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*When darkness deepens strangling the earth's breast
And man's corporeal mind is the only lamp,
As a thief's in the night shall be the covert tread
Of one who steps unseen into his house.
A Voice ill-heard shall speak, the soul obey,
A Power into mind's inner chamber steal,
A charm and sweetness open life's closed doors
And beauty conquer the resisting world,
The Truth-Light capture Nature by surprise,
A stealth of God compel the heart to bliss
And earth grow unexpectedly divine.
In Matter shall be lit the spirit's glow,
In body and body kindled the sacred birth;
Night shall awake to the anthem of the stars,
The days become a happy pilgrim march,
Our will a force of the Eternal's power,
And thought the rays of a spiritual sun.*

(Savitri, p. 55)

Translating Savitri

The Mother's message opposite, and her letters to Prithwi Singh on the following page, make it clear that we should not rely too much on translations.

Nevertheless they may have their uses, so long as we remain aware of their limitations.

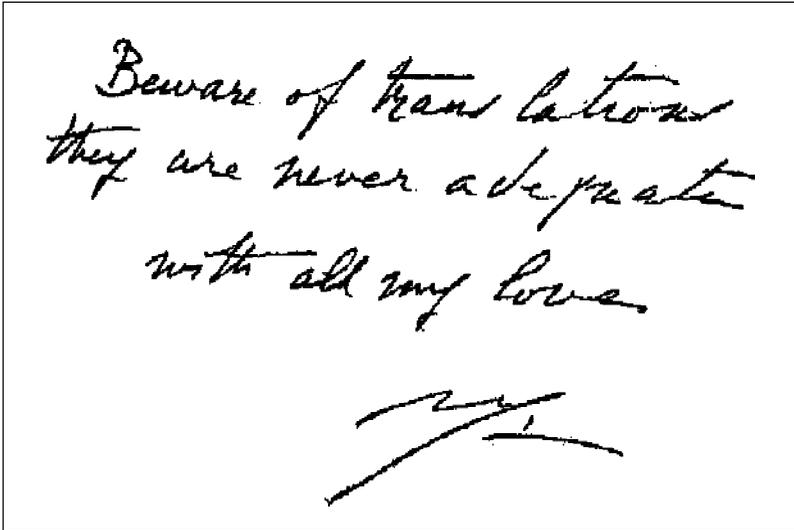
Although the Mother herself felt and said that it was impossible to translate *Savitri*, she encouraged several people to make the attempt, and even authorised the publication of some of the results.

In our Reading Room at Savitri Bhavan we hold copies of a number of *Savitri* translations, published or unpublished, in various languages; a list of these is given on pages 38-40. Moreover we are aware of a number of "works in progress" because the translators are in touch with us. Some information about these is also given in this section.

We asked some of the translators to share their experiences with us, and thought that you would be interested to read the notes we received from two of them.

But first we are presenting the second part of a study of the Mother's own translation work on *Savitri*, traced in *The Mother's Agenda* and other sources.

A Letter from the Mother to Huta



*Beware of translations
they are never adequate*

with all my love

Mother

Two letters from the Mother to Prithwi Singh

*regarding his attempt to translate Savitri into Bengali**

Prithwi Singh, my dear child,

If you want me to express frankly my view of this affair, I must say that I consider *Savitri* as **untranslatable** and will never encourage a translation of it except as a personal exercise for the sake of concentration on this unique marvel; but surely not for publication. That is why I cannot attach any importance to this contention.

With my love and blessings

Mother

14 December 1961

Prithwi Singh

Certainly you can continue the translation of *Savitri* for your own benefit and I am sure that the help from Sri Aurobindo will always be with you.

With love and blessings

Mother

15 December 1961

Note :

Prithwi Singh did continue, and the portion of Savitri which he translated is included in Kabita, Nato O Probandho.

* From *Sri Aurobindo and Mother to Prithwi Singh : Correspondence 1933-1967*, Mira Aditi, Mysore, 1998, p. 165-166

The Mother's Savitri Translations

A study by Shraddhavan

Part Two (continued from Invocation no. 20, August 2003)

We saw in the first part of our study that the Mother first expressed her intention to translate parts of *Savitri* into French in a talk of September 18, 1962, included in *The Mother's Agenda*, Vol. 3 :

September 18, 1962

I don't have far to go on my translation of *The Synthesis of Yoga* (it's going very quickly), and I have found what I'll do next. ... I am going to take the whole section of *Savitri* (to start with, I'll see later) from "The Debate of Love and Death" to the point where the Supreme Lord makes his prophecy about the earth's future; it's long – several pages long. This is for my own satisfaction.

I am going to translate it line by line (not word by word – line by line), leaving a space between each line; and when I've finished I will try to recapture it in French (*gesture of pulling down from above*).

I am not doing it to show it to people or to have anyone read it, but to remain in Savitri's atmosphere, for I love that atmosphere. It will give me an hour of concentration, and I'll see if by chance.... I have no gift for poetry, but I'll see if it comes! (It surely won't come from a mentality developed in this present existence – there's no poetic gift!) So it's interesting, I'll see if anything comes. I am going to give it a try.

But we also saw that, despite the Mother's expressed intention to translate from Books Ten and Eleven, in the early months of 1963 she was instead translating selected passages from Cantos Four and Five of Book One – passages corresponding to the paintings she was working on with Huta, the "Meditations on Savitri" series.

From the *Agenda* we learn that it was on March 13, 1963 that the Mother took up her intention to translate from Book Ten:

March 13, 1963

(Mother opens “Savitri.” She intended to translate “The Debate of Love and Death.” The book opens “by chance” on the last lines of Death’s defeat, which Mother reads aloud:)

*And [Death] left crumbling the shape that he had worn,
Abandoning hope to make man’s soul his prey
And force to be mortal the immortal spirit.* X.IV, p. 667

No matter where you open, no matter where you read, it’s wonderful! Immediately it’s wonderful – strange, these three lines, aren’t they....

*Abandoning hope to make man’s soul his prey
And force to be mortal the immortal spirit.*

Wonderful.

These people could very easily lure me: for a long time they have been asking me to read them the whole of *Savitri* – quite a work! But this [*translation*] work is irresistible.

So, in fact (the trouble is, my notebook won’t be thick enough!), in fact I would like to translate all of the “Debate” [*of Love and Death*], it’s so wonderful.

(Mother leafs through the book)

When she says ... I don’t remember the words, she says: *My God is love ...*

[“My God is love and sweetly suffers all.” IX.II. p. 591]

Oh, that’s....

(Mother goes back to the beginning of Book X, Canto IV)

Here:

“The Dream Twilight of the Earthly Real”

Look at this:

*Or in bodies motionless like statues, fixed
In tranced cessations of their sleepless thought
Sat sleeping souls, and this too was a dream*

X.IV, p. 642

They are the ones who want to attain Nirvana.... “*And this too was a dream*”!

(Mother looks further)

It begins here:

*Once more arose the great destroying Voice:
Across the fruitless labour of the worlds
His huge denial's all-defeating might
Pursued the ignorant march of dolorous Time. X.I p.643*

Here is where I should begin.

Book X is long: “The Book of the Double Twilight.”... Of course, if I start reading ...

You'll end up at the beginning!

I would do the whole book!

(Mother leafs back)

“The Gospel of Death and Vanity of the Ideal”

This is invaluable to answer all, all, all the arguments people use.

(Mother leafs further)

Ah, here we are! “The Debate of Love and Death.” That’s where it begins. It’s Canto III.

There's a passage underlined here.

If it’s underlined, it’s not by me! ... No, that’s the place where I stopped when I was reading: I used to mark in red the place where I stopped.

He says ... *(Death to Savitri, in a supremely ironic tone):*

*... Art thou indeed so strong, O heart, O Soul, so free?...
X.III p.636*

It’s wonderful!

So we would have to start at the beginning of the “Book of the Double Twilight,” Book X. Let’s see how it goes....

(Mother reads)

*All still was darkness dread and desolate;
There was no change nor any hope of change.
In this black dream which was a house of Void,
A walk to Nowhere in a land of Nought,
Ever they drifted without aim or goal....* X.1 p.599

My God, how wonderful! It's wonderful.

(Mother turns the pages)

And Book XII [*"The Return to the Earth"*].... I don't know.

(Mother reads the concluding lines of "Savitri":)

*Night, splendid with the moon dreaming in heaven
In silver peace, possessed her luminous reign.
She brooded through her stillness on a thought
Deep-guarded by her mystic folds of light,
And in her bosom nursed a greater dawn.* XII p.724

It heralds the Supermind.

But I had a feeling he hadn't completed his revision. When I read this, I felt it wasn't the end, just as when I read the last chapter of the "Yoga of Self-Perfection" I felt it was unfinished. He left it unfinished. And he said so. He said, "No, I will not go down to this mental level any more."

...

It's captivating, *Savitri*! I believe it's his Message – all the rest is preparation, while *Savitri* is the Message.

A few days later, the Mother has started on her translation of Book Ten:

March 23, 1963

(Mother first reads from her translation of Savitri a few excerpts about death. We give here the original English.)

*Death is a stair, a door, a stumbling stride
The soul must take to cross from birth to birth,
A grey defeat pregnant with victory.
A whip to lash us towards our deathless state.
The unconscious world is the spirit's self-made room ...*

Self-made.

*Eternal Night shadow of eternal Day.
Night is not our beginning nor our end;
She is the dark Mother in whose womb we have hid
Safe from too swift a waking to world-pain....*

Oh, this is....

*By Light we live and to the Light we go.
Here in this seat of Darkness mute and lone,
In the heart of everlasting Nothingness
Light conquered now even by that feeble beam....*

X.I p.600-01

It's marvelous.

Yes, it must be a joy to work on "Savitri."

Oh, mon petit! ... It makes you live in a marvelous atmosphere.

A few months later, in July, the Mother again shows Satprem a passage from *Savitri* that she has translated, but it is one of the "Meditations on Savitri" passages, this time from Book Two, Canto One, corresponding to the fifth painting for this canto.

July 10, 1963

(Mother reads out a passage from "Savitri":)

*A slow reversal's movement then took place:
A gas belched out from some invisible Fire,
Of its dense rings were formed these million stars;
Upon earth's new-born soil God's tread was heard.*

II.I. p. 101 [MoS passage 2.1.5]

It's magnificent ... magnificent. In French it would be poor.

I don't seek to translate poetically, I only try to render the meaning. I read the English sentence until I SEE the meaning clearly, and once I see it, I put it into French, but very awkwardly I don't claim to be a poet! Only, the meaning is correct.

This translation will not serve any purpose – it serves a purpose only for me. But I don't even have the time, I can hardly spare half an hour a day for this work - I hope I can offer myself half an hour a day!

In the first part of our study, we referred to a publication of Editions Auropress of 1977, entitled *Sri Aurobindo : Savitri – passages traduits par la Mère*. We gather that this collection of passages from *Savitri* translated by the Mother into French was compiled by her grand-daughter Françoise, later named Purna Prema. And we understand that it was Purna Prema who worked with the Mother for the translation of the passages selected for the “Meditations on Savitri” paintings series. It will be appropriate here to give an outline of the full contents of that book. All the passages are given first in the original English, with the French translation appearing on the facing page.

First comes Sri Aurobindo's “Author's Note”. This is followed by passages from Book Ten, Cantos 1, 2, 3 and 4, totalling 1661 lines in all out of the 2385 lines of the original. This seems to comprise the work which the *Agenda* shows as extending from March 1963 to July 1970.

In addition, Purna Prema's collection includes passages from the beginning of the book : one passage from Book One Canto Three, perhaps prepared as a Darshan message? Then the passage from Book One Canto Four which we have placed with our frontispiece in this issue. This is followed by other passages from the same canto, all corresponding to “Meditations on Savitri” paintings. Then come translations of all the “Meditations on Savitri” passages for Book One Canto Five. Probably this is the work which the Mother refers to in the *Agenda* as going on with ‘F’ – most likely her grand-daughter Françoise. Then comes a very significant passage from Book Six, Canto Two – part of the last passage that Sri Aurobindo is known to have worked on in November 1950, very shortly before leaving his body on December 5th. There is no indication of when, or for what purpose, the Mother translated the following lines, but we cannot help finding it deeply moving that she did so :

*A day may come when she must stand unhelped
On a dangerous brink of the world's doom and hers,
Carrying the world's future on her lonely breast,
Carrying the human hope in a heart left sole*

*To conquer or fail on a last desperate verge,
 Alone with death and close to extinction's edge.
 Her single greatness in that last dire scene
 Must cross alone a perilous bridge in Time
 And reach an apex of world-destiny
 Where all is won or all is lost for man.
 In that tremendous silence lone and lost
 Of a deciding hour in the world's fate,
 In her soul's climbing beyond mortal time
 When she stands sole with Death or sole with God
 Apart upon a silent desperate brink,
 Alone with her self and death and destiny
 As on some verge between Time and Timelessness
 When being must end or life rebuild its base,
 Alone she must conquer or alone must fall.*

VI.2 p.461

Then comes a selection of passages from the end of Book Eleven, starting from:

*O Satyavan, O luminous Savitri,
 I sent you forth of old beneath the stars,
 A dual power of God in an ignorant world,
 In a hedged creation shut from limitless self,
 Bringing down God to the insentient globe,
 Lifting earth-beings to immortality.*

XI.I p.702

The twelve short passages, totalling 83 lines (out of 372) end with the last lines of the canto :

*A power leaned down, a happiness found its home.
 Over wide earth brooded the infinite bliss.*

XI.I p.712

Unfortunately there is no indication of when the Mother did this translation, and we find no reference to it in the *Agenda*. Nevertheless we feel very fortunate that all these precious translations by the Mother have been collected and published, and are thus available to us.

In September 1963, the Mother again speaks to Satprem about her experience with translation, this time in connection with a message which she wished to publish in both English and French :

September 25, 1963

(Mother first reads her notation of a recent experience)

It came in English. (I want to put it in the *Bulletin* to fill a gap!)
We should put it in French, too.

Love is ... (no need to say that it's the condensation of an experience – an experience I leave unsaid). Love is not sexual intercourse. Love is not vital attraction and interchange. Love is not the heart's hunger for affection. Love is a mighty vibration coming straight from the One. And only the very pure and very strong are capable of receiving and manifesting it.

Then an explanation on what I mean by “pure, ”: *the very pure and very strong*:

To be pure is to be open only to the Supreme's influence, and to no other.

Far more difficult than what people consider purity to be! Which is something quite artificial and false.

The last sentence I wrote in French, too (the two came together):

Être pur, c'est être ouvert seulement à l'influence du Suprême et à nulle autre.

It's simple and definite.

Now we should translate the rest into French – I have so many papers that I am lost! (*Mother rummages among a heap of scraps of paper*) I am snowed under with papers!

At first I put, *L'Amour n'a rien à voir avec ...* [Love has nothing to do with ...], and so on, but that's not true. So we'll put, *L'Amour n'est pas ...* [Love is not ...].

L'Amour n'est pas les relations sexuelles. L'Amour n'est pas les attractions et les échanges vitaux. L'Amour n'est pas le besoin d'affection du coeur ...

It's from *Savitri*, in “The Debate of Love and Death,” when Death

tells Savitri, “What you call love is the hunger of your heart.”

*[... thy passion was a sensual want refined,
A hunger of the body and the heart; X.II, p.611]*

Savitri replies :

*My love is not a hunger of the heart,
My love is not a craving of the flesh;
It came to me from God, to God returns. X.II, p.612*

...

And then, the positive side:

*L'Amour est une vibration toute-puissante émanée
directement de l'Un. Et seul, le très pur et le très
fort est capable de la recevoir et de la manifester.*

I have a whole stack of notes! (*Mother shows her successive drafts of the translation*)

The thing is new to me. That's what I told you the other day: first an experience, but an experience ... something that takes HOLD of the entire being, the entire body, everything, everything, like this (*grasping gesture*) and keeps you in its hold. And it works. It works everywhere in the cells: absolutely everywhere, in the consciousness, in the sensation, in the cells. Then it settles, as if passing through a very fine sieve, and it falls back to the other side – as words. But not always arranged in sentences (it's very odd): two words here, three words there (*Mother seems to show patches of color here and there*). Then I keep very still, I don't stir – above all I don't think, don't stir – silence. Then, little by little, the words start a dance, and when they form a reasonably coherent sentence, I write it down. But generally it isn't final. If I wait a little longer (even while doing something else), after a time it comes: a sentence that has a far more logical and striking existence. And if I wait still longer, it becomes more precise, until finally it comes with a feeling, “Now this is it.” That's what happened with the English note: “Now this is it.” Good, so I write it down.

I never had that before. Everything had to fall silent (I mean even the most active and material outer mind), I had to get into the habit, when my experience comes, of not stirring – not stirring,

nothing stirring, everything like this (*gesture in suspense*), waiting.

Even visually, it almost looks like a fine rain of white light, and after a time, that fine rain seems to make the words grow, as if it were watering the words! And the words come. Then they start a sort of dance, a quadrille, and when the quadrille has taken a clear shape, then the sentence becomes clear.

Very amusing. It's already the third time that's happened – brand new.

So when I note it all down, the result is all sorts of papers!
(*Mother shows the stack of drafts*)

And now, with that new process, the papers will go on multiplying! Because it comes the way I told you [*in successive bits*]. But it has an advantage: the mind stays absolutely silent – the mind need not do anything, it's as if someone came to look for the words in a storehouse and made all the arrangements. And that someone is impersonal: an impersonal consciousness. Almost “the consciousness of what wants to be expressed,” the consciousness of a revelation or an instruction, or the consciousness of a will, but not of a person. That someone collects the words and puts them together, then there is a dance ... like a dance of electrons!

...

That's how it works! It's really thought seen from above, from a height, and it's very amusing. Very amusing, it all plays, it's like little will-o'-the-wisps coming out from here and there, doing a dance, arranging themselves – very amusing.

It's beginning to be amusing. It has been very strong lately it's been coming at night, in daytime, all the time.

Just a few days later comes another conversation relating to the Mother's work with *Savitri* :

September 28, 1963

Do you remember Savitri's debate with Death? According to it, Sri Aurobindo seems to be saying that Disorder arose when Life entered Matter.

(*Mother leafs through her thick translation notebook*)

Although God made the world for his delight,

An ignorant Power took charge and seemed his Will

In other words, that Power assumed the appearance of God's Will.

*And Death's deep falsity has mastered Life.
All grew a play of Chance simulating Fate. X.III, p.629*

And before, Sri Aurobindo writes:

O Death, this is the mystery of thy reign.

He seems to imply it's only on earth:

*In earth's anomalous and tragic field
Carried in its aimless journey by the sun
Mid the forced marches of the great dumb stars,
A darkness occupied the fields of God,*

(Mother repeats)

*A darkness occupied the fields of God,
And Matter's world was governed by thy shape.*

The shape of Death.

Thy mask has covered the Eternal's face,

It's marvelous!

*The Bliss that made the world has fallen asleep.
Abandoned in the Vast she slumbered on:
An evil transmutation overtook
Her members till she knew herself no more. X.III p.627-28*

And so on, a whole passage. And he seems to imply that it's when Life entered inert Matter that an ignorant Power ... what I read at the beginning:

*An ignorant Power took charge and seemed his Will
And Death's deep falsity has mastered Life.*

Consequently, according to this, Death would exist only on the earth.

(silence)

That's where I am in my translation. *(Mother closes her notebook)*

What are your conclusions?

I'll have to go to the end to understand what he wants to demonstrate.

You see, I was always under the impression that the earth was a symbolic representation of the universe in order to concentrate the Work on one point so that it could be done more consciously and deliberately. And I was always under the impression that Sri Aurobindo too thought that way. But here ... I had read *Savitri* without noticing this. But now that I read it and I am so immersed in that problem ... In other words, it's as if it were THE question given me to resolve.

I noticed it while reading.

(long silence)

It would seem to legitimize or justify those who want to escape entirely from the earth's atmosphere. The idea would be that the earth is a special experiment of the Supreme in His universe; and those who are not too keen on that experiment (!) prefer to get out of it (to say things somewhat offhandedly).

The difference is this: In one case, the purpose of the earth is a concentration of the Work (which means it can be done more rapidly, consciously and perfectly here), and so there is a serious reason to stay on and do it. In the other case, it's just one experiment amidst thousands or millions of others; and if that experiment doesn't particularly appeal to you, to want to get out of it is legitimate.

I don't see how it would be possible for one point of the Supreme not to be the whole Supreme. If there is a difficulty here, it's a difficulty for the WHOLE, isn't it?

Not necessarily.

Why should there be something apart from the rest?

It all depends, in fact, *(laughing)* on what He is driving at!

We can very well conceive that He may be carrying on some very different experiments. And so you could go from one experiment to another, you see.

It would be as Buddha said: it's attachment or desire that keeps you here, otherwise there's no reason for you to stay here.

(Satprem protests wordlessly)

Everything is possible to me, you know, absolutely everything, even the seemingly most contradictory things – really, I am totally unable to raise a mental or logical or reasonable objection either to this or to that. But the question ... *(Mother leaves her sentence unfinished)*. That is to say, the Lord's Will is very clear to Him, and *(laughing)* the whole thing is to unite with that Will and know it.

It had always seemed to me that way [*the earth as a symbolic point of concentration*], but I am so convinced that Sri Aurobindo saw things more truly and totally than anyone did that, naturally, when he says something, you tend to consider the problem!

I don't know, I haven't reached the end of *Savitri* yet. Because I notice (rereading it after the space of a few months, barely two years) that it's altogether something else than the first time I read it. Altogether something else: there is in it infinitely more than what I had experienced; my experience was limited, and now it's far more complete (maybe if I reread it in a year or two, it would be still more complete, I don't know), but there are plenty of things that I hadn't seen the first time.

Perhaps that passage I've just read is only one aspect? ... I will see when I reach the end.

What he announces, and what I am sure of, is that the Victory will be won on the earth and that the earth will become a progressive being (eternally progressive) in the Lord – that's understood. But it doesn't preclude the other possibility. The future of the earth he has announced clearly, and it's understood that such is the future of the earth; only, if that possibility [*of death as an exclusively earthly phenomenon*] is what we could term "historically" correct, it would sort of legitimize the attitude of those who get away from it. How is it that Buddha, who undeniably was an Avatar, laid so much stress on Deliverance as the conclusion of things? He who stayed behind only to help others ... to get away faster. Then that means he saw only one side of the problem?

...

Oh, yes!

But if there is a whole universe, thousands of universes with altogether different modes, and if to be here is merely a matter of CHOICE ... then the choice is free, of course - there are those who like conquest and victory, and those others who like doing nothing.

But Buddha represented only one stage of consciousness.

AT THAT TIME it was good to follow that path, therefore ...

We can conceive it was a particular necessity within the whole, of course. But these are all conceptions, it's still something mental. I recently had in my hands a quotation from Sri Aurobindo in which he said that there is "no problem the human mind cannot solve if it wants to." (*Laughing*) There is no problem that the mind cannot solve if it applies itself to it! But I don't care, I have no need of mental logic – no need. And it would have no effect on my action – that's not what I want, not at all! It's only because there is that increasingly acute contradiction between the Truth and what is. It's becoming painfully acute. You know, that suffering, that general misery is becoming almost unbearable.

There was a time when I looked at all that with a smile – a long time. For years and years it was a smile, the way you smile at a childish question. Now, I don't know why it has come ... it has been THRUST on me like a sort of acute anguish – which certainly is necessary to get out of the problem.

To get out, I mean, to cure, to change – not to flee. I don't like flight. That was my major objection to the Buddhists: all that you are advised to do is merely to give you an opportunity to flee – that's not pretty. But change, yes.

(silence)

There are some lines [in *Savitri*] that all of a sudden are so magnificent! They come with such power, but once written down, that's not it any more.

For example, you SEE that image of the mask of Death covering the Supreme's face.

It's marvelous. So intense. And then that ignorant Power that took charge of the earth and made it ... that "seemed," – SEEMED the Supreme's Will. It's so pregnant with meaning.

The next conversation recorded in the *Agenda* which relates to the Mother's *Savitri* translation is dated February 22, 1964. We have looked at it in the first part of our study. Then once more, about a month later, the Mother again refers to her method of translation :

March 18, 1964

To translate I go to the place where things are crystallized and formulated. Nowadays my translations are not exactly an amalgamation, but they are under the influence of both languages: my English is a little French and my French is a little English – it's a mixture of the two. And I see that from the standpoint of expression, it's rather beneficial, for a certain subtlety comes from it.

I don't "translate" at all, I never try to translate: I simply go back to the "place" where it came from, and instead of receiving this way (*gesture above the head, like scales tipping to the right for French*) I receive that way (*the scales tip to the left for English*), and I see that it doesn't make much difference: the origin is a sort of amalgamation of the two languages. Perhaps it could give birth to a somewhat more supple form in both languages: a little more precise in English, a little more supple in French.

...

But it's my method for *Savitri*, too, it's a long time since I stopped translating: I follow the thought up to a point, and then, instead of thinking this way (*same gesture of tipping to the right*), I think that way (*to the left*), that's all. So it's not pure English, not pure French either.

Personally I would like it to be neither English nor French, to be something else! But for the moment, what words are to be used? ... I clearly feel that to me, both in English and French (and maybe in other languages if I knew any), words have another meaning, a slightly unusual and far more PRECISE meaning than they do in languages as we know them – far more precise. Because, to me, a word means exactly a certain experience, and I clearly see that people understand quite differently; so I feel their understanding as something hazy and imprecise. Every word corresponds to an experience, to a particular vibration.

I don't say I have reached the satisfactory expression – it's taking shape.

And the method is always the same: I never translate – never, never – I go up above, to the place where one thinks beyond words, where one experiences the idea or the thought of a thing, or the movement or the feeling (whatever), and when it's in a particular language, it goes like this (*same gesture as before*), while in another language, it goes like that: it's as if something up above tipped over. I don't translate on the same level at all, I never translate on the level of languages. And sometimes, I notice that for me the quality of the words is very different from what it is for others, very different.

I have given up all hope of making myself understood.

Eighteen months later, in connection with her translation work on *Savitri* the Mother refers to an interesting experience with “Sri Aurobindo's light” :

November 6, 1965

(Mother takes up the translation of “Savitri” and stops abruptly, as if she were following something with her eyes:)

... As big as this, a sun, a sun scintillating with Sri Aurobindo's light, when I write, between me and the notebook, and it moves about with the pen! It's this big (*a big orange*), it's Sri Aurobindo's light, blue, that special blue, silver blue, scintillating, and it moves about every time I write in this notebook! (*Laughing*) That's why I have difficulty seeing: it moves about with the pen!

The following January, the Mother refers to this experience again :

January 19, 1966

(Mother copies out in her thick white notebook a few lines from her translation of “Savitri.”)

... Near my pen, there is a small disk of Sri Aurobindo's light, which sparkles and sparkles.... I see it more than my handwriting.

It's no bigger than this (*two inches*) and it shines, it shines brightly – blue light, of the silvery blue that was Sri Aurobindo's blue. It shines and shines, and it moves along with my fingers

And when I speak, when I say things that “come,” there are two disks (I don't know why). Not one, but two, and they are bigger (*about four inches*), one above the other. When I tell of an experience, for instance, or answer a question, there are two of them, slightly bigger.

And when I concentrate on someone while calling the Lord, then, generally, near the shoulder (*gesture between the person's head and shoulder*), there is a great golden light, like that, which sparkles and sparkles, shines and shines, very brightly, all the while. And when the light goes, the concentration goes.

But just now, it was amusing, it was quite small like this, moving along with my pen. Now it's finished, gone! (*Mother laughs*)

A couple of weeks earlier she had said :

December 28, 1965

The first poetry I was able to appreciate in my life was *Savitri*. Previously, I was closed. To me it was always words: hollow, hollow, hollow, just words – words for words' sake. So as a sound it's pretty, but ... I prefer music. Music is better!

This translation of *Savitri* gives me a whole lot of fun, it's great fun for me.

April 16, 1966

(*Mother translates a line of “Savitri” without hesitation, then comments:*)

You read here [*in the physical book*], then you keep still, open a door, and it comes.

It's amusing, I've just done that as if I had been made to do it. Usually it's always blank and still here (*gesture to the forehead*), and that's what it gets inscribed on; but just now it wasn't like that: I

read, it came here, then I made a movement backwards: a door opened, and then it was clearly written!

In May 1966, the Mother was still working on Book Ten, and the debate between Savitri and Death. But in November, we find her again taking up the passage in Book One, Canto Four to which she referred a number of times :

November 19, 1966

*When darkness deepens strangling the earth's breast
And man's corporeal mind is the only lamp,
As a thief's in the night shall be the covert tread
Of one who steps unseen into his house. I.IV, p.55*

Yet another example: *Quelqu'un entrera INAPERÇU dans sa maison* ["One who steps UNSEEN into his house"]. It came on the "screen" this morning (so much comes that it's impossible to remember, but it's so interesting), and when *inaperçu* [unseen] came, I told you, "Yes, that's better."

It's strange. It's almost ... (if there were time to remember precisely), it's almost like a memory in advance.

Strange.

(A few lines below, Mother hesitates between two translations:)

And earth [shall] grow unexpectedly divine.

It's again the quality of the vibration: *sans s'y attendre* ["without expecting it"] is fuller – it's fuller, more golden. The other, *d'une façon inattendue* ["in an unexpected way"] is a bit cold and dry.

"Et sans s'y attendre, la Terre deviendra divine ..."

As mentioned above, the Mother's translation of this whole passage is included in Purna Prema's collection; and we have used these lines to accompany the frontispiece of this issue of our Study Notes. We have done so, not only because this passage is the one from *Savitri* to which the Mother refers most often in the *Agenda*, mentioning it

no less than 10 times; but also because, according to the conversation of December 31, 1963, it may be this passage which the Mother is seen working on in the accompanying photo.

In May 1968, the Mother refers to another experience with Sri Aurobindo connected to her *Savitri* translation :

May 4, 1968

When was the last time you came? The day before yesterday? ... The day before yesterday, at 5 in the morning, I read a letter from T.F. which I hadn't had the time to read. I was all alone, concentrated, and two sentences came in answer to her letter, which I wanted to write down. I started writing, and I found myself writing with a tiny handwriting! I tried to make it bigger – impossible. Then I drew within, I looked, and I saw it was Sri Aurobindo who was writing! So naturally, I let him write.

It's not his handwriting, but not mine either! It's a sort of combination of both.... I had the same experience years ago, ... One day, while writing, it was he who wrote; it was his handwriting, that is, nearly illegible! So (*laughing*) I said, "No, I don't want it!" (Because it was illegible – if it had been clearer than mine, I'd have been happy!) And I stopped.

Two months later, in July, she refers to Sri Aurobindo dictating the translation to her. Here too we find the Mother referring to her work with 'F', (probably Françoise, the Mother's grand-daughter, whom she later named 'Purna Prema'), and mentioning that she has started translating again at the beginning of the poem.

July 3, 1968

And your translation of "Savitri"?

But I have work to do. I no longer have time. I no longer have time to do anything.

It's a pity.

That is to say, now F. has taken it into her head to translate *Savitri* with me (all she does is look in the dictionary when I need a word), right from the start, and I've reached the second page! It'll take ten or fifteen years!

But I find it very interesting, because I only have to be still, and Sri Aurobindo dictates to me. So there remain one or two little corrections in the French, and that's that. He tells me the word: for this word, this word. Like that. It's very interesting. Only, I do five or six lines every time.... But now I do it better than I used to.

Unfortunately, apart from the translation of Sri Aurobindo's "Author's Note", included in the Auropress collection, we have no trace of any translations from the Mother of the very beginning of *Savitri*.

By April of the following year, we find the Mother translating a passage at the beginning of Book One, Canto Five, starting from one of the "Meditations on Savitri" passages, corresponding to the first painting for this canto :

April 16, 1969

I found something in *Savitri* ... something in the fifth Canto (I translated it yesterday and kept it to show you) Here:

(Mother takes a roll of sheets and reads:)

*This knowledge first he had of time-born men,
Admitted through a curtain of bright mind
That hangs between our thought and absolute sight,
He found the occult cave, the mystic door
Near to the well of vision in the soul,
And entered where the Wings of Glory brood
In the sunlit space where all is for ever known. I.V, p.74*

(Then Satprem reads out Mother's translation)

Not too great, the translation!

Oh, but it is, Mother.

That's the best I found, but it's not too great.

(Silence; Mother looks at another sheet)

And at one place he says:

*He shore the cord of mind that ties the earth-heart
And cast away the yoke of Matter's law
The body's rules bound not the spirit's powers I.V, p.74*

You see, he says the heartbeats stop

(Mother looks for the passage, which Satprem reads out:)

When life had stopped its beats, death broke not in ...

That's it! And he says that the mind also stops.

(Satprem reads)

He dared to live when breath and thought were still.

That's it.

*Thus could he step into that magic place
Which few can even glimpse with hurried glance*

When I read it, I didn't know he had spoken of that experience of the abolition of the mind – he did speak of it, and he says the heartbeats have stopped, but that one isn't dead. That's it.

I don't know, when I read it, I suddenly felt he was describing the transition from ordinary life to a supramental life.

I don't know why, but I very strongly said to myself that I absolutely had to show you this.

(Satprem reads out the translation)

I don't know if the translation is very great, but it's the best I could do. (I am slowly translating the whole of *Savitri* – it'll take ten years!) You remember, we had translated a good deal of it, but it was the end of *Savitri*; this is the beginning.

In the publication brought out by Auropress and most probably compiled by Purna Prema, we find that all the "Meditations on Savitri" selections from this canto are given in the Mother's translation. But as an exceptional addition, we find there also the lines linking

the first and the second passages – just the ones which she discusses in this conversation with Satprem.

A few months later, in July, the Mother is still working on passages from Canto Five selected for “Meditations on Savitri” :

July 26, 1969

(Mother wants to revise with Satprem a few passages of her translation of ‘Savitri.’)

But now I’ve come to notice that they cut these quotations, they leave out two lines in the middle – suddenly I’ll say to myself, “But it doesn’t hang together!” I’ll ask, and F. tells me, “Yes, they left out one line, two lines” So what’s to be done? It’s absurd.

Here, all this is ready. I don’t need to see it again: it’s for you to see it. It’s my translation.

What should I do?

(Laughing) See if my translation is good!

But Mother, listen ... why?

No, because some things might be put in a better way.

Yes, but I’m wary. You know, I have learned that what’s thought to be “better” according to literary knowledge isn’t necessarily better from the standpoint of the true force.

I quite agree with that.

Listen, basically what you should do is to see (you can see it right away) if you find something you think isn’t too good. I’ve done it “like that”; I can’t say I am attached to my translation, not at all, but if you could suggest something to me ...

(Satprem starts reading out a passage)

As you said, the French might be a bit awkward, but it may

be the only way to translate precisely. Sometimes I did it purposely.

*Admitted through a curtain of bright mind
That hangs between our thought and absolute sight,
He found the occult cave, the mystic door
Near to the well of vision in the soul
And entered where the Wings of Glory brood
In the sunlit space where all is for ever known.*

I.V p.74 [MoS 1:5:1]

“Brood”? ...

It’s the image of a hen brooding on its eggs! “The Wings of Glory” brood on things so they may be realized.

*There in a hidden chamber closed and mute
Are kept the record graphs of the cosmic scribe,
And there the tables of the sacred Law
The symbol powers of number and of form,
And the secret code of the history of the world
And Nature’s correspondence with the soul
Are written in the mystic heart of life. I.V p.74 [MoS 1.5.2]*

*In the glow of the Spirit’s room of memories
He could recover the luminous marginal notes
Dotting with light the crabbed ambiguous scroll ...*

I.V, p.76 [MoS 1.5.3]

(Mother laughs) “The crabbed ambiguous scroll”! ... Is that all?

*He saw the unshaped thought in soulless forms,
Knew Matter pregnant with spiritual sense,
Mind dare the study of the Unknowable,
Life its gestation of the Golden Child. I.V p. 76 [MoS 1.5.4]*

*A Will, a hope immense now seized his heart,
And to discern the superhuman’s form
He raised his eyes to unseen spiritual heights,
Aspiring to bring down a greater world. I.V p.76 [MoS 1.5.5]*

(silence)

The Mother continues :

Yesterday, I read another part of *Savitri* which tells how the king is transformed [*The World-Soul, II.XIV.*] – those are ALL the experiences my body is now going through! I knew nothing about it (I don't remember that at all), and I seemed to be reading all the experiences my body is now going through It's interesting.

There's EVERYTHING in this *Savitri*!

And to be able to describe those experiences like that, he must have had them.

As mentioned in the first part of our study, the *Agenda* notes that on two days in April 1969 the Mother recording her reading of some of these "Meditations on Savitri" passages translated into French. In July 1969, we find her again working on passages from Book One Canto Five, also from the "Meditations on Savitri" series.

But in June the following year, she has resumed her translation of Book Ten, and is working on Canto Four :

June 6, 1970

(Mother takes up the reading of Savitri: the end of the Debate of Love and Death.)

Is it a speech by this gentleman?

Yes (laughing), yes, it's the end.

The end of his speech?

One of us should write.... If it's more convenient for me to write, I'll write.

It's always better to have your handwriting! But if it tires you, it's quite easy for me to note it down.

"Tires," oh no! It's just that it [*Mother's handwriting*] is no longer good. It's no longer as it should be – but it doesn't tire me. So we'll put:
(Mother writes her French translation of the following verses:)

*If thou art Spirit and Nature is thy robe,
Cast off thy garb and be thy naked self
Immutable in its undying truth,*

*Alone for ever in the mute Alone.
Turn then to God, for him leave all behind;
Forgetting Love, forgetting Satyavan,
Annul thyself in his immobile peace.
O soul, drown in his still beatitude.
For thou must die to thyself ...*

That's for sure! Thou must die to thyself to reach ... *à la suprématie divine* [divine supremacy]?...

"To reach the divine heights"?

No, we must put "God" in Death's mouth.

*For thou must die to thyself to reach God's height:
I, Death, am ...*

Happiness?

I, Death, am the gate of immortality. X.I, p.647

He's *clever!*

Every time you read it again, it's new.

But that's a very interesting phenomenon. Every time I read *Savitri*, I feel as if I am reading it for the first time, really. It's not that I understand differently, it's that it's completely new: I never read it before! It's odd. It's at least the fourth time I read it.

And truly there's everything in it. All the things I've discovered lately were there. And I hadn't seen it. It's odd.

The first time I read it was a revelation; it hung together perfectly well from beginning to end, and I felt I had understood (I did understand something). The second time I read it, I said to myself, "But this isn't the same thing as what I read!..." It hung together, it made up a whole – and I understood something else. Then, recently when I read, at every passage I said to myself, "How new this is! And how the things I have found since are there!" Today again, that's how it is, as if I read it for the first time! And it puts me into contact with the things I have just discovered.

It's a miraculous book! (*Mother laughs*) We'll continue in the same way.

June 20, 1970

(Mother takes up her translation of Savitri: Savitri's answer to Death.)

*But Savitri answered to the sophist God:
"Once more wilt thou call Light to blind Truth's eyes,
Make knowledge a catch of the snare of Ignorance
And the Word a dart to slay my living Soul?"*

One can't slay the soul!

Offer, O king, thy boons to tired spirits ...

(Mother smiles)

*And hearts that could not bear the wounds of Time,
Let those who were tied to body and to mind,
Tear off those bonds and flee into white calm
Crying for a refuge from the play of God,
Surely thy boons are great since thou art He!" X.Ip.647*

July 1, 1970

Do we have time for some Savitri?

Yes, Mother. In the last verses, Savitri said:

*Let those who were tied to body and to mind,
Tear off those bonds and flee into white calm*

Is it Savitri who says that?

*Yes, Death told her one must leave one's body in order
to find God's height....*

(Mother translates the sequel)

*But how shall I seek rest in endless peace
Who house the mighty Mother's violent force,
Her vision turned to read the enigmaed world,
Her will tempered in the blaze of Wisdom's sun
And the flaming silence of her heart of love?*

*The world is a spiritual paradox
Invented by a need in the Unseen,
A poor translation to the creature's sense
Of That which for ever exceeds idea and speech,
A symbol of what can never be symbolised,
A language mispronounced, misspelt, yet true...*

X.IV, p.647-648

Is there more?

Yes, there is more.

But Satprem tells us that these were the last lines of Book Ten that the Mother was to translate, and these are the last lines from it that appear in the Auropress collection.

However there are a few more *Agenda* references, later in 1970, to the Mother translating passages from *Savitri* into French – passages selected for the “Meditations on Savitri”. However these passages, from the early cantos of Book Two, do not appear in the Auropress publication.

August 5, 1970

(Mother takes up the translation of a few extracts from Savitri)

*The great World-Mother by her sacrifice
Has made her soul the body of our state ...*

II.I p.99 [MoS 2.1.2]

That's interesting, I hadn't noticed: “*has made her SOUL...*”

*The divine intention suddenly shall be seen,
The end vindicate intuition's sure technique.*

II.I p.100 [MoS 2.1.3]

It's interesting...

October 24, 1970

(Mother translates a few fragments from Savitri which were chosen for her.)

*A miracle of the Absolute was born,
Infinity put on a finite soul,
All ocean lived within a wandering drop,
A time-made body housed the Illimitable.
To live this Mystery out our souls came here.*

II.I p.101 [MoS 2.1.6]

*A figure sole on Nature's giant stair,
He mounted towards an indiscernible end
On the bare summit of created things.*

II.I p.102 [MoS 2.1.7]

That's really good. It's a pity it was cut into small bits!

November 28, 1970

(Then Mother translates a few passages from Savitri, including this one:)

*It lends beauty to the terror of the gulfs
And fascinating eyes to perilous Gods,
Invests with grace the demon and the snake.*

II.II p.106 [MoS 2.2.4]

It's charming! That's exactly the nature of the vital, what Theon called the "nervous world."

December 2, 1970

(Then Mother translates a few fragments of Savitri:)

*This mire must harbour the orchid and the rose,
From her blind unwilling substance must emerge
A beauty that belongs to happier spheres.*

II.II p.107 [MoS 2.2.6]

This translation, of the "Meditations on Savitri" passage number 6 of Book Two, Canto 2, is the last reference to Mother translating *Savitri* found in the *Agenda*. However, as we mentioned in the first part of this study, it is possible that in April 1972 she translated the following

passage into French, for use as the Darshan message for April 24th that year. At least a translation of this passage by the Mother is included in Purna Prema's book, and it seems likely that it was made at this time.

*He comes unseen into our darker parts
And, curtained by the darkness, does his work,
A subtle and all-knowing guest and guide,
Till they too feel the need and will to change.
All here must learn to obey a higher law,
Our body's cells must hold the Immortal's flame. I.III, p.35*

*Invisible, il vient dans nos parties les plus sombres
Et, voilé par l'obscurité, fait son travail,
Un hôte subtil, un guide connaissant tout,
Jusqu'à ce qu'elles sentent aussi le besoin et la volonté de changer.
Tout ici-bas doit apprendre à obéir à une loi supérieure
Les cellules de notre corps doivent contenir la flamme de l'immortel.*

There is one more conversation from the *Agenda* which should be included here to round off this part of our study :

October 6, 1971

(Concerning the next "Bulletin.")

What shall we take up next?

What have we published?

*"The Human Cycle," "Human Unity," a few chapters
of "The Life Divine." ...*

Well, we should finish the book.

Finish it!... (laughter)

It's a lot of work.

Yes, enough for 30 years of the "Bulletin"!

(Mother laughs) Yes, it's best to take The Life Divine.

Or "Savitri"? Your translation of "Savitri"?

Oh, that!... It would take a poet to do that.... You're speaking of my translation?

Yes, Mother.

It's worthless.

No, it's not, Mother! Maybe a few things need adjusting, but.... No, no, it's worth it.

But I've done very little of it.

Well, you would have to "complete" it! (laughter)

Did I do the end?

A little at the beginning and then the end.

I don't see anymore.... So I should go back to it then.... *The Life Divine* will take how many years?

I don't know, thirty years maybe [at the rate of a chapter per "Bulletin"].

What! (laughter) Thirty!... Then it will go on until the year 2000.

Yes.

(Laughter) Then we have plenty of time!

Note: This article has emerged from an on-going study of all references to *Savitri* in *Mother's Agenda*. This research has been very much helped by an Index of References to *Savitri* in *Mother's Agenda* prepared by Martin S. of the House of Mother's Agenda in Auroville. My thanks go to Martin and to Ganga Lakshmi for their assistance in obtaining research materials for this study.

Acknowledgement is made to L'Institut de Recherches Evolutives, Paris, publishers of *L'Agenda de Mère* and *Mother's Agenda*, for the excerpts quoted here.

We should be aware that for this work the Mother was making use of the 1954 edition of *Savitri*.



The Mother's handwriting

Taken from the title page of *Sri Aurobindo, Savitri : passages traduits par la Mère*, Editions Auropress, 1977

Translations of Sri Aurobindo's Savitri held at Savitri Bhavan

1) Indian Languages:

Bengali : Gupta, Nolini Kanta, *Sri Aurobindo's Savitri, A Legend and a Symbol* (Parts 1 & 2) Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, 1996

Gujarati : Pujalal, *Savitri*, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, 1998

Hindi : Verma, Dr. K. N., *Savitri*, Ma Mandir Janakalyana Trust, Sri Aravinda Gram (Mahasuba), Hyderabad (M.P.) 1999

Marathi : Kavi Nrusimhagraj, *Sri Aravind Savitri*, Karmayogi Publications, Solapur, M.P., 1995, 2003

K.S. Seljadevi Vaheni Saheb Pratinidhi, *Savitri : a legend and a symbol by Sri Aurobindo*, Pondicherry, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, n.d.

Oriya : Mohante, Sri Rajkrushna, *Sri Aurobindo's Savitri* [Oriya adaptation of Nolini Kanta Gupta's Bengali translation] Matri Bhavan, Cuttack 1999

Sanskrit : Nirakari, Dr.R.D., *Savitri Book II*, Vedanta Prakashanam 1993

Tamil : Ravi Arumugam, Dr. A. I., *Savitri (A Legend and a Symbol)*, Narmaddha Pathimalingam, Chennai, 2004

Sankaranarayanan, Ms. Vijaya, *Sri Aravindar Aruliya "Savitri"* (Book 1, Cantos 1 – 5) Pondicherry, Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust, 2001.

Telugu : Rao, Tenneti Poornachandra, *Savitri, The Book of Beginnings*, Suryapet, Sri Aravinda Kendram, 1998, 1999.

Apart from these, we know of work being done in Urdu, by Cmdr. Satpal Sharma, as well as in Punjabi by our friend Mr. Ved Prakash Chaudry, who writes :

Why do I translate Savitri ? To concentrate on each and every word. I have done it thrice and I will start for a last time when I find myself competent to do so. I take up a few hundred lines every day and read them repeatedly until I feel hallucination and thrill. The more I read Savitri I feel that very few people meditate sufficiently on the lines, which show not only marvellous craftsmanship but also the highest source of inspiration a poet can touch.



Shri Prabhakar Nulkar, of Karmayogi Publications, Sholapur, along with Mrs. Nulkar and other well-wishers, presenting the new Marathi translation of Savitri to Shradhdhavan at Savitri Bhavan on September 20, 2003

2. Other Languages

Catalan : Kaque, *Sri Aurobindo Savitri I : El Libre dels commencaments*
Barcelona 1999

Dutch : *Savitri : Een Legende en een Symbool* by Martin Schreurs,
Haarlem, The Netherlands, 2001

Other work is being done in Dutch by our regular correspondent
Hans Vas.

French : La Mère, *Sri Aurobindo: Savitri: passages traduits par la
Mère*, Editions Auropress 1977

Panier, Janine, *Savitri*, Books 1, 2. and 3, Paris, Centre
d'Études Sri Aurobindo (CESA) (spiral bound computer print-out)

Satprem, *Savitri, Sri Aurobindo*, Books 1 to 11, Paris, Institut
de Recherches, Évolutives, various dates.

Thépôt, Raymond, *Sri Aurobindo Savitri*, Éditions Latin Pen,
Fraternité, Auroville [in 2 vols.]

Blond, Georges, *Sri Aurobindo – Savitri* unbound typescript

Deschamps, Dr. G., *Savitri* [selected passages from Book One]
bound typescript

German: Kappes, Heinz Rolf, *Sri Aurobindo: Savitri, Legende und Sinnbild*, Verlag Hinder und Deelman 1981 (1970)

Steiger, Peter, *Sri Aurobindo, Savitri, Eine Sage und ein Gleichnis* Sri Aurobindo Verlag/ Auroville Verlag [Zurich] n.d.

Italian : De Paolis, Paola, *Sri Aurobindo, Savitri : Leggenda e Simbolo, Traduzione italiana: introduzione e note*, Edizion Mediterranee/ Latin Pen, Auroville 1995, 2000

Russian : “*Aspiring to call on earth the highest world*”, Fragments of *Savitri* in English and Russian, compiled and translated by Dimitri Melgunov (spiral bound computer print out) Om Yut, St. Petersburg, Russia 1998

Spanish : Vidhi Sharma, at the Centre of Asian and African Studies of the University of Mexico, is preparing a thesis on Sri Aurobindo’s *Savitri*. Since his work is to be presented in Spanish, he is translating a number of passages to be included in it.

Bel Atreides, noted Spanish translator and poet, has also promised to share his version of *Savitri* with us one day.

We also received this e-mail from a Spanish reader of *Invocation* :

Dear friends:

*I give you notice of this new web page about Sri Aurobindo’s poem **Savitri**:*

<http://personal.ulyses.net/joslah62943/index.html>

Its purpose is to make the reading of the poem in its original English easier for Spanish-speaking people. The main content of the page is the possibility of downloading an English-Spanish vocabulary with about 15,000 words.

People also could pose questions about the literal meaning of the writing. In this way I hope the door between Savitri Bhavan and this page can stay open in the future.

José Luis L.

A print-out of this glossary is available in our Reading Room.

Thesis Received

Recently we were grateful to receive for our collection a copy of a thesis entitled “An Introduction to Sri Aurobindo and his epic poem *Savitri*.” The work is in English and was authored by Ms. Leilani Travens, who submitted it for a Master’s degree from the University of Pau in France in 2002, in the Department of English and North American Studies. It received a “Very Good” mention. Leilani was the first to have introduced a study of Sri Aurobindo in any French University. She visited Auroville and Pondicherry twice during the preparation of her thesis, and we remember that at Savitri Bhavan she mentioned the great encouragement given to her by her supervisor, Professor Sylvain Floc’h, who responded enthusiastically to the copy of *Savitri* which she had shown him. We are deeply grieved to learn that Leilani passed away shortly after receiving her degree, at the age of 44. Our sympathies go to her family and friends.

Correction

We try to avoid misprints in INVOCATION, and especially in the many quotations from *Savitri* which appear in our Study Notes. We are very sorry that in No. 22, on page 35, mistakes have slipped into some lines quoted. This is how they should have read :

*Not only is there hope for godheads pure;
The violent and darkened deities
Leaped down from the one breast in rage to find
What the white gods had missed: they too are safe;
A mother’s eyes are on them and her arms
Stretched out in love desire her rebel sons.* p.613

Translating Savitri: The Book of Yoga

by Carlo Chiopris

Carlo Chiopris, who has been reading Sri Aurobindo's books since 1975 and visiting the Ashram and Auroville regularly since 1977, is a founder member of "Aditi", an all-Italy group dedicated to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. In 2000 he was one of the founders of the Savitri Group of Milan, Italy, which meets weekly; and in 2004 he set up a Savitri Study Center there, as well as a website in Italian on Savitri (www.savitri.it).

I first heard about ***Savitri*** in 1975, when I discovered Sri Aurobindo's books. In the following years I often tried to read it, but it was only in 1994 that I could somehow get into it. For business reasons I was in Mountain View, California, and happened to get in touch with the Berkeley Sri Aurobindo Group. We used to meet on Sundays to read *The Synthesis of Yoga* and discuss it. Let me say first that discussing Sri Aurobindo's words was in itself something quite unusual, after my previous experience in Italy, made up of silent meetings where any kind of talk was sternly discouraged as "mental" and the very idea of "discussing" Sri Aurobindo would be considered disrespectful.

One day we moved to ***Savitri***. I still remember vividly the impression left by all those different voices, many of which had a strong foreign accent. It was like hearing Sri Aurobindo talking through us all, uncannily manifesting his consciousness in our human diversity. Pronunciation was in no way an issue, even understanding was not, just speaking those words was enough, some kind of miracle, a previously unexperienced kind of sacredness.

It was then that I decided to read the whole book, which I completed in a few weeks, just before going back to Italy. After that I started returning to ***Savitri*** again and again, re-reading the books I loved the

most, the The Book of Fate and The Book of Yoga, the very middle ones, the heart of the poem.

One day I stumbled on a line that started obsessing me. I asked Giusy, a colleague and friend of mine just returned from the USA, how she would translate:

A night of person in a bare outline

That was the beginning of my involvement in translating the Book of Yoga.

Giusy kept asking me about this obviously unusual book, and she started reading it too. I made my first translation attempts on a few passages, until we decided to translate the whole Book of Yoga together. She took care that it was correct, while I was busy providing a suitable verse-structure. That was in mid-1995, and still that experience is not over. I keep on revising my translation again and again, changing it as my understanding of *Savitri* deepens, which often comes about as a result of interaction with other readers in meetings and seminars. It is still open-ended, though I feel the time is approaching to close it and publish it.

For some months we met almost every Sunday to work on the translation in a team-effort. Dealing with a bilingual person turned out to be a rather frustrating experience: every time I thought I was translating by sheer intuition I discovered that I was simply wrong. And for Giusy, dealing with me, obsessed by rhythm and prosody, must have been even harder. But it was a marvellous experience, which I count among my happiest days ever. It was sadhana, and it was at the very same time the fruits of sadhana. Long hours trying to understand Sri Aurobindo's intention – it was like being allowed to live in some high place on the mountains, close to his mind, breathing a different air, seeing a much vaster landscape, amazingly rich and subtle.

There are five main issues in my effort, my main aim being a translation that could be read aloud and could from the start captivate the hearer's ear by rhythm and sound.

First, it was and still is a team effort. I think one single person can hardly be enough for such a task, for the languages are far enough apart, while yet often misleadingly similar, to lead to many errors.

Second, I never considered translating the whole of *Savitri*. At the time when I started this work, Paola de Paolis had just released her integral translation, so the need for an Italian rendering had finally been met. What interested me was a very specific work on rhythm and prosody, something that for the whole of *Savitri* would require an effort far too vast for my available time. I can also say that I consider The Book of Yoga as an almost independent part of *Savitri*, one that could be published apart by itself and still maintain a clear identity.

Third, the approach: I was interested in finding a rhythm that could reproduce something of the regular pace of the original, without being too preoccupied by lower-level issues in prosody. I eventually chose a free combination of the most important Italian metres: lines of seven and eleven syllables, allowing them to be often imperfect in the number of syllables while keeping the distinct rhythm of the verse, and sometimes adding a shorter line, such as one with five syllables.

A fourth peculiar issue is that I seldom translate while sitting at a desk, in front of a piece of paper or a PC. I learn the difficult or beautiful lines by heart and keep them in the background of my mind. Many of the passages that satisfy me most have been translated while on my mountain bike in very long rides, or when walking, or on the train. It is something that keeps going on even nowadays when I'm doing what will hopefully be the last revision.

My last issue is that this is a translation I regularly use in readings and seminars. It is one of the tools of my approach to *Savitri*. This may explain why I am so reluctant to close it down to a final revision. Different situations and audiences may call for a different translation. When alone, I may prefer to emphasize prosody or some ideal poetic standard; in public I may choose to emphasize readability in general, or to get close to a specific vocabulary, for example when dealing with people from a Buddhist or lay background.

Translating *Savitri* is such a many-sided issue that it can be considered as a sadhana in itself. The level of attention and understanding required to translate such a complex text as *Savitri*, and to translate it into a verse-form, is such that one is forced into a very deep contact with it. As I just wrote of those long hours with Giusy: at the end we used to feel both exhausted and uplifted. A few times we felt (please do not misunderstand!) as if we really understood something of Sri Aurobindo's mind, or saw through his eyes. Other times we discovered that the language of *Savitri* was reverberating in our own speech by a kind of contagion.

Once my first translation of The Book of Yoga was complete, I started reading it in public in the Aditi meetings. Aditi was at the time an all-Italy group of people interested in knowledge and practice of Sri Aurobindo's yoga. The first cantos read were the first and fifth. I read the fifth canto and very timidly said something on the finding of the soul, while the late Bianca Toccafondi, a marvellous actress, with her partner read the first one, about Savitri's discovery of suffering. I could feel the tears in the people attending that reading, and their sudden discovery of a Sri Aurobindo they had never suspected, unfathomably human, so close to the humanity we really, deeply are.

It may be interesting to note that before those readings I was strongly criticized for daring to propose "the reading of a text too high for us to understand". Such criticisms still appear even now, after ten years of *Savitri* being a regular activity in Aditi meetings. But why should Sri Aurobindo have written *Savitri* otherwise? Not reading Sri Aurobindo's books seems to me a very strange way of showing him respect or devotion!

One recent development from that initial *Savitri* experience is the Milan *Savitri* group, where a very few, very devoted people regularly meet each week to spend two hours in touch with *Savitri*. The group was larger in the past, up to fifteen people, and is now close to its fourth year of activity. From what I saw of Savitri Bhavan, the Milan readings are very similar. It is interesting that over the years we have become more and more 'shameless' in our

approach to *Savitri*. We do not pretend to understand it, but still try to touch it the way we touch our very lives. *Savitri* has become very intimate, and we let it dive deeply, standing naked and defenceless before its influence. Sometimes we feel like a small group of mystics going astray, or gone mad.

The latest development is the Italian *Savitri* website, www.savitra.it, where I and other *Savitri*-lovers are recording notes and experiences. An interesting feature of the site is that Italian translations of *Savitri* can be listened to via the web, for we realized that *Savitri* is grasped better, and its charm felt more irresistibly, when it is heard.

A Poet's Jottings

Raymond Thépot

Diary notes from an Aurovilian poet and essayist, one of those who has translated Savitri into French.

September 6, 1983

As I translate the least translatable of all books, *Savitri*, I feel my soils being overturned, and gently moving through them the Vedic ploughshare of future fertile harvests.

1985

Savitri is always ready to drown our pettinesses, it besieges our limitations with a multifarious immensity. Poetry would be able to anchor in us the new earth, the other perception, spread over us its puissant wings, if we cling close to her – and bit by bit this perception draws nearer to us that still floating island which has journeyed towards the earth – the barque of the Sun that will rule over the next cycle, which has perhaps already begun.

July 4, 1987

As I adjust, with the delight of a miniaturist, (caught now and again in a sort of cube of calm power), my formulas for the translation of Book Two, Canto 2 of *Savitri*, a canary wishes me good morning from the window. Endless corrections. Drowning under my accumulated pages. A certain subtle satisfaction when for the sake of greater truthfulness, and even a kind of boorishness, I renounce polish, the purring of so-called classic verse : the translation then takes on the bitter purity of wild bay-leaves. An uneven rhythm, and even, if necessary, anti-rhythm, have, I believe, right of entry in my translation-ascent up this mountain of a poem.

1987

I re-read Canto Five of Book Two of *Savitri*.

The dimension of this poem is the sphere : each line forms a whole, each Canto forms a whole. A whole of knowledge (the knowledge content is prodigious, and fresh and new with each reading) – a whole of love and of vision – totally “orchestrated” by its mantric music.

And even in translation, this work is so total that even in translation something remains. Between this masterwork and myself, by a reflex which I am unsure whether it is evasive or encyclopedic, I tend to interpose the translation of other texts. And intermittently this poem gnaws away at me – an awakening gnawing, which penetrates the inner forests.

May 26, 1988

Savitri, for the translator, is a mountain under construction, forever cut off from its summit, yet even as it is a marvel, entire in each of its rocks, each turn of a pathway. I often scold myself for not visiting this mountain often enough, for not setting up camp there permanently.

1988

How *Savitri* can amaze me, take me by surprise, after an interruption, fifteen minutes forgetting, half a day's wave of oblivion, or the lightning flash of an even more complete forgetfulness. In it there is a Force that works from every angle.

October 18, 1989

A golden ocean, translating this never-ending *Savitri*, beneath the golden rain of the morning sun who offers us a gallery of serene days (like me he sits on his balcony – we look each other in the face; down below the faithful murmur of the open-air market, whose stubborn recurrence I have to emulate.)

Time unrolls lazily. I pass uncounted hours tracing a synonym or avoiding a repetition. Certain pages, certain lines or words provoke debaucheries of research, orgies of erasures, witch hunts. The habitual response is to curse this English language which has so many strings to its bow, while French, like an archer miserly with his praises, has only one....

To express the idea of nudity, of being stripped bare, on pages 311-12 of his poem Sri Aurobindo without a qualm lines up 'bare' (1.51), 'naked' (1.54) and 'nude' (1.57). And in Book Three, Canto Three, spread over two pages, and sometimes only a few lines apart, we find side by side : 'insensitive' (translated by '*insensible*') , 'senseless' (same translation), 'insentient' (translated by '*dénué de sensation*'), 'unfeeling' (translated by '*qui ne ressent rien*') and finally our own 'insensible' (twice); for English, while adopting widely, has abandoned practically nothing from its stock of Latin words.

Faced with a word of Saxon origin, the translator innocently uses its French equivalent, only to find this very word, the same or almost the same in English, just a few lines further on. How can he help feeling some frustration?

Moreover some lines are so densely packed, so laconically rich in meaning that they can hardly be put into French. Often it is as if the absolute, or the essential reality of everything, has been brought together in a single line – not to mention the aureole that each line, with its rhythmic inflections, is haloed with. And not to mention the supple, complex, intricate constructions that English allows without killing the poetry, while French, in its own way, creates similar marvels – but in prose. Consider, O fantom reader, the untranslatability of ‘*the soul’s seer-vision’s home*’!

Correct usage, the notion of what can and can not be done, what can and can not be said, has become freakishly exaggerated in the French social animal. Only our party games have rich vocabularies. In every other context half of our most expressive terms are outlawed or obsolete.

September 1990

At present, in the unending revision of the computerised text of *Savitri* (a task of material precision never before attempted – hunting for the slightest mistake in the layout), I bathe in the marvellous vibration of the great poem – a bracing solidity and immensity.

It is a delight, a solace, when *Savitri* gets into our blood, our life. When the Universal Mother – that Ever-Present She, fully manifested as the Word at the end of the First Part – comes out of the book to take our heart into her arms, and for the space of a moment that aspires to eternity, breaks from it the obstinate hardened seals.

December 7, 1997

Golden groves of *Savitri*, blue galleries, unwounded skies. The words exude amber and myrrh. Like a green wood at first light, with its scarves of floating vapour, and on its verges, so far, so near, a promise – high, high up, the first signs of a message, the offer of an adventure to be lived out on the ground.

Night of the 28th to 29th August, 1998: One of the most beautiful dreams I have ever had :

I am walking alongside a buddhist monk,
who puts into my hand a volume of *Savitri* ...

[**August 2004** : I take great care not to interpret this dream. But for two whole days it left on me the stamp of a very great spiritual joy – one of those that can never be forgotten. This dream helped me to review the translation of Books One to Three of *Savitri* in the revised edition of 1989, and is at present helping me to revise line by line, and for the last time I hope, Books Four to Twelve. According to my experience as a happy but at the same time struggling translator, any text by Sri Aurobindo has to have been translated several times, even many times, before one can say that one has really translated it to the best of your capacity. I no longer count the translations of his longer poems, *Ahana* in particular – I remember that my last labour on this poem allowed me to bathe one night in the atmosphere of Sri Aurobindo, giving me an intimate understanding of the poem, or rather an intimate perception of its atmosphere, which does not necessarily pass into the words. It was the same with *Ilion* : when I thought that I had finished translating it, I had hardly let it lie for a few months before I felt impelled to take it up again. And so on, until the day when one feels more or less satisfied, and readers write to express their gratitude to one who has enabled them to understand the original a little better ...]

[Here I feel like referring to another dream, also a meeting, very brief but very concrete. At the time when my [*Savitri*] translation was being hotly challenged, and I had doubts about my work, I simply saw the Mother accepting the volume I offered her, before disappearing with it behind a curtain, her step divinely light. At the same time I had offered her chocolates, which she did **not** accept. I am very ready to suppose that these ‘chocolates’ were none other than my notes and commentaries!!]

November 2004

The translator of a glorious work resembles a restorer of paintings who is eager to bring back to life a talented copy of an original masterpiece – a copy which some declared enemy of translations, some fanatic disciple of the Great Master, would conscientiously

have allowed to fade away. The art restorer, whose zeal is somewhat like that of an archeologist, minutely scrapes away the uniform grey to remove the mask, the veil; he scrapes away with devotion, and little by little, a small miracle : it emerges from limbo, this successful copy that has caught some gleam of the masterwork. It shines with a borrowed radiance, and rightly so (after all it really is borrowed), but is not crudely overlaid: rather, let us say, adapted. It never lets you forget the original, never for a moment takes its place, but reminds you of it constantly (not directly in the form of clumsiness and rigidity done almost on purpose so that the reader shall never overlook the fact that this is a translation, a betrayal !) but indirectly, by the very spontaneity or even naturalness that it has inherited from the original. Not losing sight of the fact that in art spontaneity and naturalness are generally second-hand, the fruit of an elaboration that may extend over some time. In fact it is a matter of a close union between impulse and elaboration. And – except for those powerful, overwhelming visits of an inspiring breath that admits of no discussion, and of course except for translators like the Mother who receive their inspiration from the very source, the original fount – sincere elaboration often aims to scrape away the greyness, the vagueness, the fog, to rediscover COLOUR. Laboriousness or spontaneity make no difference so long as the scraping itself is inspired, and when it is often justified by its sudden apt discoveries (or rediscoveries).

Translating a work such as *Savitri* : it is obvious that in poetry no translation can be poetic, and therefore to some small extent faithful, unless it possesses rhythm, and to a lesser extent (much less) rhyme, a reminder of sound, an echo which emerges naturally – so long as this echo, this reminder do emerge naturally, and rarely, not continually and systematically. Of course, if we are translating *Ahana* – a poem which, unlike *Savitri*, is rhymed – a certain perfection is attained if the translation is interwoven with echoes in the same way as the original.

Let me stress the meaning of words like ‘natural’ and ‘spontaneous’. A work of art is a work – and the work should be felt. The discipline of the writing is constantly visible, and constantly transcended; it is the architecture of the message – and a significant part of the message is that architecture itself, always a sign of victory.

A humble, pretty water-lily whose special character is to have been born, by imitation and devotion, from a matchless lotus.

The Theme of "Transformation" in Sri Aurobindo's Savitri

by Shraddhavan

Paper presented at a conference on "Integral Psychology and Transformation" held at the Sri Aurobindo World Centre for Human Unity, Auroville, Jan. 11 -13, 2005

If we are to trace the theme of Transformation through Sri Aurobindo's revelatory epic, we shall need to be clear about exactly what this term implies in his vision. For as Sri Aurobindo writes in one of his letters :

"Transformation" is a word that I have brought in myself (like "supermind") to express certain spiritual concepts and spiritual facts of the integral yoga. People are now taking them up and using them in senses which have nothing to do with the significance which I put into them.

Letters on Yoga, SABCL 22-24: 115

So I started my preparation for this paper by gathering some extracts from his letters, to serve as guidelines in the exploration. Here I give only the most trenchant and essential of them :

Transformation means that the higher consciousness or nature is brought down into the mind, vital and body and takes the place of the lower.

Letters on Yoga, SABCL 22-24: 1143

I also noted that the ultimate aim of Sri Aurobindo's yoga is not reached with any individual transformation of consciousness and nature, however high and complete. His aim is the supramental transformation of the entire earth life. King Aswapati and Savitri both pray for the boon of the complete divine Presence "*for earth and men*". In another of his letters, Sri Aurobindo makes clear :

There are three kinds or stages of transformation contemplated in this sadhana, the psychic transformation,

the spiritual and the supramental. The first two have been done in their own way in other yogas; the last is a new endeavour. A transformation sufficient for spiritual realisation is attainable by the two former; a transformation sufficient for the divinisation of human life is, in my view, not possible except by a supramental change.

Letters on Yoga, SABCL 22-24: 1512

My first idea was that it would be possible to trace in *Savitri* these three levels of transformation mentioned by Sri Aurobindo (psychic, spiritual and supramental) through the sadhana of King Aswapati, extending from Book One Canto Three, “The Yoga of the King; the Yoga of the Soul’s Release” up to the end of Book Three “The Book of the Divine Mother”, Canto Four “The Vision and the Boon”; as well as in *Savitri*’s yoga which is described in Book Seven, but which also extends further, through her encounter with the god of Death, described in Books Eight, Nine and Ten, and on up to the middle of Book Eleven. And I felt it would be interesting to bring out the similarities and differences which the poet shows between these two yogas.

However when I went deeper into the passages in *Savitri* where these stages in transformation are described, my attention was drawn to another aspect : the power which effects the transformation. Particularly in the case of King Aswapati it became very noticeable that his aspiration and tapasya were led forward at each crucial transition by the intervention of a higher power. This led me to Sri Aurobindo’s wonderful book *The Mother*.

There we read :

There are two powers that alone can effect in their conjunction the great and difficult thing which is the aim of our endeavour, a fixed and unfailing aspiration that calls from below and a supreme Grace from above that answers.

The Mother, SABCL 25:1

If you desire this transformation, put yourself in the hands of the Mother and her Powers without cavil or resistance and let her do unhindered her work within you. Ibid:36-37

The Mother's power and not any human endeavour and tapasya can alone rend the lid and tear the covering and shape the vessel and bring down into this world of obscurity and falsehood and death and suffering Truth and Light and Life divine and the immortal's Ananda *Ibid:40-41.*

In the psycho-symbology of Savitri, King Aswapati represents the “fixed and unfailing aspiration that calls from below”, as Sri Aurobindo has pointed out in his “Author’s Note” to the poem:

Aswapati, the Lord of the Horse, ... is the Lord of Tapasya, the concentrated energy of spiritual endeavour that helps us to rise from the mortal to the immortal planes;

Savitri herself is, he says :

... the Divine Word, daughter of the Sun, goddess of the supreme Truth who comes down and is born to save;

She embodies the response of the supreme Grace to the sustained tapasya of King Aswapati, as a representative of the entire earth :

*A world's desire compelled her mortal birth.
One in the front of the immemorial quest,*

...
Brought down to earth's dumb need her radiant power: p. 22

So here I will try to trace very briefly the course of Aswapati's sadhana, to bring out how at each stage the king encounters the transforming power of the Mother in different guises on different levels, and how at each phase it enables him to move into new fields of experience and action.

We find the first stage of this process described in Book One, Canto Three “The Yoga of the Soul's Release”. We see King Aswapati being guided and illumined by the goddess-powers of inspiration, intuition, revelation and wisdom. As a result he is released from ignorance, and undergoes a first transformation of his individual nature.

We may recall here something which Sri Aurobindo relates in *The Secret of the Veda* about his own sadhana:

My first contact with Vedic thought came indirectly while pursuing certain lines of self-development in the way of Indian Yoga, which, without my knowing it, were spontaneously converging towards the ancient and now unfrequented paths followed by our forefathers. At this time there began to arise in my mind an arrangement of symbolic names attached to certain psychological experiences which had begun to regularise themselves; and among them there came the figures of three female energies, Ila, Saraswati, Sarama, representing severally three out of the four faculties of the intuitive reason,—revelation, inspiration and intuition.

The Secret of the Veda, CWSA, 15: 36

In the case of Aswapati, we are told that as a result of this guidance

*Thus came his soul's release from Ignorance,
His mind and body's first spiritual change.*

Even the body is affected :

A genius heightened in his body's cells

So that

*The human in him paced with the divine;
His acts betrayed not the interior flame.*

We see King Aswapati becoming a powerful divine Worker :

*Apart he lived in his mind's solitude,
A demigod shaping the lives of men:
One soul's ambition lifted up the race;
A Power worked, but none knew whence it came.
The universal strengths were linked with his;
Filling earth's smallness with their boundless breadths,
He drew the energies that transmute an age.
Immeasurable by the common look,
He made great dreams a mould for coming things
And cast his deeds like bronze to front the years.
His walk through Time outstripped the human stride.
Lonely his days and splendid like the sun's.*

p.44-45

This release from Ignorance brings him a grasp of the “Secret Knowledge” conveyed in Canto Four. Aswapati perceives the immanence of the Transcendent in the world, the action of the “Two in One”, the Supreme Lord and his creative Force, the essential oneness of Nature and Soul, Spirit and Matter. As a result he can discern not only the all-pervading divine Presence in all Nature, but more : a direction and purpose to her workings.

*There is a plan in the Mother’s deep world-whim,
A purpose in her vast and random game.
This ever she meant since the first dawn of life,
This constant will she covered with her sport,
To evoke a Person in the impersonal Void,
With the Truth-Light strike earth’s massive roots of trance,
Wake a dumb self in the unconscious depths
And raise a lost Power from its python sleep
That the eyes of the Timeless might look out from Time
And the world manifest the unveiled Divine.
For this he left his white infinity
And laid on the spirit the burden of the flesh,
That Godhead’s seed might flower in mindless Space. p.72-73*

He sees too that the Earth is constantly being guided by higher powers towards this great fulfilment :

*Across the cries of anguish and of joy,
Across the triumph, fighting and despair,
They watch the Bliss for which earth’s heart has cried
On the long road which cannot see its end
Winding undetected through the sceptic days
And to meet it guide the unheeded moving world.
Thus will the masked Transcendent mount his throne.
When darkness deepens strangling the earth’s breast
And man’s corporeal mind is the only lamp,
As a thief’s in the night shall be the covert tread
Of one who steps unseen into his house.
A Voice ill-heard shall speak, the soul obey,
A Power into mind’s inner chamber steal,
A charm and sweetness open life’s closed doors*

*And beauty conquer the resisting world,
The Truth-Light capture Nature by surprise,
A stealth of God compel the heart to bliss
And earth grow unexpectedly divine.
In Matter shall be lit the spirit's glow,
In body and body kindled the sacred birth;
Night shall awake to the anthem of the stars,
The days become a happy pilgrim march,
Our will a force of the Eternal's power,
And thought the rays of a spiritual sun.*

p.54-55

In Canto Five we are shown that with this Knowledge there comes to Aswapati a perception of the possibility of working to hasten this transformation :

*A Will, a hope immense now seized his heart,
And to discern the superhuman's form
He raised his eyes to unseen spiritual heights,
Aspiring to bring down a greater world.
The glory he had glimpsed must be his home.*

...

*The Ideal must be Nature's common truth,
The body illumined with the indwelling God,
The heart and mind feel one with all that is,
A conscious soul live in a conscious world.*

p. 76-77

In the intense aspiration for this achievement,

His soul retired from all that it had done

...

*One-pointed to the immaculate Delight,
Questing for God as for a splendid prey,
He mounted burning like a cone of fire.*

p.77-79

And in response there comes a transforming Descent :

A strong Descent leaped down. A Might, a Flame,

...

His nature shuddered in the Unknown's grasp.

...

*It was torn out from its mortality
And underwent a new and boundless change.*

...

*The little ego's ring could join no more;
In the enormous spaces of the self
The body now seemed only a wandering shell,
His mind the many-frescoed outer court
Of an imperishable Inhabitant:
His spirit breathed a superhuman air.
The imprisoned deity rent its magic fence.*

p. 80-82

This second change dissolves the ego, releases the in-dwelling godhead and leads to mastery over the secret nature, Maya or “The Mother of Dreams”, ruling the subtle worlds. It is this transformation which enables Aswapati to perceive clearly “The World-Stair” – the hierarchy of subtle worlds which constitute the support for the material manifestation – and to embark upon his journey through the different planes, in search of the transforming principle which could transfigure the entire earth-life and enable it to become the true home of the spirit.

On this epic journey, in which all the deeper levels of human psychology and man's place in the universe are laid bare, two stages seem to be of particular importance in our present exploration. First Aswapati confronts the immense obstacle of the distorted vital nature presently governing the life of all human beings. He sees in the subtle planes a wonderful world of “*griefless life*”. But he is unable to enter it:

*This world of bliss he saw and felt its call,
But found no way to enter into its joy;
Across the conscious gulf there was no bridge.
A darker air encircled still his soul
Tied to an image of unquiet life.
In spite of yearning mind and longing sense,
To a sad Thought by grey experience formed
And a vision dimmed by care and sorrow and sleep
All this seemed only a bright desirable dream
Conceived in a longing distance by the heart
Of one who walks in the shadow of earth-pain.*

*Although he once had felt the Eternal's clasp,
Too near to suffering worlds his nature lived,
And where he stood were entrances of Night.*

p. 128

Before he can proceed further, he has to master this “darker air” still encircling his soul. So he has to undertake the sadhana mentioned in this letter of Sri Aurobindo (as well as in his poem “A God’s Labour”)

The cardinal defect, that which has been always standing in the way and is now isolated in an extreme prominence, is seated or at least is at present concentrated in the lower vital being. I mean that part of the vital-physical nature with its petty and obstinate egoism which actuates the external human personality,—that which supports its surface thoughts and dominates its habitual ways of feeling, character and action. I am not concerned here with the other parts of the being and I do not speak of anything in the higher mind, the psychic self or the higher and larger vital nature; for, when the lower vital rises, these are pushed into the background, if not covered over for the time, by this lower vital being and this external personality. Whatever there may be in these higher parts, aspiration to the Truth, devotion, or will to conquer the obstacles and the hostile forces, it cannot become integral, it cannot remain unmixed or unspoilt or continue to be effective so long as the lower vital and the external personality have not accepted the Light and consented to change. It was inevitable that in the course of the sadhana these inferior parts of the nature should be brought forward in order that like the rest of the being they may make the crucial choice and either accept or refuse transformation. My whole work depends upon this movement; it is the decisive ordeal of this yoga. For the physical consciousness and the material life cannot change if this does not change. Nothing that may have been done before, no inner illumination, experience, power or Ananda is of any eventual value, if this is not done

Letters on Yoga, SABCL, 22-24: 1305

This conquest is described in an astonishing and mysterious passage at the end of Canto Eight of Book Two.

*In a world where neither hope nor joy could come
The ordeal he suffered of evil's absolute reign,
Yet kept intact his spirit's radiant truth.*

...

*He sounded the mystery dark and bottomless
Of the enormous and unmeaning deeps
Whence struggling life in a dead universe rose.
There in the stark identity lost by mind
He felt the sealed sense of the insensible world
And a mute wisdom in the unknowing Night.
Into the abysmal secrecy he came
Where darkness peers from her mattress, grey and nude,
And stood on the last locked subconscious's floor
Where Being slept unconscious of its thoughts
And built the world not knowing what it built.
There waiting its hour the future lay unknown,
There is the record of the vanished stars.
There in the slumber of the cosmic Will
He saw the secret key of Nature's change.
A light was with him, an invisible hand
Was laid upon the error and the pain
Till it became a quivering ecstasy,
The shock of sweetness of an arm's embrace.
He saw in Night the Eternal's shadowy veil,
Knew death for a cellar of the house of life,
In destruction felt creation's hasty pace,
Knew loss as the price of a celestial gain
And hell as a short cut to heaven's gates.*

...

*Night opened and vanished like a gulf of dream.
Into being's gap scooped out as empty Space
In which she had filled the place of absent God,
There poured a wide intimate and blissful Dawn;
Healed were all things that Time's torn heart had made
And sorrow could live no more in Nature's breast:*

*Division ceased to be, for God was there.
The soul lit the conscious body with its ray,
Matter and spirit mingled and were one.* pp.230-232

Only when he has achieved this new consciousness is it possible for him to move on to higher planes, described in the later cantos of Book Two. At last he reaches “The Self of Mind”, which seems at first an ultimate achievement :

*He stood on a wide arc of summit Space
Alone with an enormous Self of Mind
Which held all life in a corner of its vasts.*

...

*In the still self he lived and it in him;
Its mute immemorable listening depths,
Its vastness and its stillness were his own;
One being with it he grew wide, powerful, free.*

...

*There he could stay, the Self, the Silence won:
His soul had peace, it knew the cosmic Whole.*

But he is shown that this great liberating experience is not the end of his quest :

*Then suddenly a luminous finger fell
On all things seen or touched or heard or felt
And showed his mind that nothing could be known;
That must be reached from which all knowledge comes.*

...

*A shadow seemed the wide and witness Self,
Its liberation and immobile calm
A void recoil of being from Time-made things,
Not the self-vision of Eternity.
Deep peace was there, but not the nameless Force:
Our sweet and mighty Mother was not there
Who gathers to her bosom her children's lives,
Her clasp that takes the world into her arms
In the fathomless rapture of the Infinite,
The Bliss that is creation's splendid grain
Or the white passion of God-ecstasy*

*That laughs in the blaze of the boundless heart of Love.
A greater Spirit than the Self of Mind
Must answer to the questioning of his soul.*

Until he has found that, it feels as if :

To be was a prison, extinction the escape. pp.283-288

It is only when the Universal Mother reveals herself to him as the World-Soul that by her grace and power he is able to pass beyond, to the worlds of Greater Knowledge, at the very summit of the manifestation : Supermind and the Satchidananda Planes. Here is the description of the Universal Mother :

*Ever disguised she awaits the seeking spirit;
Watcher on the supreme unreachable peaks,
Guide of the traveller of the unseen paths,
She guards the austere approach to the Alone.
At the beginning of each far-spread plane
Pervading with her power the cosmic suns
She reigns, inspirer of its multiple works
And thinker of the symbol of its scene.
Above them all she stands supporting all,
The sole omnipotent Goddess ever-veiled
Of whom the world is the inscrutable mask;
The ages are the footfalls of her tread,
Their happenings the figure of her thoughts,
And all creation is her endless act.
His spirit was made a vessel of her force;
Mute in the fathomless passion of his will
He outstretched to her his folded hands of prayer.
Then in a sovereign answer to his heart
A gesture came as of worlds thrown away,
And from her raiment's lustrous mystery raised
One arm half-parted the eternal veil.
A light appeared still and imperishable.
Attracted to the large and luminous depths
Of the ravishing enigma of her eyes,
He saw the mystic outline of a face.
Overwhelmed by her implacable light and bliss,*

*An atom of her illimitable self
Mastered by the honey and lightning of her power;
Tossed towards the shores of her ocean-ecstasy,
Drunk with a deep golden spiritual wine,
He cast from the rent stillness of his soul
A cry of adoration and desire
And the surrender of his boundless mind
And the self-giving of his silent heart.
He fell down at her feet unconscious, prone.* p. 294-5

But still he has not found the full power he is seeking. It lies beyond the limits of the manifestation, beyond Time, beyond Space, beyond all name and form. How can a time-born individual penetrate that Unknowable, “from which all comes, in which all is called to cease”?

*He stood compelled to a tremendous choice.
All he had been and all towards which he grew
Must now be left behind or else transform
Into a self of That which has no name.* p.307

We are shown the results of this “sheer self-discovery of the soul” :

*Self’s vast spiritual silence occupies Space;
Only the Inconceivable is left,
Only the Nameless without space and time:
Abolished is the burdening need of life:
Thought falls from us, we cease from joy and grief;
The ego is dead; we are freed from being and care,
We have done with birth and death and work and fate.* p.310

It seems like the ultimate liberation. But Aswapati is told that this is not the end of his quest.

*Something thou can ’st to do from the Unknown,
But nothing is finished and the world goes on
Because only half God’s cosmic work is done.* p.310

What is the great affirmative Power that can carry him further, to complete his mission? Out of the core of this featureless Unknowable, the Supreme Divine Mother makes herself known as the supreme transforming power.

*Even while he stood on being's naked edge
And all the passion and seeking of his soul
Faced their extinction in some featureless Vast,
The Presence he yearned for suddenly drew close.*

...

*The Mother of all godheads and all strengths
Who, mediatrix, binds earth to the Supreme.*

...

*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.*

*This known as in a thunder-flash of God,
The rapture of things eternal filled his limbs;
Amazement fell upon his ravished sense;
His spirit was caught in her intolerant flame.
Once seen, his heart acknowledged only her.
Only a hunger of infinite bliss was left.
All aims in her were lost, then found in her;
His base was gathered to one pointing spire.*

p.314-15

Aswapati realises that :

*All he had done was to prepare a field;
His small beginnings asked for a mighty end:
For all that he had been must now new-shape
In him her joy to embody, to enshrine
Her beauty and greatness in his house of life.
But now his being was too wide for self;
His heart's demand had grown immeasurable:
His single freedom could not satisfy,
Her light, her bliss he asked for earth and men.*

*But vain are human power and human love
 To break earth's seal of ignorance and death;
 His nature's might seemed now an infant's grasp;
 Heaven is too high for outstretched hands to seize.
 This Light comes not by struggle or by thought;
 In the mind's silence the Transcendent acts
 And the hushed heart hears the unuttered Word.
 A vast surrender was his only strength.
 A Power that lives upon the heights must act,
 Bring into life's closed room the Immortal's air
 And fill the finite with the Infinite.
 All that denies must be torn out and slain
 And crushed the many longings for whose sake
 We lose the One for whom our lives were made.*

Because of all his previous efforts, Aswapati is able to make this ultimate surrender :

*Now other claims had hushed in him their cry:
 Only he longed to draw her presence and power
 Into his heart and mind and breathing frame;
 Only he yearned to call for ever down
 Her healing touch of love and truth and joy
 Into the darkness of the suffering world.
 His soul was freed and given to her alone.*
p. 314-16

In order to be able to receive the Grace of the Supreme Mother, Aswapati has to make an even further effort of aspiration and rejection and surrender. This is described in the first section of Canto 3 of Book Three:

*A mightier task remained than all he had done.
 To That he turned from which all being comes,
 ...
 A strength he sought that was not yet on earth,
 Help from a Power too great for mortal will,
 The light of a Truth now only seen afar,
 A sanction from his high omnipotent Source.
 But from the appalling heights there stooped no voice;
 The timeless lids were closed; no opening came.*

..
*He felt the stark resistance huge and dumb
Of our inconscient and unseeing base,
The stubborn mute rejection in life's depths,
The ignorant No in the origin of things.
A veiled collaboration with the Night
Even in himself survived and hid from his view:
Still something in his earthly being kept
Its kinship with the Inconscient whence it came.*

...
*This now he willed to discover and exile,
The element in him betraying God.*

...
*Then lest a human cry should spoil the Truth
He tore desire up from its bleeding roots
And offered to the gods the vacant place.
Thus could he bear the touch immaculate.
A last and mightiest transformation came.
His soul was all in front like a great sea
Flooding the mind and body with its waves;
His being, spread to embrace the universe,
United the within and the without
To make of life a cosmic harmony,
An empire of the immanent Divine.
In this tremendous universality
Not only his soul-nature and mind-sense
Included every soul and mind in his,
But even the life of flesh and nerve was changed
And grew one flesh and nerve with all that lives;
He felt the joy of others as his joy,
He bore the grief of others as his grief;
His universal sympathy upbore,
Immense like ocean, the creation's load
As earth upbears all beings' sacrifice,
Thrilled with the hidden Transcendent's joy and peace.
There was no more division's endless scroll;
One grew the Spirit's secret unity,
All Nature felt again the single bliss.*

*There was no cleavage between soul and soul,
There was no barrier between world and God.*

...

*Abolished in its last thin fainting trace
The circle of the little self was gone;
The separate being could no more be felt;
It disappeared and knew itself no more,
Lost in the spirit's wide identity.
His nature grew a movement of the All,
Exploring itself to find that all was He,
His soul was a delegation of the All
That turned from itself to join the one Supreme.*

...

*The last movement died and all at once grew still.
A weight that was the unseen Transcendent's hand
Laid on his limbs the Spirit's measureless seal,
Infinity swallowed him into shoreless trance.*

This “*last and mightiest transformation*” and the touch of the Transcendent Grace allows Aswapati at last to enter the House of the Spirit and see the New Creation – the possible future of the suffering earth. From that radiant world he sees our own, and his own physical body there :

*He saw a world that is from a world to be.
There he divined rather than saw or felt,
Far off upon the rim of consciousness,
Transient and frail this little whirling globe
And on it left like a lost dream's vain mould,
A fragile copy of the spirit's shell,
His body gathered into mystic sleep.
A foreign shape it seemed, a mythic shade.*

p.330-331

What link can there be, between these two creations? He himself is the link.

*Two beings he was, one wide and free above,
One struggling, bound, intense, its portion here.
A tie between them still could bridge two worlds;*

...

*All had not ceased in the unbounded hush.
 His heart lay somewhere conscious and alone
 Far down below him like a lamp in night;
 Abandoned it lay, alone, imperishable,
 Immobile with excess of passionate will,
 His living, sacrificed and offered heart
 Absorbed in adoration mystical,
 Turned to its far-off fount of light and love.
 In the luminous stillness of its mute appeal
 It looked up to the heights it could not see;
 It yearned from the longing depths it could not leave.
 In the centre of his vast and fateful trance
 Half-way between his free and fallen selves,
 Interceding twixt God's day and the mortal's night,
 Accepting worship as its single law,
 Accepting bliss as the sole cause of things,
 Refusing the austere joy which none can share,
 Refusing the calm that lives for calm alone,
 To her it turned for whom it willed to be.
 In the passion of its solitary dream
 It lay like a closed soundless oratory
 Where sleeps a consecrated argent floor
 Lit by a single and untrembling ray
 And an invisible Presence kneels in prayer.
 On some deep breast of liberating peace
 All else was satisfied with quietude;
 This only knew there was a truth beyond.*

p. 331

It is this heart which prays for the descent of a human embodiment of the Supreme Mother, to come on earth to help and save and transform. And the Supreme Divine Mother grants this boon. Savitri is born as Aswapati's daughter. His fixed and unflinching aspiration receives the sanction and response of the supreme Grace.

We could compare this entire process with what Sri Aurobindo writes in *The Mother* :

There are three ways of being of the Mother of which you can become aware when you enter into touch of oneness

with the Conscious Force that upholds us and the universe. Transcendent, the original supreme Shakti, she stands above the worlds and links the creation to the ever unmanifest mystery of the Supreme. Universal, the cosmic Mahashakti, she creates all these beings and contains and enters, supports and conducts all these million processes and forces. Individual, she embodies the power of these two vaster ways of her existence, makes them living and near to us and mediates between the human personality and the divine Nature.

SABCL 25:20

In the early stages of his sadhana, Aswapati is guided by illuminating “*female energies*” – powers emanated by the Mahashakti to support and help his effort. At a further stage of development, she sends a “*strong Descent*” to seize and transform his nature. As a result of that transformation, a “*border sovereign*” – the secret Nature governing the subtle worlds and their occult processes – is given into his grasp. On his journey through the worlds, she is supporting him. But to reach the very highest levels at the very summit of the manifestation, the direct intervention of the Universal Mother is necessary. By all his efforts, Aswapati has become able to recognise Her and offer Her “*the surrender of his boundless mind / And the self-giving of his silent heart.*” (p. 296). This enables him to access the Kingdoms of the Greater Knowledge. Then, going beyond the manifestation to encounter the supreme mystery, the Unknowable, his aspiration is answered by a self-revelation of the Supreme Divine Mother, who alone can grant the boon he aspires for : an individual embodiment of her Grace to descend to earth to help and save.

At every stage Aswapati has to make an effort of sadhana to be able to receive the uplifting and transforming Grace of the Mother.

The supreme Grace will act only in the conditions of the Light and the Truth; it will not act in conditions laid upon it by the Falsehood and the Ignorance. For if it were to yield to the demands of the Falsehood, it would defeat its own purpose. ... If you call for the Truth and yet something

in you chooses what is false, ignorant and undivine or even simply is unwilling to reject it altogether; then always you will be open to attack and the Grace will recede from you. Detect first what is false or obscure in you and persistently reject it, then alone can you rightly call for the divine Power to transform you....

A glad and strong and helpful submission is demanded to the working of the Divine Force, the obedience of the illumined disciple of the Truth, of the inner Warrior who fights against obscurity and falsehood, of the faithful servant of the Divine.

SABCL 25:1-7

In Aswapati Sri Aurobindo has shown us this inner Warrior, this illumined disciple, this faithful servant of the Divine.

The final outcome of the Boon granted to Aswapati by the Supreme Mother in answer to his aspiration, and worked out through her individual embodiment Savitri, is to be the supramental transformation of the whole earth. This culmination is movingly evoked in a long passage in Book Eleven, and I would like to close by reading a portion of it. Savitri receives this promise from the Supreme :

*But when the hour of the Divine draws near
The Mighty Mother shall take birth in Time
And God be born into the human clay
In forms made ready by your human lives.
Then shall the Truth supreme be given to men:*

...

*A greater truth than earth's shall roof-in earth
And shed its sunlight on the roads of mind;
A power infallible shall lead the thought,
A seeing Puissance govern life and act,
In earthly hearts kindle the Immortal's fire.
A soul shall wake in the Inconscient's house;
The mind shall be God-vision's tabernacle,
The body intuition's instrument,
And life a channel for God's visible power.*

All earth shall be the Spirit's manifest home,

...

*All things shall manifest the covert God,
All shall reveal the Spirit's light and might
And move to its destiny of felicity.*

...

*Even there shall come as a high crown of all
The end of Death, the death of Ignorance.*

p.705 – 708

But there is a condition to be fulfilled before this great transformation can come about :

*But first high Truth must set her feet on earth
And man aspire to the Eternal's light
And all his members feel the Spirit's touch
And all his life obey an inner Force.*

p.708

Only then can :

This earthly life become the life divine.

p.710

In the poem, this great transformation is shown as being prepared by Aswapati, embodying the fixed and unfailing aspiration of the evolving earth, and Savitri, embodying the Grace of the Supreme Mother.

In our earth-life, the transforming supramental descent has been achieved by Sri Aurobindo and The Mother.

Those of us who aspire to join in the great adventure of working out that transformation in human time, are invited to put ourselves in the hands of the Mother and her Powers, without cavil or resistance, to do our best to fulfil the conditions that she sets us, and to allow her to do her work unhindered within us and around us. With immense gratitude for the vision and the work of the Master and the Mother, let us put ourselves in their hands, and at the Service of Truth. *Victoire à Douce Mère!*

News of Savitri Bhavan

November 2004 – February 2005

On the morning of November 21st 2004 we held a very simple consecration ceremony for our second-phase building, completed over the preceding year. More than 200 friends joined us for the occasion, and all could fit into the lovely new space, although it was quite a tight fit! Some of the very youngest Aurovilians, who had helped us lay the first brick the previous November, led us into the room, making a flower offering at the feet of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo. Then a traditional puja lamp was lit to represent our collective aspiration. Sraddhalu Ranade chanted the oldest known hymn to the Divine Mother, from the Veda, the Devi-shukta, as well as a Sanskrit composition by Kapali Shastriar invoking the presence of Sri Aurobindo for fulfilment and realisation. Then we listened to a recording of our eldest brother Nirodbaran (who completed 101 years just a week earlier) reading from Book Eleven of *Savitri*, the passage he had read on our foundation day, November 24, 1995. (Nirod-da



Friends gathering for the inauguration of the New Hall on November 21, 2004

himself was not able to be with us in the morning, but was driven out from the Ashram for an unannounced flying visit in the afternoon.) Finally Sraddhalu led us in collective chanting of OM, before we took prasad, again led by the littlest ones, at the Mother's Feet. When we went out again into the sunshine people lingered to chat and appreciate as a benevolent winter sun smiled blessings on us. This happy occasion marked the start of a whole new stage in the work of Savitri Bhavan.

The purpose of this building is to house and display the series of 468 paintings created by the Mother with Huta during the 1960s, and named by the Mother "Meditations on Savitri". In 1967, when all of these paintings had been exhibited in the Ashram, and were being kept at Golconde, Huta communicated to the Mother her strong feeling that "Savitri must have her own place". The Mother went into a deep concentration, then said emphatically, "It will be." When Savitri Bhavan was started, Huta felt that this was the "own place" which the Mother had promised for Savitri. So beyond all expectation, this great treasure was entrusted to our care. In our brochure published in 2003 we wrote :

In June 2001 the entire set of 468 oil paintings illustrating the whole of Savitri, entitled by the Mother "Meditations on Savitri", was entrusted to our care, along with facsimiles of the Mother's original sketches, written instructions and comments, copies of her recorded recitations of the selected passages, and of her recorded explanations of Savitri. This is a unique treasure, which will be a goldmine of insight to future scholars seeking to gain a deeper understanding of Sri Aurobindo's vision. To house and display this priceless collection under secure and state of the art conditions, as well as providing the necessary curatorial and research facilities, is at present our highest priority.

Now a building is available where the paintings can be displayed. In order to make it fully functional and safe for them, special lighting will be needed to protect the oil-paint and canvas from harmful ultra-violet rays, and suitable display arrangements will have to be installed.

That is the next priority for us, and we look forward to the day when these unique paintings will be able to spread their vibrations freely to all. We request the help and support of all Savitri-lovers in completing this important project.

In this context we are happy to inform all our well-wishers that the Finance and Administrative Office of the Auroville Foundation has recently intimated that renewal of tax-exemption under Section 35 (i) (iii) of the IT Act has now been received for the period 01.04.2003 to 31.03.2006, by Notification no. 16/2005 (F.No. 203/43/2004-ITA II) dated 27.01.2005.

This means that Indian donations to Savitri Bhavan for research purposes are again eligible for 100% tax relief up to the end of March 2006.

In order to avail of this possibility, it should be clearly mentioned when sending the donation that it is intended for research purposes and that the exemption is requested. For details on how to send donations, please see the inside back cover.

Meanwhile, until the proper conditions can be provided for putting all the “Meditations on Savitri” paintings on permanent display according to the Mother’s wish, we are using the new hall for other functions and temporary exhibitions.

The first such function in the new hall after its consecration was held on December 5th. On Sri Aurobindo’s Mahasamadhi day we gathered at 3.30 in the afternoon for “Remembering Sri Aurobindo”. Several sadhaks who had the great privilege of Sri Aurobindo’s living darshan were present. The main speaker was Smt. Gauri Pinto, affectionately known as Gauri-di. Now a teacher in the Ashram School, Gauri was born just a year before her parents joined the Ashram, and had the blessings of the Mother and the Master from her very birth. She shared with us sweet memories of her early childhood experiences, as well as reminiscences from her late father, Udar Pinto. Along with musical offerings, students of the Arul Vazhi school performed beautiful devotional dance items. Our dear elder brother S. Mahalingam also spoke. On this occasion we were especially happy to have a group of brothers and sisters from the Chingleput Sri Aurobindo Centre with us.

On December 14th we had another visit from Dr. Prema Nandakumar, now a familiar friend of Savitri Bhavan. Again she treated us to her delightful and inimitable story-telling, relating in Tamil different versions of the Savitri legend as told down the ages.



*Dr. Prema Nandakumar, Shri Varadharajan, Shri S. Mahalingam,
December 14, 2004*

During January 2005 an unusual exhibition was held in the new Hall. Every day lovely flowers are gathered all over Auroville, and then brought to the Matrimandir gardens. There Auroculture and her team arrange them into beautiful mandalas and hold a concentration on them. When the flowers wither, they are made into compost using a special method developed by Auroculture. When this special compost, charged with consciousness and dedicated to the Mother, is ready, it is used for growing plants for the Matrimandir gardens. One of the team members, a French Aurovilian named Christiane, had taken photographs of the mandalas (flower arrangements). An exhibition of 30 of these photos was shown from January 12 – 31st. The photographs were offered for sale for the benefit of the Auroville Land Fund.

During February an exhibition of rare photographs of the Mother is being presented by Loretta. It is entitled “Mother – A Smile” and runs from February 11 – 28th.

Our regular classes, courses and other activities continue as usual. All our readers are most welcome to visit Savitri Bhavan and to join the activities when they are in the area.

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.