CHAPTER – VIII
CONCLUSION
CONCLUSION

It is now an accepted truth that Sri Aurobindo is one of the uncontestably outstanding personalities who pushed India suddenly into the Modern Age and signalled the dawn of Modern World through his masterpiece Savitri. His poem Savitri is not only an artistic creation but also the container of lofty thoughts and mystic experiences of the Philosopher – Yogi of the New Age and Spokesman of New Truth.

Sri Aurobindo is one the few poets who dared to probe on the phenomenon of ‘death’ as the basic evils, doubts and tribulations of this world are due to death and fear of death. Man’s emotive response to Beauty, Birth, Love and Death can neither be categorised nor explained easily. In the early years of his Baroda period he had begun probing the problem of death. As the years passed, he began gaining new insights into the dark power of death. The story of Savitri’s total victory over death in the Vanaparva of the Mahabharata particularly fascinated him and he thought that he would make a poem out of it embodying his insights and ensouling his aspirations. He made a beginning with a narrative poem on Savitri which means to be a companion-piece to Urvasi and Love and Death and the main stress was on the story element, for Sri Aurobindo was then only at the beginning of his yoga sadhana. But in the meantime politics demanded his full – time attention. He took it up again in twenty after his settlement in Pondicherry. The poem Savitri entered into his mind after the sudden death of his wife which was a shocking experience to him.

Sri Aurobindo began meditating on the mystery of Death that holds mankind in thrall. When the overmind realisation occurred to him in 1926, there was room for a more fundamental transformation of the poem. It is an attempt both to retell the old story Savitri as found in the Mahabharata and to record in symbolic terms his mystic experience, embodying stairs of spiritual aspiration and involving trails and struggles, doubts and difficulties, but culminating in spiritual victory. He presented through the poem Savitri his
speculative consciousness, imaginative fervour and visionary experience and tried to offer consolations in mitigation of it through the central character Savitri whose Power of Love brings about the vanquishment of death and inaugurates the region of the Life Divine. Savitri is verily Shakti, the Divine Creatrix who changes and recreates and transforms man and earth-life and death itself.

As an epic, Savitri is structured on the classical western ideal of twelve books and thematically it is related to Vedas and Upanishads. It exhibits the chief characteristics as well as well-known conventions of secondary epics. The scope of Savitri is cosmic and its action takes place on earth, in heaven and in hell. Like Adam in Milton's Paradise Lost the central figure savitri represents the entire human race. The action of Savitri is narrated in a ceremonial style which is sometimes deliberately distanced from ordinary speech and proportioned to the grandeur and formality of spiritual subject. Hence there are Latinate diction, stylized syntax and wide-ranging allusions. It uses Homer's method of repetition, virgil's technique of enlargement and Dante's art of harmonising philosophy and poetry. Like Shakespeare and Milton in English Literature and Toru Dutt in Indo-Anglian Literature, Sri Aurobindo used blank verse in 24000 lines in a masterly fashion with beauty and vigour. Savitri has been reckoned to be longest poem in the English Language, longer than Browning's The Ring and The Book which holds the place of runner-up with its 21,116 lines. Like Dante's The Divine Comedy and Milton's Paradise Lost, Savitri has a Universality in its theme being concerned with the destiny of Man and his relations with the Divine. Like the two Indian epics, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, Savitri has a romantic inwardness, an insistent stress on the mystical, though it does not combine this with a violent and sensational exteriority in the theme as the two Indian epics do. Savitri can be regarded as a consummation of the tradition of the inward or romantic epic exemplified by Wordsworth in The prelude and by Keats in Hyperion. The theme of Savitri was also treated by Toru Dutt, but in a different metrical pattern that of moving quatrains. Sri Aurobindo like Tagore and Goethe, picked up on ancient story and developed it as a legend summing up the past and treated it on a Subtler Plane making it a symbol of Spiritual Evolution.
projecting the future and a philosophy based on his own experience and employed blank verse keeping in mind the epic grandeur of his poetry. Blank verse in *Savitri* becomes ecstatical and greatly melodious in many places.

There is remarkable imaginative as well as emotional precision in the diction developed by Sri Aurobindo in *Savitri*. It is Neoclassical, Metaphysical and Modernistic even as it is Romantic. He resorted to the use of technical terms and unusual turns of speech, like the Metaphysicals and to the use of Latinisms and involved syntax ('Periods') like Milton. In his satirical and reflective passages, he instinctively goes back to the vigour of Dryden and pope, their epigrammatic and antithetical manner. He desired that his diction should have an Upanishadic charm and depth and a Kalidasian richness and concreteness and used the English Language to convey his total vision of the Modern World.

The Modernist Critics are of the opinion that the language of *Savitri* is vague, obscure and rhetorical. But such criticisms can be countered because *Savitri* is a Spiritual epic and some technical terms are bound to appear but these words are neither vague nor rhetorical; they are concrete images for the poet. Sri Aurobindo is free from the incoherence of Blake, the prosiness of Wordsworth, the vagueness of Shelley, the fragmentariness of Keats, the tortuous self-division of the later W.B.Yeats and the retardation that the brain causes in the poetry of T.S. Eliot. But the real achievement of Sri Aurobindo as a poet consists not in his poetic diction, but in the fact that the bulk of his poetic output has in it an aroma of the spirituality of India and is as much an expression of a Personal Vision as that of the Spiritual Personality of India.

Sri Aurobindo mastered and evolved a style and technique of his own, to suit the substance that come to him from the planes of 'Overhead Consciousness'. In the Planes of 'Overhead' Poetry Spiritual Power undergoes translation in poetical terms and the Overhead Spiritual Powers charge with new or universal significance. For such an unusual theme and aim, Sri Aurobindo needed a new poetic technique and had to forge an "Overhead" aesthesis as the main instrument of his poetic expression. *Savitri* is the
embodiment of the voice from above to explore new avenues of human consciousness to bring down the Supramental not for personal salvation, but for the deliverance of the entire humanity. *Savitri* is great in its fusion of mysticism, philosophy and poetry in the true tradition of Indian Vedic Poetry. It is thus a prophetic vision of a glorious future, not a conventional recital of an ancient Hindu Legend. Its forbidding length and intricate symbolism may deter the casual reader and the careless critic but its thematic richness and the technical skill make it an outstanding achievement in Indian English Romantic Poetry.

Sri Aurobindo has given us a new psychology and new philosophy, a new poetry and criticism, a new vision of the integral life that embraces both Spirit and Matter, Earth as well as Heaven. He wished to make his poem *Savitri* a foretaste of the 'Future' poetry of the "Overhead" planes, the poetry that crystallizes at auspicious moments into the mantra and wished to reproduce something of the Valmikian Upanishadic and Kalidasian Verse movement. He has worked nearly for fifty years from the 'soul's great deeps' and today *Savitri* is considered an excellent tour de force of the "future" poetry in form and spirit as it quickens the process of evolution to bring about the emergence of the Supramental Consciousness in man. Sri Aurobindo stands as the Creator of a New Vedic and Upanishadic Age of poetry one can hardly think of another genius in India after Vyasa that had this encyclopaedic range of knowledge and insight and this comprehensive seership. It is in this light that Sri Aurobindo is not only a great poet, but a poet's poet.