

Invocation

Savitri

B H A V A N

Study notes No. 46

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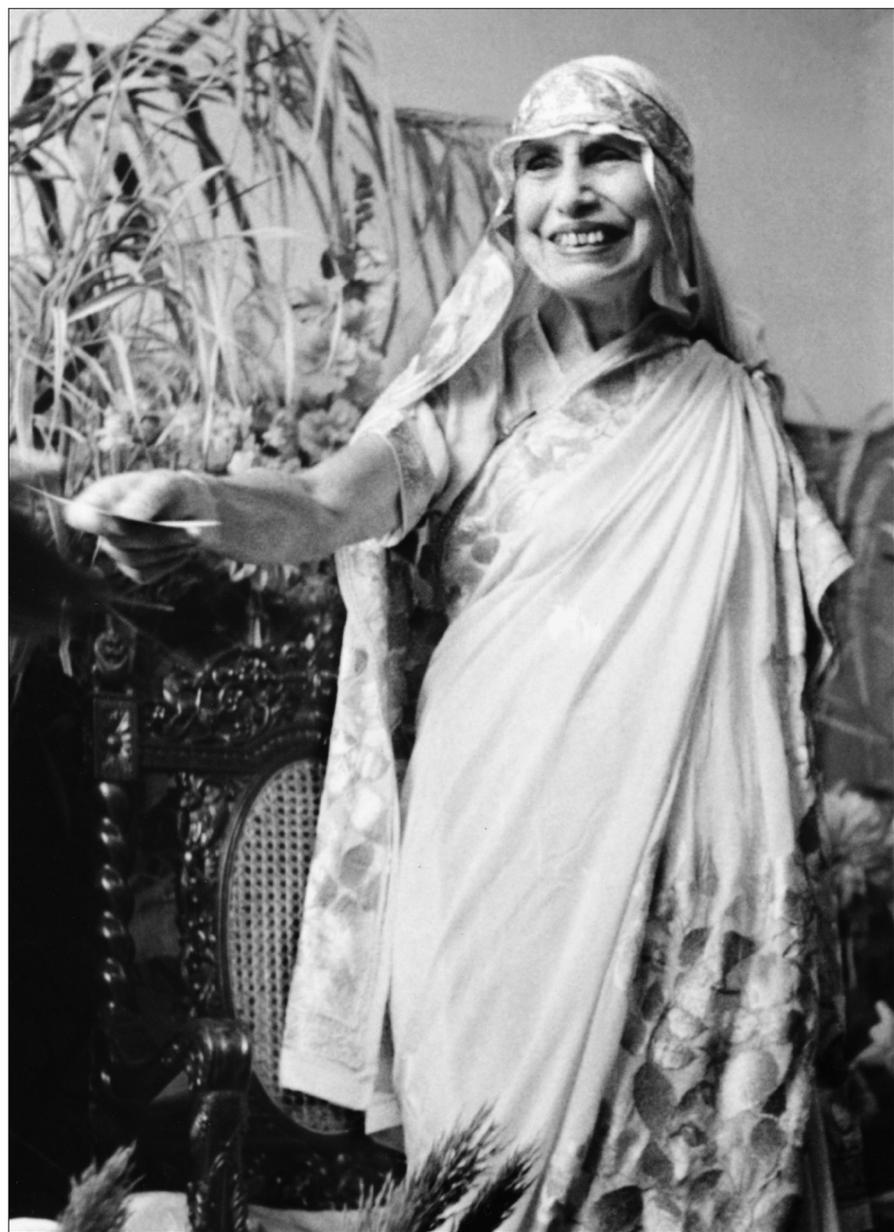
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*Since the beginning of the earth,
wherever and whenever there was the
possibility of manifesting a ray of
consciousness, I was there.*



Since the beginning of the earth,
wherever and whenever there was the
possibility of manifesting a ray of
consciousness, I was there.

THE MOTHER
MCW 13:37



The English of *Savitri*

Book Two, Canto Three: The Glory and the Fall of Life

Sections 1, 2, 3 and 4

by Shraddhavan

Section 1, lines 001–090

In the previous canto we read how King Aswapati entered and experienced the Kingdom of Subtle Matter and understood its importance for our material world as a template, a model, a source of inspiration and beauty; but he also understood its limitations. It is also a physical world where physical gods rule. Although the substance there is subtle, fine and plastic, still it is a world of form in which appearances are all-important; and this is limiting to the spirit, which wants to go beyond form. Since Aswapati represents the energies that want to ascend and progress ever further, he cannot stay long in that beautiful but limited realm; he has to move on. The next level that he reaches is the realm of Life. So now we are embarking on our exploration of Canto Three, the first canto which deals with the realm of Life; the next seven cantos – numbers Three, Four, Five, Six, Seven, Eight and Nine – all explore different aspects of the Life worlds. It is clear that Sri Aurobindo has given a great importance to this aspect of manifestation. Canto Three is called ‘*The Glory and the Fall of Life*’ and it opens with a symbolic characterisation of the nature of life as we perceive it here in the ignorance – that is what King Aswapati encounters first.

An uneven broad ascent now lured his feet.
Answering a greater Nature’s troubled call
He crossed the limits of embodied Mind
And entered wide obscure disputed fields
Where all was doubt and change and nothing sure,
A world of search and toil without repose.

King Aswapati’s feet are now attracted, ‘*lured*’, by an ‘*uneven broad ascent*’. It is a wide road leading upwards, but it is ‘*uneven*’, rough, not smooth and easy. As he moves upward, he feels the ‘*troubled*

call' of 'a greater Nature', a Nature greater than the limited perfection of the realm of subtle matter that he was exploring earlier, but one which is disturbed, "troubled", uneasy and uncertain. He goes beyond 'the limits of embodied Mind', Mind confined within form, and enters the 'wide obscure disputed fields' of 'A world of search and toil without repose'. These fields are wide but 'obscure', shadowy, and they are 'disputed': it is not clear who controls them, whom they belong to. There, 'all was doubt and change and nothing sure': everything is doubtful, changing; nothing is certain, nothing can be fully relied upon. He has entered 'A world of search and toil', a realm of effort and endless seeking.

As one who meets the face of the Unknown,
A questioner with none to give reply,
Attracted to a problem never solved,
Always uncertain of the ground he trod,
Always drawn on to an inconstant goal
He travelled through a land peopled by doubts
In shifting confines on a quaking base.

Aswapati moves onwards 'As one who meets the face of the Unknown', a realm about which nothing is known; he is full of questions but finds no-one to answer them. He is being drawn farther, 'Attracted to a problem never solved': an unsolved problem has a power of attraction, we would like to know the solution, but as yet Aswapati does not find the answer to the riddle of life. Even the ground he is treading on is 'uncertain', so that he can never be quite sure whether it will support his feet or give way beneath him; he cannot feel sure whether he is going in the right direction or not; something is always drawing him on, luring him to continue farther, but the goal is 'inconstant': changing and uncertain: now one thing, now something else. 'Trod' is the past tense of 'tread' which means 'to walk'. He is travelling through a land which is 'peopled by doubts', as if all the beings there are doubting and doubtful. Even the 'confines' or borders, the boundaries of this realm seem to be shifting and changing, and the ground, the base itself, is 'quaking', moving and unsteady. There seems to be 'nothing sure', nothing to be relied on, in this world that he is entering now.

In front he saw a boundary ever unreached
And thought himself at each step nearer now,—
A far retreating horizon of mirage.

Aswapati sees a boundary ahead of him, which seems to grow nearer with every step he takes, but still it can never be reached, for it is ‘*A far retreating horizon of mirage.*’ Mirages are images sometimes seen in the desert or at sea: an island appears in the distance, or perhaps a grove of trees that makes the traveller think that there must be water there, but as he moves towards it, it vanishes. The ever-retreating horizon that Aswapati sees before him is a ‘*mirage*’: an optical illusion, an unreal image.

A vagrancy was there that brooked no home,
A journey of countless paths without a close.

The very nature of this world that Aswapati is moving through seems to be ‘*vagrancy*’: a state of wandering from place to place without ever finding a home; A ‘vagrant’ is a person with no home. The nature of this realm does not allow anyone to find a permanent resting place there. ‘To brook’ means ‘to allow’. Aswapati finds himself always moving on, along ‘*countless paths*’, but none of them ever reaches an end.

Nothing he found to satisfy his heart;
A tireless wandering sought and could not cease.

Aswapati could not find anything there ‘*to satisfy his heart*’, but he is driven to continue this ‘*tireless wandering*’, this seeking, unable to find a place to halt or stay.

There life is the manifest Incalculable,
A movement of unquiet seas, a long
And venturous leap of spirit into Space,
A vexed disturbance in the eternal Calm,
An impulse and passion of the Infinite.

In the realm that he has entered now ‘*life is the manifest Incalculable*’: nothing can ever be predicted or calculated, there is no hint of what might come next. Life there appears to be ‘*A movement of unquiet seas*’, restless seas, always in movement, or ‘*a long / And venturous leap of spirit into Space*’, as if spirit has adventurously

plunged into boundless dimensions of time and space and finds no end, no conclusion. This life in the ignorance seems to be ‘*A vexed disturbance*’ – a troubled, worried, anxious state that has disturbed ‘*the eternal Calm*’ of the Supreme, due to some ‘*impulse and passion*’ or intense drive that has somehow emerged in the Infinite.

Assuming whatever shape her fancy wills,
Escaped from the restraint of settled forms
She has left the safety of the tried and known.

Since there are no fixed limits, Life can take on ‘*whatever shape her fancy wills*’, any shape she wishes. She has escaped from ‘*the restraint of settled forms*’: no longer restricted by fixed form, Life is like a stream, a sea, an atmosphere, and can assume whatever shape she chooses. ‘*She has left the safety of the tried and known*’: in that realm everything is incalculable, unpredictable, unfamiliar: anything can happen.

Unshepherded by the fear that walks through Time,
Undaunted by Fate that dogs and Chance that springs,
She accepts disaster as a common risk;
Careless of suffering, heedless of sin and fall,
She wrestles with danger and discovery
In the unexplored expanses of the soul.

In this realm, Life is ‘*Unshepherded*’: there is no shepherd to guide and protect her. We live in Time, and often for us it is fear or caution that guides and protects us: the fear that something may be destroyed, or opportunities lost; but for the free life-force there is no such restraint: she is ‘*Undaunted*’, without fear. A person who is dauntless or undaunted has no fear of circumstances, of danger; nothing can make him/her afraid. Unlike us, Life is not daunted either by ‘*Fate that dogs*’ or by ‘*Chance that springs*’. A well-trained dog will always follow at his master’s heel. If somebody or something is ‘*dogging*’ you, it means that it is always following you closely. We feel dogged by Fate because anything can happen to us at any moment without warning – we never know when disaster may strike. But the life-force does not have that fear, and she is not afraid of ‘*Chance that springs*’. Unexpected things are always happening to us, coming at us from nowhere, unpredictably, like

an animal jumping out from behind a bush, upsetting our plans and hopes and intentions; anything can change at any moment. But Life does not fear that unexpected leap of Chance; she accepts the possibility of disaster: for her it is a common everyday risk. She does not care about suffering. She does not care about any sense 'of sin and fall', of doom, of something going wrong, of spoiling things. She is always ready to wrestle 'with danger and discovery / In the unexplored expanses of the soul', always on the lookout for whatever new experiences and new possibilities may arise as she explores the realm of soul-experience.

To be seemed only a long experiment,
The hazard of a seeking ignorant Force
That tries all truths and, finding none supreme,
Moves on unsatisfied, unsure of its end.

In that world, existence seems to be nothing but 'a long experiment,' trying this, trying that, not with any sense of purpose or direction but by 'hazard', by chance. This experiment is not conducted methodically with a clear aim in view; it is only 'The hazard of a seeking ignorant Force'. On this level Life seems to be an 'ignorant Force' which does not know where it is going and yet is always trying things out, looking for something new. So it 'tries all truths', all the many contradictory truths that present themselves in the ignorance; and since it does not find anything that is absolutely convincing, which seems 'supreme', it simply 'Moves on unsatisfied, unsure of its end': unsure of where it is going, or how and when it will reach a conclusion, forever unsatisfied.

As saw some inner mind, so life was shaped:
From thought to thought she passed, from phase to phase,
Tortured by her own powers or proud and blest,
Now master of herself, now toy and slave.

Sri Aurobindo tells us that the life force is always accompanied by some consciousness. In the particular state which Aswapati is observing now, the life force is being guided by the perceptions of 'some inner mind'; she passes from one thought to another, from one phase to another, from one extreme to another. Sometimes she suffers, 'Tortured by her own powers'; at other times she feels 'proud

and blest’, blessed; sometimes she is in control, ‘*master of herself*’ and at other times she seems to be the plaything or the ‘*slave*’ of circumstances or powers that are stronger than she is.

A huge inconsequence was her action’s law,
As if all possibility must be drained,
And anguish and bliss were pastimes of the heart.

There is no plan or sequence guiding her action, one action follows on another without any sequence or connection: ‘*A huge inconsequence was her action’s law*’. The only guiding principle seems to be that ‘*all possibility must be drained*’, tasted and drunk down like a cup that has to be emptied regardless of any distinction between ‘*anguish and bliss*’: intense pain or pleasure are just amusements, ‘*pastimes*’ of her heart. A ‘*pastime*’ is something done to pass the time, a trivial amusement or entertainment, without any deeper meaning or significance.

In a gallop of thunder-hooved vicissitudes
She swept through the race-fields of Circumstance,
Or, swaying, she tossed between her heights and deeps,
Uplifted or broken on Time’s inconstant wheel.

In the first two lines, we find the image of the Life-Goddess being carried on a powerful horse. In the Veda the horse is the symbol of Energy, and particularly the Life-energy. Her horse is galloping – the fastest pace of the horse – as if in a race, sweeping through ‘*the race-fields of Circumstance*’ in a gallop of ‘*thunder-hooved vicissitudes*’. When a strong horse gallops swiftly its hooves may make a loud noise like thunder as they strike the ground. ‘*Vicissitudes*’ are unexpected difficulties and dangerous circumstances. Past one vicissitude, one obstacle, after another she gallops ‘*through the race-fields of Circumstance*’ as if time and circumstances were a vast pasture or race-course for the life-force to gallop in. Then the poet gives us another image: ‘*Or, swaying, she tossed between her heights and deeps*’. Sometimes she is up on her heights, happy and triumphant, uplifted on the ever-circling wheel of time as it goes round and round, then cast down and broken as it crushes her on its downward course. Such alternations of extremes are characteristic of the life-experience.

Amid a tedious crawl of drab desires
She writhed, a worm mid worms in Nature's mud,
Then, Titan-statured, took all earth for food,
Ambitioned the seas for robe, for crown the stars
And shouting strode from peak to giant peak,
Clamouring for worlds to conquer and to rule.

The poet continues evoking the contrasting extremes of life: sometimes she seems like an earthworm writhing '*in Nature's mud*', in the dirty lower levels of Nature, along with many other worms, stuck in '*a tedious crawl of drab desires*'. '*Drab*' means dull and boring and colourless – there is nothing noble or glorious or exciting about the state life is in then. But at other times she is huge, with the stature of a giant, a superhuman being, a '*Titan*'. She claims the whole earth for her food, she can devour it all; she wants to wear the seas like a robe. '*Ambition*' is when you have huge aims, huge ideas, and desires; here Sri Aurobindo uses this word as a verb to indicate that the life-force is driven by vast desires: she wants to wear all the limitless oceans as her robe, to wear all the stars in the universe in her crown. Aswapati sees her like a Titan, striding from one mountain peak to the next, '*Clamouring*' or shouting, demanding more '*worlds to conquer and to rule*'. This is the Titanic aspect of the life power.

Then, wantonly enamoured of Sorrow's face,
She plunged into the anguish of the depths
And, wallowing, clung to her own misery.

Then, in contrast, for no particular reason, Life falls in love with the face of Sorrow; '*wantonly*' means '*wilfully*', '*without cause or reason*'. In love with grief, she plunges into '*the anguish*', the intense suffering, of the lower levels of consciousness, and there, '*wallowing*', she clings '*to her own misery*'. '*Wallowing*' is what hippopotamuses or pigs do: they find a nice muddy place and roll in it, enjoying the cool sticky dirty mud. If we observe ourselves, we may notice that there is something in us which enjoys sorrow and anguish and misery and feeling sorry for ourselves. When we feel very upset and distressed about something, our rational mind might tell us that there is in fact no reason to be so unhappy about

it; but there is something in us which really enjoys feeling upset and unhappy and insists on wallowing in the mud of the lower nature.

In dolorous converse with her squandered self
She wrote the account of all that she had lost,
Or sat with grief as with an ancient friend.

This is self-pity. Life converses or communicates dolorously, sorrowfully, '*with her squandered self*'. 'To squander' means 'to waste', for example, to spend all your money on useless things. It is as if she has uselessly wasted all her energies, all her possibilities and now she is noting down '*the account*' of everything that she has lost, enjoying her misery. Or she sits '*with grief*', with sadness, '*as with an ancient friend*', spending hours and hours lamenting and complaining as if conversing with someone she has known for a very long time. We may recognise how we ourselves sometimes indulge in self-pity like this.

A romp of violent raptures soon was spent,
Or she lingered tied to an inadequate joy
Missing the turns of fate, missing life's goal.

Life also sometimes indulges in a '*romp of violent rapture*'. Children or young animals '*romp*', playing roughly with great energy and excitement. This is very enjoyable, but tends to end in tears. This violent play of intense delight does not last long. In contrast, she may also linger for a long time '*tied to an inadequate joy*'. Although she feels that a particular form of delight is not really satisfying, for one reason or another she clings on to it, and by doing so misses great opportunities, '*turns of fate*', and her real goal. A very sad condition!

A scene was planned for all her numberless moods
Where each could be the law and way of life,
But none could offer a pure felicity;
Only a flickering zest they left behind
Or the fierce lust that brings a dead fatigue.

In this vast range of possibilities it is as if a '*scene*' has been arranged to display all the countless moods that life can conceivably experience, a stage where each of them can dominate as '*the law*'

and way of life'. But none of those '*numberless moods*' could '*offer a pure felicity*', a lasting pure delight. They pass, perhaps leaving behind them '*a flickering zest*'. A '*zest*' is an exciting taste or an enthusiasm; '*flickering*' suggests the weak and unsteady flame of a candle that is about to go out: '*a flickering zest*' must be a fluctuating urge or impulse that comes and goes without much drive or energy. Or else those enjoyments leave behind the kind of burning desire that leads to exhaustion and inertia.

Amid her swift untold variety
Something remained dissatisfied, ever the same
And in the new saw only a face of the old,
For every hour repeated all the rest
And every change prolonged the same unease.

All this '*swift untold variety*' of the ever-changing moods of life leaves some part of the life-urge dissatisfied. New things, feelings and experiences seem only to be another face of the old ones, because every hour is repeating all that has already happened and every change just prolongs, extends, '*the same unease*', the same restlessness and lack of satisfaction. Recognising this state in yourself can be the starting point for taking up the spiritual life, for when you start feeling like this, it is an indication that your inner being is getting ready to look for a higher and truer kind of enjoyment. But if dissatisfaction gets cultivated for its own sake then it can become a very negative habit.

A spirit of her self and aim unsure,
Tired soon of too much joy and happiness,
She needs the spur of pleasure and of pain
And the native taste of suffering and unrest:
She strains for an end that never can she win.

In the Ignorance the life force too is ignorant. She does not know who she is, she does not know what her aim is. She gets '*Tired soon of too much joy and happiness*'. In order to move on she needs '*the spur of pleasure and of pain*'. Horsemen wear spurs on their boots to drive their horses to move faster. The word '*spur*' is also used in a psychological sense for some impulsion that drives people to action. Life in the ignorance needs the contrast and alternation '*of pleasure*

and of pain' as a spur, and needs the inborn taste of '*suffering and unrest*': she is always straining, making an effort to reach some '*end*', some goal, which she is unable to gain or achieve. It seems as if it is impossible for the life-force ever to achieve the satisfaction she is longing for.

A perverse savour haunts her thirsting lips:
For the grief she weeps which came from her own choice,
For the pleasure yearns that racked with wounds her breast;
Aspiring to heaven she turns her steps towards hell.

'*A perverse savour*', a taste that is perverted and impure, is haunting the lips of Life; that is what she is longing and thirsting for. She weeps and wails even though she can feel that her grief has come '*from her own choice*'; she is yearning for pleasure which she knows has caused her terrible suffering. 'To rack' means 'to torture', and 'the rack' was a terrible instrument of torture used in the Middle Ages in Europe. Life is aspiring to heaven, aiming for higher things, but somehow her steps always lead her '*towards hell*', the dreadful lower levels of consciousness.

Chance she has chosen and danger for playfellows;
Fate's dreadful swing she has taken for cradle and seat.

This is because she has chosen '*Chance*' and '*danger*' as her playmates and companions. Fate or destiny has a '*dreadful swing*' which carries her up to the heights and then back down to the depths. The Life-force has chosen that dreadful swing as '*her cradle*', where she is nursed and nourished, and as the '*seat*' from which she rules.

This is how Aswapati perceives life as it is for us in our ignorant state – both irresistibly attractive and perilous. But now the poet tells us that this is not the whole truth of Life:

Yet pure and bright from the Timeless was her birth,
A lost world-rapture lingers in her eyes,
Her moods are faces of the Infinite:
Beauty and happiness are her native right,
And endless Bliss is her eternal home.

Sri Aurobindo affirms that in its origin and essence Life is a divine power that has been born '*pure and bright from the Timeless*'.

Even here in the Ignorance there is a light in her eyes, the light of a *'world-rapture'*, a cosmic delight which seems to have been lost in the material universe. Her many moods express something *'of the Infinite'*, of the Supreme, and her very nature or birthright, *'her native right'*, is *'Beauty and happiness'*. The *'eternal home'* which she is always searching and yearning for yet never finding is actually *'endless Bliss'*, the Ananda of the Supreme. What we humans experience as Life is a distortion of its true divine nature. In the second section, Aswapati is given a glimpse of the blissful realm which is the true home of Life.

Section 2: Lines 91–155

This now revealed its antique face of joy,
A sudden disclosure to the heart of grief
Tempting it to endure and long and hope.

'This' refers to the *'eternal home'* from which life as we know it has originated. That high source of Life *'now revealed'* at least a part of itself to Aswapati: *'its antique face of joy'*. The word *'antique'* suggests something old. We might understand it as *'ancient'* or *'original'*, but this word has another connotation too: on the faces of some ancient statues we see a beautiful expression of divine bliss. Commenting on certain images of the Buddha, Sri Aurobindo points out that the artist has been able to recapture in bronze or stone an expression of divine bliss. Some Greek statues from the pre-classical period have a similarly rapturous smile on their faces. The poet's use of the word *'antique'* here evokes memories of those images from a happier and purer time. The sight of that blissful face is *'A sudden disclosure to the heart of grief'*. To our suffering human hearts, a glimpse of that higher delight encourages them *'to endure and long and hope'*, giving strength and courage to endure life as it is, and at the same time providing an aim to long for and hope for. *'To endure'* means to persist courageously in spite of obstacles and disappointments.

Even in changing worlds bereft of peace,
In an air racked with sorrow and with fear
And while his feet trod on a soil unsafe,
He saw the image of a happier state.

Aswapati has not entered the blissful world which is the true home of Life; he has only glimpsed it. He himself is still moving '*in changing worlds bereft of peace*': where peace is lacking. A person feels '*bereft*', when he has lost the thing he treasured the most. Aswapati is surrounded by an atmosphere that is '*racked*' or tortured '*with sorrow and with fear*', and he is moving on quaking and unsteady ground, but nevertheless he is able to see '*the image of a happier state*'. This is what he sees:

In an architecture of hieratic Space
Circling and mounting towards creation's tops,
At a blue height which never was too high
For warm communion between body and soul,
As far as heaven, as near as thought and hope
Glimmered the kingdom of a griefless life.

He sees '*the kingdom of a griefless life*', a life completely free from sorrow, glimmering, shining softly above him '*In an architecture of hieratic Space*'. '*Hieratic*' means '*priestly*'; a priest is one whose function is to link us to higher sacred levels. That '*hieratic Space*' above him seems to be spiralling up towards the highest levels of creation, '*creation's tops*', but its '*blue height*' still maintains a connection, a '*warm communion between body and soul*'. Although that kingdom of griefless life seems as far away as a distant '*heaven*', at the same time it feels as intimate and near '*as thought and hope*'.

Above him in a new celestial vault
Other than the heavens beheld by mortal eyes,
As on a fretted ceiling of the gods,
An archipelago of laughter and fire,
Swam stars apart in a rippled sea of sky.

The '*celestial vault*' means the sky – but the sky Aswapati is seeing now is different from '*the heavens beheld by mortal eyes*', the skies that we see with our physical eyes. The sky that Aswapati sees is like '*a fretted ceiling of the gods*'; '*fretted*' means intricately carved and decorated. He sees many stars scattered across that sky, forming '*An archipelago of laughter and fire*'. An '*archipelago*' is a series of islands. These scattered stars are islands '*of laughter and fire*', swimming in a '*rippled sea of sky*'.

Towered spirals, magic rings of vivid hue
And gleaming spheres of strange felicity
Floated through distance like a symbol world.

Like the wonderful heavenly forms which we can see nowadays in photographs from the Hubble telescope, Aswapati sees spiral forms towering up, and '*magic rings*' of vivid colours, as well as '*gleaming spheres*' of moons or planets, all expressing some '*strange felicity*', some unusual happiness. He sees them floating '*through distance*', making up a symbolic world, a complete universe.

On the trouble and the toil they could not share,
On the unhappiness they could not aid,
Impervious to life's suffering, struggle, grief,
Untarnished by its anger, gloom and hate,
Unmoved, untouched, looked down great visioned planes
Blissful for ever in their timeless right.

Just as the stars of the material universe seem to look down on us from the night sky, those lovely spheres and spirals and rings were looking down on the '*changing worlds bereft of peace*' where Aswapati was standing. Those '*great visioned planes*' which he is seeing are '*Unmoved, untouched*', '*Blissful for ever in their timeless right*', but still they look down on the lower levels of life, on '*the trouble and the toil they could not share*' and '*the unhappiness they could not aid*'. Those higher planes are '*Impervious to life's suffering, struggle, grief*' and '*Untarnished by its anger, gloom and hate*'. '*Impervious*' means 'impenetrable': they cannot be touched or influenced by the suffering, struggle and grief of life as we know it. '*Untarnished*' means 'unstained': metals such as silver and copper may get 'tarnished' and need to be cleaned in order to recover their bright gleam; those planes are perfectly pure and untouched by the '*anger, gloom and hate*' that disfigure life as we know it.

Absorbed in their own beauty and content,
Of their immortal gladness they live sure.

Those planes are self-absorbed '*in their own beauty and content*', enjoying their own blissful and beautiful state, secure in their everlasting happiness.

Apart in their self-glory plunged, remote
Burning they swam in a vague lucent haze,
An everlasting refuge of dream-light,
A nebula of the splendours of the gods
Made from the musings of eternity.

Aswapati sees those realms as very far away, '*Apart*' and '*remote*', plunged deep in contemplation of their own glory. He sees them '*Burning*' like distant suns, swimming in a '*vague lucent haze*', a mist or cloud of light. That '*haze*' of '*dream-light*' looks like a '*nebula*' or cloud '*of the splendours of the gods*'. '*Nebula*' is a Latin word meaning 'cloud'. The hazy formations in outer space that we call '*nebulae*' are often gigantic clouds of gas and dust containing a multitude of stars and suns. Aswapati is seeing some glorious formations like that in the higher realms of the Life-Worlds, that have been made from the '*musings*', the dreamy thoughts and imaginations '*of eternity*', created in an indrawn dreamlike state of the Timeless. They appear to him like an '*everlasting refuge*', a haven that is forever safe.

Almost unbelievable by human faith,
Hardly they seemed the stuff of things that are.

These realms and forms are so wonderful that the human consciousness can hardly believe that they are real, that they really exist. They seemed to be made of some other unreal substance: '*Hardly they seemed the stuff of things that are*', of things that really exist.

As through a magic television's glass
Outlined to some magnifying inner eye
They shone like images thrown from a far scene
Too high and glad for mortal lids to seize.

We do not think that Sri Aurobindo actually ever saw a television, but obviously he knew about the principle of it; here he uses the word in its literal meaning of 'far-seeing', or 'seeing from a distance'. Aswapati is seeing all these wonders as if through some magical glass which outlines them like images from very far away, making them visible '*to some magnifying inner eye*'. These scenes are not

visible to our physical eyes, because they are '*Too high and glad for mortal lids to seize*'.

But near and real to the longing heart
And to the body's passionate thought and sense
Are the hidden kingdoms of beatitude.

But although we cannot see them with our mortal eyes, and although they are difficult for our human mind and faith to believe in, nevertheless, those '*hidden kingdoms of beatitude*', of blessedness and bliss, are very '*near and real to the longing heart*' which is longing always for bliss, and to '*the body's passionate thought and sense*': the body consciousness and senses believe in those blissful state and planes and are always longing for them; for them these '*hidden kingdoms of beatitude*', of blessedness, are very near and real.

In some close unattained realm which yet we feel,
Immune from the harsh clutch of Death and Time,
Escaping the search of sorrow and desire,
In bright enchanted safe peripheries
For ever wallowing in bliss they lie.

They exist in '*some close unattained realm*' – a realm which we feel close to us but which we have not yet reached or entered. There they are '*Immune*', protected from '*the harsh clutch of Death and Time*' which rules in the material universe; they are free from '*the search of sorrow and desire*' which cannot reach them in the '*bright enchanted safe peripheries*' where they exist. A 'periphery' is a boundary line. Those realms lie within magical protective boundaries, '*wallowing in bliss*' – a very vivid phrase! Usually we associate '*wallowing*' with mud. It is what pigs and hippopotamuses and elephants do when they find a nice muddy place: they roll and enjoy the cool, sticky mud, and indeed they look quite blissful as they are doing it.

In dream and trance and muse before our eyes,
Across a subtle vision's inner field,
Wide rapturous landscapes fleeing from the sight,
The figures of the perfect kingdom pass
And behind them leave a shining memory's trail.

In a dream, or when we are ‘day-dreaming’, musing, or if we enter a state of trance, when the ‘*inner field*’ of ‘*subtle vision*’ opens up within us, we might catch a glimpse of the ‘*Wide rapturous landscapes*’ and the ‘*figures*’ or beings of that ‘*perfect kingdom*’. They pass fleetingly across the field of inner vision, but leave behind them the ‘*trail*’ or trace of an unforgettable ‘*shining memory*’.

Imagined scenes or great eternal worlds,
Dream-caught or sensed, they touch our hearts with their depths;
Unreal-seeming, yet more real than life,
Happier than happiness, truer than things true,
If dreams these were or captured images,
Dream’s truth made false earth’s vain realities.

If we get such a glimpse, we may be unsure whether they are only ‘*Imagined scenes*’ or ‘*great eternal worlds*’ more real than everyday reality. Whatever they are, whether we catch them in a dream or sense them with some subtle sense, when we come into contact with them ‘*they touch our hearts with their depths*’. They seem unreal: ‘*Hardly they seemed the stuff of things that are*’, but they may feel ‘*more real*’ than this life that we know, and they bring a happiness that is happier than what we usually call by that name, and they are truer and more convincing than all the things that we usually think are true and real here. If these experiences are only dreams, nevertheless they are so convincingly true that they make our earthly realities seem false and worthless: ‘*Dream’s truth made false earth’s vain realities*’.

In a swift eternal moment fixed there live
Or ever recalled come back to longing eyes
Calm heavens of imperishable Light,
Illumined continents of violet peace,
Oceans and rivers of the mirth of God
And griefless countries under purple suns.

The experience may last only a moment, but what we have seen in that moment may remain fixed in the memory as a ‘*swift eternal moment*’, or it may return over and over again, ‘*ever recalled*’ as we remember the landscapes of the perfect kingdom: the skies, ‘*Calm heavens of imperishable light*’ and the lands of peaceful violet light:

'Illumined continents of violet peace'. Violet and purple are the characteristic colours of the life-planes. We may recall the oceans and rivers flowing with *'the mirth of God'*, God's laughter, his merriment, and those *'grieffless countries under purple suns'*.

There is an illuminating anecdote about these beautiful lines. Amal Kiran often wrote to Sri Aurobindo, enquiring about lines of poetry. One day he asked about the following lines of the great Roman Virgil, from his epic *The Aeneid*, which describe the Elysian or heavenly fields, the home of virtuous souls after death, writing:

What plane is spoken of by Virgil in these lines?

Largior hic campos aether et lumine vestit
purpureo, solemque suum, sua sidera norunt.¹

Sri Aurobindo replied:

I don't know, but purple is a light of the vital. It may have been one of the vital heavens he was thinking of. The ancients saw the vital heavens as the highest and most of the religions also have done the same. I have used the suggestion of Virgil to insert a needed new line:

And grieffless countries under purple suns.²

The 'Purple' or *'purpureo'* mentioned in Virgil's line was a colour which had a special significance in antiquity. Purple dye was obtained from a shellfish found on the Syrian coast. The Phoenicians used to collect the shellfish to make that dye by a method of which only they had the secret. They produced a purple cloth interwoven with fine gold threads which shone as the wearer moved. In Roman times only the Emperor was allowed to wear this exclusive and expensive fabric. When the ancient peoples used this word they meant not only the colour but its golden shine. The suns of those life-heavens are like that: purple but glowing, shining, brilliant.

1. Here a wider air clothes the fields with shining purple light;

They know their own sun and their own stars.

2. Sri Aurobindo, CWSA 27:30

Section 3: Lines 156–244

This, once a star of bright remote idea
Or imagination's comet trail of dream,
Took now a close shape of reality.

'*This*' refers to the last lines of the previous section with their evocation of the divine home of Life. That had once been to Aswapati only '*a star of bright remote idea*': the conception of a bright world as far away from realisation as a distant star, far beyond reach; or something imagined, like a brilliant comet with its long trail of dreams, impossibly far away; but now that realm takes on for Aswapati '*a close shape of reality*': those calm heavens and those continents of violet peace and the oceans and rivers of those griefless countries become close and real to his experience.

The gulf between dream-truth, earth-fact was crossed,
The wonder-worlds of life were dreams no more;
His vision made all they unveiled its own:
Their scenes, their happenings met his eyes and heart
And smote them with pure loveliness and bliss.

There seems to be a deep '*gulf*', an unbridgeable gap between the '*earth-fact*' of material realities and the truth of those '*dreams*', those intuitions of the pure life worlds. But now Aswapati has crossed that gulf. The '*wonder-worlds of life*' are no longer only dreams: he has developed a power of vision that is able to identify with everything that they revealed, '*unveiled*'. '*Their scenes, their happenings met his eyes and heart*'. He could see them and he could feel them intimately and intensely. '*Smote*' is the past tense of the verb 'to smite', which means 'to strike', 'to give a blow'. Aswapati's eyes and heart receive the '*pure loveliness and bliss*' of those life-heavens with a shock of delightful astonishment.

A breathless summit region drew his gaze
Whose boundaries jutted into a sky of Self
And dipped towards a strange ethereal base.
The quintessence glowed of Life's supreme delight.

Aswapati's '*gaze*', his look, is attracted to a '*breathless summit region*', as if of high mountain peaks where the atmosphere is

windless and too rarefied to breathe. The outlines of those peaks are seen reaching up *'into a sky of Self'*, of pure existence: that *'breathless summit region'* reaches up towards a high, pure sky of self-existence, and at the same time it dips down *'towards a strange ethereal base'*, veiled in a mysterious subtle atmosphere. These regions glow with *'The quintessence ... of Life's supreme delight'*. *'Quintessence'* is a term from the ancient science of alchemy. Alchemists, the early chemists, used to distil different substances to extract their essences. To get the greatest possible purity, they would repeat the distillation process five times; what remained after these five purifications was considered to be the utterly pure essence of that substance. *'Quintessence'* means *'fifth-essence'*, the purest possible state of substance. What Aswapati sees glowing there in those *'summit regions'* is the pure and concentrated essence of *'Life's supreme delight'*.

On a spiritual and mysterious peak
Only a miracle's high transfiguring line
Divided life from the formless Infinite
And sheltered Time against eternity.

At the very highest level of those *'summit regions'* of Life, on a *'spiritual and mysterious peak'*, only a fine borderline – *'a miracle's high transfiguring line'* – separates life *'from the formless Infinite'*, and protects this world of Time and Space from the transcendent unmanifest state of eternity and infinity. It seems as if Life in its essence reaches up almost to the Absolute, almost to the supreme existence.

Out of that formless stuff Time mints his shapes;
The Eternal's quiet holds the cosmic act:
The protean images of the World-Force
Have drawn the strength to be, the will to last
From a deep ocean of dynamic peace.

'Out of that formless stuff' of infinity, *'Time mints his shapes'*: *'to mint'* means to make a coin; earlier, coins used to be minted out of gold or silver and nowadays alloys of different kinds are used; *'the Mint'* is the place where coins are made. The poet is telling us that all the limited forms that exist in this manifestation of Time and

Space have been shaped out of the formlessness of infinity. ‘*The Eternal’s quiet holds the cosmic act*’: the transcendent Silence is embracing and containing and supporting – holding – all the action of the universe. Then he speaks of ‘*The protean images of the World-Force*’: ‘*protean*’ is an adjective formed from the name Proteus, an ancient Greek sea-god who could never be held firmly, for if you tried to seize him he would change shape. The creative World-Force that we call Nature has given rise to an uncountable multiplicity of forms, which come into existence and then dissolve and are reshaped. The images that the World-Force creates are continuously changing shape, but all have drawn their power to exist and their will to continue existing from the fathomless and formless ocean of the eternal and the infinite peace, which is ‘*dynamic*’, full of the energy and power of action which enables all these ‘*protean images*’ to form, allowing all these myriad individualities to exist.

Inverting the spirit’s apex towards life,
She spends the plastic liberties of the One
To cast in acts the dreams of her caprice,
His wisdom’s call steadies her careless feet,
He props her dance upon a rigid base,
His timeless still immutability
Must standardise her creation’s miracle.

‘*She*’ here refers to the creative World-Force of the Divine. She inverts ‘*The spirit’s apex*’ towards life: the spirit is imaged as an upward-pointing triangle; the world force inverts the triangle so that its ‘*apex*’ or highest point is turned downwards, towards life. The One omnipresent reality is unlimited by anything – not by time or space or any imaginable kind of restriction or boundary. It is able to be everything. Because it is the One, it can take any shape or form. The World-Force uses those freedoms of the One, its ‘*plastic liberties*’ to ‘*cast in acts the dreams of her caprice*’. The word ‘*plastic*’ means ‘mouldable’ – any substance that can be moulded into various shapes can be described as ‘*plastic*’. ‘*Caprice*’ means ‘sudden shifts in moods or behaviour’. The World-Force uses the very substance of the One, which can be moulded into any form, to cast or mould all her fanciful dreams into acts and forms. Whatever her fancy wills she makes. But the One is always supporting and

steadying her: *'His wisdom's call steadies her careless feet'*. It is as if Life can never be completely random because the shaping will of the divine wisdom is always steadying her dance, *'her careless feet'*. *'He props her dance upon a rigid base'*. The World-Force is in constant motion, whirling in her dance of Kali, the dance of time, but she needs a floor to dance on. In the traditional image Siva allows her to dance on his breast, providing her a firm and steady base for her dance. The *'timeless still immutability'* of the One is there to *'standardise her creation's miracle'*, so that the unpredictable magic that she performs, all that she creates, forms a harmony rather than a chaos, and once a form or a species has come into existence, it tends to remain in existence for some time: things do not just come and go in a moment, because the eternal changelessness of the One is providing a stable base for the creative dance of the World-Force.

Out of the Void's unseeing energies
Inventing the scene of a concrete universe,
By his thought she has fixed its paces, in its blind acts
She sees by flashes of his all-knowing Light.

She, the World-Force, has invented all that we can see around us, on the earth, in the solar system, and everything beyond, this *'scene of a concrete universe'*, *'Out of the Void's unseeing energies'*, from the visionless, unconscious energies of the Void, the emptiness. But she has not done it by pure caprice: *'she has fixed its paces'*, the planes and levels of this universe, the steps that it can make, the journey that it has to follow, *'By his thought'*, by the thought of the One, according to his Divine Idea and Plan. The material universe seems to be blind, unconscious; but, amazingly, everything is perfectly arranged in its place. How does Nature manage that? She can arrange it perfectly because *'in its blind acts'*, all the apparently unconscious movements and happenings of the material world, *'She sees by flashes his all-knowing Light'* – she is granted some intuitive awareness of the omniscience of the Supreme, the One; the whole process of manifestation has been and is being guided by the infallible Divine Wisdom.

At her will the inscrutable Supermind leans down
To guide her force that feels but cannot know,

Its breath of power controls her restless seas
And life obeys the governing Idea.

The Creatrix, the creative World-Force is guided by the thought of the One and steadied, stabilised by his unmoving presence, whose power she is and whose thoughts she is materialising. In the process of manifestation, between the Supreme, the One, and his Creation lies the Truth-conscious power of Supermind. At the will of the World-Force, *'the inscrutable Supermind leans down / To guide her force that feels but cannot know'*. If something is *'inscrutable'* it cannot be read or understood, it is mysterious and ungraspable; but that mysterious power of Supermind leans down from its great height to guide the apparently unconscious movements of the creative World-Force. The *'breath of power'* coming from the Supermind also controls the *'restless seas'* of her energies, so that despite all her apparent play of caprice *'life obeys the governing Idea'*: the divine Idea, the original concept of what the evolutionary manifestation should be, which gets expressed through the creative Supermind.

At her will, led by a luminous Immanence
The hazardous experimenting Mind
Pushes its way through obscure possibles
Mid chance formations of an unknowing world.

The universal principle of Mind is a projection or reflection of Supermind at work on the lower levels of the manifestation where it is experimenting, groping to find its way by trial and error; there it is *'hazardous'*, taking risks, trying things out, unsure of the outcome; but still the power of Mind is being *'led by a luminous Immanence'*: an indwelling presence that is full of Light and Consciousness. Mind, driven by the World-Force and led by that luminous indwelling presence *'Pushes its way through obscure possibles'*: all sorts of possibilities that may come up in the midst of the *'chance formations of an unknowing world'*, this world of ignorance. Despite all the obscurity and uncertainty of the Ignorance, Mind is always exploring and experimenting and trying things out, and gradually extending the range of its knowledge and mastery.

This creative World-force may appear to us as the unconscious, blind force of Nature or Prakriti, but in fact she is the expression

of the Conscious-Force of the Supreme: Shakti, Ishwari, the Mother of the universe. She can command Supermind, universal Mind and universal Life, and these lower powers have to obey her. Even as apparently unconscious Nature, she is drawing on the higher powers of the One which are involved and immanent in the manifestation.

Our human ignorance moves towards the Truth
That Nescience may become omniscient,
Transmuted instincts shape to divine thoughts,
Thoughts house infallible immortal sight
And Nature climbs towards God's identity.

All of us, all human beings, are on a journey, in the course of which '*Our human ignorance moves towards the Truth*'. The purpose of this evolutionary journey is that '*Nescience*', the state of not-knowing or unconsciousness, may eventually become '*omniscient*', all-knowing. That is why we are here, that is the meaning of evolution and the goal of this creation: that everything may become conscious. At present we are foreseeing the possibility of supramental transformation, of a complete change in the consciousness of the human race, or of the emergence of a new race with a higher level of consciousness; but the ultimate aim is that the entire material universe shall become conscious so that all which is at present nescient '*may become omniscient*'. That is why our human ignorance is moving towards the Truth of things, so that the impulses which are now unconscious instincts in plants and animals and ourselves may be '*Transmuted*', transformed, into conscious '*divine thoughts*', and what are now thoughts, the products of our imperfect mental processes, may instead '*house*' or contain '*infallible immortal sight*'. By this process, Nature is climbing back, through the unconsciousness of matter, the instinctive awareness of plants and animals, and the ignorance of human mind, towards her original identity with God, the Divine.

The Master of the worlds self-made her slave
Is the executor of her fantasies:
She has canalised the seas of omnipotence;
She has limited by her laws the Illimitable.

So that this can happen, the original Lord and Creator, the ‘*Master of the worlds*’ has made himself the slave of his World-Force, to carry out all her fantasies, her amazing imaginations. What she has done is to channel or canalise the limitless oceans of his power and to limit his infinity, his illimitability, by what we call ‘the laws of Nature’.

The Immortal bound himself to do her works;
He labours at the tasks her Ignorance sets,
Hidden in the cape of our mortality.

The Immortal Lord and Creator has accepted to be subject to Nature in order to enable her works to be carried out. He allows his infinite force to be harnessed to carry out the tasks that the World-Force dictates even in her ignorant state. He disguises his immortal omnipotence and omniscience ‘*in the cape of our mortality*’, hidden under a cloak of humanity, in the grip of death and ignorance.

The worlds, the forms her goddess fancy makes
Have lost their origin on unseen heights:
Even severed, straying from their timeless source,
Even deformed, obscure, accursed and fallen,—
Since even fall has its perverted joy
And nothing she leaves out that serves delight,—
These too can to the peaks revert or here
Cut out the sentence of the spirit’s fall,
Recover their forfeited divinity.

The worlds and forms that the creative World-Force makes as the goddess of Life have lost their higher origin. But even though they have been ‘*severed*’, cut off from ‘*their timeless source*’, even though they are ‘*straying*’, wandering and lost, even though some of them have become ‘*deformed, obscure, accursed and fallen*’ because there is a ‘*perverted joy*’, a distorted delight even in falling and the Life goddess does not leave out anything that serves delight, even so, the poet says, it is still possible for them to ‘*revert*’, which means to turn back or return, to their original heights; or even here, in the material universe, they may still be able to ‘*Cut out the sentence of the spirit’s fall*’ – abolish the consequences of the fall from their origin, to ‘*Recover their forfeited divinity*’ and regain the divine state that they have lost.

At once caught in an eternal vision's sweep
He saw her pride and splendour of highborn zones
And her regions crouching in the nether deeps.

Aswapati is able to see, '*caught in an eternal vision's sweep*', the whole range of the life worlds, from '*her pride and splendour of highborn zones*' on the higher levels, to '*her regions crouching in the nether deeps*', hiding in the lower darker levels of unconsciousness and falsehood.

Above was a monarchy of unfallen self,
Beneath was the gloomy trance of the abyss,
An opposite pole or dim antipodes.

'*Above*', on the higher levels, he sees '*a monarchy of unfallen self*': the sovereignty of Life's original divine state. '*Beneath*', far below, lies '*the gloomy trance of the abyss*': the sad dark state of dreamlike unconsciousness in the deepest depths, which is the very opposite of Life's higher levels: '*An opposite pole or dim antipodes*'. Our earth has a north and a south pole, marking the extremities, the most distant points on the earth's surface. The '*antipodes*' are the countries on the opposite side of the globe, the furthest away from where one is standing. The extremes of the life-levels form opposite poles or '*antipodes*' to each other.

There were vasts of the glory of life's absolutes:
All laughed in a safe immortality
And an eternal childhood of the soul
Before darkness came and pain and grief were born
Where all could dare to be themselves and one
And Wisdom played in sinless innocence
With naked Freedom in Truth's happy sun.

At one extreme or pole, Aswapati sees vast realms ruled by '*the glory of life's absolutes*', realms where all beings can happily enjoy '*a safe immortality*' and '*an eternal childhood of the soul*', the original state of life '*Before darkness came and pain and grief were born*'. There, all the beings could freely express their own individuality, while at the same time feeling their oneness with all the others: '*all could dare to be themselves and one*'. There, Wisdom

could play innocently with Freedom, in the light of ‘*Truth’s happy sun*’: a happy childlike state of spontaneous self-expression with no need for any restrictions.

There were worlds of her laughter and dreadful irony,
There were fields of her taste of toil and strife and tears;
Her head lay on the breast of amorous Death,
Sleep imitated awhile extinction’s peace.

But Aswapati also sees other realms of Life, where she indulges in darker kinds of delight: her taste for ‘*irony*’ and for ‘*toil and strife and tears*’. ‘*Irony*’ is a mocking, sarcastic form of humour in which words are used to convey the opposite of their literal meaning, or a situation or statement which holds a meaning different from what it appears to mean, or it can be used of a condition in which a person seems to be mocked or made fun of by fate or facts. In those realms Life seems to be in love with Death, her opposite, while sleep, which should be peaceful, refreshing and restorative, instead seems to offer the peace of extinction, non-existence.

The light of God she has parted from his dark
To test the savour of bare opposites.
Here mingling in man’s heart their tones and hues
Have woven his being’s mutable design,
His life a forward-rippling stream in Time,
His nature’s constant fixed mobility,
His soul a moving picture’s changeful film,
His cosmos-chaos of personality.

Aswapati sees that in her life-realms the creative force has separated different aspects of the One, dividing his brighter aspects from darker ones in order to try out the taste or ‘*savour*’ of his extremes. But in our world these ‘*bare opposites*’ are mingled and mixed together in the human heart; their contrasting colours and notes have woven the ‘*mutable design*’, the changeful patterns of our lives. Human life has become ‘*a forward-rippling stream in Time*’, ever-changing; our human nature is both fixed and mobile, constantly changing and yet basically always the same. From this perspective the experience of the human soul is like ‘*a moving picture’s changeful film*’, something unreal and ever-changing, and we embody a ‘*cosmos-chaos of*

personality' in which all the varying moods of life are played out. 'Cosmos' and 'chaos' are both ancient Greek words and they have opposite meanings: while 'cosmos' signifies harmony, order and beauty, 'chaos' means total disorder. Our human life-personality contains both these elements.

The grand creatrix with her cryptic touch
Has turned to pathos and power being's self-dream,
Made a passion-play of its fathomless mystery.

In these life-realms, '*The grand creatrix*', the great creative World-Force, has used her '*cryptic touch*', her mysterious and bewildering power, to turn the '*self-dream*' of the pure Existent, the Spirit, into '*pathos and power*', the quality that inspires pity, as well as the quality of intensity and force. In this way she has made the '*fathomless mystery*' of the One's dream of himself into '*a passion-play*', full of intense emotion, grief and suffering.

Section 4: Lines 245–440

In this section Sri Aurobindo will describes some of the life worlds which are neither on the highest summits nor in the lowest depths, but '*halfway to heaven*':

But here were worlds lifted half-way to heaven.
The Veil was there but not the Shadowy Wall;
In forms not too remote from human grasp
Some passion of the inviolate purity
Broke through, a ray of the original Bliss.

There is a '*Veil*' separating these worlds from the highest levels of consciousness, '*but not the Shadowy Wall*' of ignorance, unconsciousness and falsehood. In them the forms are '*not too remote from human grasp*': Aswapati is able to catch some glimpse of them. He sees that '*Some passion*', some intensity '*of the inviolate purity*', the perfect purity of the highest levels of existence, '*a ray of the original Bliss*' does get expressed in these forms. '*Inviolate*' means 'pure', 'unspoiled', 'undamaged', 'not harmed or imperfect in any way'. Some light from the '*inviolate purity*' and '*the original Bliss*' from which the Life-Force has been born can enter those worlds like a ray of sunlight breaking through clouds.

Heaven's joys might have been earth's if earth were pure.
There could have reached our divinised sense and heart
Some natural felicity's bright extreme,
Some thrill of Supernature's absolutes:
All strengths could laugh and sport on earth's hard roads
And never feel her cruel edge of pain,
All love could play and nowhere Nature's shame.

Then Sri Aurobindo tells us that the bliss of that pure origin of life, '*Heaven's joys*', could also have been experienced here on earth '*if earth were pure*'. This gives us the hope that if earth can become pure enough, then the heavenly delights of the divine life can be experienced here too. If earth were pure enough, '*our divinised sense and heart*' could also enjoy that bliss, that '*extreme*' intensity of '*natural felicity*'. We experience the world around us through our physical senses, based on living matter. And through the subtle heart, the inner heart centre, we can feel intense emotions. If the heart and the sense were pure enough, even we here in our physical bodies could experience that extreme bliss or '*felicity*' and feel some '*Some thrill of Supernature's absolutes*', some resonance of our nerves with a delight that belongs to a level high above our present stage of evolution. If it were like that, then '*All strengths*', all powers, not only material ones, '*could laugh and sport*' – play, run, race – even on the '*hard roads*' of earth without feeling any of the cruel pain that is characteristic of our material experience. If earth were pure '*All love could play*' here too, without any of the sense of shame which makes us feel our impurities.

But she has stabled her dreams in Matter's courts
And still her doors are barred to things supreme.
These worlds could feel God's breath visiting their tops;
Some glimmer of the Transcendent's hem was there.

The poet refers to life's dreams as if they are horses: '*she has stabled her dreams in Matter's courts*'. A 'stable' is the shelter where domesticated horses are housed. Life has kept her winged horses, her dreams, in a stable that belongs to '*Matter's courts*', that is ruled by the laws of Matter. That is what has led to this impurity; because of the impurity of the earth-life, '*her doors are barred to*

things supreme'. That is true on earth; but now Aswapati is seeing worlds which are '*lifted half-way to heaven*'. At that height, they can '*feel God's breath*' touching their higher levels like a wind, a gentle breeze, the breath of the Lord '*visiting their tops*'. There is some '*glimmer*', some faint light as if from a very distant star, of '*the Transcendent's hem*'. The '*hem*' is the lower edge of a garment. The Transcendent Divine is not seen directly – only some faint light from the edge of its covering can be seen.

Across the white aeonic silences
Immortal figures of embodied joy
Traversed wide spaces near to eternity's sleep.

Between those life-worlds and the pure Transcendent existence beyond Time and Space lie '*white aeonic silences*'. '*White*' indicates purity, and from pure white light all colours are derived, so white is also the colour of integrality, of pure spirit. '*Aeonic*' suggests vast extents of time. An '*aeon*' is an immensely long period of time. Through those '*white aeonic silences*', figures are moving: '*Immortal figures of embodied joy*', forms that are incarnating or embodying joy, bliss are crossing or traversing those pure silent spaces bordering the Transcendence, the sleep of eternity.

Pure mystic voices in beatitude's hush
Appealed to Love's immaculate sweetnesses,
Calling his honeyed touch to thrill the worlds,
His blissful hands to seize on Nature's limbs,
His sweet intolerant might of union
To take all beings into his saviour arms,
Drawing to his pity the rebel and the waif
To force on them the happiness they refuse.

Aswapati sees these figures and hears '*Pure mystic voices*' in that blissful silence, that hush of beatitude. Those voices are appealing or calling to the '*immaculate sweetnesses*' of the Lord of Love. '*Immaculate*' means '*pure*' '*without any stain*'. They are appealing for '*his honeyed touch to thrill the worlds*' and imploring him to seize hold of '*Nature's limbs*' with his hands of bliss, begging for '*His sweet intolerant might of union*', which will not tolerate any separation, to overcome all division and separation by its power of

oneness. They are praying to Love to ‘*take all beings into his saviour arms*’ and to embrace with his compassion ‘*the rebel and the waif*’; ‘*the rebel*’ rejects and struggles against the power of divine love; a ‘*waif*’ is a lost child who may never have experienced love, does not know what it is. Those heavenly voices in the blissful silences are appealing for Love to force on all lost and suffering beings ‘*the happiness they refuse*’. It is like Savitri’s prayer in Book Eleven: ‘*Take all beings into one embrace*’. These voices are saying that Love should force ‘*happiness*’ on ‘*the rebel and the waif*’ even if they do not choose it. The rebel has chosen something else; the waif does not even know that it has this opportunity; they are turning away, living in sadness or in anger and hatred; but if that sovereign Love comes and takes them into its arms, they cannot but become happy.

A chant hymeneal to the unseen Divine,
A flaming rhapsody of white desire
Lured an immortal music into the heart
And woke the slumbering ear of ecstasy.

These pure mystic voices now seem to be singing to the Divine ‘*A chant hymeneal*’: a song of union, a marriage hymn. That hymeneal chant takes the form of a ‘*rhapsody*’, music that is full of intense feeling: ‘*A flaming rhapsody of white desire*’. This pure prayer for love and oneness attracts ‘*an immortal music into the heart*’ and wakes up ‘*the slumbering ear of ecstasy*’; ‘*slumbering*’ means ‘*sleeping*’. Perhaps the capacity to feel ‘*ecstasy*’, intense delight, is asleep in all life; the sound of that marvellous music, that ‘*rhapsody*’, that ‘*hymeneal chant*’, awakens it.

A purer, fierier sense had there its home,
A burning urge no earthly limbs can hold;
One drew a large unburdened spacious breath
And the heart sped from beat to rapturous beat.

Those realms of life allow ‘*A purer, fierier sense*’ than our physical senses can experience because they are dominated by earth matter. But even through our physical nerves there runs an energy which enables us to feel things with our senses, to touch, taste, smell, hear and see things. This energy is a form of fire, of Agni. In that world the senses are much purer and therefore more intense. The ‘*sense*’

that belongs to those worlds is a *'burning urge'*, an intense impulse to delight, that *'no earthly limbs can hold'*. And in those realms not only the senses, but the whole *prana*, the life-energy, the breath, is less restricted than ours. There, one could draw *'a large unburdened spacious breath'*. There is no dense matter to weigh life down; so the heart beats faster, speeding from one rapturous beat to the next.

The voice of Time sang of the Immortal's joy;
An inspiration and a lyric cry,
The moments came with ecstasy on their wings;
Beauty unimaginable moved heaven-bare
Absolved from boundaries in the vasts of dream;
The cry of the Birds of Wonder called from the skies
To the deathless people of the shores of Light.

There *'The voice of Time'* is singing *'of the Immortal's joy'*, the joy which is beyond Time. Aswapati feels the passage of the moment like beautiful singing birds, bringing *'An inspiration and a lyric cry'*, uplifting and meaningful, and carrying *'ecstasy on their wings'*. He experiences *'Beauty unimaginable'* moving there *'heaven-bare'*, without any covering to veil its loveliness. The spirit of Beauty exists on every plane, but here in our world it is clothed in material forms, physical forms. In those life-worlds Aswapati sees unimaginably beautiful forms moving *'heaven-bare'*, unveiled, without any of the coverings that disguise beauty from us. That Beauty is *'absolved from boundaries'*, it can move freely, without restrictions, in those dream-vastnesses. He hears *'The Birds of Wonder'* calling from the skies to the *'deathless people'* who inhabit those *'shores of Light'*. The sense of wonder, of what is marvellous and magical, is one of the most delightful and attractive things that we experience. In those beautiful life-worlds that power of wonder, of mystery and surprise is constantly calling to the immortal beings who live there on the shores of the infinite ocean of Light. Sri Aurobindo has seen and experienced these things; through his magical words we can grasp many wonderful hints of glories that lie beyond our experience, but we cannot say precisely what these words mean. That is also one of the attractions of poetry. One dimension of poetry is wonder and mystery. There is something surprising and new and inexplicable, magical, about it: pure poetry.

Creation leaped straight from the hands of God;
Marvel and rapture wandered in the ways.

Everything there is fresh and new and surprising, coming '*straight from the hands of God*' as if on the first day of creation. '*Marvel*' is another word for '*Wonder*', delighted astonishment; this sense of wonder and the '*rapture*' or intense delight which it gives are wandering freely in the ways of those worlds.

Only to be was a supreme delight,
Life was a happy laughter of the soul
And Joy was king with Love for minister.

There it is '*a supreme delight*' simply to exist; Life there, unlike the life that we know, is a pure and spontaneous '*happy laughter of the soul*'; '*Joy*' is the ruler of that world and the '*minister*' who carries out his will is '*Love*'. The ruling principle of these realms is joy and delight, and because the dictates of that ruler are being carried out by '*Love*' it is a truly happy world.

The spirit's luminousness was bodied there.
Life's contraries were lovers or natural friends
And her extremes keen edges of harmony:

'*The spirit's luminousness*', all the light and radiance of the spirit, is embodied in the forms of those realms. Contrasts and '*contraries*' are one of the typical characteristics of Life; in those delightful realms, '*Life's contraries were lovers or natural friends*', in joyful harmony with each other. Even '*her extremes*', which here would be painful contradictions and opposites, are enjoyed there as '*keen edges of harmony*'. '*Keen*' means '*sharp*': in music, contrasting notes that by themselves might sound discordant can often give a surprising richness and intensity to the overall harmony.

Indulgence with a tender purity came
And nursed the god on her maternal breast:
There none was weak, so falsehood could not live;
Ignorance was a thin shade protecting light,
Imagination the free-will of Truth,
Pleasure a candidate for heaven's fire;
The intellect was Beauty's worshipper,

Strength was the slave of calm spiritual law,
Power laid its head upon the breasts of Bliss.

The poet gives some examples. In our world, '*Indulgence*' is usually felt to be a negative quality: when we are indulgent to ourselves or others it implies tolerating and encouraging weaknesses; indulging children suggests spoiling them by letting them have their own way too often. But in that world the quality of '*Indulgence*' is like the loving care of a mother who with '*a tender purity*' nourishes and nurses '*the god on her maternal breast*', helping the inner divinity to grow. '*There none was weak, so falsehood could not live*'. This line reminds us that falsehood is born of weakness and fed by weakness. But in those realms there is no weakness, and therefore no falsehood. There is some '*Ignorance*' there, but it is only '*a thin shade*' which is '*protecting light*', like a fine lampshade that prevents too bright a light from dazzling us. In those realms '*Imagination*' or fantasy is an expression of '*the freewill of truth*', allowing truth to play with many possibilities. In our lives, '*Pleasure*', like '*Indulgence*', is something that we have to be careful about; but in those realms, where there is no weakness or impurity, it is '*a candidate for heaven's fire*', a sacred offering to the divine. There, '*intellect*', which in our experience is often dry and dusty, is a worshipper of Beauty. There, '*Strength was the slave of calm spiritual law*': not insisting on fulfilment of its own desires, it surrenders completely to serve the calm and wise law of the Spirit. In our world we rarely associate Power and Bliss; but there '*Power laid its head upon the breasts of Bliss*'. These are examples of '*life's contraries*' living together harmoniously as '*lovers or natural friends*'.

Even here, Life likes to play with extremes and contradictions and opposites attract each other, but we tend to experience them as oppositions and contraries, especially on the mental level. The worlds that Aswapati is experiencing now, '*lifted half-way to heaven*', are ruled by purity, harmony, joy and love, but they still have some closeness to us, they are not entirely beyond our grasp. First Sri Aurobindo has given us a glimpse of higher Life-realms where '*Joy was king with Love for minister*'. Now he will tell us about other domains which are ruled other principles: first by Wisdom and then by Power.

There were summit glories inconceivable,
Autonomies of Wisdom's still self-rule
And high dependencies of her virgin sun,
Illumined theocracies of the seeing soul
Throned in the power of the Transcendent's ray.

On the highest levels of the life worlds are '*summit glories*', splendid shining peaks that are '*inconceivable*' to us: our minds cannot imagine or conceive them. There, '*Wisdom*' is the dominant principle. In this passage we find some political vocabulary: first, '*Autonomies*': independent states which enjoy the '*self-rule*' of Wisdom; connected to them are '*dependencies*', also ruled by the pure light of Wisdom's '*virgin sun*' but less directly; there are also '*Illumined theocracies of the seeing soul*'. A '*theocracy*' is a state governed by the Divine. In those realms '*the seeing soul*', fully conscious, with a clear unveiled vision, is enthroned as the ruler, illumined and empowered by '*the Transcendent's ray*': the light of the Supreme, the Transcendent Divine.

A vision of grandeurs, a dream of magnitudes
In sun-bright kingdoms moved with regal gait:
Assemblies, crowded senates of the gods,
Life's puissances reigned on seats of marble will,
High dominations and autocracies
And laurelled strengths and armed imperative might.

Aswapati sees other high life-realms where the dominant principle is Power. In those '*sun-bright kingdoms*', '*A vision of grandeurs*' and '*a dream of magnitudes*', different ideal forms of greatness, move '*with regal gait*', like kings or princes. Those realms are governed by '*Assemblies*' of '*Life's puissances*' – the powers of Life – gathered in '*crowded senates of the gods*'. A '*senate*' is a governing body, a group of people who make decisions and laws; it can also mean the place where the governing powers meet. The ancient Roman republic was governed by a '*senate*' consisting of representatives of the upper classes. In the domains that Aswapati is seeing now, those ruling '*puissances*' reign from their '*seats of marble will*'. All the divine powers of Life are assembled as in the ancient Roman Senate, seated on circular tiers of marble. Marble is

a very strong and beautiful stone. The will of those life-powers is like that: strong and shining and durable. The poet describes them as ‘*High dominations*’, powerful rulers, and ‘*autocracies*’, self-rulers; as ‘*laurelled strengths*’ and ‘*armed imperative might*’, powerful warriors. Again this reminds us of ancient Rome where conquerors or eminent people were crowned with a wreath of laurel leaves.

All objects there were great and beautiful,
All beings wore a royal stamp of power.
There sat the oligarchies of natural Law,
Proud violent heads served one calm monarch brow:
All the soul’s postures donned divinity.

All the ‘*objects*’, the things in those realms, were ‘*great and beautiful*’ and all the beings ‘*wore a royal stamp of power*’: they had a majestic and authoritative quality. Of course that is what royal people should be like. Our modern royals seem to be very much like ordinary people dressed up in grand clothes and living in great palaces; but there have been times when kings and aristocrats really represented a higher level of consciousness than that of ordinary people, a higher level of culture and a capacity of leadership. The beings of these higher life-worlds have that natural nobility and dignity about them. ‘*There sat the oligarchies of natural Law*’: ‘*oligarchy*’ means ‘*government by a few*’, a system in which a few elite individuals or families rule the state. In those life-realms all the powers of natural law are present as beings. All of them are proud; all of them have the capacity to wield force; they are disciplined warriors, all serving ‘*one calm monarch brow*’: one power whom they recognise as their leader. Each of them represents a posture of the soul, some particular quality or capacity of the soul’s nobility.

There met the ardent mutual intimacies
Of mastery’s joy and the joy of servitude
Imposed by Love on Love’s heart that obeys
And Love’s body held beneath a rapturous yoke.

Those noble beings live out the ‘*ardent mutual intimacies*’, the intense and intimate relationships between masters and loyal servants, one enjoying the delight of being the master, of ruling and dominating, and the other enjoying the delight of being a willing

servitor. These different and shared kinds of joy are '*Imposed by Love*'. One may be the master and the other the slave, but because there is love even that slavery is '*a rapturous yoke*' joining the two of them and which both enjoy.

All was a game of meeting kinglinesses.
For worship lifts the worshipper's bowed strength
Close to the god's pride and bliss his soul adores:
The ruler there is one with all he rules;
To him who serves with a free equal heart
Obedience is his princely training's school,
His nobility's coronet and privilege,
His faith is a high nature's idiom,
His service a spiritual sovereignty.

Life there is '*a game*' of different kinds of royalty, of '*kinglinesses*' coming together. Sri Aurobindo shows us that even if one is high and the other low, the act of worship, of adoration, lifts up and gives dignity to the humble and submissive attitude of the worshipper. He bends his head but in his heart he is adoring the '*pride and bliss*' of the one he sees as a god, and that sincere adoration lifts up his soul to be equal and close to the one he worships. On those levels, the one who rules is identified with all that he rules, he is '*one with all he rules*'; thus he rules with love and knowledge, with understanding and compassion. He shows how noble servitude can be: '*To him who serves with a free equal heart / Obedience is his princely training's school*'. The one who serves willingly learns through being obedient to his master how to be a good ruler. In the old feudal system young princes or nobles would serve as squires or equerries, as servants and aides to the more mature ones, and they had to be obedient and disciplined; that state of service was their training to become leaders, masters, rulers, warriors whose duty was to command and lead. The British public school system was based on some kind of ideal like this, and in the army it happens, but in our life this ideal can be terribly debased sometimes. But on the higher levels of life, Aswapati is seeing these noble possibilities in their purity, in their essence. Here the word '*equal*' suggests the discipline recommended by Sri Krishna in the *Bhagavad Gita* for overcoming egoism: to take good fortune and misfortune, happiness and suffering all with

the same steadiness. If we can serve like that, willingly, obedience and service can be a training school. This privilege is given only to noble beings; a '*coronet*' is a sign of nobility. The '*faith*' or loyalty shown by a servitor towards his master is a characteristic '*idiom*' or expression of a noble nature: the fact that he can serve like that shows '*spiritual sovereignty*': spiritual self-mastery.

There were realms where Knowledge joined creative Power
In her high home and made her all his own:
The grand Illuminate seized her gleaming limbs
And filled them with the passion of his ray
Till all her body was its transparent house
And all her soul a counterpart of his soul.

Now Aswapati sees realms which are ruled by a marriage or partnership between the creative Power of Life and the mental power of Knowledge: '*Knowledge joined creative Power / In her high home and made her all his own*': it is as if the mind power takes Life as his wife or consort. '*The grand Illuminate*' who has a higher secret knowledge, takes the creative life-power into his arms, seizing '*her gleaming limbs*', uniting with her and filling her '*with the passion of his ray*', his ray of illumined Knowledge, '*Till all her body was its transparent house*' becoming full of light, '*And all her soul a counterpart of his soul*', thus creating a perfect union of Knowledge and creative Power.

Apotheosised, transfigured by wisdom's touch,
Her days became a luminous sacrifice;
An immortal moth in happy and endless fire,
She burned in his sweet intolerable blaze.

Then the creative Power is '*Apotheosised*': raised to its divine absolute and transfigured by the touch of wisdom, so that '*Her days became a luminous sacrifice*', a fully conscious offering, bringing the bliss of union and surrender. Sri Aurobindo compares this ecstatic state to that of a moth attracted to a candle flame. The moth gets destroyed by the flame; but in this case the Power is immortal and rejoices in the '*happy and endless fire*' of this union as she burns in the '*sweet intolerable blaze*' of the higher Light.

A captive Life wedded her conqueror.
In his wide sky she built her world anew;
She gave to mind's calm pace the motor's speed,
To thinking a need to live what the soul saw,
To living an impetus to know and see.

This continues the description of the union of Knowledge and Power, reminding us of certain historical happenings or legends of a ruling Queen being conquered and wedded by a great hero, as in the tales of Arjuna and Chitrangada or of Alexander and Roxanne. Life surrenders to and is united with illumined Knowledge and adapts to it. In the light of '*his wide sky*' of Knowledge, she rebuilds her world so that everything in her kingdom is changed. At the same time she contributes the speed and powerful dynamism of the life-force '*to mind's calm pace*'. To his thinking she adds '*a need to live what the soul saw*', and to her life-force she joins his '*impetus*', his powerful urge, '*to know and see*'. Thus these realms are ruled by a fusion of Power and Knowledge.

His splendour grasped her, her puissance to him clung;
She crowned the Idea a king in purple robes,
Put her magic serpent sceptre in Thought's grip,
Made forms his inward vision's rhythmic shapes
And her acts the living body of his will.

The '*splendour*' of illumined Knowledge embraces the Life-force and her '*puissance*' powerfully clings to the Knowledge-power and surrenders her powers to him. For example, '*the Idea*' is sometimes divorced from reality and unable to implement itself; but by this union the creative Life-force makes it a powerful ruler, crowning it as '*a king in purple robes*', giving it her own '*magic serpent sceptre*' of occult energy to enforce its visionary '*Thought*'. The '*purple robes*' and the '*sceptre*' or rod are the signs of a ruler, a king or emperor. Snakes, serpents, always symbolise energies, so naturally the creative and dynamic life-power has a '*serpent sceptre*'. A rod entwined by two serpents is the sign of Hermes, the messenger of the ancient Greek gods, and a similar rod is the mark of the healing power. When the Life-force is united with the power of illumined Knowledge she gifts those dynamic energies to Thought, so that

the *'rhythmic shapes'* of his *'inward vision'* can be embodied in outward forms. She makes her actions into *'the living body of his will'*, the living expression of whatever he wills. By her Power, his Knowledge, his Thought and Vision and Will get realised in forms and manifested in action.

A flaming thunder, a creator flash,
His victor Light rode on her deathless Force;
A centaur's mighty gallop bore the god.
Life throned with mind, a double majesty.

Here the poet gives us three powerful images for this dynamic union of Knowledge and Power. First the *'deathless Force'* of Life is imaged as a strong horse, which is being ridden and controlled by the illumined Knowledge – the rider and his steed; together they are like a powerful storm, *'A flaming thunder, a creator flash'*. Then an even closer union is imaged as a *'centaur'*, a symbolic figure from ancient Greek mythology, with the upright torso of a man and the body, tail and hooves of a horse; *'A centaur's mighty gallop bore the god'*: the galloping horse of Life-energy carries the divinised Mind. Thirdly, the two Powers are shown *'throned'*, seated side by side on a single throne: Life and Mind ruling together as a dual power, *'a double majesty'*.

Worlds were there of a happiness great and grave
And action tinged with dream, laughter with thought,
And passion there could wait for its desire
Until it heard the near approach of God.

Now the poet introduces us to other life-worlds in which these two powers are united in another way, *'Worlds ... of a happiness great and grave'*. *'Grave'* means *'serious'*, *'thoughtful'*. There *'action'* is *'tinged with dream'*. *'Tinged'* means *'touched or tinted with colour'*; if you happen to wash a red cloth with some white things, the white may be *'tinged with'* red, becoming pink. In those worlds, even *'laughter'* is *'tinged'* *'with thought'* and becomes somewhat thoughtful. In those worlds, *'passion'*, intense longing, *'could wait for its desire'*; it could restrain its longing and wait for its fulfilment *'Until it heard the near approach of God'*, until God himself comes to fulfil its aspiration.

Worlds were there of a childlike mirth and joy;
A carefree youthfulness of mind and heart
Found in the body a heavenly instrument;
It lit an aureate halo round desire
And freed the deified animal in the limbs
To divine gambols of love and beauty and bliss.

There are other life-worlds too that are '*lifted half-way to heaven*'. Here the poet introduces us to realms '*of a childlike mirth and joy*'. '*Mirth*' means 'merriment', 'spontaneous laughter and fun', a very youthful kind of enjoyment. As we get older we tend to lose that '*carefree youthfulness of mind and heart*', but there it is the ruling principle, felt in the mind and the heart and using the body as '*a heavenly instrument*', so that even '*desire*', which in our world is often muddy or painful, is lit up by '*a golden halo*', an aura of golden light. Our earthly body is the part in us that is closest to our elder brothers, the animals, but in those realms the animal '*in the limbs*' is '*deified*', made divine, and set free to express itself and enjoy '*divine gambols of love and beauty and bliss*'. '*Gambols*' are spontaneous happy movements like those of young animals, lambs or kittens, skipping around and playfully chasing each other.

On a radiant soil that gazed at heaven's smile
A swift life-impulse stinted not nor stopped:
It knew not how to tire; happy were its tears.

Even the ground, the '*soil*' of those worlds is '*radiant*', shining and always gazing up at a smiling heaven. There the impulse of life is '*swift*'; it moves quickly and it never fails. It '*stinted not nor stopped*'. 'To stint' means 'to use sparingly'. Here we may 'stint' our life-energies, using them sparingly for fear of getting tired and worn out, but there the '*swift life-impulse*' never '*stinted*' or '*stopped*', because it does not know '*how to tire*'. There is no tiredness, no fatigue, and if any tears come they are tears of happiness.

There work was play and play the only work,
The tasks of heaven a game of godlike might:
A celestial bacchanal for ever pure,
Unstayed by faintness as in mortal frames

Life was an eternity of rapture's moods:
Age never came, care never lined the face.

This is how life should be: work should be *'play and play the only work'*. *'Work'* there consisted of *'tasks of heaven'*, heaven-given tasks, which are carried out as *'a game of godlike might'*, a play of divine strength, and enjoyed as *'A celestial bacchanal for ever pure'*. A *'bacchanal'* is a riotous celebration of divine intoxication, associated with the worshippers of Bacchus, the Roman god of wine. Normally this word would be used of an orgy of over-indulgence in all kinds of sensuous pleasures, but here Sri Aurobindo tells us that in those higher life-worlds life itself can be a festival of heavenly enjoyment of everything, always pure, with nothing distorted or perverted or impure about it. That enjoyment and celebration is *'Unstayed by faintness'*: it goes on and on; there is no faintness, no weakness to bring it to an end. *'In mortal frames'*, in our human bodies that are subject to death, we experience tiredness, weakness, *'faintness'* and fatigue. But there, Life is *'an eternity of rapture's moods'*, an everlasting play of an endless variety of moods, of different ways of feeling *'rapture'*, intense delight. There, *'Age never came, care never lined the face'*. In that ever-youthful world there is no ageing and no anxiety, no worry. Its dominant principle is *'a childlike mirth and joy'*, a never-ending *'carefree youthfulness'*. Now the poet will introduce to us the beings who are experiencing this *'childlike mirth'*.

Imposing on the safety of the stars
A race and laughter of immortal strengths,
The nude god-children in their play-fields ran
Smiting the winds with splendour and with speed;
Of storm and sun they made companions,
Sported with the white mane of tossing seas,
Slew distance trampled to death under their wheels
And wrestled in the arenas of their force.

This seems to take place on a universal scale. The *'nude god-children'* are running and playing and wrestling and enjoying *'the safety of the stars'*, the security of the universal order, imposing on it their *'carefree youthfulness'*. There, these *'immortal strengths'* who

know nothing of death, enjoy racing, laughing as they run freely ‘*in their play-fields*’, unclothed like ancient Greek athletes. If you run against a strong wind you will feel it buffeting you, but here it is not the wind that is buffeting them, but they who are buffeting the winds: ‘*Smiting the wind with their splendour and their speed*’. They are so beautiful and splendid, and run faster than the wind. They do not mind whether it is stormy or sunny, but make both ‘*storm and sun*’ their companions and playmates. They sport ‘*with the white mane of tossing seas*’. Nowadays we often see films of young people surfing, daring powerful waves which show a ‘*white mane*’ as they break and curl over. On a stormy day out at sea we can see the troubled waves tossing their white crests – and we refer to them as ‘*sea-horses*’. ‘*Slew*’ is the past tense of the verb ‘*to slay*’, which means ‘*to kill*’. For those ‘*nude god-children*’ it is easy to speed from one place to another, destroying distance with the swiftness of their chariot-wheels and trampling it under the hooves of their racing horses. They compete with each other, wrestling in special ‘*arenas*’ set aside for public competitions and displays of strength.

Imperious in their radiance like the suns
They kindled heaven with the glory of their limbs
Flung like a divine largess to the world.
A spell to force the heart to stark delight,
They carried the pride and mastery of their charm
As if Life’s banner on the roads of Space.

They spread light like suns, and this radiance of theirs is ‘*imperious*’, compelling, irresistible. The glorious beauty of their limbs seems to set heaven on fire. ‘*To kindle*’ means to start a fire. They spread that radiant beauty generously to the world, like a king scattering gold amongst his subjects – but this is no material ‘*largess*’ of an earthly monarch, but ‘*a divine largess*’ flung to the world by these god-children as they move ‘*on the roads of Space*’ carrying the proud ‘*banner*’ or flag of Life and casting an irresistible ‘*spell*’ around them, an enchantment that compels the heart to utter delight.

Ideas were luminous comrades of the soul;
Mind played with speech, cast javelins of thought,

But needed not these instruments' toil to know;
Knowledge was Nature's pastime like the rest.

In these dynamic and playful life-worlds, *'Ideas were luminous comrades of the soul'*: the mind and soul playing together as companions. *'Mind played with speech'*, with words, and *'cast javelins of thought'*: a 'javelin' is a long heavy spear used in athletic competitions. Javelin throwing is one of the Olympic disciplines. Sometimes we say that thought is like an arrow, but these thoughts are as strong as javelins. In those realms, Mind sports with words and thoughts but does not need them to gain knowledge, *'to know'*, for Knowledge *'was Nature's pastime like the rest'*: a spontaneous and enjoyable game like everything else there.

Investitured with the fresh heart's bright ray,
An early God-instinct's child inheritors,
Tenants of the perpetuity of Time
Still thrilling with the first creation's bliss,
They steeped existence in their youth of soul.

'Investitured' is a word that suggests a ceremony in which a young prince or nobleman is given special clothing which indicates his status. These *'nude god-children'* wear as their distinctive aura or atmosphere *'the bright ray'* of the young and pure *'fresh heart'*. They have inherited as their birthright *'An early God-instinct'* which keeps them divinely pure and youthful. They are *'Tenants of the perpetuity of Time'*, allowed to inhabit everlasting time; a *'perpetuity'* is a privilege that is granted for ever. In the old feudal system you might be allowed to occupy a plot of land, not as an owner but as a tenant, but *'in perpetuity'* – forever. You would not own the land, it remained the property of the ruler, but you and your heirs would be allowed to occupy and use it forever. These young beings are still feeling the thrill of the blissful first moment of creation, before ignorance and separation creep in; and they *'steep'* or soak all existence in *'their youth of soul'*, pervading all existence with that blissful youthfulness. If you want to dye a plain cloth, you will *'steep'* it in a solution of your chosen colour, until the cloth has fully absorbed it. Or we might steep healing herbs in water to produce a medicinal drink. These wonderful carefree beings are

steeping all existence in the essence of their youthful souls. If we can imagine 'existence' as being absolutely pure and colourless and without qualities, when it gets steeped in their '*youth of soul*' that bare existence takes on the fresh youthful quality that pervades their souls.

An exquisite and vehement tyranny,
The strong compulsion of their will to joy
Poured smiling streams of happiness through the world.
There reigned a breath of high immune content,
A fortunate gait of days in tranquil air,
A flood of universal love and peace.
A sovereignty of tireless sweetness lived
Like a song of pleasure on the lips of Time.

These are child-rulers. They are imperious. Their will to joy is like a '*vehement tyranny*', a forceful autocratic rule that does not allow opposition of any kind. But this '*tyranny*' of theirs is not only '*vehement*' – insistent – but also '*exquisite*', wonderfully beautiful and fine. '*The strong compulsion of their will to joy*', the dominant characteristic of the beings of those realms, is so strong that it '*Poured smiling streams of happiness through the world*'. As a result, in the whole atmosphere of that world '*There reigned a breath*', a pervasive air, '*of high immune content*'. There is no discontent, no dissatisfaction, and this all-pervasive contentedness is '*immune*': it cannot be harmed or spoiled or diminished in any way. There is a sense of security in all that happiness. '*A fortunate gait of days in tranquil air*': the days march on in a blessed way, with a '*fortunate gait*'. The word '*gait*' refers to the way that someone or something walks. If a person feels really happy and fortunate and immune, they will walk in a special way: those days move smoothly, happily, confidently, '*in tranquil air*', serene and smiling. The atmosphere of those realms is undisturbed by storms of any kind: it is a constant flow of '*universal love and peace*'. There is a ruling atmosphere of '*tireless sweetness*' as if Time is constantly singing a happy song: '*a song of pleasure on the lips of Time*', as if all the moments of all the days are singing because they are happy.

A large spontaneous order freed the will,
A sun-frank winging of the soul to bliss,
The breadth and greatness of the unfettered act
And the swift fire-heart's golden liberty.

We mental beings aim for order, but what we achieve, often with difficulty, is a restricted and restricting order which is unsatisfactory and cannot last. We long for a harmony that comes naturally. Aswapati perceives that in those higher realms of Life '*A large spontaneous order*' sets the will free from effort, allowing '*A sun-frank winging of the soul to bliss*'. '*Frank*' means 'open' 'sincere', 'honest', 'candid', 'without pretence or concealment'; as if in full sunlight, the soul flies freely and spontaneously towards bliss. Frankness is the quality of free beings. This spontaneous freedom brings about '*The breadth and greatness of the unfettered act*': '*breadth*' means 'wideness'; '*unfettered*' means 'free'. '*Fetters*' are chains or shackles put on the feet of criminals to limit their movement. Sometimes we have to fetter our speech and our actions: we have to restrain what we do and say in order to remain in harmony with our environment and circumstances; but there action is '*unfettered*', unrestricted, free to be vast and great, and the heart too is free to follow its aspirations without restraint and enjoy a '*golden liberty*', moving swiftly and freely in the sunlight of the soul, going exactly where it has to go.

There was no falsehood of soul-severance,
There came no crookedness of thought or word
To rob creation of its native truth;
All was sincerity and natural force.
There freedom was sole rule and highest law.

The '*childlike mirth and joy*' and '*the swift fire-heart's golden liberty*' which prevail in these realms are possible because they are free from the '*falsehood of soul-severance*': souls there are not 'severed', not cut off from their origin nor from each other; therefore, true spontaneity can express itself. There is '*no crookedness of thought or word*', no distortion, and no insincerity '*To rob creation of its native truth*'. Your native land is the land in which you are born, and your native right is the right that you have because you are born to it; you are born with it; nobody can take it away from you. Creation has that

native truth – it is born from the truth consciousness. But at a certain stage of the involution there comes in this severance of the soul and then as a result, all the ignorance, the crookedness that spoils our lives. Those high life-worlds are above and beyond that: there everything is '*sincerity and natural force*'. Each being expresses itself openly according to its own nature, because '*freedom*' is the only rule and the highest law, enforced by the spontaneous purity of the soul following '*its native truth*'.

In a happy series climbed or plunged these worlds:
In realms of curious beauty and surprise,
In fields of grandeur and of titan power,
Life played at ease with her immense desires.
A thousand Edens she could build nor pause;
No bound was set to her greatness and to her grace
And to her heavenly variety.

Aswapati is seeing these worlds of Life arranged in an order, a hierarchy, '*a happy series*' of higher and lower levels. Some of them are full of '*curious beauty and surprise*', each one special and strange in its own way; others are '*fields of grandeur and of titan power*'. In all of them the creative Life-Force '*played at ease with her immense desires*', freely indulging all her vast dreams without restraint. She can construct '*A thousand Edens*', unlimited paradises, without needing to pause. There are no limits to '*her greatness*', '*her grace*' and '*her heavenly variety*'. Here in the world of matter the life force is limited in its expression by the laws of physics and the laws of the ignorance. But Sri Aurobindo is showing us that in her own realm no limits are set to the creative fantasy of the Life-force, who is an expression of the Shakti, the Supreme creative power.

Awake with a cry and stir of numberless souls,
Arisen from the breast of some deep Infinite,
Smiling like a new-born child at love and hope,
In her nature housing the Immortal's power,
In her bosom bearing the eternal Will,
No guide she needed but her luminous heart:
No fall debased the godhead of her steps,
No alien Night had come to blind her eyes.

Free of falsehood and ignorance and ‘*soul-severance*’, Life is awake and active, filled with the ‘*cry and stir of numberless souls*’. Like a goddess born from the ocean, she has emerged ‘*from the breast of some deep Infinite*’, fresh and new, ‘*Smiling like a new-born child at love and hope*’. In her nature she contains or ‘houses’ the power of the Immortal, and in her bosom, her heart, she is carrying ‘*the eternal Will*’. She does not need any other guide than her own ‘*luminous heart*’. ‘*No fall debased the godhead of her steps*’: ‘to debase’ means to reduce the value or purity of something. If pure gold is mixed with some other substance it becomes impure and less valuable, it is ‘*debased*’. In these realms Life has not fallen from her original divine state, nothing has debased her natural divinity: ‘*No alien Night*’, no darkness from another realm has no yet come to cloud her vision and pervert her will.

There was no use for grudging ring or fence;
Each act was a perfection and a joy.
Abandoned to her rapid fancy’s moods
And the rich coloured riot of her mind,
Initiate of divine and mighty dreams,
Magician builder of unnumbered forms
Exploring the measures of the rhythms of God,
At will she wove her wizard wonder-dance,
A Dionysian goddess of delight,
A Bacchant of creative ecstasy.

In those worlds there is no need for restraint. ‘To grudge’ means ‘to give unwillingly’, with reluctance or resentment, or you may like to restrict someone’s freedom or limit their possibilities, confining them within a limiting ring or a fence. There is ‘*no use*’, no need, for such restrictions in those realms. Every act has ‘*a perfection and a joy*’ of its own. The Life-goddess is free to act out all the ‘*moods*’ of ‘*her rapid fancy*’ and ‘*the rich coloured riot of her mind*’. ‘Riot’ often has a negative connotation, referring to an angry crowd out of control; but about a garden in full bloom we exclaim with admiration, “What a riot of colours!” Here it implies a rich variety of different and ever-changing possibilities. The Life-goddess is an ‘*Initiate*’, one who has access to secret knowledge; she knows the secret of ‘*divine and mighty dreams*’ and she uses that knowledge and the power it

gives her as a ‘*Magician builder of unnumbered forms*’. There is no limit to the forms that she can create. She uses her secret knowledge and power to explore ‘*the measures of the rhythms of God*’ as if in a never-ending dance. The word ‘*measures*’ is used to refer to dance steps. The varied ‘*rhythms of God*’ sustain the universe, and she is exploring them all freely, just as she wishes, ‘*At will*’, weaving her ‘*wizard wonder-dance*’ that is full of magical power. The poet calls her ‘*A Dionysian goddess of delight*’ and ‘*A Bacchant of creative ecstasy*’. These two phrases refer to the ancient Greek god of wine and divine ecstasy, Dionysus, whose Latin name is Bacchus. Female worshippers of Dionysus or Bacchus, known as ‘*Maenads*’ in Greek and ‘*Bacchants*’ or ‘*Bacchantes*’ in Latin, worshipped their god by circling around his figure in ecstatic dances. There is a famous Renaissance painting, ‘*The Progress of Bacchus*’, which shows the living god in his chariot, which is drawn by leopards and decorated with bunches of grapes and vine-leaves, while his worshippers, the Bacchants and Satyrs, blissfully dance around him. Like a Bacchant, the Life-goddess is endlessly weaving her ‘*wizard wonder-dance*’ in a trance of creative ecstasy.

At the end of the first section of this canto, after showing us the troubled and doubtful state of life that rules the earth at present, Sri Aurobindo told us that despite this face of life which is familiar to us,

Yet pure and bright from the Timeless was her birth,
A lost world-rapture lingers in her eyes,
Her moods are faces of the Infinite:
Beauty and happiness are her native right,
And endless Bliss is her eternal home.

In the three following sections Aswapati was shown ‘*the image of a happier state*’ than that of the life that we know. In the next and last section of this canto Sri Aurobindo will reveal how that divine ‘*happier state*’ which we have been reading about has become the troubled and unhappy state of the lower life-levels. We shall take that up in the next instalment.

(to be continued)

Savitri goes around the World

A Project of Auroville International

To celebrate the 50th Anniversary of Auroville
(February 1968 to 2018)

and remembering the Mother's words:

"Savitri is a Mantra for the transformation of the World"

it is proposed to undertake a live on-line continuous complete reading (parayan) of Sri Aurobindo's revelatory epic Savitri, starting from its place of birth, the Sri Aurobindo Ashram in Pondicherry, creating a chain of readers from country to country around the world, including as many countries as possible, and ending in Auroville.

When: February 2018 (exact dates to be announced)

Who: Savitri-lovers around the world.

The intention is to start with a recorded reading of the first lines by the Mother; then the continuous reading will be taken up by participants from the Ashram and other places in India. From India the readings will move on from East to West following the sun around the world, passing through as many countries as possible before ending in Auroville. Participation is invited from members of the Ashram, Auroville International Centres and Liaisons, Sri Aurobindo Centres around the world, and individual Savitri-lovers.

Where: All around the world, in places where Savitri-lovers gather regularly, and in individual homes.

From the Sangam Hall at Savitri Bhavan, the aim is to establish internet connections with all the readers, singly or in groups, so that they can be heard and seen on a big screen there and an audio-visual recording can also be made.

How: It is proposed to register the willing participants in advance, grouped by country and centre(s), and to inform each participant which lines he or she is requested to read. It will be helpful if one coordinator can be identified to organise the necessary arrangements for each

country or centre where more than one reader is participating. Further details will be worked out with the coordinators and participants by e-mail or skype.

To make this event happen, willing readers, co-ordinators and technical helpers are needed.

Your participation and helpful suggestions are warmly invited by Evelyne Guinouard and Jettie Zwaans for Auroville International

For details please contact: jet.zwaans@planet.nl

by August 15 2017 at the very latest.

The English of Savitri

Volume One: The Book of Beginnings, 2nd revised edition, 520 pages, hard-bound, Rs. 550.

Volume Two: The Book of the Divine Mother, 284 pages, hard-bound, Rs. 450

Volume Three: The Book of Yoga, in preparation for publication by August 2017, 500 pages, hard-bound, Rs. 550
Available from SABDA and Savitri Bhavan

Savitri Shabdarnrut Volume 6

Gujarati translation by Shri Kirit Thakkar of Shradhdhavan's *English of Savitri* talks on Sri Aurobindo's epic *Savitri*, covering Cantos One, Two and Three of Book Seven, The Book of Yoga. Also included are summaries of Books Four, Five and Six of *Savitri*. As usual, the volume includes original lines of *Savitri* along with Pujalal-ji's verse translation of them and translation in prose by Shri Kirit Thakkar, followed by the Gujarati translation of Shradhdhavan's explanations.

380 pages, soft-bound, Price Rs. 150.00
(Postage in Gujarat Rs. 20.00, outside Rs. 50.00)
Published by Yogayukta Prakashan, 2016

Available from:

Yogayukta Prakashan, E 102, Chandranagar Colony, Nr. Suvarna Laxmi Appts.
Waghodia Road, Vadodara 390019, Gujarat, Mobile: 9427540195,
e-mail: kirityukta@yahoo.co.in

Also from Savitri Bhavan; SABDA; and Sri Aurobindo Memorial Trust,
Sri Aurobindo Nivas, Vadodara 1, Phone (0265) 2418978; as well as at all leading Sri
Aurobindo Centres in Gujarat.

News of Savitri Bhavan

Some Major Events

22.11.2016 Release of *Savitrisabdamrut* volume 6

On November 22, Savitri Bhavan hosted the ‘Bhagavadarpan’ of Volume 6 of the *Savitrisabdamrut* series of Gujarati translations by Shri Kirit Thakkar of Shradhdhavan’s *English of Savitri* explanations. This volume covers Book Three of *Savitri*, The Book of the Divine Mother, and is published in Vadodara by Yoga Yukta Prakashan (For details see p. 53). The Translator, Publisher and about 40 other friends from Gujarat were present at the ceremony. Mr. Nilkanth Desai addressed the gathering. After the new volume, wrapped in a beautiful cloth hand-painted by Mrs. Yukta Thakkar, had been offered to Sri Aurobindo by Shradhdhavan, presentations were made to her as the author and to Priti Ghosh, whose beautiful *Savitri* paintings grace the covers of all the books in the series. Refreshments prepared by Mrs. Yukta Thakkar were enjoyed by all.

Award to Shradhdhavan

The Savitri Bhavan team is happy to announce that the Sri Aurobindo Samiti of the Sri Aurobindo Bhavan in Kolkata has awarded its 2016 ‘Sri Aurobindo Puraskar’ for work in English to Shradhdhavan “in recognition of her outstanding contribution to the study of Sri Aurobindo.” The award was presented to Shradhdhavan on Tuesday December 27th 2016 at the Hall of Harmony of the Ashram School by the Managing Trustee of



the Ashram, Shri Manoj Das Gupta, in the presence of Shri Biswajit Ganguli and other representatives of the Samiti and a gathering of friends and well-wishers from the Ashram and Auroville. Mrs. Aster Patel addressed the gathering, and many others added their tributes and felicitations to Shradhdhan, who accepted the honour with a few words.

29.01.2017 Completion of Sangam Hall

On Sunday January 29, the weekly *Savitri* Study Circle met for the first time in the new Sangam Hall which was then nearing completion, in order to test the suitability of its acoustics for reading and study. It was found that we could hear each other clearly from all levels of the Hall.

19.02.2017 Dr. M.V. Nadkarni Memorial Lecture

On Sunday February 19, Dr. Ananda Reddy was invited to declare the Sangam Hall officially open before giving the 7th Dr. M.V. Nadkarni Lecture there on the topic '*The Vision and the Boon: Savitri and the*



Katha Upanishad'. About 300 interested devotees attended the lecture. It was regretted by all that Mrs. Meera Nadkarni was unable to attend in person because of an unavoidable delay in her travel arrangements. A brief concentration was held, aspiring for her wellbeing.

21.02.2017 Picture Gallery extension

On 21.02.2017 a 'first brick' ceremony was held to launch construction of the long-planned extension of the Picture Gallery dedicated to displaying the *Meditations on Savitri* paintings created by the Mother with Huta during the 1960s. The existing gallery is not big enough to allow all the 472 paintings of the series to be exhibited at the same time; so far only about 120 paintings are being shown at once. This extension, which is being funded by a Government of India through the Sri Aurobindo International Institute of Educational Research (SAIIER), is expected to be completed in early 2018, and when fully equipped will house a permanent display of the entire series of paintings, so that it will be possible to 'walk through' *Savitri* from the first lines of Canto One of Book One, 'The Symbol Dawn' to the last lines of the poem at the close of Book Twelve, the 'Epilogue', thus fulfilling Huta's wish. When Huta entrusted to Savitri Bhavan this priceless collection of artworks inspired and guided by the Mother, she told us that it had been the Mother's wish that they should have a home of their own where they could remain on permanent display. We aspire for the successful completion of this project, which will also complete construction



of the Savitri Bhavan complex which has been growing steadily, by the Grace of The Mother and Sri Aurobindo, since our beloved elder brother Nirodbaran invoked their Presence and Grace when laying the Foundation Stone of the complex on November 24, 1995.

26.02.2017 Completion of *Savitri* Study Circle reading-cycle

On Sunday, February 26, 2017 the members of the weekly *Savitri* Study Circle reached the end of Sri Aurobindo's epic, completing the cycle of reading which began in May 2012. To celebrate the occasion, a group photo was taken. A new cycle of reading began the following week, on Sunday, March 5th.



A valuable new Study-Aid on *Savitri*

Four Aspects of Savitri

by

Dr. V. Ananda Reddy

**Sri Aurobindo Centre for Advanced Research,
Puducherry, 2016**

224 pages, soft-bound,

Rs. 360, available from SACAR and SABDA

Visit the Savitri Bhavan Website
www.savitribhavan.org

To find:

- Monthly Programme of Activities
- ‘Flower of the Month’ pages with photos of plants from the Savitri Bhavan garden with their spiritual significances, the Mother’s comments, etc.
- Videos of Shraddhavan’s *English of Savitri* sessions from Book Three onwards.
- Videos of Dr. M.V. Nadkarni Memorial Lectures nos. 1-6 and other Guest Lectures and presentations at Savitri Bhavan
- Shraddhavan’s complete reading of *Savitri* with accompanying text
- Chapter-wise readings of *The Life Divine* with accompanying text
- Digital copies of all issues of *Invocation*

and more.

News of Savitri Bhavan

Calendar – October 2016 to February 2017

Regular weekly activities:

- Sundays** 10.30-12 noon: *Savitri Study Circle*
- Mondays** 7-8 am: *Chanting Sanskrit Hymns*
3-4 pm: *Yoga and the Evolution of Man*, led by Dr. Jai Singh
5-6 pm: *Understanding the Myths of Ancient Greece in relation to the Yoga of Sri Aurobindo*, led by Claude de Warren
- Tuesdays** 9am-12.00 noon: *Introduction to Integral Yoga*, led by Ashesh Joshi
3-4 pm: *Yoga and the Evolution of Man*, led by Dr. Jai Singh
4-5 pm: *L' Agenda de Mère – The Mother's recorded talks*
5-6 pm: *Let us learn Savitri together*, in Tamil, led by Buvana
5.45-7.15 pm: OM Choir
- Wednesdays** 7-8 am: *Chanting Sanskrit Hymns*
5.30-6.30 pm: *Reading The Life Divine*, led by Shraddhavan
- Thursdays** 4-5 pm: *The English of Savitri*, led by Shraddhavan
- Fridays** 7-8 am: *Chanting Sanskrit Hymns*
3-4 pm: *Exploring the Bhagavad Gita*, led by Dr. Jai Singh
4-5 pm: *L' Agenda de Mère – The Mother's recorded talks*
5.30-7.00 pm: *Meditation with Hymns of the Rig Veda*, led by Nishtha

Saturdays 4-5 pm: *L' Agenda de Mère* – The Mother's recorded talks

5-6.30 pm: *Satsang* led by Ashesh Joshi

Monthly Activities:

Full Moon Gatherings in front of Sri Aurobindo's statue every month at Full Moon.

Mudra Chi : *A body prayer in Tai-chi form based on the Mother's Mudras*, led by Anandi on the first Sunday of every month at 5pm.

Special Events:

October

1-31 **Exhibitions:** *Meditations on Savitri, Books Four to Seven; Sri Aurobindo: a life-sketch in photographs; Glimpses of the Mother* (photographs and texts).

3 **Film:** *Evolution, Transformation, The Overman and The Superman*: Interview of Dr. Alok Pandey by Narad.

10 **Film:** *Personal Effort and the Divine Grace*: a talk by Dr. Alok Pandey

11 **Event:** Special OM Choir, conducted by Narad for students from Mumbai.

17 **Film:** Sri Aurobindo's *The Mother Chapters 1 to 5* read by *The Mother*.

24 **Film:** Sri Aurobindo's *The Mother Chapter 6 Part 2* read by *The Mother*.

31 **Film:** *Meditations On Savitri, Book One Canto Four – The Secret Knowledge, Part One*:

November

1-31 **Exhibitions:** *Meditations on Savitri, Books Four to Seven; Sri Aurobindo: a life-sketch in photographs; Glimpses of the Mother* (photographs and texts).

7 **Films:** *A New Birth – A meeting of The Mother with Surendranath Jauhar on 11.05.1967*, followed by *Adoration of the Divine Mother* by Michel Montecrossa.

14 **Film:** *The Mother – Terrace Darshan 1965-1973*.

- 21 **Film:** *Siddhi Day –The Day of Victory*: interview of Dr. Alok Pandey by Narad.
- 22 **Event:** Bhagavadarpan and Book Release of *Savitrisabdarnut* vol. 6.
- 24 **Event:** *Integrality in All Spheres of Life: 1 – Integral Philosophy*, led by Divyanshi Chugh.
- 28 **Film:** *Meditations on Savitri, Book One Canto Four – The Secret Knowledge, Part Two*.

December

- 1-31 **Exhibitions:** *Meditations on Savitri, Books Four to Seven; Sri Aurobindo: a life-sketch in photographs; Glimpses of the Mother* (photographs and texts).
- 1 **Event:** *Integrality in All Spheres of Life: 2 – Integral Psychology*, led by Divyanshi Chugh.
- 5 **Film:** *The Mother on Sri Aurobindo*.
- 8 **Event:** *Integrality in All Spheres of Life: 3 – Integral Economy*, led by Divyanshi Chugh.
- 12 **Film:** *India and the Birth of Sri Aurobindo* – talk by Dr. Alok Pandey.
- 15 **Event:** *Integrality in All Spheres of Life: 4 – Integral Poetry*, led by Divyanshi Chugh.
- 19 **Film:** *Home: the Earth*.
- 22 **Event:** *Integrality in All Spheres of Life: 5 – Integral Sociology*, led by Divyanshi Chugh
- 26 **Film:** *Meditations on Savitri, Book One, The Book of Beginnings, Canto Five*.
- 29 **Event:** *Integrality in All Spheres of Life: 6 – Integral Daily Living*, led by Divyanshi Chugh.
- 31 **Event:** Midnight Meditation.

January:

- 1-31 **Exhibitions:** *Meditations on Savitri, Books Four to Seven; Sri Aurobindo: a life-sketch in photographs; Glimpses of the Mother* (photographs and texts).
- 2 **Film:** *Auroville – the City the Earth Needs*.
- 5 **Event:** *Integrality in All Spheres of Life: 7 – Integral*

- Vision of Human Unity*, led by Divyanshi Chugh.
- 9 **Film:** *Interview with Shri Kireet Joshi in 2013*.
- 12 **Event:** *Integrality in All Spheres of Life: 8 – Integral Beauty and Sustainability*, led by Divyanshi Chugh.
- 16 **Film:** *On Auroville*: interview of Dr. Alok Pandey by Narad.
- 19 **Event:** *Integrality in All Spheres of Life: 9 – Integral Education*, led by Divyanshi Chugh.
- 23 **Film:** *Life After Life*: the research of Dr. Raymond Moody.
- 26 **Event:** *Integrality in All Spheres of Life: 10 – Integral Health and Healing*, led by Divyanshi Chugh.
- 30 **Film:** *Meditations on Savitri, Book Two – The Traveller of the Worlds, Cantos One to Four*.

February

- 1-31 **Exhibitions:** *Meditations on Savitri, Books Four to Seven; Sri Aurobindo: a life-sketch in photographs; Glimpses of the Mother* (photographs and texts).
- 6 **Film:** *The Yoga of the Earth*: the Mother comments on some passages from *Savitri*
- 11 **Event:** *My Burning Heart*: dramatization of a text by Satprem presented by Francesca Papale.
- 13 **Film:** *The Mother's Mahasamadhi and Her Work for the New Creation*: a conversation between Dr. Alok Pandey and Narad.
- 16 **Event:** *To see a World in a Grain of Sand: Poems of Small Things*: readings and flute by Gordon Korstange
- 19 **Event:** *The Vision and the Boon: Savitri and The Katha Upanishad*: The 7th Dr. M.V. Nadkarni Memorial Lecture by Dr. Ananda Reddy
- 20 **Film:** *The One Whom we Adore As The Mother*.
- 21 **Event:** 'First Brick' ceremony for Picture Gallery extension.
- 27 **Films:** *Building Matrimandir – Labour of Love 1971-2000*, followed by *Matrimandir from Above*, 2016.



*Jeanne and Gordon Korstange performing on February 16, 2017
in their presentation of readings and flute: "To see a World in a Grain of
Sand: Poems of Small Things".*

Appeal Equipment for Sangam Hall

The Sangam Hall has been successfully completed with the help of many willing donors. Now we appeal for your continued support to make the new space fully functional for a wide variety of uses by purchasing

Acoustical and multi-media Equipment

₹ 8 lakh is needed

Will You Help?

The Dream of Savitri Bhavan

We dream of an environment in Auroville

that will breathe the atmosphere of Savitri

that will welcome Savitri lovers from every corner
of the world

that will be an inspiring centre of Savitri studies

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

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

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

TO SUPPORT THE WORK OF SAVITRI BHAVAN

Savitri Bhavan is mainly dependent on donations, and all financial help from well-wishers is most welcome. 100% exemption is available for offerings from Indian tax-payers under section 35 (i) (iii) of the IT act.

Savitri Bhavan is a unit of SAIER
(Sri Aurobindo International Institute of Educational Research)

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Cheques and DDs should be made payable to **Auroville Unity Fund** and sent to Savitri Bhavan at the address given below.

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Access www.auroville.com/donations and enter the amount you wish to offer. Amounts of INR 500 to INR 10,000 are accepted. Specify 'Savitri Bhavan' as the recipient. Please be aware that charges will be deducted from the amount before it enters our account, and that therefore the amount mentioned on our receipt will be less than the exact amount that you sent. This will be a consideration if you require tax relief on your offering.

For all correspondence and queries, please contact

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Savitri
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of the world

The Mother