contains all the information needed to make us, but it does not move. It stays

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quiet and stable within the nucleus. It does not take part in the movement. Yet it passes on the vision, the information which lies in the DNA through the RNA - ribonucleic acid. This RNA has got that one crucial atom of oxygen, which makes it move, which makes it organize, which makes it unfold the laws that lie behind existence. So the RNA represents the dream state. It then breaks up into different proteins and amino-acids which create the different processes in our body, becoming the waking state, the Vaishvanara, the Virat.

So the fourfold being unfolds in every cell of our body, and in every cell of our consciousness. And this third spirit, the sleep state, the seed state, is that which carries all, which has the vision but does not take part in the movement. It just passes on the vision to that which moves and creates laws and finally manifests.



*Shruti during the Isha Upanishad workshop
at Savitri Bhavan from August 20th to 25th, 2002*

*Creator of things in his all-knowing sleep.
All from his stillness came as grows a tree;
He is our seed and core, our head and base.
All light is but a flash from his closed eyes:
An all-wise Truth is mystic in his heart,
The omniscient Ray is shut behind his lids;
He is the Wisdom that comes not by thought,
His wordless silence brings the immortal word.
He sleeps in the atom and the burning star,
He sleeps in man and god and beast and stone:
Because he is there the Inconscient does its work,
Because he is there the world forgets to die.
He is the centre of the circle of the God,
He the circumference of Nature's run.*

(p.681)

What a beautiful expression! “*He is the centre of the circle of God.*” He is that point from which everything comes out and radiates into the whole vastness, the whole ever-expanding circle of existence. But this seed is also “*the circumference of Nature’s run*”. When Nature runs in time and space, when it completes the knowledge of its vibration, when it understands all that it is in time and space, then Nature comes to its outermost limit which brings her in contact with the potential, the sleep state, the seed state. When the being becomes knowledgeable of the seed state, it reaches the circumference, the outer limit of its running, and comes to that limit where it is in touch both with the movement and with the Omniscient.

He is the circumference of Nature’s run.

In the fourth state, the state of *Samadhi*, these three states become one – in the All-knowing, the All-potential, the Transcendent which encompasses all in “*the inexhaustible meaning of a Word*” in “*the sole timeless Word that carries eternity in its lonely sound*” (p.97).

*Above was the brooding bliss of the Infinite,
Its omniscient and omnipotent repose,*

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*Its immobile silence absolute and alone.
All powers were woven in countless concords here.*
(p.682)

This then is what we are in our four folds, and our journey is to become conscious of these four folds of our existence. We have just spoken of He who is All-consciousness, who expresses these fourfolds, who is the Fourfold Being, and we are urged to move towards this awareness, towards this expression. How do we move towards this expression? From Brihat to Ritam to Satyam, to the encompassing of the whole?

Pain

In his great epic, Sri Aurobindo speaks of many paths towards this goal. One important helper on the way is '*the dark intruding god*' as he calls it, which is Pain. '*Pain is the hand of Nature*' he says, '*sculpturing men / To greatness:*', and also:

*Pain is the hammer of the Gods to break
A dead resistance in the mortal's heart,*
(p. 443)

This is the role of pain in the yoga of life; and the Divine uses it in two ways. He uses it gently as a chisel to sculpture man to greatness; but he also uses it as a hammer when we become too hard and crystallised:

*Pain is the hand of Nature sculpturing men
To greatness: an inspired labour chisels
With heavenly cruelty an unwilling mould.
Implacable in the passion of their will,
Lifting the hammers of titanic toil
The demiurges of the universe work;
They shape with giant strokes their own; their sons
Are marked with their enormous stamp of fire.
Although the shaping god's tremendous touch
Is torture unbearable to mortal nerves,*

*The fiery spirit grows in strength within
And feels a joy in every titan pang.*

(p. 444)

When the potter prepares a pot, the clay has to be heated to high degrees of temperature before it can shine and become strong enough to bear the outward touches of nature and manifest the creator's beauty. Similarly, the Divine prepares us through this unbearable heat of pain. We feel his touch as pain because we are not flexible enough to manifest his will. Wherever there is rigidity and resistance, there is pain; and pain is that '*dark intruding God*' who helps to dissolve this hardness, to dissolve the inertia and make us move, make us flexible in vibration, so that the Lord's will may be done.

Creativity and the quest for perfection

Sri Aurobindo hints at other ways in his yoga. He speaks of creativity being amongst the first steps towards realising the godhead. He speaks of painting, sculpture and architecture. Each of us is being trained by our father, the Divine, each of us is an acolyte of the Divine:

*A mystic acolyte trained in Nature's school,
Aware of the marvel of created things
She laid the secracies of her heart's deep muse
Upon the altar of the Wonderful;*

(p. 360)

When we seek the All-wonderful in his creation, and seek to express our creativity as a picture of the Divine, then through our perfection, we reach the Divine. Through the Powers of the Mother we reach the Divine. Through skill in works, through the play of creativity, through allowing the hand of Mahakali to break us and re-chisel us when we become hard, through the wisdom of Maheshwari, we reach the divine Mother, we reach the all-manifest God.

*Intense philosophies pointed earth to heaven
Or on foundations broad as cosmic Space
Upraised the earth-mind to superhuman heights.*

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*Overpassing lines that please the outward eyes
But hide the sight of that which lives within
Sculpture and painting concentrated sense
Upon an inner vision's motionless verge,
Revealed a figure of the invisible,
Unveiled all Nature's meaning in a form,
Or caught into a body the Divine.*

(p. 360)

Each effort of creation by us is a seeking of the divine within us to express itself. We want to see that primordial perfection in our creation, and the more and more we perfect this creation of ours the closer we move towards the knowledge of the Divine.

*The architecture of the Infinite
Discovered here its inward-musing shapes
Captured into wide breadths of soaring stone:
Music brought down celestial yearnings, song
Held the merged heart absorbed in rapturous depths,
Linking the human with the cosmic cry;*

(p. 360-361)

These lines reveals to us of the role of music in bringing us into oneness with the sublime, connecting us with the Divine through sound.

Mantra

The role of the mantra in helping the growth of consciousness is described by Sri Aurobindo in a beautiful passage:

*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 unutterably 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)

This speaks of the power of the mantra to transport us to our true selves. These are helpers on the way, tools of the godhead which take us to our rightful home, deep within ourselves.

Thus Sri Aurobindo shows us how each aspect of creativity in nature, each form of expression, can be used as a tool to move towards divine perfection, whether it is art or music, whether it is sculpture, or the word as philosophy, or the word as sight in a yantra which is the visual symbol of a mantra.

Science tells us that when the OM is projected on to a lump of dust on a vibrating membrane, it reorganises the dust particles into a symbol which is a circle, with triangles and diamonds one within the other around a common centre. This lump of dust, vibrating with the sound of OM, becomes a mystic symbol, a perfectly symmetric geometrical symbol which represents creation, the Sri Yantra. So when the word of god enters us, when the truly harmonious primordial seed sound enters us, it reshapes us – we who are nothing but dust – matter, our cells, our atoms are reoriented into their primordial harmony, into their primordial symmetry. Then we feel at ease, we feel at home, we feel closer to our true selves.

We see here how all art forms, all creative forms in life, can lead us towards our own perfection, lead us towards making ourselves a true vehicle of the Spirit. In this process, we discover that the way to make all these

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manifestations perfect is to draw from within; and as we go along in life, dealing with pain, dealing with the knocks of life, we learn to understand that pain is the forerunner of joy. We learn to understand that pain and joy are '*the bright and tenebrous twins*', as Sri Aurobindo calls them in *Savitri*. '*But pain came first, then only joy could be*', he says. Unless we go through the pain of perfecting every cell and muscle of our consciousness, we cannot make the body of our consciousness fit. So pain may be used willingly or may be taken on unwillingly, the choice is ours. When we accept this pain willingly, we know that we are on our way to greater joy, to a greater perfection. And as this knowledge increases, we come to know where the source of this knowledge is, and slowly come in touch with that spark which lies deep within us, which is the spark of the Divine, which in the Veda is called Agni – the son of Surya.

The process of going within is described in the next passage.

Going within

To see the importance of *pratyahara*, going deep within, to refresh the outer being with the knowledge of what it truly is, let us look at a passage in the Canto called "The Secret Knowledge" in The Book of Beginnings. Here the poet speaks of this part of us, which we must refer to again and again for our Yoga, for our progress in life.

*In moments when the inner lamps are lit
And the life's cherished guests are left outside,
Our spirit sits alone and speaks to its gulfs.*

(p. 47)

Our gulfs are the depths within us which are still, surrounded, enclosed, away from the waves of the ocean of life, away from the tumultuous waves; the waters are still in the gulfs and in that stillness lies the truth and depth of our being.

*A wider consciousness opens then its doors;
Invading from spiritual silences
A ray of the timeless Glory stoops awhile*

*To commune with our seized illumined clay
And leaves its huge white stamp upon our lives.*

...

*A Voice calls from the chambers of the soul;
We meet the ecstasy of the Godhead's touch
In golden privacies of immortal fire.*

(p. 48)

Agni

"In golden privacies of immortal fire." – Agni, the divine spark, the leader on the way, *purohitam*, the priest of our ultimate surrender to the Divine, the knower of all things, *jata veda*.

*It is the origin and the master-clue,
A silence overhead, an inner voice,
A living image seated in the heart,
An unwalled wideness and a fathomless point,
The truth of all these cryptic shows in Space,
The Real towards which our strivings move,
The secret grandiose meaning of our lives.
A treasure of honey in the combs of God,*

(p. 49)

This origin, this spark is what we truly are. This *vayuranilam*, this Agni, goes on from life to life and forms the body again and again; but it is not the body and it is not the mind as we know it. For as the Isha Upanishad says:

Vayuranilam amritamathedam bhasmantam shariram

Vayuranilam is the breath of things, the spark within; *amritam* is an immortal life; *bhasmantam sariram* means “of this body ashes are the end”.

Om krato smara kritam smara krato smara kritam smara

Krato – O Seer-will, O spark of the Divine, O Agni! *Smara* – remember. *Kritam smara* – that which was done, remember.

Invocation

O Will, O spark! Come forward and remember, that which was done
remember! Where have we come from? What road have we traversed? Why
are we here? What is the goal? What have we been doing? What is it that
has to be done?

So we call to that inner voice, that inner spark, that Seer-will, that Agni,
that '*honey in the combs of God*'. Each manifestation is a honeycomb of
God, and that spark which is our essence is the honey within each comb.
This great spark thus is Agni, the son of the divine light, *Surya*.

*A Splendour burning in a tenebrous cloak,
It is our glory of the flame of God,
Our golden fountain of the world's delight,
An immortality cowled in the cape of death,
The shape of our unborn divinity.
It guards for us our fate in depths within
Where sleeps the eternal seed of transient things.
Always we bear in us a magic key
Concealed in life's hermetic envelope.*

(p. 49)

This Agni, this spark, this inner voice, is the magic key which is enclosed in this outer envelope of the triple cord of existence: *anna, prana*, and *mana* – matter, life-energy and mind. Until we understand what this triple cord is, it remains binding on us. It remains as a '*hermetic envelope*', a tightly-sealed envelope, within which is this magic key which holds the secret of all existence. And the effort of life after life of the being, through each moment, through each life, is to slowly dissolve the seal from the envelope so that we may have a sight of the key and so that we may use this key to transform life, to open the door to felicity and eternal bliss.

*A burning Witness in the sanctuary
Regards through Time and the blind walls of Form;
A timeless Light is in his hidden eyes;
He sees the secret things no words can speak
And knows the goal of the unconscious world
And the heart of the mystery of the journeying years.*

The Chrysalis

Yet, to know this key we must know how to handle the envelope. We must take the journey back to the origin. We cannot escape the journey; we have to go through the process of Prakriti, and learn to understand every colour, every shape of Nature and in its heart find the key, the inner light, the inner truth of all things.

That is why, in the Canto called ‘The Debate of Love and Death’, Sri Aurobindo says:

*A mute material Nature wakes and sees;
She has invented speech, unveiled a will.
Something there waits beyond towards which she strives,
Something surrounds her into which she grows:
To uncover the spirit, to change back into God,
To exceed herself is her transcendent task.
In God concealed the world began to be,
Tardily it travels towards manifest God:
Our imperfection towards perfection toils,
The body is the chrysalis of a soul:*

(p. 623)

The chrysalis is the cocoon inside which the caterpillar turns into a butterfly. The crust of ego and ignorance, *avidya*, is the cocoon which hides the true self within. Slowly, as we manage to dissolve and break the crust, the true beautiful divine self springs forth and flies with free wings to manifest its colours in nature.

*The body is the chrysalis of a soul:
The infinite holds the finite in its arms,
Time travels towards revealed eternity.*

Each one of us feels that stir deep within us, knowing that it exists, knowing of the inner voice that calls out to us. Sometimes the pulls and pushes of life make us deaf to that voice; and yet if we take refuge in the silent chambers of our heart we come closer to that voice and are able to hear it again. When we bring ourselves closer to the beauty of nature, to the beauty of the art of

Invocation

life, to the magic of the word of God, to the sound of the silence within us, we are able to hear the inner self speak.

*I have felt a secret spirit stir in things
Carrying the body of the growing God:
It looks through veiling forms at veilless truth;
It pushes back the curtain of the gods;
It climbs towards its own eternity.*

(p. 693)

We pray to that inner self, to that Seer-will which leads us from light to light, to that Agni, to lead us on the right path to felicity, to bliss:

*Om agne naya supatharaye asman vishwani deva vayunani vidvan
Yuyodhyasmajjuhuranameno bhuyishtham te nama uktim vidhema*

O Agni! O leader of the ultimate surrender! Lead us on the true path to bliss. O Agni, you who are the knower of all things manifested, remove from us the devious attraction of ignorance, division and sin. With our entire being we implore thee to lead us on the true path to eternal bliss.

Savitri Bhavan Regular Activities

The regular ongoing activities at Savitri Bhavan include the following study-circles, courses and classes.

All our readers are warmly invited to join any of these activities when they are in the area.

REGULAR COURSES

<i>Sunday</i>	<i>morning</i>	<i>10.30 - 12.00</i>	<i>Savitri Study Circle</i>
	<i>evening</i>	<i>5.00 - 6.30</i>	<i>The Human Cycle, led by Kittu Reddy</i>
<i>Monday</i>	<i>evening</i>	<i>5.30 - 6.30</i>	<i>Cultivating Concentration, led by Jai Singh</i>
<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>evening</i>	<i>4.30 - 5.15</i>	<i>Entretiens - The Mother's Playground talks</i>
		<i>5.30 - 6.30</i>	<i>The Synthesis of Yoga, led by Shraddhavan</i>
<i>Thursday</i>	<i>evening</i>	<i>4.00 - 5.00</i>	<i>The English of Savitri, led by Shraddhavan</i>
<i>Friday</i>	<i>evening</i>	<i>5.30 - 6.30</i>	<i>Cultivating Concentration, led by Jai Singh</i>

*Exhibition, Office and Reading Room open
Monday - Saturday 9 - 12, 2 - 5*

Everyone is welcome

Invocation

“LIGHT OF SAVITRI”

We are happy to announce that some well-wishers have formed an organisation under this name, with the aim of spreading awareness of Sri Aurobindo's *Savitri* in Tamil Nadu and gaining support for the Savitri Bhavan project. As a first step, they have organised a programme of Vedic Chanting of the whole of *Savitri* in several Sri Aurobindo Centres. This was initiated in Trichy, Srirangam, Tanjore and Kumbakonam on October 20th and will be started in other centres on November 17th. The idea is to conduct Vedic Chanting of *Savitri* over 144 weeks ($1 + 4 + 4 = 9$, the date on which the Master's body was laid to rest) covering 5 pages per week ($5 \times 144 = 724$ pages). What is meant by “Vedic Chanting”? It means group reading in which one person with a good knowledge of English pronunciation gives the lead by first reading one line, which is then repeated by all present, before going on to the next. It is expected that each session of reading five pages will last about 30 minutes. The time chosen for this activity is 11.30 a.m. Indian Standard Time, which corresponds to 6 a.m. GMT. The organisers suggest that other centres and groups elsewhere in India and around the world could take up the same programme, preferably at the same time, or otherwise at their own convenience, but regularly, to create a powerful atmosphere of the vibration of *Savitri*.

LIGHT OF SAVITRI (A LITERARY WING)

8 / 15 Velappa Naidu Nagar, Peelamedu,
Coimbatore – 641 004. Phone : 0422 – 573481.

Object :

To conduct, organise and execute programmes and seminars on *Savitri* with the approval of Savitri Bhavan.

To work for the goal and dream of Savitri Bhavan.

This literary wing does not raise any funds independently.
It will function strictly on the directions of Savitri Bhavan.

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“We aspire for the SAVITRI ENVIRONMENT all over the world”

About Savitri Bhavan

We dream of an environment in Auroville

that will breathe the atmosphere of Savitri

that will welcome Savitri lovers from every corner of
the world

that will be an inspiring centre of Savitri studies

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

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

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

INVITATION

Savitri Bhavan is entirely dependent on donations, and financial help from all well-wishers is most welcome. We invite everyone who feels the value of the work of Savitri Bhavan to make this 125th Anniversary Year of the Mother the occasion to pledge their on-going support to the realisation of this Dream. Please consider in what way you could help the Dream of Savitri Bhavan to become a reality – whether by a lump-sum donation, or by commitment to a regular monthly or yearly amount.

How to send your help

If you live in India :

- Personal cheques or DDs may be made payable to “S.A.I.I.E.R.” and sent to Savitri Bhavan.
- Money orders may be made payable to “Savitri Bhavan” and sent to the same address.

If you live outside India :

- Cheques or Bankers’ Orders payable to “S.A.I.I.E.R.” may be sent directly to Savitri Bhavan
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SWIFT Code : SBININBBAFXD
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Auroville International Township Branch
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- You may send your donation through the AVI Centre in your country. In some countries, this may entitle you to tax-relief.

Please specify whether you would like your donation to be used for on-going activities, construction, or some specified project.

For further information, please contact :

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

The Mother