

Invocation

Savitri

B H A V A N

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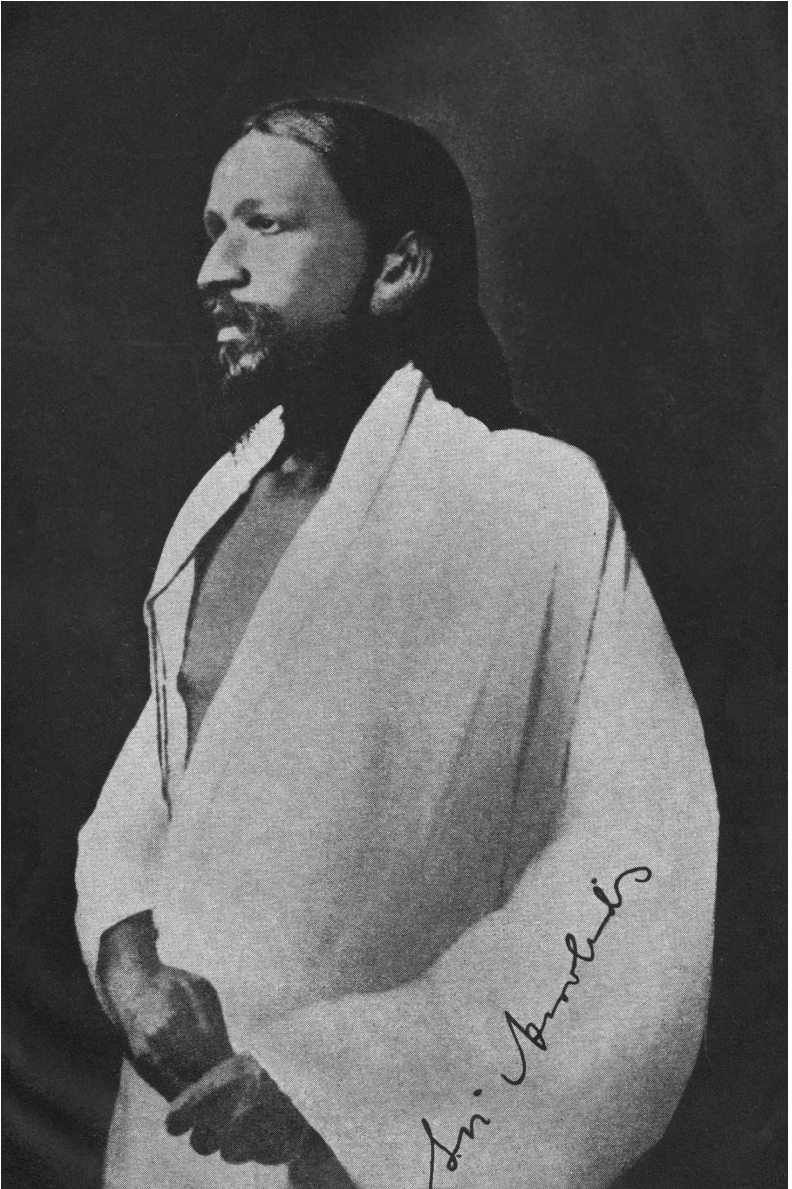
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*He cast from the rent stillness of his soul
A cry of adoration and desire
And the surrender of his boundless mind
And the self-giving of his silent heart.
He fell down at her feet unconscious, prone.*

Savitri p. 296



...the beauty of the Unveiled Ray

Reflections on Passages in *Savitri*: The Slow Footsteps of Far Destiny

Larry Seidlitz

Each of the 48 cantos of *Savitri* has its unique and special character and particularly memorable passages, but the fourth canto of Book 1, “The Secret Knowledge”, is one that prominently stands out in these respects. Shradhdhavan has said that it “can be taken separately from the rest of the poem and read by itself as a ‘Sri Aurobindo Upanishad’, for it contains the essence of the knowledge on which the entire poem is based” (*The English of Savitri*, Vol. 1: 261). It comes as an interlude between two other cantos that describe King Aswapati’s yoga, and transitions after its first line away from Aswapati and his experiences to a description of the central truths of existence and of humanity; the poem returns to describing Aswapati in the first line of the canto that follows. This canto has seven different sections separated by line spaces, each like a separate part of a symphony. But even within these main sections, one can detect different movements, subtle shifts in perspective on the issue being described, or new and further developments of its description. We see three such shifts in the passage I have selected for this essay, which follow several other shifts that occur earlier in this section of the canto. Each of these three movements builds on the previous ones, and the earlier movements in this section further contextualize and help explain the passage under review. Still, each of the movements has a certain completeness in itself and can stand separately and alone.

The first of the three movements, which begins near the bottom of page 53, reads as follows:

Only the Immortals on their deathless heights
Dwelling beyond the walls of Time and Space,
Masters of living, free from the bonds of Thought,

Who are overseers of Fate and Chance and Will
And experts of the theorem of world-need,
Can see the Idea, the Might that change Time's course,
Come maned with light from undiscovered worlds,
Hear, while the world toils on with its deep blind heart,
The galloping hooves of the unforeseen event,
Bearing the superhuman Rider, near
And, impassive to earth's din and startled cry,
Return to the silence of the hills of God;
As lightning leaps, as thunder sweeps, they pass
And leave their mark on the trampled breast of Life.

At the outset, we may note that this is a single sentence, 14 lines, the length of a sonnet, and among the longest sentences in the poem.¹ The long length of the sentence, cut with frequent commas, correlates with its content: the Immortals impassively overseeing the creation from above, listening to the galloping hooves of the unforeseen event bearing the superhuman Rider near to earth which leave their mark on the trampled breast of Life, and then return to the silence of the hills of God. We may also note here the singular form of the word "God", in contrast to the plural "Immortals" who are watching this unfold.

A remarkable sentence both in its galloping rhythm and its prophetic superhuman content! First, let us consider the opening vision of "the Immortals on their deathless heights". This vision of the gods dwelling beyond Time and Space is a stark contradiction of contemporary thinking and affirms the ancient traditions of the gods overlooking our world. The term "beyond the walls of Time and Space" is intriguing, as though Time and Space are mentally-constructed divisions of the eternal and infinite spiritual existence that is home to these gods. The description of these Immortals is particularly fascinating. They are "Masters of living". It is an unusual appellation for the gods, one which contrasts them with human beings who very evidently are not masters of living. Indeed, our lack of mastery over our lives is our

1 The longest sentences are a 35-line sentence on pp. 644-645 and a 25-line sentence on p. 86. In all, there are 25 sentences that are 14 lines or longer, out of a total of 5864 sentences in the poem. The average sentence length is 4.06 lines.

glaring defect, the source of all our problems. These gods also are “free from the bonds of Thought”. Normally we believe Thought to be our highest attribute, something which frees us from the bonds of ignorance and natural forces, giving us mastery over them. But here we see that Thought itself binds us, ties us up in its limitations. Much could be written about how it does this, and Sri Aurobindo explains it at length in other parts of the poem, but here we could just say that Thought divides the one Reality into separate ideas, and these ideas themselves are broken reflections of the Reality, not actual aspects of the Reality itself. One important way it binds us is by confusing us into believing that these thoughts are the Reality itself, when they are only a caricature of it. These gods are also “overseers of Fate and Chance and Will”. These three terms coming together in this way is striking, for usually they are considered mutually contradictory explanations for the events that occur in life. Fate implies a predetermination of events, Chance implies a random occurrence of events, and Will implies a present self-determination of events. Sri Aurobindo seems to suggest here that they all have a truth and play a role, and that the gods ‘oversee’ their execution of the events that happen to us and in our world. ‘Oversee’ suggests ‘observation’ but also ‘management’ of these three processes which apparently are the gods’ basic tools in their mastery over life.

Perhaps a book could be written about this latter line, but here let us briefly consider how Fate, Chance, and Will might coexist. When we think of these gods standing above Time and Space, ‘Masters of living’, and overseers of these processes, it suggests they know and determine our fate. Still, they seem to utilize Chance and Will in their management of our fate. They are beyond Time and Space, so in a sense our fate is predetermined, but it is not determined from an earlier point in Time; it is determined from beyond Time and Space. From beyond Time, it may be possible for the gods to intervene within Time, at a particular time and place. Thus, fate may not operate like a clock automatically chiming exactly at the time it was set, but more flexibly, even though a certain unfolding of stages and steps may be there. As Sri Aurobindo says in another line in *Savitri*: “A Godhead stands behind the brute machine” (p. 21).

When we think of Chance as a basic principle underlying the events of our lives, we must afford it at least a relative or practical reality. When we flip a coin, it would seem chance operates in the determination of the outcome. Indeed, the more times we flip it, the closer the proportion of resulting outcomes will approach 50-50. Recently, in the news coverage of the Covid 19 pandemic, we learned of the many random mutations that were occurring in the DNA structure of the spreading virus. Most of these many mutations had little or no consequence, but a few of them provided an advantage for the virus to reproduce itself through greater contagion. Sometimes this more contagious mutation created a more deadly form of the virus, other times a less deadly form. Thus, these random mutations seemed to play an important role in the new forms that the virus was taking in the population over the course of time. Would the gods who dwell beyond the walls of Time and Space know the outcome of these random mutations? We would have to say ‘yes’, for they evidently could see or know the future. Could they intervene at particular moments in Time to override Chance and determine an outcome? Again, we would have to answer ‘yes’, for they seem to determine our fate.

Finally, what is the role of Will, and whose Will are we talking about: the Divine Will, the Will of the gods, or our own human will? Let us first collapse the first two, for it would seem that the Will of the gods would be in line with the Will of the Supreme Divine, a Will perhaps delegated to them to carry out, but nonetheless a Will in service of the Divine Will. This Divine Will is crucial, and is implied in that earlier quoted line: “A Godhead stands behind the brute machine” (p. 21). In *The Synthesis of Yoga*, Sri Aurobindo says “The only free will in the world is the one divine Will of which Nature is the executrix; for she is the master and creator of all other wills” (*Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo*, 23: 96). This is a consequential statement, for it suggests that our fate and the chance events that seem to occur in our lives are the working out of the Divine Will; it implies that all that happens in our life and in our world are results of the Divine’s Will. Although not free, our own will may also be determinative to a degree. We may note that we are given the sense that our will is determinative, that we make choices, and these choices

have consequences. This sense of free-will and these consequences have a practical reality for us. Still, we can also imagine that our choices are influenced by factors beyond our reckoning, whether it be our upbringing, education, heredity, social conditioning, the formation of pathways in our brain through experience, or other factors – as Sri Aurobindo puts it, through Nature. But we learn in Yoga that we can and must align our individual will with the divine Will, and to the extent we do so, our will becomes more powerful and effective. When our wills are aligned with the Divine Will, we may alter the processes of nature that earlier had us in their grip, when our fate seemed to be determined randomly like that of a coin tossed in the air.

The next line is also interesting. Referring to the Immortals, it says they are “experts of the theorem of world-need”. A theorem is a theoretical proposition, sometimes a formula derived from a more general theory. The line suggests to me that “world-need”, the fundamental need of the world, is a reflection of the Reality from which the world is derived. Because the world has come from the infinite existence, the infinite consciousness-force, and the infinite bliss of Sachchidananda, it feels the need to recover and possess these. Because these things are infinite, the world-need is insatiable. It is never satisfied with half-measures, with some expansion of being, with some knowledge, with some delight – it always wants more. Yet perhaps the incremental gains it achieves lure the world’s development higher, to wider and greater degrees of fulfilment and perfection. Whatever the formula is, these Immortals know it, for they are experts in it.

Now let us reflect on the next five lines, the heart of this first movement of the passage. Referring again to these Immortals on their deathless heights, only they “Can see the Idea, the Might that change Time’s course, / Come maned with light from undiscovered worlds, / Hear, while the world toils on with its deep blind heart, / The galloping hooves of the unforeseen event, / Bearing the superhuman Rider, near”. Only *they* can see the coming of the supramental being, or perhaps it is the superman, the intermediate being between the human and the supramental being. They see the Idea and they see the Might that change Time’s course. Knowledge and Will are fused into one

in Supermind. As Sri Aurobindo says, “Supermind or gnosis is in its original nature at once and in the same movement an infinite wisdom and an infinite will. At its source it is the dynamic consciousness of the divine Knower and Creator” (*Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo*, 12: 158). As our world blindly toils on, the Immortals see the galloping hooves of the unforeseen event. The phrase “galloping hooves” suggests it is coming fast and it is coming strong. Horses are for Sri Aurobindo, and for the Vedas, symbols of power and Tapasya. Sri Aurobindo in his Author’s Note at the beginning of the poem refers to King Aswapati as the Lord of the Horse, based on the meaning of his name. Given that this canto is sandwiched between two cantos describing “The Yoga of the King”, we may surmise that these galloping hooves represent his action, a powerful expression of his Tapasya. These horses are “Bearing the superhuman Rider”, the next evolutionary being beyond the human being.

And then comes the last enigmatic word of the line: “near”. It seems they do not fully arrive at their destination, the physical earth, but they bring the superhuman Rider *near*. Where? Perhaps in the subtle physical plane just beyond the physical earth. Here I would like to relate portions of two conversations of the Mother that seem to shed light on this word “near”. For the sake of brevity, I will just relate the most crucial and relevant portions.

The first is from 16 April 1958 and concerns the realization of the Superman consciousness. She says,

Anyway, we have now reached a certitude since there is already a beginning of realisation. We have the proof that in certain conditions the ordinary state of humanity can be exceeded and a new state of consciousness worked out which enables at least a conscious relation between mental and supramental man.

It can be asserted with certainty that there will be an intermediate specimen between the mental and the supramental being, a kind of superman who will still have the qualities and in part the nature of man, that is, who will still belong in his most external form to human being with its animal origin, but will transform his consciousness sufficiently to belong in his realisation and activity to a new race, a race of supermen...

It seems – it is even certain – that the very substance which will constitute this intermediate world that is already being built up, is richer, more powerful, more luminous, more resistant, with certain subtler, more penetrating new qualities, and a kind of innate capacity of universality, as if its degree of subtlety and refinement allowed the perception of vibrations in a much wider, if not altogether total way, and it removes the sensation of division one has with the old substance, the ordinary mental substance.

One may conclude from this that the moment a body, which was of course formed by the old animal method, is capable of living this consciousness naturally and spontaneously, without effort, without going out of itself, it proves that this is not one single exceptional case but simply the forerunner of a realisation which, even if it is not altogether general, can at least be shared by a certain number of individuals who, besides, as soon as they share it, will lose the perception of being separate individuals and become a living collectivity. (*Collected Works of the Mother*; 9: 313-315)

Of course, here the Mother was referring to herself when she said “this is not one single exceptional case but simply the forerunner of a realisation which ... can at least be shared by a certain number of individuals.” Importantly, she speaks of an “intermediate world that is already being built up” which is associated with this superman consciousness and to which she appeared to have access. Next, the Mother relates an experience she had that seems to bear on this word “near”, which is described in *Mother’s Agenda*:

For the West, with all its outward development, a few centuries may be needed before the junction between the two worlds can be made. And yet these two worlds – the physical world and the world of Truth – are not distant from one another. They are as if superimposed. The world of Truth is there, close by, like a lining of the other.

Shortly before the 15th of August I had a unique experience that exemplifies all this....

I found myself in another world, but not far away (I was not in a total trance). This world was almost as substantial as the physical world. There were rooms – Sri Aurobindo’s room with the bed he rests on – and he was living there, he was there all the time: it was his abode. Even my room was there, with a large mirror like the one I have here, combs, all kinds of things. And the substance of these objects was almost as dense as in the physical world, but they shone with their own light. It was not translucent, not transparent, not radiant, but self-luminous. The various objects and the material of the rooms did not have this same opacity as the physical objects here, they were not dry and hard as in the physical world we know...

You see, it’s not as if this world of Truth had to be created from nothing: it is fully ready, it is there, like a lining of our own present world. Everything is there, EVERYTHING is there.

I remained in that state for two full days, two days of absolute felicity. And Sri Aurobindo was with me the whole time, the whole time – when I walked, he walked with me, when I sat down, he sat next to me. On the day of August 15th, too, he remained there constantly during the darshan. But who was aware of it? A few – one or two – felt something. But who saw? – No one.

And I showed all these people to Sri Aurobindo, this whole field of work, and asked him WHEN this other world, the real one that is there, so near, would come to take the place of our world of falsehood. *Not ready*. That was all he replied. *Not ready*.

Sri Aurobindo gave me two days of this – total bliss. But all the same, by the end of the second day I realised that I could not continue to remain there, for the work was not advancing. The work must be done in the body; the realization must be attained here in this physical world, for otherwise it is not complete. So I withdrew from that world and set to work here again.

And yet, it would take little, very little, to pass from this world to the other, or for the other to become the real world. A little click would be enough, or rather a little reversal in the inner

attitude. How should I put it? ... It is imperceptible to the ordinary consciousness; a very little inner shift would be enough, a change in quality. (*Mother's Agenda*, Vol. 1, 6 October 1959)

The quoted passages suggest indeed that the superhuman is near, perhaps in a world of Truth very close to ours, that is like a lining to our own world. It seems clear that the Mother herself embodied this superman consciousness, and that she was the forerunner of a more general realization that is accessible to others. It seems that our world is not yet ready to manifest the superman on a wide scale, though it is accessible to sufficiently developed and motivated individuals. Perhaps within a few centuries our world may be ready for a wider manifestation.

The last few lines of this portion of the passage in *Savitri* leave us in awe. After bearing the superhuman rider near, the galloping hoofs, “impassive to earth’s din and startled cry, / Return to the silence of the hills of God”. Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, after their tremendous Tapasya which brought the supramental consciousness near to us, “Return to the silence of the hills of God”. The silence on those hilltops of spirit are impassive, unmoved by “earth’s din and startled cry”. Their brief sojourn here brought about a sudden upheaval on earth: “As lightning leaps, as thunder sweeps, they pass / And leave their mark on the trampled breast of Life”. During the lifetimes of these Avatars, the world witnessed world wars and revolutions; the creation of nuclear weapons and their proliferation; scientific and technological transformations; social, political and economic reorganizations of humanity. At the same time, Indian spiritual thought and yoga underwent a renaissance and began spreading throughout the world into mainstream culture. Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have indeed left their “mark on the trampled breast of Life”, and in “the silence of the hills of God” wait for the seeded, overturned earth to sprout the new creation.

The second movement of the passage reiterates but also elaborates and expands on the first movement. It begins by referring back to the first line of the previous movement, “the Immortals on their deathless heights”:

Above the world the world-creators stand,
In the phenomenon see its mystic source.
These heed not the deceiving outward play,
They turn not to the moment's busy tramp,
But listen with the still patience of the Unborn
For the slow footsteps of far Destiny
Approaching through huge distances of Time,
Unmarked by the eye that sees effect and cause,
Unheard mid the clamour of the human plane.
Attentive to an unseen Truth they seize
A sound as of invisible augur wings,
Voices of an unplumbed significance,
Mutterings that brood in the core of Matter's sleep.
In the heart's profound audition they can catch
The murmurs lost by Life's uncaring ear,
A prophet-speech in Thought's omniscient trance.

Like the earlier movement, it contrasts the Immortals, here given the more dynamic epithet, "the world-creators", with our common humanity. They "heed not the deceiving outward play, / They turn not to the moment's busy tramp". Normally, this is exactly what the mind of human beings does. We scan the obvious surfaces of things and make hasty judgments based on our superficial observations. As a result, our judgments are frequently mistaken, for we fail to see or understand the various forces and circumstances that may have led to them. What Sri Aurobindo tells us often and in many ways in *Savitri* and elsewhere is that although outer appearances are significant and express inner realities and inner forces, it is necessary to delve underneath the surface in order to ascertain the truth and meaning of those significances. The ambiguity of surface appearances is played out dramatically in the latter part of the poem in the long debate between Savitri and Death, who each argue their diametrically opposite views of the significance of human life and its vicissitudes.

There is an exceptionally illuminating passage in *The Synthesis of Yoga* which not only illustrates this truth about the appearances of things, but explains the yogic method of getting at their inner truth:

The method of Yoga in knowledge must always be a turning of the eye inward and, so far as it looks upon outer things, a penetrating of the surface appearances to get at the one eternal reality within them. The lower knowledge is preoccupied with the appearances and workings; it is the first necessity of the higher to get away from them to the Reality of which they are the appearances and the Being and Power of conscious existence of which they are the workings. It does this by three movements each necessary to each other, by each of which the others become complete, — purification, concentration, identification. The object of purification is to make the whole mental being a clear mirror in which the divine reality can be reflected, a clear vessel and an unobstructing channel into which the divine presence and through which the divine influence can be poured, a subtilised stuff which the divine nature can take possession of, new-shape and use to divine issues. For the mental being at present reflects only the confusions created by the mental and physical view of the world, is a channel only for the disorders of the ignorant lower nature and full of obstructions and impurities which prevent the higher from acting; therefore the whole shape of our being is deformed and imperfect, indocile to the highest influences and turned in its action to ignorant and inferior utilities. It reflects even the world falsely; it is incapable of reflecting the Divine.

Concentration is necessary, first, to turn the whole will and mind from the discursive divagation natural to them, following a dispersed movement of the thoughts, running after many-branching desires, led away in the track of the senses and the outward mental response to phenomena: we have to fix the will and the thought on the eternal and real behind all, and this demands an immense effort, a one-pointed concentration. Secondly, it is necessary in order to break down the veil which is erected by our ordinary mentality between ourselves and the truth; for outer knowledge can be picked up by the way, by ordinary attention and reception, but the inner, hidden and higher truth can only be seized by an absolute concentration of the mind on its object, an absolute concentration of the will to

attain it and, once attained, to hold it habitually and securely unite oneself with it. For identification is the condition of complete knowledge and possession; it is the intense result of a habitual purified reflecting of the reality and an entire concentration on it; and it is necessary in order to break down entirely that division and separation of ourselves from the divine being and the eternal reality which is the normal condition of our unregenerated ignorant mentality. (*Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo*, 23: 514-515)

In the part of the passage we are considering, Sri Aurobindo seems to emphasize that these inner significances can be caught in a profound silence of the mind, that they may come to us as “A sound as of invisible augur wings, / Voices of an unplumbed significance, / Mutterings that brood in the core of Matter’s sleep”. One gets the sense that the outer appearances hold within them deeper vibrations, which if our minds are sufficiently quietened and attuned, can speak to us and reveal their burdened significances. It is in this profound silence of the mind that we can hear “the slow footsteps of far destiny”. The last line, “A prophet-speech in Thought’s omniscient trance”, seems more closely associated with the profound, indrawn concentration alluded to in *The Synthesis of Yoga*, but at the same time it suggests the prophetic utterances in *Savitri* itself, and even in the present passage.

The last part of the second movement of our passage reads as follows:

Above the illusion of the hopes that pass,
Behind the appearance and the overt act,
Behind this clock-work Chance and vague surmise,
Amid the wrestle of force, the trampling feet,
Across the cries of anguish and of joy,
Across the triumph, fighting and despair,
They watch the Bliss for which earth’s heart has cried
On the long road which cannot see its end
Winding undetected through the sceptic days
And to meet it guide the unheedful moving world.

This last long 10-line sentence describes in vivid and distressing language and images the surface experience of earth's life. Our hopes often turn out to be illusory, our difficulties often seem to come to us by chance or by some inexplicable and meaningless fate. And our difficulties can be horrible, with "trampling feet" and "cries of anguish", with "fighting and despair". Although we also experience joys and triumphs, these never seem to last or satisfy. But the Immortals, the world-creators, stand above all this, watching for "the Bliss for which earth's heart has cried / On the long road which cannot see its end." We are vexed by our short lives, we do not have the patience of the immortal gods, our suffering is immediate. We are sceptical of promises of future bliss, for our hopes often pass unfulfilled. But though calm and immortal, though "impassive to earth's din and startled cry", the gods "guide the unheedful moving world". Finally, in the last line of this meandering sentence, we sense the support of these Immortals in our human struggle, their knowledge and power lighting our dark, winding road to its blissful destiny.

We come to the third climactic movement of this passage. In the first movement, the first line introduced us to the Immortals, in the second movement to the world-creators, and in this third movement we meet "the masked Transcendent". This movement starts with a powerful one-line sentence; its beginning word "Thus" subtly relates the "masked Transcendent" to the two earlier appellations.

Thus will the masked Transcendent mount his throne.
When darkness deepens strangling the earth's breast
And man's corporeal mind is the only lamp,
As a thief's in the night shall be the covert tread
Of one who steps unseen into his house.
A Voice ill-heard shall speak, the soul obey,
A Power into mind's inner chamber steal,
A charm and sweetness open life's closed doors
And beauty conquer the resisting world,
The Truth-Light capture Nature by surprise,
A stealth of God compel the heart to bliss
And earth grow unexpectedly divine.

In the last line of the previous movement, the world-creators were guiding “the unheedful moving world”, a world unaware that it is moving towards “the Bliss for which earth’s heart has cried”. Now we see “the masked Transcendent mount his throne”. Why is he “masked” and what is his “throne”? As is made evident in the later lines, his throne is this “resisting world”, “Nature”, “earth”. The masked Transcendent shall step “unseen into his house”, into our world and assume his kingship. He is masked because the world is “unheedful” and absorbed in the externalities of life and fails to look behind the surfaces of things and see their deeper significances. Also, we fail to see because “man’s corporeal mind is the only lamp”. ‘Corporeal’ means ‘bodily’; the bodily mind is the part of the mind limited and obscured by the physical body, the part chiefly concerned with the physical body and its life in the material world. He is masked because we are blind, but perhaps too he masks himself so as not to overwhelm our dim vision with his blinding Light.

The second line is also formidable. In the earlier movement we heard “the trampling feet” and “cries of anguish”; here the “darkness deepens strangling the earth’s breast”. It is as if the Transcendent will come on earth when it is under siege, when it is being strangled. It conjures a sense of existential threat, perhaps of the great war when the evil of Nazism threatened world domination, or perhaps the present climate catastrophe with its raging wildfires and smoke-filled landscapes, disintegrating eco-systems, and massively air-polluted cities.

The last seven-line sentence reveals how the masked Transcendent shall covertly enter our world and inhabit his house as though a thief in the night. A quiet Voice within us shall speak and our soul shall obey. A Power shall slip into the inner chambers of our mind. A charm and sweetness shall open the closed doors of our life that shut out God. Beauty shall conquer our resistance. The Truth-Light shall suddenly illumine Nature. And God will quietly compel our heart to open to his bliss. Thus earth shall grow unexpectedly divine.

The third movement and the passage as a whole conclude with these prophetic lines, which begin by tracing the contours of the supramental transformation of mankind:

In Matter shall be lit the spirit's glow,
In body and body kindled the sacred birth;
Night shall awake to the anthem of the stars,
The days become a happy pilgrim march,
Our will a force of the Eternal's power,
And thought the rays of a spiritual sun.
A few shall see what none yet understands;
God shall grow up while the wise men talk and sleep;
For man shall not know the coming till its hour
And belief shall be not till the work is done.

Interestingly it begins by describing the coming change in matter and the body. "In Matter shall be lit the spirit's glow". It reminds us of the Mother's vision of the world of Truth near to our earth where she saw Sri Aurobindo's room and her room just like in the physical world, with the same the objects: "And the substance of these objects was almost as dense as in the physical world, but they shone with their own light. It was not translucent, not transparent, not radiant, but self-luminous". In the next line, "In body and body kindled the sacred birth", the repetition of "body" seems to emphasize that this will be a general realization, while "kindled" carries echoes of "lit the spirit's glow" of the previous line. What is kindled or set alight in these bodies is "the sacred birth". What is this "sacred birth"? It could be the supramental realization in the body's cells giving birth to a new body, for the Mother in her experience of the intermediate superman consciousness described a different substance: "richer, more powerful, more luminous, more resistant, with certain subtler, more penetrating new qualities, and a kind of innate capacity of universality, as if its degree of subtlety and refinement allowed the perception of vibrations in a much wider, if not altogether total way, and it removes the sensation of division one has with the old substance, the ordinary mental substance". Her very form was transformed, at least to her vision and consciousness, which had profound consequences, for example, in her effects on others and the physical world around her which she began to penetrate, as if they were part of her greater body which became more like a sea of vibrations. In another conversation she said, "Again last night, for a large part of the night, it was ... the body has no more limits – it's

only a great MASS of vibrations” (*Mother’s Agenda*, Vol. 1, 30 October 1960).

The next couplet about the night and the days is also interesting, particularly in light of the Mother’s experiences. In the brief quote about her experience above, we get a sense of the Mother’s nights, the kinds of experiences that she underwent and frequently described in *Mother’s Agenda*; they are beautifully, poetically imaged here as an “anthem of the stars”. And her days were like a “happy pilgrim march” through experience after experience leading her steadily forward towards the supramental transformation. But this perception of progressing through the days and nights is not something that pertains only to the Mother or great Yogis; when our own lives are oriented more or less directly towards the Divine, when we become singularly focused on our spiritual journey, our days and nights also can take on this character. As we progress on the path, as the surrender of our being to the Divine becomes more and more sincere, integral and complete, our experiences are taken up by the divine consciousness and become a force and light of the Divine.

The final four-line sentence reverberates with prophetic mantric vibrations, while bringing to full circle the initial one-line sentence at the start of the movement, “Thus will the masked Transcendent mount his throne”. Only a few shall see the Transcendent assuming his earthly throne, though none yet truly understands. Pertinent to the next line, “God shall grow up while the wise men talk and sleep”, the Mother sometimes referred to the special nature of some of the children being born. Related to this, we may note her answers to two questions:

*In 1967 the Supermind will enter the phase of realising power.
What does realising power exactly mean?*

Acting decisively on the mind of men and the course of events.

*Does this date – 4.5.67 – mark the beginning of what the
Mother and Sri Aurobindo have called the new race – the
race of superman?*

Since a few months the children born, amongst our people mostly, are of a very special kind. (*Collected Works of the Mother*, 15: 104-105)

This passage suggests that the new race of the superman may already be in the making, though the process behind the appearance of this special kind of being is unclear. Perhaps beings from the supramental world are descending into our world as souls in newly born children, especially children whose circumstances are conducive to spiritual development. But there is no clear line between man and superman; man develops into superman, and this necessarily entails a progressive individual realization even though there may be an increasing possibility for it to fructify. Naturally, children who are not contaminated by the falsehoods of the present world have an advantage and if they are properly nurtured and grow up in a spiritual atmosphere oriented towards the creation and embodiment of a spiritual life, they will have a greater possibility of manifesting the higher vibrations of the superman consciousness. These vibrations Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have established in the earth consciousness, and are potentially accessible to all those who open themselves to receive their influences. We may surmise that as time passes, more and more individuals will awaken to this higher possibility and strive to open themselves to this higher consciousness and manifest its divine energies and live a diviner life. But even for those who awaken to this possibility and strive to realize it, the path to the supramental realization is long and hard; it demands a one-pointed spiritual discipline and a full and integral surrender of all one's being into the hands of the Divine. Therefore, we should steadily progress on this path but be patient.

The final two lines of the passage put this destiny of earth into the perspective of the common person: "For man shall not know the coming till its hour / And belief shall be not till the work is done". At the same time, for the spiritual aspirant, these lines can be a strong support for our faith. They give Sri Aurobindo's assurance that the work will be done. He was not in doubt, and if we have faith in him, we too can cast aside any doubts that we may have. Nor should we be moved by the scepticism of others, for we are forewarned that most people will not see or believe in earth's divine destiny "till the work is done". Only "a few shall see", and even they will not fully understand the way in which it will come about. We have already been forewarned to look behind the surface appearances, for even

as “darkness deepens strangling the earth’s breast” will “earth grow unexpectedly divine”. This earth is God’s house, and he has surely created it for a purpose – to live in it. Being one of earth’s creatures, let us listen carefully for his Voice within, let us obey, let us open our mind to his Power, let us open our life’s closed doors to his charm and sweetness, let us be conquered by his beauty and his bliss, let us grow divine. After all, this is our destiny.

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The Iliion Mystery – Part 2

Claude de Warren

We saw in the previous *Invocation* article that the Trojan War was a pictorial description of a great inner conflict concerning the evolutionary direction beyond liberation of Spirit. On the one hand, the Trojan coalition expresses the view of the most advanced realisations of a yoga in the heights of the mind. Homer calls them Trojans, Lycians and Dardanians, i.e. those who work for liberation in spirit and enlightenment in a yoga that separates spirit from matter, and thus the spiritual quest from ordinary life. This coalition is led by the ‘divine’ Hector, a symbol of an upward expansion of consciousness. The most advanced of these achievements is represented by the queen of the Amazons, Penthesilea, who represents the ability to abstract oneself from suffering through perfect mastery from above.

On the other hand, the Achaean coalition expresses the view of the other parts of the adventurer’s consciousness. Homer calls them Danaans, Achaeans and Argives, i.e. respectively those who work in a spirit of unity, those who concentrate or aim at an annihilation of the ego, and those who work for further purification. This coalition is led by Agamemnon, the symbol of the strongest aspiration for ‘something else’. His brother Menelaus, ‘the one who cares about freedom’, is the king of Sparta, ‘that which arises, the new’. He is married to the most beautiful of Greek women, Helen, the symbol of the right evolutionary direction towards more freedom, ‘for beauty is truth’. She is the daughter of Zeus, and thus a new impulse of the overmind in human evolution.

To this Achaean coalition belongs Achilles. He is the son of Thetis, daughter of the ‘old man of the sea’. She symbolises the roots of life in its emergence from matter. When we consider the meaning of her name, she represents ‘the root of life’, the physical or cellular

consciousness. Through his father, Achilles belongs to the lineage of the Titan Oceanos, thus to the process of purification/liberation. He is the king of the Myrmidons, a term meaning ‘ants’. He is therefore the symbol of a yoga of purification which works in the minute movements of consciousness down to the most archaic body consciousness, which cleanses down to the bone, as ants do. He is therefore a symbol of a very advanced purification. Although Helen was born among the Achaeans, the Trojans, through the intermediary of Paris, took her, considering that the evolutionary truth was on their side.

When the poem *Iliad* begins, the conflict has already been going on for ten symbolic years, the time of a long maturation, and the events described there take place on the last day of this tenth year of the conflict. At the beginning of this advanced phase of Yoga, the adventurer does not clearly perceive whether the divine evolutionary direction is towards an improvement of the present mental man and a continuation of the quest in spirit, or whether it is a radical reorientation. But the highest of the overmind knows this, even if the seeker is not aware of it in all parts of his being. This is why Zeus decided the outcome of the war in advance, having promised Achilles the greatest glory, and promised Agamemnon that he would only return to Argos once the city of Ilium known as Troy had been destroyed:

My friends, Danaan warriors, squires of Ares, great Zeus, son of Cronos, hath ensnared me in grievous blindness of heart, cruel god! seeing that of old he promised me, and bowed his head thereto, that not until I had sacked well-walled Ilios should I get me home; ¹

From the very beginning of *Iliad*, through the voice of the goddess of the dawn, Eos, who in Greek mythology belongs to the supermind, Sri Aurobindo reminds us of this inescapable outcome decreed by the highest of the overmind:

Looking on men who must die and women destined to sorrow,
Looking on beauty fire must lay low and the sickle of slaughter,

1 Homer, *Iliad*, Canto 2 Lines 112-113

Fateful she lifted the doom-scroll red with the script
of the Immortals,²

The unfolding of the *Iliad* epic is then no more than a detailed description of a number of purifications on all levels, of the ultimate hopes of the ancient spiritual forms to perpetuate themselves, and of their final annihilation. By “ancient spiritual forms”, we must understand those that have survived to the present day and are based on many centuries, even millennia, of practices, experiences and realisations.

What can we understand about the symbolic meaning of a city and its inhabitants? A city is the symbol of a coherent, well-established and organised structure, in this case, for Troy or Ilium, that of a yoga consolidated since time immemorial, that of liberation in the spirit. The name ‘Ilium’ means ‘the liberation of consciousness’. And its inhabitants represent what works within this structure, namely the practices (the heroes), the achievements towards which these practices tend (the heroines), and the new emergences (the children). The city of Troy is thus a symbol of a yoga that has brought about liberation in the spirit, union with the divine in the spirit, the ‘wisdom’ of the enlightened mind, for the Trojan royal lineage belongs to the offspring of the Pleiades Electra, the symbol of this plane, as well as the ‘holiness’ symbolised by the union of the Trojan Anchises with Aphrodite, the goddess of love.

Mythology states that the fundamental cause of the war was the choice of the Trojan shepherd, Paris-Alexander, who designated Aphrodite as the most beautiful of the goddesses, ahead of Hera and Athena: at a certain point in human evolution, primacy in yoga was given to the search for Love before that of Truth. This is why Aphrodite, the force that helps the growth of love, supports the Trojan camp. Apollo, the force that helps the development of the Mind of Light is also supporting the Trojans. The goddesses Athena and Hera, respectively the symbol of the forces that support inner growth – the master of yoga – and the force that controls the proper execution of the divine

2 *Iliad*, CWSA 2: 335-36

plan, were displeased by the judgment of Paris and swore the loss of Troy and sided with the Achaeans.

If Troy is to be razed to the ground, this does not mean that the quest for Love will cease forever. When humanity has integrated the Truth, then the quest for Love can flourish again. That is why the Trojan Aeneas will survive the slaughter. And that is why Sri Aurobindo refers to Troy as “perishable immortality”: it is only a temporary destruction.

So over Ilion doomed leaned the yearning immense of the sunrise.
She like a wordless marble memory dreaming for ever
Lifted the gaze of her perishable immortality sunwards.³

The Roman poet Virgil imagined that it was up to Rome and its emperors to revive Troy, but this was premature. This was also the basis of Christianity: “Love thy neighbour as thyself”.

The situation on the last day of the war

While the battle was no longer being fought on the outskirts of the city but on the ships of the Achaeans, Achilles had finally agreed to enter it after the death of his friend Patroclus, reversing an almost hopeless situation. When the poem *Ilion* begins, on the last day of the war, many heroes have died on both sides. The adventurer of consciousness has thus already challenged many of the formulations and practices of the spiritual quest in all areas.

In the Trojan camp, Hector is dead, killed by Achilles. This is a sign that the adventurer has accepted once and for all that the new yoga must take place in life itself and on all planes, and is no longer just about an expansion of consciousness into the spirit worlds. Since Achilles finally agreed to return Hector’s body to his father to be buried according to the rites, the myth indicates that the phase that is coming to an end could not take place otherwise. However, the Trojans have not yet agreed to return Helen, i.e. the adventurer has not yet fully accepted that the separation of spirit and matter is over, and is still convinced that the quest for Love comes before the quest for Truth. Also in the Trojan camp, Polydamas, meaning

3 *Ibid.* p. 355

‘many masteries’, is no more: it is accepted that the path of mastery exercised from above must give way to transformation.

In the Achaean camp, let us mention the death of Patroclus, whose name means ‘the glory of the ancients’, and who was a friend of Achilles. His death is an acknowledgement that the old processes of purification must be ended while recognising their usefulness in their time. But the adventurer is still not clearly aware of the evolutionary path, for he is aware of the overmind forces working within him in opposite directions. Indeed, the gods have manifested themselves on the battlefield on both sides.

On the other hand, the most advanced achievements and practices of each side, which had previously refrained from participating in the battle, were finally mobilised for the final outcome. In the Achaean camp, it was Achilles and his Myrmidons who turned around an almost hopeless situation for the Achaeans, as the Trojans had broken through the moat and wall protecting the ships. This seems to be a recurring phenomenon in yoga: it is when one thinks that all is lost that there is a reversal. Indeed, each movement must go to its exhaustion.

Achilles, by the letters which constitute his name and given his ancestry, is the symbol of the completion of the double purification/liberation on the mental and vital planes, of a total equanimity and surrender on these planes. It is the completion of this purification that will enable the great reversal.

In the Trojan camp, it is Penthesilea, the queen of the Amazons, who has come with her troops to support the Trojans. Her city is located near the mouth of the river Thermodon, and thus at the peak of the inner fire of union with the Divine in the spirit. It symbolises a grandiose achievement, the ability to abstract oneself from suffering through perfect mastery, through the power of the spirit exercised from above. It demonstrates in some way the validity of spirituality that tends towards conquests in the spirit. Achilles expresses himself as follows about it:

A woman had come in to aid you,
Regal and insolent, fair as the morning and fell as the northwind,

Freed from the distaff who grasps at the sword and she
spurns at subjection
Breaking the rule of the gods. She is turbulent,
swift in the battle.⁴

This Amazon queen and her troops of warrior women represent realisations on planes where the fruits of yoga lead to divine intoxication or ecstasy. Achilles addresses her as follows:

Girl, to thy rivers go back and thy hills where the grapes
are aspirant.⁵

These planes are very close to the overmind. Indeed, in Book 4, Penthesilea invites the young Eurus, symbol of an ‘enlargement of consciousness’, to join her after the war in her country where the hills besiege Cronion, i.e. the son of Cronos, Zeus, symbol of the highest of the overmind:

Eurus, there in my land thou shalt look on such hills as thy vision
Gazed not on yet, with their craggy tops besieging Cronion,
Sheeted in virgin white and chilling his feet with their vastness.⁶

Penthesilea embodies a completion of the yoga represented by the three children of Tros, the founder of Troy: liberation in spirit (Ilos), equality (Assarakos) and joy (Ganymede), which can be likened to the realisations that Sri Aurobindo makes explicit in *The Synthesis of Yoga*, Part 4, Chapter 13, “The Action of Equality”, when he speaks of the progression of equality which can be assessed in oneself through four criteria:

- equality in the most concrete practical sense of the word: freedom from mental, vital and physical preferences, an even acceptance of all God’s workings within and around him;
- a firm peace and absence of all disturbance and trouble,
- a positive inner spiritual happiness and spiritual ease of the natural being which nothing can lessen,
- a clear joy and laughter of the soul embracing life and existence.

4 *Ibid.* p. 349

5 *Ibid.* p. 353

6 *Ibid.* p. 408

Through the mobilisations of the disciplines represented by Achilles and Penthesilea, the adventurer of consciousness is thus aware that the outcome is near.

The final peace offering

In the last peace offering made by Achilles to the Trojans, Sri Aurobindo clearly poses the problem that will be discussed in the rest of the poem, namely the possibility of preserving the forms of the old yoga in the new era that is beginning, the one in which matter will no longer be separated from spirit.

From the point of view of the deep purification of the vital, the achievements in spirit are great, but they have led to the rejection of the lower planes of nature, life and body. They concern only a few and leave out the rest of humanity. Sri Aurobindo tells us that these few realised masters have suppressed fear but are blinded by the powers of the highest mind:

Awe they have chid from their hearts, nor our common
 humanity binds them,
Stay have they none in the gods who approve,
 giving calmness to mortals:
But like the Titans of old they have hugged to them
 grandeur and ruin.
Seek then the race self-doomed, the leaders blinded by heaven.⁷

However, the adventurer who follows the inner call for greater purification is still attracted to some of the achievements of the quest in spirit, to ‘strange’ powers, miraculous to ordinary humanity. This is illustrated by Achilles’ love for Polyxena, ‘numerous strange realisations’, daughter of the Trojan king Priam. This is why Achilles does not want the ruin of Troy, this city of love.

Then let none seat deaf flame on the glory of Phrygia’s marbles
Or with his barbarous rapine shatter the chambers of sweetness
Slaying the work of the gods and the beauty the ages
 have lived for.⁸

7 *Ibid.* p. 347

8 *Ibid.* p. 417

At this final stage of the inner struggle, the adventurer is still ready to find a compromise in a spirituality which, while recognising the need for purification towards greater liberation, would retain the practices and achievements of the past by integrating all forms of spirituality.

Achilles therefore asks the Trojan leaders to unite Asia with Greece, returning Helen and giving up much wealth.

Asia join with Greece, one world from the frozen rivers
Troed by the hooves of the Scythian to farthest undulant Ganges.⁹

To return Helen is to accept that the evolving truth is moving towards even greater freedom, not only that in the spirit: Helen is indeed the wife of Menelaus, the one ‘who cares for freedom’ in the line of Tantalus, the symbol of ‘aspiration’. This offer of peace can remind us of the moment when Mother had prepared in the subtle planes a new creation for the earth in the overmind. She undid it in a few days when Sri Aurobindo told her that they had not come for that, but for a greater conquest.

The Trojan deliberations, the refusal of the offer and the reactions of the Achaeans

Sri Aurobindo then develops the different points of view that oppose each other in the consciousness of the liberated in spirit. In “The Book of the Statesman”, it is the viewpoint of the higher mind with clear discernment that is addressed. But this mind is no longer recognised as valid by the liberated in spirit, either because the adventurer has silenced it or put it under tutelage. With lucidity, from this point of view, the adventurer recognises that the forces of the overmind, the gods, are asking him to evolve mastery towards transformation and to stabilise the overmind within himself.

Vainly the sands of Time have been strewn with the ruins of empires,
Signs that the gods had left, but in vain. For they look for a nation,
One that can conquer itself having conquered the world,
but they find none.

None has been able to hold all the gods in his
bosom unstaggered,¹⁰

⁹ *Ibid.* p. 350

¹⁰ *Ibid.* p. 363

This point of view calls for a humble work on oneself instead of dreaming of unattainable conquests in the mind:

Who but the fool and improvident, who but the dreamer and madman
Leaves for the far and ungrasped earth's close and
provident labour? ¹¹

It proposes that the ancient yoga should temporarily step back and accept a union of spiritualities, saying that it will win the day later.

Then in “The Book of the Assembly”, first addressed is the point of view of intuition at the level of the enlightened mind, but Sri Aurobindo warns us at the outset that this pure intuition coming from the Mind of Light has been distorted by fate. This distorted intuition calls the adventurer to maintain the present state, and thus to continue the inner struggle.

Priam's son Laocoon, fate-darkened seer of Apollo.¹²

Next to be addressed is the point of view of equality represented by Paris, considered as the greatest of the Trojans, and then that of Aeneas, symbol of the further evolution of consciousness, which leads to the final decision, the rejection of Achilles' offer.

On learning of the rejection of his offer, Achilles is prepared to go into battle alone if necessary and asks the other Achaean leaders not to destroy the city.

Touch not the city Apollo built, where Poseidon has laboured,
Slay not the work of the gods and the glory the ages
have lived for.¹³

Despite their rather divergent opinions, the Achaean leaders pretend to accept Achilles' request, reserving the right to destroy Troy when the time comes. Twice, once in each camp, it is the ruse that is proposed. Sri Aurobindo thus suggests that perfect sincerity and surrender is still not achieved, as some parts of the being seek to retain their achievements or ways of being.

11 *Ibid.* p. 365

12 *Ibid.* p. 370

13 *Ibid.* p. 419

In this Book, Zeus summons all the gods and announces that the time has finally come for the fulfilment of what has long been decreed. The highest of the overmind thus orders the annihilation of the old forms of spirituality, their structures, practices and achievements:

Troy shall fall at last and the ancient ages shall perish.¹⁹

If the overmind had enabled the victory of Troy, it would have meant that the movement of spirit/matter union was postponed to another evolutionary cycle, and probably that the time had not come for the intervention of the supramental consciousness and forces.

This necessary shift of spirituality from the heights of the spirit to the yoga of the body entails a necessary descent into the shadows for the purpose of purification and liberation.

Twilight thickens over man and he moves to his winter of darkness.²⁰

From the beginning of Book 2, Sri Aurobindo, through certain allusions, invited us to consider that this epic also concerned the present times and made numerous digressions that we recognise as always relevant.

Then as now men walked in the round which the gods have
decreed them

Eagerly turning their eyes to the lure and the tool
and the labour.²¹

He has also put forward some ideas on political organisation such as:

Gathered alert to the call the democracy hated of heaven.²²

In “The Book of the Gods”, Sri Aurobindo adds new considerations on the evolution of civilisations, evoking their greatness and their fall under the pressure of the barbarians. He introduces the idea of cycles and the fact that nothing can be left behind in this evolution, that each descent into night allows for a greater dawn.

19 *Ibid.* p. 447

20 *Ibid.* p. 448

21 *Ibid.* p. 355

22 *Ibid.* p. 357

So shall the darker and ruder always prevail o'er the brilliant
Till in its turn to a ruder and darker it falls and is shattered. (...)
So shall it last till the fallen ages return to their greatness.
For if the twilight be helped not, night o'er the world cannot darken;
Night forbidden how shall a greater dawn be effected?²³

At the end of “The Book of the Gods”, Sri Aurobindo gives us a vision of the present humanity marching towards its dark winter and the position of the overmind forces during this period. With the god Ares, he evokes the weakening of the right use of force, the memory of which will be preserved by weak peoples:

Leaving a Roman memory stamped on the ages of weakness²⁴

Aphrodite, the goddess of Love, knows that her greatness will disappear, but she will fight to maintain herself, which Zeus grants her for a symbolic time of a cycle and a half.

Thou for a day and a night and another day and a nightfall,
White Aphrodite, prevail; o'er thee too the night is extended.
She has gone forth who made men like gods in their glory
and gladness.

Now in the darkness coming all beauty must wane or be tarnished;
Joy shall fade and mighty Love grow fickle and fretful;²⁵

The god helping the development of the Mind of Light, Apollo, is shrouded in night. Only Poseidon, the master of the subconscious, happily supports Zeus' decision. The Book ends with the relentless manifestation of the forces of fate of which no one is aware until they act: Hades, the god of the corporeal unconscious, Themis, the divine law, and Ananke, the implacable executor of that law.

Book 9, unfinished, begins with the account of some of Penthesilea's deeds in the final battle that is about to begin.

23 *Ibid.* p. 448

24 *Ibid.* p. 449

25 *Ibid.* p. 454

What is to be understood from this poem?

We started out with the idea that, like Homer's *Iliad*, *Ilion* was only for the very advanced seekers, the adventurers of consciousness who had already reached the stage of the enlightened mind, and who had to carry out a thorough purification of the vital without separating spirituality from life. In this perspective, Sri Aurobindo invites us to consider that, apart from a misdirection that separates spirit from matter, it is the adventurer's attachment to his most advanced achievements that prevents the New, the most extreme symbol of which is Penthesilea and her Amazons. For attachment to these achievements creates a mental, vital or occult fortress.

Only the overmind could see, long before the conflict broke out, that in each of its parts, the more evolved in spirit and outer nature, there remained somewhere a desire to retain the old achievements, a lack of complete surrender, which is expressed in the myth by 'deceptions'. On the Trojan side, it is the proposals by certain chiefs such as Anténor to accept Achilles' offer while being certain that Troy would very quickly become the most powerful again. On the Achaean side, it is Achilles who is in love with the Trojan Polyxena and refuses the destruction of the city. It takes a 'lie' from the other chiefs to get him to join the fight. It is this 'attachment to the old' that makes the destruction of the old forms of spirituality inevitable for the adventurers of consciousness. This attachment goes hand in hand with a lack of humility, as Achilles says to Penthesilea.

Distaff and girdle,

Work of the jar at the well and the hush of our innermost chambers,

These were appointed thee, but thou hast scorned them, O Titaness²⁶

But this attachment to the ancient forms also concerns us all. For Sri Aurobindo has gradually led us to see this poem as being about humanity as a whole, inasmuch as the adventurers cannot totally dissociate themselves from the rest of humanity. For civilisations and spiritualities in the broadest sense, including religions, are built around the impulses given by realised beings.

²⁶ *Ibid.* p. 352

He also tells us that the civilisations that have developed on the basis of these impulses follow certain cosmic cycles, without however specifying their duration and nature. He suggests that the present time is both the end of a civilisation and the end of a cycle that should lead us to a new golden age after the passage of a great shadow. We can deduce that this would be a great reversal, accompanied by the energies of the cycles, by the action of the supramental since 1956, and by the influence of a 'new consciousness' manifested since January 1969.

If the old forms are to be destroyed, we must discover the new forms of progression. Sri Aurobindo invites us in other writings to each discover his or her own form of yoga. We are invited to work more on the vital and on the body. And sensitive to the shift in energies, we may accompany the movement that restores the place of women in evolution.

We can compare the destruction of Ilion to one of those moments that Sri Aurobindo calls 'The Hour of God' and make this aphorism our own:

Break the moulds of the past,
but keep safe its gains and its spirit,
or else thou hast no future.²⁷

Ilion invites each of us to an inner examination: what are 'the moulds of the past' to which we cling? And among the gains to be retained, might there not be the discernment for which the ages have toiled? Is not its 'spirit' a discovery of the divine within and a gradual surrender in the most perfect humility?

27 Thoughts and Glimpses 237, CWSA 12: 456

The Path of Works

Based on a talk given at Savitri Bhavan

for the Dream Divine Series on 6 September 2023

Dr. Alok Pandey

The subject of this talk is ‘The Path of Works’, but we can start with life, because life and works are so closely intertwined with each other. Some of the different ways that we have tried to understand life are as a journey; as a song; as a battlefield; as a game; as worship; as an adoration; and as a service. Whichever way we look at life it is a kind of path on which we move. At first we move blindly, not knowing where the goal is, not even knowing who put us in the car or where we are going. But as we go through the process, quite naturally, some bit of awakening comes: we begin to seek, at least we try to understand, we want to figure out who we are and where we are going. So here we arrive at our first conclusions, that when we travel through the journey of life, the journey implies a goal, a path and a vehicle.

Ordinarily, whatever the path, it is directed by our highest conception of life. It reflects our ideas about life, our ideal of life. Unfortunately, for most of us, in the beginning – when I say most of us, I do not mean most of us here, but in general – the conception is that life is meant to satisfy our desires, our longings. At a little step higher, it becomes the fulfilment of our ideas and ideals about life. Whatever these are, they put a goal before us. Very often, the journey seems aimless, because always there is something impelling us, and we go through life as it opens itself.

Depending on the goal, we have a path which opens and the vehicle is the body. Ordinarily, the fuel or the energy that is used for driving this car is desire, and the driver is the ignorant mind. In the days when there was neither GPS nor a very clear orientation about where to go

or how to go, we were just driven around blindly. In fact, often in life, especially in the beginning, we do not know where we are headed, and we tell the driver, the ignorant mind, “wherever you want to take me, you take me”. Imagine that scenario where we are at the mercy of the driver who will take us wherever he wants! It may look very strange; but this is how most of us lead life. We let the mind take us wherever it wants to. If we did this while we are travelling in a car and sat back and told the driver to take us wherever he wants to it would look very strange, but this is precisely how we move through life – blindly, as it is said.

Yoga brings in a new dimension which is that there is a clear goal which goes beyond the limits and frames of our present humanity. Yoga says that life is about progress, which is one thing that we can really see in life clearly. And this progress yoga terms as ‘concentrated evolution’. This progress takes place through many lives: we go back and we return, and we again travel. We have travelled by many vehicles. Sometimes they break down, and that is something which is impelling us to progress. This is the minimum understanding about life which makes life beautiful and worth living: that life is meant for progress.

Yoga makes this progress concentrated but still that progress will take place through many lives. We are so programmed that whatever we may have in life, we cannot stop and be satisfied. We will keep on returning, as if in search of something. We are programmed for evolution, and yoga makes this evolution concentrated. How does it concentrate the progress of evolution? By the very same energies which are given to us by life, which are normally spent in ordinary pursuits. Those very same energies, when we concentrate and put them towards the goal that yoga puts before us or demands of us, then they bring about concentrated evolution.

Let us now look at the aspects of our being which are given to us: there is the mind with its thought and some degree of intelligence; then there is the heart of emotions and feelings; and then there is the will. We have several other aspects, but these are the three main impellers of the journey. They are given to us, and ordinarily one or another is active. Always the mind is active, the thoughts are active,

and if we observe its activity, most of the time it is a discursive activity which is drifting. As the Mother says, if someone suddenly asks us “what are you thinking?” most of the time, the answer is, “I don’t know” because this activity is taking place mechanically and it is usually drifting. As a result, there is a dispersion of our mental energies, and because of this we get fatigued. We have even devised novel ways of drifting the mind: focussing it on channel browsing, allowing it to run from channel to channel.

In yoga, we concentrate the mind, which means that instead of letting it drift, we pick up this mind and try to focus it on one single object, one single idea. Usually, in yoga, we pick one idea, the highest idea, the greatest idea, the widest idea, and let the mind focus on that. Every time it goes astray, runs away, we catch it and bring it back. In this process there are two activities. One is that we focus on a single idea till that idea ultimately reveals the truth behind it. For instance, the idea could be that the Divine is in all beings, the Divine is in the entire creation, or it could be the idea of love or the idea of bliss; or it could be a different principle. And the other way, which is easier, is that we pick up the same idea and let our thoughts run around it. Either way, we teach the mind to concentrate, and when the mind concentrates it becomes very powerful. It is like when we pack all the energy in a room into a smaller space. For example, the air which is there in this room, if we pack it into a small container, would become very powerful, because we are compressing all the molecules which are there into a smaller space. Likewise, all the energies of the mind are concentrated on a single object. And when we do this, as a result of the power of this concentration, suddenly the idea releases what is held within it. And when it releases, we are flooded with a completely new dimension of understanding of life, and new kinds of knowledge begin to pour in; a wide God-knowledge pours in from above, as Sri Aurobindo says, because in the mind, now all the discursive activity is brought together and is concentrated on that single object or idea.

We can think of it using the analogy of the journey of life. Say, a person is travelling by car and he closes his eyes and is contemplating, and suddenly he has this ‘*aha*’ phenomenon. He says, “hold on, please stop the car.” He comes out of the car and says, “my job is over.” And to the driver when he asks where to go next, he says, “I don’t care.

It is your problem, I have reached where I wanted to reach.” This is what we see in the traditional path of *jnana*, the traditional path of knowledge, where one stops the moment one realises the Self. And then one says, “my job is over”.

But then, what about work, the journey, the path? Is its utility over? In Sri Aurobindo’s yoga, it is not over, because while we may understand the power of the idea, we may realise something very high and beautiful, we also need to understand what this world is about: why did we embark on this journey? Where is this journey taking us? All this is known as the Integral Knowledge: one is the knowledge of the Self; and the other is how the Self extends into this world and all its various becomings. The *Gita* speaks about it beautifully, about God in His power of becoming. So, we have to understand not only Krishna the player but also the play; we want to play with him, and that is so wonderful. And when Krishna plays, he has two modes of play: one is the Kurukshetra type of play and the other is Brindavan. The path of knowledge traditionally stops with self-realisation. But here it goes on, until it has found God in everything and invaded all fields with the Divine consciousness. And then we see the utility of works. Because, how are we going to really be here if we were content with ourselves and our own self-realisation? How are we going to find Him in nature and in all these activities and works?

What about the path of love? Again we take the same analogy: somebody who is travelling in the car. He wants to meet his beloved and the beloved is the Divine. But even before that – as the yogis would rightly say – He whom the traveller is seeking is seeking him. Somewhere that connection has been built, and He is drawing the seeker closer and closer. The seeker wills with all the intensity that he is capable of: “I want to meet you”, and a point comes when He arrives. He does not wait for us to reach Him. He comes suddenly and here again we have the ‘*aha*’ phenomenon: we merge in that. We see this in several stories of certain *bhaktas* like Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and many others who reached that state of exaltation, where they find the Divine by the power and intensity of love.

Now, here again we see concentration; how does it come into play? Ordinarily we see that the energy of love is dispersed into a

hundred and one relatives and relativities. If you are living in India, you understand what it means to have a discursive heart, tied to everyone and everything. But for the *bhakta*, the entire energy of love is concentrated on the one Divine. And when it is concentrated on the one Divine, that energy becomes so intense that ultimately something opens and, as I said, one meets the Beloved.

But in Sri Aurobindo's yoga, again, we cannot stop with that. We cannot be happy with one Krishna. There is a very nice line in one of the bhajans that I read, "I am not happy with one Krishna. I want to meet infinite Krishnas". So, it is not enough that I have found the Divine. In this world, in every being, in every creature, in all the many folds of existence, and in the wrestle and the clasp and the embrace of different people, I must discover the same Divine. We need to meet the Beloved in everyone and in everything.

If I may add, in Sri Aurobindo's *jnana* yoga, when we have that 'aha' phenomenon and the door of knowledge opens, we tell Him or we tell the Light, "I don't want to merge into you. You take me along, guide me. Up to now I have guided my mind as I have tried to concentrate and tried to find the way, but now you are there to lead me." Thus, we see the traditional path of knowledge is extended in Sri Aurobindo's yoga such that works and knowledge come together.

Now in *bhakti* yoga, again, we see that when we meet the beloved, we do not come out of the car. We say, "You please get into the car." And He will do so. He will in fact say, "This driver is no longer necessary. I will drive your car". That is how the divine Charioteer works: He takes hold of the steering wheel. And if the Divine is the driver and we are seated next to Him, who would ever want to get out of the car? Maybe you would rather say, "Drive eternally, wherever you want to take me". And then, everything, even the battlefield, becomes His play, because He is there with us seated next to us. This is where the traditional path of *bhakti* universalises itself: it discovers the Deity in everything. And instead of coming out and merging – by 'coming out' I mean coming out of creation and the journey of life and merging with the Divine – we walk with the Divine. The Divine walks with us, and He takes the reins – the steering wheel of the car – and He takes us along.

In the path of works it is the will that gets concentrated. We have already seen that in the concentration of mind the thought concentrates on a single idea; in the concentration of the heart the emotions concentrate on a single relation and establishing many-fold relationships with the Divine – he becomes one’s father, mother, beloved, friend, everything. The heart opens, one day the door opens, and we discover the Divine. In Sri Aurobindo’s Yoga, we are not to be just happy with finding Him in the temple, we have to find Him even in the battlefield, we have to find Him everywhere. Now, with the will we again see that it is normally also in a dispersed state. Will is the impelling power to acquire, to achieve, to find whatever one is seeking. Will is the most important element in human beings. However, it is hardly trained. Our whole education is so much analytical-mind-centred. The will is hardly trained, and yet it is so indispensable in yoga. When somebody praised Sri Aurobindo’s mind, he said, “it is not the mind. It is the will. I had a very obstinate will’. Our will is so important, but we tend to miss that and hardly train it.

That is why one of the things that we see in the Ashram life – I am sure it applies here also, as everywhere it should apply – is that the first training is the training of will. What does this training involve? One simple thing is regularity and punctuality, like coming on time. I have seen that the practice of just these two elements itself is a training of the will. Why? Because, if you have to reach somewhere or do some activity at a specified time the mind will start finding excuses. For example, I have to go to the dispensary at eight o’clock. But my mind may say, “Nobody is going to come at eight o’clock. It is okay if I go five minutes later, or ten minutes later’. But it is not about somebody coming or not coming. It is my duty to go there and sit there. Maybe nobody will come, yet I sit there. Now for that, I have to work backwards. If I meet somebody on the way, what do I do? I cannot start chatting. It is just not possible because the will knows that this is a work which is given at this point, and one has to be there. So even while I am talking, my will is concentrated on the work that is to be done. Will and works are directly connected.

But, ordinarily, this will is scattered in the fulfilment of desires. When the will drives in ignorance, it tells the driver, “Take me there to

that market, because I need to get some nice dresses (I have nothing against good dresses), or take me there where I can get some nice food.” Once again we have to concentrate and here it is the will. This means that instead of leading a life which is running at the mercy of desires and various attachments, we withdraw that energy and turn the will in one direction, which is to find the Divine or to serve the Divine. And when the will takes this, when it is taken up by this particular urge, this aspiration – that I want to serve the Divine – there is no other goal. Then one day, again, as a result of it, there is another opening at another level, and the Knower of this world, the Lover and Beloved of our souls, comes to us as the Master of works. As Sri Aurobindo says, “But that is the end of a long and difficult journey, and the Master of works does not wait till then to meet the seeker on the path of Yoga and put his secret or half-shown Hand upon him and upon his life and actions.”¹

All these paths will lead us to the discovery of one particular aspect of the Divine, and each of them is important. The knowledge path leads to where we transcend everything, the world of senses, form and name, and it is that state of wide universal impersonality where we ultimately discover the Origin of all things, of all creation. And by love we discover that this entire creation is throbbing in its core with the pulsation of love, which is sustaining this creation, though creation has emerged from Knowledge. By knowledge here I mean that secret consciousness and force which has built this universe. They are one and the same, but that consciousness which has created this universe is Knowledge and that Knowledge is everywhere, hidden in creation. The ant has not read a book on itself. People may write a book on how ants navigate, but the ants have that knowledge inside. Every creature has this, and if we look at this creation, it is amazing. It is bursting with Knowledge; it is an expression of Knowledge. ‘Knowledge’ here means That. We try to find how everything works, but we do not know which is hidden, intrinsic to everything in creation. When the doors of that Knowledge opens, we see this creation as magnificent and how much knowledge has gone into it. Then, as the *Gita* says, we are filled with wonder, “*Ascharya vad*

1 *The Synthesis of Yoga*, p. 261

pashyati kaschidenam'. We wonder what it is at the core, what is impelling.

Then we discover, through the path of love, that the heart which is throbbing in this universe is the heart of Love. But then why is it there? Where is it leading us? Which way? In what direction? What is this love which is throbbing in the universe? We discover that it is leading us towards the origin, Delight. This is the basic paradigm of yoga, that it is not desire which has given birth to creation, but Delight.

So what is Delight? It is the process of creating many homes of delight. I will take one simple example of any group life: a family. Ordinarily, in a family, there is a husband and a wife, children and other members of the family. What it is actually, if we look at it this way, is an attempt to multiply the joys. There is a very interesting phrase in the Veda which says that "you don't enjoy being alone; you want many". So there are many. Although it is a human expression, it is so true that it is about the multiplication of delight. Love is multiplying that one Delight in many forms. But how are these forms going to be built? And there we enter into works. It is working to build homes for the Delight, manifestations of Delight, movements of Delight. And we would like to participate in that whole process, collaborate in that process. If we do not collaborate in that process, we may find God, but away from this world; we would not find him in the becoming, in this movement. This is the whole idea of the path of works.

The path of works is ultimately to collaborate with this great movement that we call the universe. This is the basic idea, but how does it proceed? First of all, what is work? Ordinarily, when we talk about work, if people ask me, "what do you do?" I would say "I am a doctor", and that is the ordinary understanding of work. But when we talk about works in the sense of yoga, all outward-going movements are works. Everything, our thought, feelings, will, impulsion, everything which is going outward is work. That is why this is so much connected with our inner life, because what is inside will go into our works.

There is a very interesting story which I read about this. In ancient times, there was a priestly class. I am talking of India, but everywhere it was there. Their life was supposed to be a life of extreme self-discipline. Once, one such priest loses his way, he errs, he stumbles. And there is a way that you can do some *prayaschitta*, that is repentance, so he does that. Then everybody says, “Now that you have done this, it is alright”. But he says, “No, no, it is not complete, because inside me it is still there, the attachment that I wanted to get rid of, because of which I stumbled and deviated, and this external repentance is not enough and I need to work this out”. And the story is very beautiful, because he transformed that attachment into love. But that is a different story altogether.

Works are everything that is going out. Ordinarily, we see that most of our activity is going out, except when we sleep, and even in sleep also, unfortunately, we remain largely on the surface. We get only a moment to go deep inside; that is why we need long hours of sleep and, even then, it is not very fruitful. While most of our activities are on the surface, how is it going to be useful, if we have to find the Divine? Because, ordinarily, this is the conception, that the Divine is inside us, in a subjective inner space. Every outward-going movement means that our energy is rushing out. How are we going to concentrate this energy which is rushing out into various activities? The simple formula is to turn this activity of the mind, of the heart, of the will, all the energies and movements of the hands, feet, everything, into a service, into the worship of the Divine. Then, even the outward-going activity becomes not only a way to God realisation, but leads to a great, wide fulfilment, because then we do not have to find a separate place to sit, nor a separate process, nor a special technique to worship the Divine.

There is a story in the *Mahabharata* where Draupati makes a very interesting remark. She was going to meet Krishna. The *Ashwamedha Yagna* was going on, and it was an event where everybody was expected to be there. But she wanted to meet Krishna so she waited for him, so that they could go together. People said, “Don’t you think that by missing on the yagna, you are losing your share of merits which you incur when you go for such a yagna?” She said, “You don’t know the full truth, and this is the full truth: Each step that we take

on the journey knowing that we are going to meet the Divine gives you the merit of a hundred *Ashwamedha yagnas*'. It means that it is one thing to go to a place of worship and sit, wanting some merits, and it is quite another to undertake each step as if we are going to meet the Divine and participate in that fulfilment.

This is how the path of works proceeds. All other fruits have to be renounced, including the merits that we are going to get from work; that is how the *Gita* puts it. What are these fruits that we covet, when we work, when we act? There are well-known rewards of money, position, status, name and fame, and all these outer things. There are also inner rewards. Even when we renounce these outer things, still the inner reward is there. And these inner rewards can be very subtle. This sometimes could be just earning respect, and earning respect is something intrinsic, wanting to be in a certain state or position of reverence, so many kinds of things. And we begin to change our life in a certain way, we begin to even put on a show. And Sri Aurobindo says this is duplicity, a sham. And all this takes us into a whole zone which is far away from the Divine, even though outwardly we profess that we are seeking the Divine.

As Sri Krishna says, we worship God, we turn to Him for earthly benefits for the satisfaction of desires. That is the difference, incidentally, between religious life and spiritual life. In religious life, we turn to God so that he can take care of our earthly needs, as if God is at our disposal. But He does not mind; He is very humble: "It is okay if you want me only for this'. But in spiritual life that has to be renounced. Spiritual life brings out a completely new dimension altogether. In fact, if we are sincere about the spiritual life, and we still try to have that relation with God that He will always satisfy our desires, in the beginning He may, but later on He might say, "I am going to change the rules of the game for you, because you are not any more following your own true aspiration." He may even start to snatch whatever little gains that we have, even the last straw we want to hold on to.

When we take the path of works, the first practice is *nishkama karma*, work without any care for the fruit. When it is said "without an eye on the fruit', does it mean that we will do our work negligently?

No, on the contrary, we have to do all our works with the spirit of service, as a worship, as a dedication to the Divine. Whether we get out of it success or failure, fortune or misfortune, that we have to renounce. Sri Aurobindo says in his famous Uttarpada Speech which gives the essence of the teaching of the Gita: “He demands of those who aspire to do His work, to be free from repulsion and desire, to do work for Him without the demand for fruit, to renounce self-will and become a passive and faithful instrument in His hands, to have an equal heart for high and low, friend and opponent, success and failure, yet not to do His work negligently.” (CWSA 8: 5–6). We have to do it well. But if success does not come we can try again. If we have built a beautiful house and just when it is almost complete there is a cyclone and it is all demolished, it does not matter. We do not give up, we persevere and rebuild it, because there is the will inside us to do that. So this is the first thing to renounce: the fruits of work. The fruits may be to our liking, or they may not be to our liking; there maybe success or failure, fortune or misfortune, all kinds of things may come. In the yoga of works, we realise that there is no other worker except nature; nature is doing everything. Even the brain, the intelligence, everything has been built by nature; all these instruments have been built by nature. Actually, to take credit is not right, because whatever one does, whatever has been done, the energy, the thought, everything is coming from the vast field of nature. The first thing is to renounce the fruit of desires; it is a very powerful practice. Sri Aurobindo says this in *Essays on the Gita*. All who have walked on the way can vouch for it, that even if this alone is practised, it liberates us. That is why the *Gita* says “*Svalpam apyasya Dharmasya*” (even if we practise this Karma yoga a little bit). Sri Krishna says, “It is very difficult to follow all the things that I am telling you, but practice just this small little thing, that no more will I do work for the satisfaction of my own desire’.

Now, this desire can be very subtle – a preferred idea, a preferred ideal, a preferred ideology, a preferred country, and in various other ways it will come; it keeps raising its level. Sometimes we want to see our idea realised, for which we have lived. For example, people sometimes want their book to be released before they are going to depart. All such desires have to be renounced completely, because

all this will be like an illusion which is tying us down to the state of ignorance. All work must become a worship and the fact that it becomes a worship and service not only enhances the quality of the work, it enhances our life itself in so many ways. When we work with the idea of worship and service, the Divine does not follow a monthly wages system; He gives us the wages instantly. The first instant-reward policy was promulgated by the Divine. The instant reward is that for which the world was created: Delight. If we are really doing work as worship and service, we will see that there is an instant joy which springs up within us, and that itself is a sign that we are on track. But if we are feeling frustrated that we have been doing this for God, but it is not working, that means we are not doing it for God, but for the satisfaction of an egoistic idea. All frustration, all sorrow, is a sign that our GPS is not working right; we need to recentre it. The act is to be dedicated to Him. When it will be fulfilled, if it will be fulfilled, if He wants to give the credit to us or to somebody else, all that does not matter.

There is a very nice little example from everyday life that I love to contemplate on. Now we see so many trees in Auroville and in other places. Whose were the hands that tilled the soil? Somebody tilled the soil, somebody brought the seeds, somebody planted them, somebody watered them, and totally different people are reaping the benefit of the shade, the fruits and the flowers. If we look at this on a larger scale, we will see that the hands that tilled the soil were moved by that One who had planned for the resulting shade and fruits and flowers after so many years. Another example is that it was the same One who gave the energy and motivation to those whose hands dug the earth for the Matrimandir knowing that probably they would never see its completion, as the One in those who saw its completion and who entered it; it is just that One consciousness. If you really and truly live like that, then you will see that there are no two and work will take us to the height of discovering that Oneness not only within us, but in this entire creation, and even in those who opposed our plans.

It was a very powerful supramental experience of Sri Aurobindo that he could see that the Lord, the Immanent Divine, the Inhabitant of all creatures, was not only in the lawyer who was pleading his case, but also in the lawyer who was opposing it. Now, why this is important

is because sometimes we feel that if there is an opposition to what we are doing, it is not God's will. And the Mother says, if you take that approach, you will land up in the hands of the hostile forces. We have to follow that inner urge within us, and it does not matter even if it does not work out many times. If I still have deep within me the aspiration, I must follow it. But if I am doing it for a particular result, then I will say, "Oh, there is an obstacle; maybe the Mother does not want it." This feeling of whether the Mother wants it or does not want it you have to feel inside your heart. Maybe in one's whole life it does not get fulfilled, and yet one has prepared the ground for some later fulfilment. That is when people say, "Oh, I am too old now, I do not know whether I will live to see the supramental creature or not'. Now, look at what the Mother says about it. She asks, "How does it matter in which body it manifests? Because, all is one body, and it becomes wider and wider as we proceed".

Nishkama Karma can lead us to great depths and heights and wideness, even if we practice just this one thing alone. Why would we then work at all when we are not coveting the fruit? Only the spirit of serving God is our goal, and all our thoughts and emotions will begin to turn towards the Divine automatically. And as they turn toward the Divine, God-knowledge will pour in. What is the test that one is proceeding rightly along the path? Sri Aurobindo says that equanimity is the fundamental thing. In the yoga of knowledge it is not required. Why? Because, you are not interacting with the world. It is all within you. And in the traditional yoga of *bhakti* also you do not need equanimity. If you do not meet Him, you might say, "You are not coming at my call. You are cutting yourself off from me". But in works, equanimity is a fundamental practice because all the time as we move through life, either we will be lured or we will meet with obstacles, oppositions and all kinds of adverse things. And we have to go through life in a state of equanimity. Sometimes when we want to work outdoors, conditions may not be conducive at all. There may be heavy rains, and such conditions offer a basic training for us. And when we look at the life of those who have gone before us, their work may seem something very small. We can remember Krishna Prem – whose original name was Roland Nixon – who was cleaning the kitchen. Those days in Indian households people used

to clean the kitchen very meticulously. There were a lot of things on cleanliness to be taken care of, and the only negative thing about it was that the dirt used to be thrown outside to accumulate, because there was no good municipal system for waste management. But houses used to be cleaned meticulously. Even now you will see Tamil women making *kolam* outside, after cleaning their house with great care. So there was a lot of energy going into this activity. Krishna Prem was entrusted with cleaning the Ashram kitchen. He was a British mathematician. Many years later somebody came to meet Krishna Prem, and saw him doing all this manual work. He asked, “Do you think this way you are going to achieve your goal? Are you going to find the Divine this way?” And Krishna Prem made a very interesting remark. He said, “Those who have gone before me have gone this way’. The whole idea that this is a small work and that is a big work – like lecturing is a big work, but washing utensils is not a big work – has no place in yoga. Alternatively, the ego can work the other way, “Oh this fellow only lectures, but I sweep the floors every day getting up at 4 o’clock’. So, one has to be very careful. If one little door – a trap door – is open, these ideas can enter.

Sri Aurobindo gives an example that when we really look at the Divine pouring himself into creation, it is *Samam Brahmam*. He pours himself equally into everything: “The hand that sent Jupiter spinning through heaven, / Spends all its cunning to fashion a curl.”² If that be the case, how am I to choose my work? I do all work with an equal heart and equal mind regardless of praise or blame. How then do I choose the work? This is a big challenge. When physically the Mother allocated us the work it was simple, though not always so simple.

It brings to my mind the story of Rishabh Chandji, who was a Jain. He wrote a wonderful book *Sri Aurobindo: His Life Unique*. He came to the Mother and said, “Mother, whatever work you will give me I’ll take it and accept”. So the Mother gave him work in the furniture department. He was a very intellectual person with a very good sense of understanding things. And he was about to write a letter of gratitude to the Mother. Meanwhile, the Mother sends a chit. His first assignment was to kill the bugs which are inside the

2 Sri Aurobindo, CWSA 2:202

cots. Now killing the bugs is an anathema to a Jain. According to Jainism, you cannot kill bugs, or any living thing. So he keeps that letter aside, and writes to Sri Aurobindo, "I think Mother does not know about that. I am a Jain and I am not supposed to kill." And Sri Aurobindo replied, "Whatever work the Mother gives is meant for your progress. Do it with that attitude'. He agreed and rose to what heights! I mean, this is how they have shown the way. Ravindraji, who was a pure vegetarian, was given the task of egg distribution. And the Mother said that when she met somebody she saw all their ideas and idealisms and how they can come in their way. She once said, "I met someone who said he is ready to do whatever God wants him to do except that he will never lift a sword. And he said he knew that God will never ask him to do it". And the Mother asked him, "How do you know for sure?" One has to be so surrendered to His will that even if there is something which is according to one's ideal not acceptable, one should be ready to do. In this the entire *Gita* is there. Any idea however high and exalted if it is not Divine it should be shed.

Some people cannot understand the actions of the Buddha or Sri Aurobindo. Recently somebody has released a book on the unsung tale of Mrinalini Devi, wife of Sri Aurobindo. The way this book presents her story is a very human way of looking at it. But the Divine's way is different. Did Sri Aurobindo ever write to her, "I have to give a great yoga and become a great guru"? Or "I have to discover a yoga of transformation. You don't know how important is the work I am doing'. He did not say anything of that kind. He said, "I am surrendered to the Divine. Whatever he asks of me I have to do. My life is no more mine." And he said, "I believe that of all that he has given to me, I have been using 14 *annas* for myself and only giving 2 *annas* to God. This must change." So one day he gets a command and he comes to Pondicherry. It is not that he abandoned this or that person. That is our mental way of understanding.

What about those who are left behind? I think they could not have had a better fate. If you ask me, I would say, imagine yourself to be married to Sri Aurobindo. I want these human thinkers to understand the significance of what it means to be wedded to Sri Aurobindo even for a day. Even for the sake of wedding, if my life is tied to Sri

Aurobindo's, what does it mean? It means he will never forget it. And that is what we see in Sri Aurobindo. In 1918 Mrinalini Devi left her body, and when Sri Aurobindo came to know about it, do you know what he said? He said, "She whom I have loved once I cease not from loving." This is how the yogi resolves all the inner dilemmas. He is moved by the will of God.

There will be conflicting elements. What is that conflicting element? Duty. In the Western context and even in India, modern thinkers like Bankim Chandra Chatterji have turned the path of works into doing one's duties. But duty is a very moral and mental concept which has its meaning when we are leading a life of ignorance. But it completely loses its value when one turns to the Divine. Swami Vivekananda, by suddenly leaving his home, did not leave anyone, but by turning towards what he felt deep within, the will of the Divine inside him, he went around the world. He was neglecting his duty, but fulfilling God's will which is what creation is meant for. And when one person does it, it automatically radiates its influence on all that is around. It is a very powerful thing. Even if outwardly there is a challenge, and there is a suffering, it is a purifying suffering.

Let us come back to the question "What will I choose?" or "How will I choose my work?" When the Mother physically gives the work it is fine. There is a second way to look at it. Let us say, one enters into a field like Auroville or the Ashram, which are special places. Why? Because they are special formations. There is no doubt about it that this is different from a government or corporate organisation outside. It is a formation by the Mother. If one enters here and a work is given by whoever is supposed to assign a work, one can take it: "This is the work She wants me to do" and do it entirely without any preferences.

I remember passingly how these things can percolate. Once, I was coming from Ashram to Auroville and I just arrived at Bharat Nivas where a talk had been organised. I was sitting in the car with a few others and they asked me the background, and again asked, "Now, where are you working?" I said, "I have not yet decided." The comment was, "you know if you go there, they will just send you to the dining room" in a very condescending way. Then I wondered

whether this is the right company. What is wrong with the dining room? I mean, whatever it may be, the work which is given becomes the means. As you know, Nirod-da, who was a doctor, was sent to work in the timber godown. I was in the marbling department where I learned all about colours and selling saris, which I could never learn even after so many years of married life. The Mother taught me, in a few months, to look at colours, to appreciate colours. It was such a beautiful experience.

In *jnana* yoga we see the collapse of this whole world of ideas. Jiddu Krishnamurthy has described how these formations and systems collapse and you are freed from all these mental systems in which you normally work. You can do the same thing through works in a very powerful way. Here, even the idea that they are collapsing is gone. Why? Because, when a *jnana yogi* collapses them, he enters into a void, a vacant blank, which is called as freedom, liberation of intelligence, or universal intelligence. But here we discover within this universal intelligence the will of the Divine operating in creation, which unfortunately the *jnana yogi* misses, and to that when we add the love of the Divine, we discover that not only is there His will, but also in this consciousness we get the knowledge as in the traditional path of knowledge by which we get freedom. We all know about *nirvānic* silence, but when we take the path of works then we discover something beyond *nirvana*: the Will in the void which is shaping this world of events, circumstances and forms. Then all becomes a disclosure of the Divine in manifold ways, including that which seems to oppose the Will, yet fulfils the Will mysteriously. All this is a greater realisation.

There is a whole chapter in *Essays on the Gita* dedicated to *nirvāna* and works in the world. In the traditional yoga, *nirvāna* is the end. However, Sri Aurobindo says, in karma yoga, *nirvāna* is the beginning. Why? Because, now we will do the works more truthfully. What does *nirvāna* mean? It is the state where desires, mental ideas, constructions, systems, philosophies, religion and ideologies, nothing works any longer; all are smashed. None of these things is impelling us. So we are full of the peace and silence of the Eternal, and in this peace and silence, the Will, the eternal Will manifests. When one practices *karma yoga* in its true sense,

nirvāna comes much faster. And the beauty is that it does not tell you to withdraw from work because a liberation which, if you enter into the world, you become bound again, is an incomplete liberation. *Sannyāsis* who had attained *nirvāna* through knowledge had withdrawn from life, but here in this *nirvāna* which comes through works, one is never bound even in this world. One is manifesting the Divine Will, and, finally, as a result of this, one discovers that love. How? We serve the Divine, worship the Divine, adore the Divine in every way, not just through ritualistic acts, but even in the smallest of activities, even the so-called menial work. When we love Him in everything, can He stay far away? So we discover that love in which all is God-directed.

These are the three things in the yoga works: One is to turn the mind inward and upward rather than following this discursive intellect which is all the time engaged in this world in a ridiculous activity driven by desire like a *yantrarudhini*, like a fly on a wheel. When the mind turns inward and upward, in the yoga of works, it seeks to know the Will of God, and what helps in this turning is *nishkama karma*. What is binding us is this attachment, this fulfilment, this particular success, this reward or fear of failure or the fear of losing a particular attainment. All this is binding us, and when we turn the mind inward and upward, then a separation takes place between the outer activity and the inner being; then we begin to truly grow.

The second step is doing all works as a sacrifice to the Divine. This sacrifice is not something like shaving one's head and offering the hairs at Thirupati, which is very easy. (Hairs are the symbol of the Inconscient, the old nature.) It is a sacrifice of all that we do into a great fire of aspiration. When we do it, what happens? What needs to be destroyed is destroyed and what can be purified gets purified. Sacrifice is about making something sacred; it makes something refined, luminous. When we sacrifice our thoughts, all our thoughts which are running here and there are turned towards the Divine. Afterwards through the power of thought, new capacities of thinking, new ways of cognition, intuition, all this begins to awaken, simply because, instead of letting these thoughts run in all directions, they are directed towards the Divine. Similarly, sacrifice of our feelings

means, instead of having all these ignorant forms of attachment, our heart turns towards the Divine. Does it mean renouncing people in our life? No, in fact it improves relationships.

Let me give an example. Imagine a husband starts regarding his wife as a *devi*, an incarnation of the goddess, and the wife also regards her husband as a *devta*. In India, it was instilled long back that the husband is like God: *pati devta*. I do not know who first said it, but we have to now set the balance right: the wife also is *devi*. When both husband and wife regard each other like that, as nothing else but the Divine, who has become this person and come into my life as my partner, that they are the forms of the Divine, they are aspects of the Divine, that becomes the ideal relationship. And children too are manifestations of the same Divine. It is not that my child must fulfil my desires, wishes and ambitions. I must understand that the child is here for blossoming in his own way, at his own time, at his own pace, and he has come to me and I am a trustee of the Divine and the Divine is in him; then life will be so beautiful. All these arguments, pushing and pulling, all this will go away. It makes life so beautiful; everything will grow delightful.

A yogi who follows the path of works loves this creation as if it is a means to his salvation, because the Divine is there. What happens in him is *maitri karuna eva cha* (friendship, kindness, etc.). Even when he fights there is no enmity, no hatred, because he knows it has no place in this fight. His thinking is “I am required to oppose this fellow because within me this is the will. Within him there may be another will, but I am not bothered about it. I am not here to judge him. Within me this is the will, and I must do that will’. But one must make sure that it is the divine Will. When we get rid of all our preferences, viewpoints and opinions, and through the practice of karma yoga we enter into a state of inner peace, then we will see that we are able to recognise the divine Will. It can come as a deep inspiration that seizes and takes hold of us. It may take the form of an imperative, something which has to be done, maybe to write a letter, maybe to act in a certain way, maybe to speak a few words. Whatever it may be, we just follow it because it goes without disturbing the peace inside. All disturbances, all restlessness is a sign that my yoga

is not complete. It does not mean that I am not practising; it means that my practice is not complete. Then one goes back and looks at that part which is creating the disturbance and restlessness, the deviation from equality. Somebody says something to me, and I am disturbed: "Oh, I did this with so much love and dedication, but it did not work out". All that restlessness is a sign of where one has to keep working on oneself. This is the great royal road.

In the path of works, there is no need for a special meditation. It does not mean 'no meditation', because very often people take it like that. It means turning life into a meditation. It is not needed to specifically do any kind of traditional worship. Again, it does not mean 'no worship, no adoration'. Why? Because, our whole life becomes a worship, our life becomes an adoration of the Divine. It does not mean doing some special activities which are called 'work' in the departments in the Ashram context, and the rest of the life is fun. In fact, this division goes away, because, everything – all our outer work, all our relationships, all the inner movements, sleeping, eating, walking – everything turns into a beautiful song or a hymn dedicated to the Eternal.

All this constitutes the yoga of works as it has been extolled by Sri Krishna in the *Gita*, but Sri Aurobindo's yoga takes us one step further, and in that one step there are two things involved. We will just touch upon that. While in ordinary karma yoga one has to be free from egoism, even the *sattwic* egoism, yet the ego would still be there acting as an instrument. Krishna says, "Arjuna, you are the instrument". One still has the feeling of being an instrument or a channel of God, but in the Supramental Yoga, that ego must vanish entirely. There is such a union in which the instrument, the channel, is gone. There is just the One expressing, manifesting itself in a million ways not only within oneself but in this entire creation – in the blooming of a rose, in the new bud which is coming, in the meteor, in the shining of the sky, in the rocket going to the moon! One sees in everyone, in every burst of activity, that Divine, who is within, without, everywhere. In the true sense we understand the Isha Upanishad: "*Tade jati tannay jati tad dure tadvantike*" (He is outside, He is within, He is far, He is near). And then what can one say about the differences? All differences cease to be. So that is

what happens with the complete vanishing of the ego in the Supramental Yoga.

And the second thing about the Supramental Yoga of works is that even the instruments have to be upgraded. Why? Because, it is no more the ordinary nature which will drive us. The yoga of the *Gita* leads us to *Jeevan mukti* in which we are free inwardly. But here the instruments have to be impelled by the Divine Shakti and no more by the three gunas, the three currents of nature. Now, what does being impelled by the Divine Shakti mean? The mind may be blown into thousand pieces when the Shakti operates, so the mind must be ready to have wideness; suppleness of the mind and the heart is a necessary condition. The heart must be tuned to that rhythm and invasion of Divine love and sweetness. The Mother has described all this in her experiences. They are mind-boggling, and the very body may shake and shiver. So in the Supramental Yoga the instruments have to be also upgraded.

This is done by the same process, except that there is this new aspiration, and that process is constant remembrance and offering. This is how the yoga proceeds: it is a state of constant inner remembrance. Initially this remembrance may be mechanical, forced: “Oh I forgot to say Ma Ma” and coming back immediately to inner remembrance. After some time, it becomes the way of life: One does not have to keep on forcibly saying the Mother’s name, because one has come so close to Her. One has to just, as Sri Aurobindo says, take a step behind, and one is in the hands of the Divine Mother. You do not have to call; there is such an intimacy that you just turn anywhere and She is there. This is the result of inner remembrance and offering of all that happens, all that comes, without qualifying anything as good or bad. In fact, if at all we have to qualify things as good or bad, it is that things which take us closer to the Divine are good and things which keep us away from the Divine are bad; there is no other ‘good’ and ‘bad’. From the yogic point of view a thing may be very good, but from the worldly point of view it may be bad. And a thing which may seem bad, as I said, the Buddha’s renunciation, or Sri Aurobindo’s, from the worldly point of view, may be very good from the yoga point of view. All these ideas have to be renounced and offered as they arise. Because they will

arise in the consciousness, they have to be offered to the Divine Mother constantly. The path of yoga finally is the path of constant inner remembrance of the Divine and offering everything to the Divine.

This path leads ultimately to three types of union, which Sri Aurobindo speaks about in different places. One is *sāyujya mukti* – one becomes united with the Divine. That is where the word ‘yoga’ comes from: ‘yuj’ means ‘to yoke’, to become one. Then there is *sālokya mukti*: one lives, dwells, in the same status as of the Divine, so even when one is in hell one is experiencing Ananda. Why? Because of *sālokya*; he is dwelling in the same status as of the Divine. That is why the *Gita* says, “somebody who is remembering me, regardless of whoever he is, you must treat him as a great sage and a saint because I do not abandon him nor does he leave me”. The *Gita* speaks about it thus: because he lives in constant remembrance, his status becomes the same as that of the Divine. The third type of *mukti* is *sāmīpya mukti*: All the time the Divine is near us – be it Kurushetra, be it the battlefield, be it the dense darkness, we know that he is near us. And as a result of these three, we are led to *sādrishya mukti*, also known as *sādharma-gati*: our nature begins to become the same as the nature of the Divine. All the divine elements of the divine Supernature, if we can call it that, begin to manifest in our human nature. That is how the life is transformed, grows beautiful and fulfils the purpose for which creation is made: delight within, delight around, delight in everything. This is the ultimate goal of existence.

Q: What is the true meaning of ‘offering’ and ‘surrender’?

A: Consecration perfected becomes surrender. Before consecration there is offering. So offering, consecration and surrender: these are the three steps. Offering is when I am doing a work as an offering to the Mother in inner prayer; consecration is when I make it sacred; and surrender is when I am completely given in all details to the Divine.

Homage to Mr. Gopal Ahir

Sebastian

When Gopal entered my life at the beginning of 2017 and volunteered to support the *Savitri* Encyclopedia, there was a question about whether it would continue to exist. For almost a year and a half I had been working on this project, which was initially conceived as a community and collaborative project aimed at helping people gain easier and deeper access to Sri Aurobindo's magnum opus. However, as it became evident that I would be leaving Auroville for personal reasons and resuming my professional activities in Germany, it was uncertain whether and in what form the project could continue. Despite all our wishes and visions, no helpers seemed to emerge.

That's when Shraddhavan informed me that an old friend of Savitri Bhavan had expressed interest in contributing to the project and, during the days he planned to visit Auroville, he would like to use the time to learn from me. From the very first moment, it became clear how deeply devoted Gopal was to Mother and Sri Aurobindo. So, despite initial challenges with the technical aspects of the work, he plunged into the project and began tirelessly immersing himself first in the technical operation and then in the development of the project. Within a short time, he became the driving force in the editorial work of the *Savitri* Encyclopedia and seemed to have invested many hours of daily work into the project.

After handling several smaller tasks, his main task became the integration of Shraddhavan's *The English of Savitri* into the Encyclopedia, and Gopal tirelessly worked on the gradually appearing volumes of Shraddhavan's significant legacy, integrating selected sections and word explanations into the online project. Alongside all this collaboration, a beautiful and increasingly profound

friendship also developed. Not only did he send children's clothing designed by his son from the USA for my nephews and nieces, but he also opened up to me more and more with his questions about personal practices with Mother and Sri Aurobindo. Earlier this year, during a European tour with his wife, he even visited me in Germany, resulting in a deeply heartfelt and beautiful encounter.

The completely unexpected and shocking news of Gopal's passing was a great shock for me and for all of us involved in the project. Just two days before, I had been in touch with Gopal discussing the next steps, and he had mentioned a severe cold that was bothering him. The void left by him as a collaborator and friend is painful, and it is uncertain whether someone with such unwavering dedication and great enthusiasm for the *Savitri* Encyclopedia project will emerge again. In deep sorrow and profound gratitude, we bid farewell to Gopal and wish his soul all the best for the further journey in the service of Mother and Sri Aurobindo.



News from Savitri Bhavan

March 2023 – September 2023

March:

- 1 A new project called **The Dream Divine Series** has been started from March 2023. Its aim is to make newcomers understand the aims and ideals of Auroville and learn about the life and works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother and about the Integral Yoga. Envisaged as a weekly session every Wednesday 4.30--5.30 pm, the series will include presentations, films, talks, etc. followed by a Q & A session. The first session was a Power Point presentation on the life and works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.
- 7 The third talk in the series on ‘Fundamentals of Sri Aurobindo’s Philosophy in *Savitri*’ was given by Larry Seidlitz on ‘The Psychic Being’. This talk is available on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N5gIne9H3Rw>
- 8 Dream Divine Series – Video of an interview of Shraddhavan by a Russian TV crew in the year 2013.
- 15 Dream Divine Series – ‘Benedictions of Auroville’, a slide-show with the Mother’s messages to Auroville was prepared and presented.
- 22 Dream Divine Series – Dr. Alok Pandey gave a talk on ‘Towards a Spiritual Society’. To view the video, go to: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IF_GDxOGtD4
- 29 Dream Divine Series – a recorded talk to visitors from Kolkata given by Shraddhavan on ‘Savitri Bhavan and *Savitri*’ was shown.

April:

- 4 The fourth talk in the series on ‘Fundamentals of Sri Aurobindo’s Philosophy in *Savitri*’ was given by Larry

Seidlitz on 'Fate, Karma and Free-Will'. This talk is available on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2dw4xfULuII>

4 Heartfull Meditation with Avantika

19 Dream Divine Series – Manoj Pavithran conducted the 'Integral Yoga Practice Sharing Circle' for newcomers.



26 Dream Divine Series – Dr. Alok Pandey spoke on 'Collective Yoga' to the newcomers and Aurovilians. The video can be accessed through this link: <https://www.youtube.com/live/ejhOznbIdkU?si=MJ4zthxek4s2aQMY>

May:

2 The fifth talk in the series on 'Fundamentals of Sri Aurobindo's Philosophy in *Savitri*' was presented by Larry Seidlitz on 'Error, Falsehood and Evil'. To view the video please click the link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1H-Eec-KFhw>

3 Dream Divine Series – Presentation on 'To be a True Aurovilian'

10 Dream Divine Series – video on 'Building Matrimandir – A Labour of Love' Auroville 1971- 2008

- 17 Dream Divine Series – Huta’s ‘Pictures of Sri Aurobindo’s Poems’ – A film produced by the artist with Sunil-da’s music.
- 24 Dream Divine Series – Dr. Alok Pandey spoke on ‘Human Relationships in Integral Yoga’ for the newcomers and Aurovilians. To see the video please click the link:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IBT6kheg-Ls&t=17s>
- 31 Dream Divine Series – ‘Matrimandir – The Twelve Gardens’, a recorded presentation by Marie in 2011.

June:

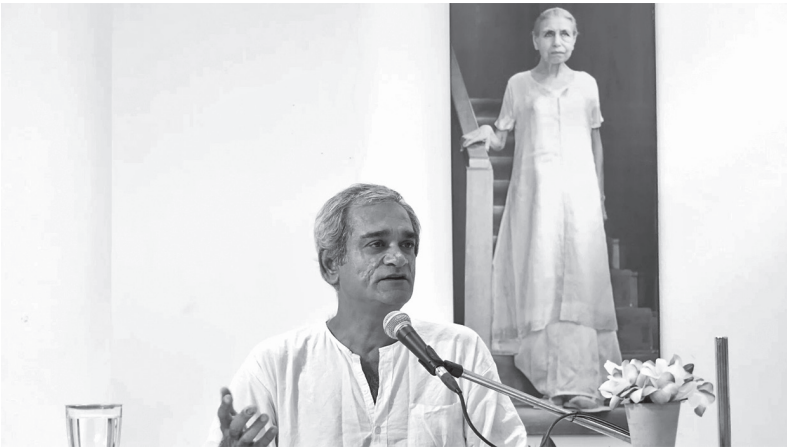
- 4 The last and concluding 12th volume of the series *The English of Savitri* by Shraddhavan was released by Dr. Alok Pandey with deep gratitude in her honour on her birthday, 4th June.



- 9 Book Release – Dr. Ananda Reddy released his book of two volumes entitled ‘Savitri: *Its profound magnificence and significance*’.



- 7&14 Dream Divine Series – Ashesh Joshi spoke on ‘Sri Aurobindo’s Vision and Integral Yoga’ followed by questions and answers from the participants. The link to view the video:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XevmiNW2QcY>



- 21 Dream Divine Series – ‘*Auroville – A Dream of the Divine*’ – a documentary film shown to the Newcomers, Aurovilians and guests.
- 28 Dream Divine Series – ‘*Musings on the Mother*’. Dr. Ananda Reddy shared his experiences. To see the video, go to: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ntRSUyQT8oc>

July:

- 5 Dream Divine Series – ‘Towards a Sustainable Future’. This was a documentary film made in 2004.
- 19 Dream Divine Series – ‘Introduction to Savitri’. This was a video of a class conducted by Shraddhavan in 2017.
- 26 Dream Divine Series – A talk by Dr. Alok Pandey on ‘The Ideal and Purpose of Auroville’. The video is available on Savitri Bhavan website. The link is <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4I3hqSBVZz4>

August:

- 2 & 9 Dream Divine Series – An interview with Shraddhavan was shown in two parts.
- 7 – 20 Exhibition: 191 paintings inspired by *Savitri*. The artist Aghni is the founder of Centro Sri Aurobindo e Mere in Italy. These paintings illustrate Book 2, Canto 1, ‘The World-Stair’. Each painting was accompanied by one verse of the canto.



- 12 ‘To Please Sri Aurobindo’ – A birthday offering and a Loving Homage to Shraddhavan by Arulvazhi Education Centre. This was a replay of two audio skits narrated by Shraddhavan. The first skit was on *Savitri* and the second one was titled ‘An Endless Beginning – Sri Aurobindo and The Mother as the Heralds of the Supermind’. Dance performance by students of Arulvazhi Education Centre led by Nimila Arun.



- 16 Dream Divine Series – Huta’s introduction to ‘Meditations on Savitri’ followed by a slide-show was shown to the newcomers.
- 22 The sixth talk in the series ‘Fundamentals of Sri Aurobindo’s Philosophy in *Savitri*’ was given by Larry Seidlitz on ‘Supermind and the Life Divine’.
- 23 The concluding session of the Study Camp on *The Life Divine* by the Sri Aurobindo Society, Pondicherry was held at Savitri Bhavan.
- 27 As a part of Auroville Literature Festival held from 25th to 27th August 2023, the last-day sessions were held at Savitri Bhavan:
 The first session was the book launch of *The Deliverance*, written by Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyaya, translated by Dilip Kumar Roy and revised by Sri Aurobindo.
 The second session was on ‘*Savitri* and the Future Poetry’. Dr. Ananda Reddy was in conversation with Sarani Mondol Ghosal and moderated by Goutam Ghosal.
 The third session was ‘The Secret of the Vedas’ with Sampadananda Mishra (author of *The Rishi Tradition of Bharat*), Sudarshan Ramabadrnan and Lopa Mukherjee.
 The fourth session was a book launch of ‘*Sanskrit Citations in The Life Divine*’ by Anilbaran Roy. The book was released by Dr. Alok Pandey.



The last session was on ‘*The Life Divine* and the Path of the Supramental’ and ‘Integral Yoga’ by Dr. Alok Pandey and Larry Seidlitz.

- 30 Helmut gave a power point presentation on ‘The History of Savitri Bhavan’ and explained some details which have not been shared before.



September

- 6 Dream Divine Series – Dr. Alok Pandey gave a talk on ‘The Path of Works’.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3A7HRqsZO48&t=2s>
- 13 Dream Divine Series – video entitled ‘City of the Dawn’ was screened.
- 19 Seventh presentation based on ‘Fundamentals of Sri Aurobindo’s Philosophy in *Savitri*’ by Larry Seidlitz was on ‘The Occult Worlds’.

- 19 Presentation on ‘The Matrimandir Lake’ – An information sharing meeting was held in the Sangam Hall of Savitri Bhavan.
- 20 Dream Divine Series – ‘Flowers are the Moment’s Representations’ a recorded talk by Narad.
- 27 Dream Divine Series – video on ‘Auroville: Exploring Alternatives’ was screened.

The English of Savitri - Synopsis of Contents

The English of Savitri

Sri Aurobindo's Savitri

Vol -1	Book One	The Book of Beginnings
Vol -2	Book Three	The Book of the Divine Mother
Vol -3	Book Seven	The Book of Yoga
Vol -4	Book Ten	The Book of the Double Twilight
Vol -5	Book Two	The Book of the Traveller of the Worlds (Cantos One to Four)
Vol -6	Book Eleven, Book Twelve	The Book of Everlasting Day, and Epilogue
Vol -7	Book Two	The Book of the Traveller of the Worlds (Cantos Five and Six)
Vol -8	Book Two	The Book of the Traveller of the Worlds (Cantos Seven to Nine)
Vol -9	Book Two	The Book of the Traveller of the Worlds (Cantos Ten and Eleven)
Vol -10	Book Two	The Book of the Traveller of the Worlds (Cantos Twelve to Fifteen)
Vol -11	Book Four, Book Five	The Book of Birth and Quest, and The Book of Love
Vol -12	Book Six, Book Eight, Book Nine	The Book of Fate, The Book of Death, The Book of Eternal Night

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	The Book of the Traveller of the Worlds (Cantos Ten and Eleven)	Vol -9
	The Book of the Traveller of the Worlds (Cantos Twelve to Fifteen)	Vol -10
Book Three	The Book of the Divine Mother	Vol -2
Book Four	The Book of Birth and Quest	Vol -11
Book Five	The Book of Love	Vol -11
Book Six	The Book of Fate	Vol -12
Book Seven	The Book of Yoga	Vol -3
Book Eight	The Book of Death	Vol -12
Book Nine	The Book of Eternal Night	Vol -12
Book Ten	The Book of the Double Twilight	Vol -4
Book Eleven	The Book of Everlasting Day	Vol -6
Book Twelve	Epilogue	Vol -6

The Dream of Savitri Bhavan

We dream of an environment in Auroville

that will breathe the atmosphere of Savitri

that will welcome Savitri lovers from every corner
of the world

that will be an inspiring centre of Savitri studies

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

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

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

TO SUPPORT THE WORK OF SAVITRI BHAVAN

Savitri Bhavan is mainly dependent on donations, and all financial help from well-wishers is most welcome. Please help the dream of Savitri Bhavan to become a reality.

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100% exemption is available for offerings from Indian taxpayers under section 35 (i) (iii) of the IT act.

By Cheque or DD: they should be made payable to **Auroville Unity Fund** and sent to the following address: Savitri Bhavan, Auroville 605101, Tamil Nadu, Phone +91 (0)413 262 2922.

By Bank Transfer: they should be made payable to Auroville Unity Fund **Acc. No.** 10237876031 (80G or Ordinary Receipt) or Auroville Unity Fund **Acc. No.** 31612623238 (for 100% tax relief under SSR), **State Bank of India, Branch code** No. 0003160 **IFSC** code SBIN0003160 Auroville International Township. **Purpose:** “SAVITRI BHAVAN”. **Note: PAN Number is essential.** If you send an offering in this way, please inform Savitri Bhavan at the same time, so that a receipt can be sent as soon as possible.

When using the **QR code**, tax exemption receipt is **not** possible.

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Savitri
is a Mantra
for the transformation
of the world

The Mother