CHAPTER – IV
SAVITRI – PART II
THE BOOK OF BIRTH AND QUEST

In THE BOOK OF BIRTH AND QUEST, we come to the terrestrial drama in the epic. The fulfilment of the Divine Mother's boon to the king Aswapathy begins here. The first two cantos of the poem describe the birth and childhood of Savitri and also details the ideal, harmonious atmosphere of Madra, the kingdom of Aswapathy where Savitri grows up.

At a high moment of spring when all nature is at beauty's festival, a celestial spirit descends on earth answering her cry for bliss. A ray has descended on earth bridging the yawning distance between man and god. It mediates between heaven and earth and also renders things of heaven into human form. Its light connects the mortal in his transient state with the unknown:

A mediating ray has touched the earth
Bridging the gulf between man's mind and God's
Transplanting heaven into a human shape
Its brightness linked our transience to the unknown.\(^47\)

The Divine Power that had struggled before with mortal dearness and pain is now once again back from her home in the Beyond and has again taken up the task left unfinished:

One had returned from the transcendent planes
And bore a new the load of mortal breath,
Who had striven of old with our darkness and our pain.
She took again her divine unfinished task. \(^48\)

The child has arrived on this globe which is strange and new to her but deep within she remembers the distant home from where she has come. She lives guarded and safe in the luminous chamber of her spirit. Though she dwells among humans, she belongs to a higher diviner kind and hence in the midst of all she is apart and alone:

Arrived upon the strange and dubious globe
The child remembering only a far home
Lived guarded in her spirit's luminous cell,
Alone mid men in her diviner kind.\(^49\)
In childhood Savitri dwells in a separate air aloof from her people. So she is compared with a strange bird that rests on a hidden branch laden with fruits lost in the green glory of the forest or that flies above divine unreachable heights.

*Her nature dwell in a strong separate air*
*Like a strange bird with large rich-colored breast*
*That sojourns on a secret fruited bough*
*Lost in the emerald glory of the woods*
*Or flies above divine unreachable tops.\(^5^0\)*

The child Savitri, the embodied divine flame grows up in a land lavishly endowed by nature, physically, aesthetically and spiritually. She thinks what is unthinkable by others, sees what is not seen by others. She is aware of the universal self in all, she encounters in these human beings reflections of her own being, counterparts, extensions of herself. Though they are separated in the outer physical bodies and their mental constructions, they are linked to her spirit by inner ties. But only a few responded to her call to rise and enlarge themselves. Still fewer recognize the veiled divinity in her and make an effort to companion her godhead with the godhead of their own soul:

*Only few responded to her call:*
*Still fewer felt the screened divinity*
*And strove to mate its godhead with their own.*
*Approaching with some kinship to their heights.\(^5^1\)*

Savitri is much too great for them, too vast for their comprehension; they cannot understand or entirely know her with their minds but they feel a divinity in her and obey its call. Some people unable to rise to her sublime heights they seek to bring her down to their own levels. When they are obliged to organize their active lives around her, they hope for their own petty human needs, to draw upon her glory and grace to which their souls have fallen captive.

*Unable to mount to levels too sublime*
*They yearned to draw her down to their own earth*
*Or forced to centre round her their passionate lives*
*They hoped to bind to their heart’s human needs*
*Her glory and grace that had enslaved their souls.\(^5^2\)*

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\(^{52}\)
Savitri struggles to uplift ignorant people to divine status; but they themselves do not want to change. As she is frustrated by human beings, she becomes one with the phenomena of nature. More often she feels closeness with nature around. Animals, birds and other sub-human species are drawn to her by the force within her. They respond to her presence and touch with the simplicity that is natural to them:

Oftener in dumb nature's stir and peace
A nearness she could feel serenely one;
The force in her draw earth's subhuman broods
She joined the ardent-hued magnificent lives
Of animal and bird and flower and tree.
They answered to her with simple heart.  

There are many who are drawn to Savitri but she does not find among them even one who could be her partner, who is designed by providence to be her companion self, who is created along with her to be one with her, like God and Nature that are one in partnership.

Among the many who came drawn to her
Nowhere she found her partner of high tasks,
The comrade of her soul, her other self
Who was made with her, like God and Nature, one.

Savitri dwells alone like a single Light of perfection, a pure shining image in a solemn shrine.

The outer physical form of Savitri grows transparent and reveals to Aswapathy the manifesting deity within. An instant revelation comes upon Aswapathy. His vision is no more limited by his physical eyes. Breaking through the walls if the outer form which hide the inner truth, he sees behind the familiar limbs of his child a great and unknown spirit shaped as Savitri. Aswapathy speaks to Savitri, who is looking at him in her divine mind transcending Love, words that come direct from the supernal heights that are beyond human sight. He addresses Savitri:

O spirit, traveller of eternity
Who camest from the immortal spaces here
Armed for the splendid hazard of thy life
To set thy conquering foot on chance and time.

A mighty presence still defends thy frame. Aswapathy asks her to venture “through the deep world” to find her mate who will be her ‘mover’ and ‘guide’ and who will be ‘the lyrist’ of her soul’s most intimate chords. He says that surely somewhere unknown to her waits her destined lover for her to whom she is unknown. She shall find her way to him; there is no need for any external guide because she has the strength of her soul which is her only support:

For somewhere on the longing breast of earth
Thy unknown lover waits for thee the unknown
Thy soul has strength and needs no other guide
Than one who burns within thy bosom’s powers.

Aswapathy says that when she finds her mate both of them will grow and prosper like two vibrating kindred harps, one even in beats of variation and joy responding to each other in divine and equal notes, finding fresh notes in the eternal theme of life:

Then shall you grow like vibrant kindred harps,
One in the beats of difference and delight,
Responsive in divine and equal strains,
Discovering new notes of the eternal theme.

These words of Aswapathy become the seed of everything to follow; they start Savitri on her mission in life. Something supernatural opens the sealed doors in her heart and she is shown the great work for which strength has been given to her:

The word was seed of all the thing to be
A hand from some greatness opened hearts locked doors
And showed the work for which her strength was born.

Savitri’s journey runs across crowded cities, forts, gardens and temples, She journeys through all these retreats, halts in the hermitage during nights or rests in the open, on the banks of rivers, in solitary tracts in desert spaces. Still Savitri’s fateful quest is not fulfilled; her search is long and tedious, but she continues it.
THE BOOK OF LOVE

The Book of Love describes the sudden meeting of Savitri and Satyavan. The poet describes their meetings in detail for two reasons: First, it gives the poet an opportunity to sing the glory of Love. Secondly, the poet can highlight the virtues of Satyavan. The meeting between Savitri and Satyavan is said to be the unique example of Spiritual Love. According to professor V.K. Gokak: “Not only has this episode the purity of the love scenes in Shakespeare’s Romeo and Juliet and Kalidasa’s Shakuntala; it is distinguished by a platonism whose lustre makes even Shelley’s splendours somewhat mawkish and immature”.

Savitri arrives at a place full of soft and delicate air which looks like of youth and joy. It is as if the earth is having a romance with her lover, heaven. Though unaware, Savitri nearing her goal, the place and time of it are close. In life it looks as if all is a play of chance, but it is only an appearance which hides the working of an all wise fate. Chance is but one of the agents of the determining will. In this game of the cosmos nothing ever takes place except at its appointed time and previsioned place. This is the scene chosen by the indeterminable Mother of the universe in the form of Savitri, for Her brief felicity. Here away from the crowd and noise of the world, she commences to play her part in the joy and struggle of the world. She happens to see Satyavan in the destined spot and hour in the forest for the first time for whom she has journeyed so far:

So he appeared against the forest verge
Inset twist green relief and golden ray
As if a weapon of the living light,
Erect and lofty like a spear of God
His figure led the splendour of the morn.

Savitri saw in him a symbol figure, the genius of the wood. His eyes had the wide look of young gods. His head was that of a young Rishi, touched with Spiritual Light and his body was as attractive as that of a Lover and as majestic as that of King. Suddenly she recognises in him her destined Lover.
and Lord. Satyavan also saw Savitri and came marvelling across the golden grass and to see who it was. His gaze meets her gaze. Savitri recognizes that Satyavan is her eternal soul-mate. In her eyes Satyavan saw the gaze of his future, the embodiment of his aeonic dreams, the mystery of immortal rapture made his very own in material shape. Sri Aurobindo says that, Love is a glory from the spheres of eternity. Love has brought down power from eternity to firmly establish himself in life on earth. Men seem to meet each other as if by accident but in fact it is all by some secret design of providence. Savitri and Satyavan knew each other although unknown to sight and although life and mind hand altered to hold a new significance:

"These bodies summed the drift of number less births
And the spirit to the spirit was the same." 61

One sacred moment had knit their hearts together again and made them each other's forever, recovering the recognition in the deeps. As a star attracts another star, in heavens, so Savitri and Satyavan look at each other in wonder and rejoice. It happens at times that when two persons meet, the inner being of one recognizes the inner being of the other behind the veil of the outer senses. The inner deeper self which is more conscious begins to grow aware of the relation. It is a moment which has the touch of eternity. A fresh hour begins the womb of a New Age:

Attracted as in heaven star by star,
They wondered at each other and rejoiced
And wove affinity in a silent gaze
A moment passed that was eternity's ray
An hour began, the matrix of new time. 62

Satyavan introduces himself to Savitri as the son of king Dyumatsena and asks: Thou who art more than a mortal what is thy name? Savitri introduces herself to Satyavan:

Musing she answered: “am Savitri”,
Princess of Madra. Who art thou? What name
Musical on earth expresses thee to men?
What trunk of kings watered by fortunate streams
Has flowered at last upon one happy branch?.... 63
Savitri also asks him why, inspite of the fact that he was, as was apparent, the scion of a royal family, he made the pathless wood his dwelling.

Satyavan replies that king Dyumatsena, his father lost his eyesight and misfortune befell him. He came and settled down in the woods and Satyavan also lived here contented with the solitude and reigned here in a kingdom of nobler kind. He has cultivated an inner vision that inspires him to carve, point and sing. He also says that his spirit is liberated as he has realised the portions of the divine in men. His body, however, is still attached to the law of Death. Inspite of this fact, he is happy because he feels that Savitri is there to change everything:

But thou hast come and all will surely change;
I shall feel the world-mother in thy golden limbs...
And hear her wisdom in thy sacred voice.64

The union of Savitri and Satyavan is really the union of the Prakriti and the Purusha. Therefore, this union is celebrated on a cosmic scale. Sri Aurobindo says that fate ties a knot with morning’s halo threads on the high glowing cupola of the day:

On the day high glowing cupola of the day
Fate tied a knot with mornings halo threads.65

They are heart-bound before the sun who is their marriage fire. The wind is the priest who mutters the sacred verses amid the choral whisperings of the leaves:

The wedding of the eternal lord and spouse
Took place again on earth in human forms,
In a new act of the drama of the world
The united two began a greater age.66

Savitri gets down from the chariot, picks flowers, weaves a garland quickly and lays it on the bosom of Satyavan as a flower symbol of her offered life and touched his feet. The marriage garland and the fact that Savitri ‘bowed and touched Satyavan’s feet with her worshipping hands’ makes this one a traditional marriage. Savitri’s long search for her soul-companion makes it a marriage of the most romantic choice possible. The marriage fits in with a definite stage in the spiritual evolution of Satyavan and Savitri. They find the
fulfilment of their quest in each other. Together they are able to assert the victory of Love over Death. It is Savitri's victory but Satyavan was the occasion for it. This is what the two lovers were born to realise. V.K. Gokak says: “The Love at first sight in this episode does not need either to be cured or strengthened by second sight. It is not merely a platonic recognition of the other half but recognition that extends over a number of lives and is rooted in the unity of spirit. It is Aurobindoneanism rather than platonism.”

Satyavan showed to Savitri at the path's end his little hermitage adorned with creepers and red – climbing flowers. Savitri spoke out of deep joy and said that she would return to her father's house, inform her parents of the marriage and return to the hermitage. She mounts her chariot and speeds back to her father's palace but kept her eye on the receding figure of Satyavan.

For purity and for tenderness and for the soul that does not deny the body but gives to human values their due place in a scheme of life. It would be difficult to find a more powerful episode of Love in World's Literature. Sri Aurobindo had made an epic of what was only an episode in Vyasa and endowed the story with novel spiritual implications.
THE BOOK OF FATE

The Book of Fate depicts the approach of Narad, the heavenly sage to the earth chanting a song. Savitri also returns to her father's palace at this moment. Love has transformed the personality of Savitri. Sage Narad knows all about her but pretends ignorance unable to recognise her, he asks where she has been:

Who is this that comes, the bride
The flame-born, and round her illumined head
Pouring their lights here hymeneal pomps
Move flashing about her? 68

Savitri pays her respects to sage Narad and her father. She also discloses her choice of Satyavan as her life-partner but sage Narad's face falls. He speaks highly of Satyavan's virtues but adds that he has only twelve more months to live. The queen cries out in pain complaining against the mockery of grace:

Vain then can be heaven's grace
Heaven mocks us with the brilliance of its gifts
For death is a cup bearer of the wine
Of too brief joy held up to mortal lips
For a passionate moment by the careless gods.
But I reject the grace and the mockery.69

The queen asks Savitri to go forth once again and choose another for her mate but Savitri declines to change her decision. She says:

Once my heart chose and chooses not again,
The word I have spoken can never be erased
It is written in the record book of God.70

Savitri knows who Satyavan is, who she herself is and why she is here on earth. She has been born to be with Satyavan. Savitri affirms the strength of her spirit's will against the law of fate. She is sure that she has a soul which will reshape her destiny:

My fate is what my spirit's strength can make
My fate is what my spirit's strength can bear;
My strength is not the titan's, it is God's.71
The queen is a very forceful character in the Aurobindonian version. She raises all those questions of life which are usually asked by the agnostics to prove the non-existence of God. The dialogue between the queen and Narad might be related to the colloquy between Draupadi and Yudhisthira which also takes place in the Vanaparva of the Mahabharata.

In the Mahabharata, Draupadi is perturbed to see Yudhisthira, the follower of Dharma, suffering and Duryodhana, the follower of adharma prospering. Similarly, in the poem Savitri the queen is moved to imagine the suffering of her innocent daughter. She desires to know the sources of pain and suffering. She questioned sage Narad:

O seer, in the earth's strange twi-nature life  
By what pitiless adverse Necessity  
Or what cold freak of a creator’s will,  
By what random accident or governed chance  
That shaped a rule out of fortuitous steps,  
Made destiny from an hour's emotion, came  
The direr mystery of grief and pain?  
Is it thy god who made this cruel law?  
...  
And he stands helpless to defend or save?72

The queen's frustration can easily be understood she has only one daughter as a gift from the Divine; even this daughter is going to be a widow after a year. Perhaps it is her despair which makes her remark that there is nothing like God or soul. She finds the soul to be only 'a dream' and a fiction sensed in trance.

In the Mahabharata, Draupadi argues that Yudhisthira is not in a position to discriminate between right and the wrong because his intelligence is tarnished by attachment (Moha). Like Draupadi, the queen is also critical of God because he has deprived man of an ability to make a right choice:

He walks why his own choice into Hells trap;  
This mortal creature is his own worst foe  
His science is an artificer of doom;73
Sage Narad contradicts the queen and tells her that it is her ignorance which makes her deny the existence of God and the soul. God is there, though. He is covered by darkness. Sage Narad asks the queen: can we say that there is no sun because the sun is not seen at night? His reply is equally convincing:

O queen, thy thought is a light of the ignorance,
Its brilliance curtain hides from thee God's face.  

Sage Narad's defense of God reminds us of Yudhisthira in the Mahabharata, who reproaches Draupadi by saying that her doubt about God's existence is really due to her stupidity of mind.

Sage Narad foretells the death of Satyavan; but he also explains the positive value of pain and suffering caused by the fear of death. Pain is the hammer of the God's to break the resistance in mortal's heart. He who would save the world must share its pain. Pain is not something to be condemned, for it shakes off our inertia and goads on to move towards the divine:

Pain is the hammer of the gods to break
A dead resistance in the mortal's heart,
His slow inertia as if living stone.
If the heart were not forced to want and weep,
His soul would have lain down content, at ease,
And never thought to exceed the human start
And never learned to climb towards the Sun.  

The king Aswapathy asks Narada:

Is then the spirit ruled by an outward world?
O seer, is there no remedy within?
But what is fate if not the spirit's will
After long time fulfilled by cosmic Force?
I deemed a mighty power, had come with her;
Is not that power the high compeer of Fate?

Narada replies ambiguously that the will of God working in time appears to him as fate:

The will of timeless working out in time
In the free absolute steps of cosmic truth
 Appears a hard machine or meaningless fate.
Man can really know the truth and be free only if his will could be made one with God’s if his thoughts could be in tune with God’s thoughts. Fate is truth working itself out in ignorance. Finally, Fate is what the spirit of man chooses: If human will could be made one with God’s If human thought could echo the thought of God Man might be all-knowing and omnipotent; In the Indian philosophy, Fate is sometimes equated with the word ‘karma’. According to the law of karma every good act or bad act, produces a certain result which cannot be escaped. The law of karma really leads on to the law of transmigration. The result of a man’s action may not come out at once or even in the present life. The actions of the past life determine the course of the present life and the actions of the present life, along with the residue of past actions, will determine the course of the future life. This is the principle of rebirth.

Sri Aurobindo seems to believe in the law of karma. But as a seer, he visualizes that this law can carry its function only to a certain extent. This law is not the sole determinant of the life of a man. A man has his soul which can cancel the law of karma to enable him to live in the Light of Knowledge:

“Fate, whether purely mechanical or created by ourselves,” says Sri Aurobindo, “... is only one factor of existence”, being and its consciousness and its will are still more important factor.... when we become consciously spiritual beings, that change can cancel or wholly remodel the graph of our physical fate.”

In the poem Savitri, Satyavan’s death really commences a greater life for man. All conspires to fulfil God’s secret plan. The world is not built with random bricks of chance. Many are masons obeying the unseen that have built it. And of these master – builders Savitri is one.

Sage Narad says to the king Aswapathy and queen that a day may come when Savitri has to stand alone and fight to save herself and the world.
So leave her to the mighty self and fate to handle her affairs and deal with Death:

"Think not to intercede with the hidden will,
Intrude not 'twixt' her spirit and its force
But leave her to her mighty self and fate."\textsuperscript{79}

Thus the poem \textit{Savitri} deals with the riddles of fate, at the same time it stresses that man has a free-will to mould his fate. Fate is said to be a dominant force, which determines the course of man's life. Further, man can mould or atleast modify his fate. Fate might be changed or cancelled by the strength of the soul.
The Book of Yoga begins with a description of the wedded love of Savitri and Satyavan. Savitri is filled with great happiness in the company of her beloved husband. But soon Savitri feels the grief of all world coming to her and fear strikes her human heart when she remembers the fatal death of Satyavan as set by sage Narad. She keeps the pain to herself and watches the world go happily by unconscious of its doom. She goes through all her household duties gracefully and quietly, pressing back her grief when it surges up in her bosom. One night as Savitri was musing upon the approaching fate, a summons from the summits of her being comes in a mighty voice, Savitri listens to the voice:

"Why cam'st thou to this dumb death found earth,  
This ignorant life beneath indifferent skies  
Tied like a sacrifice on the altar of time,  
O spirit, O immortal energy,  
If 't was to nurse grief in a helpless heart  
Or with hard tearless eyes await thy doom?  
Arise, O soul, and vanquish time and death."

Savitri surges out of the physical body, stand a little outside of it, looks in to the depths of her subtle being and there in its heart divines her secret soul:

Then Savitri surged out of her body's wall  
And stood a little span outside herself and looked into her subtle being's depths  
And in its heart as in a lotus - bud  
Divined her secret and mysterious soul.

Savitri knocks and presses against the door that guards the inner life; there is a loud cry from within asking her to go back to earth lest she be tortured and put to death. The guardian serpent at the threshold rises hissing, hounds of darkness growling, strange little beings of varied shapes scouling and staring, wild animal roarings fill the air with terror and menace. Savitri enters the inner worlds which can be broadly divided into the World of Inconscience, the World of Ignorance and the world of Superconscience.
In the scriptures there is a mention of two doors, the lower guarded by the serpent, the Muladhar centre of the Sushumna and an extremely narrow door in the thousand lotus centre in the crown. These inner countries stand for six Chakras of Tantra. The transformation of the mortal nature into the divine is not possible unless the "Immortals golden door" is opened and the being starts to ascend to the higher centres. These centres are sources of all the dynamic power of our being. According to tantrics there is the serpent power at the lowest centre, Muladhar which sleeps in coils and the seeker has to arouse this power of our being.

Savitri at first enters the region of Subtle Matter and forces her way through the body to the soul. At first it is all chaos; life is struggling to emerge from Matter into some incipient mind:

Across a perilous border line she passed
Where life dips into the subconscient dusk
Or struggles from matter into chaos of mind.82

Savitri then walks into the corridors of inner time, she breaks out into a realm of forms, of the beginnings of finiteness of the world of senses but the soul is not there:

She crossed through spaces of inner self
And trod in passages of inner Time.
At least she broke into a form of things,
A start of finiteness, a world of sense
But all was still confused, nothing self-found,
Soul was not there but only cries of life.83

She also watches the plane of unrestrained Life -Force which is really a state of utter confusion:

A horde of sounds defied significance,
A dissonant clash of cries and contrary calls,
Feelings pushed through a packed and burdened heart;
Each forced its separate inconsequent way
But cared for nothing but its ego's drive.84

Savitri sees the nether realms of life in which all kinds of contraries are mixed up. Truth and Error, Wisdom and Ignorance, Death and Life are all mingled
in this valley of fleeting Gleams. Souls trapped in this Regions become agents of life's desires not their masters:

- Souls trapped in that region never can escape
- Agents, not masters, they serve Life's desires
- Soiling forever in the snare of time.

Savitri journey on and steps into a brilliant, ordered space where life is tamed and under control, her will and fancy curbed. Mind and Sense govern the Life – Force. Reason dominates with its rule of symmetry. The soul is enthroned on a bench of law. She enters the country of Thought – Mind where there is an air of stability. She is greeted by a being of imposing self-importance who welcomes her to that of thought's finality and urges her to rest there where alone she can find the perfection and certainty she is seeking for:

- Here was a quiet country of fixed mind,
- Here life no more was all nor passion's voice;
- A cry of sense had sunk into a hush.
- Soul was not there nor spirit, but mind alone;
- Mind claimed to be the spirit and the soul.

But Savitri perceives that all there is only a limiting, orderly reign of the intellect and declines to stay in that realm of apparent knowledge. She proceeds to find her soul. She comes to a road thronged with a luminous company of gods, goddesses and beings rushing towards the world to save it. Savitri comes across three soul-forces the Mother of Sorrows, the Mother of Might and the Mother of Light – within her heart who claims to be her soul.

Savitri tells each one of these three goddesses that they are only a portion of her soul put forth to help mankind and help the travail of time. She knows that they are typal beings; as such they are imperfect. She promises to help them when she returns there after realising her soul.

Savitri is moving from one inner country to another in search of her soul, she comes through a tunnel dug in the last rock out there where a Deathless Sun was shining. On the way she perceives the various aspects of the spirit and different levels of consciousness. In the end, Savitri arrives at a house made of flame and light. There she meets her Secret Soul:
Here in this chamber of flame and light they met
They looked upon each other, knew themselves.
The secret deity and its human part,
The calm immortal and the struggling soul.  

The phrase "tunnel dug in the last rock" is the passage from agnachakra, to
the space within the heart in Savitri's body to the space between the seventh
and eleventh ring on the spinal cord or the space between the heart, where
the soul is supposed to reside in the body. Having perceived all other statuses
of the Divine through vision Savitri comes here to realise and to be one with
the Secret Soul in its own cavern.

When the serpent power reaches the thousand petalled centre,
Sahasrara, the seeker gets many occult powers by controlling the regions
beyond mind. The final union of the individual soul with the Cosmic Soul
becomes possible when the final door is opened by the power and when it
enters the mystic cave.

Savitri thus realises her soul and becomes one with the Cosmic Self. It
is this Savitri, the Power of Infinity, that challenges Death to get back the life
of her husband, Satyavan.
THE BOOK OF DEATH

The Book of Death relates the death of Satyavan in the forest, which reminds us of the 'symbol dawn' of Sri Aurobindo. Savitri's foreknowledge of doom and her yoga of preparation to face the doom comes to an end. She is awake with the dawn and reminds herself "today then is that day" when Satyavan is fated to die as foretold by the heavenly sage Narad. Savitri completes here morning rites, and pays regards to and receives benediction from the elders. She hears Satyavan's voice who was getting ready for the forest with an axe. Savitri asks Satyavan to take her with him to the forest, as she cannot bear separation from him. Satyavan tells her to obtain his parents permission. Savitri pleads and obtains the permission of her mother-in-law to accompany Satyavan to the forest:

Then the doomed husband and the woman who knew
Went with linked hands into that solemn world
Where beauty and grandeur and unspoken dream,
Where Nature's mysteric silence could be felt
Communing with the secrecy of God.89

Savitri accompanies Satyavan, admiring the multifoliate wood echoing with the peacock's cries. She closely follows him with her heart heavy of the impending crisis. Savitri feels an intense anguish within her, for her husband may die any moment but she keeps herself composed and silent. On reaching the forest Satyavan starts collecting fruits and flowers. When he began chopping wood, soon, his doom approached him. He weilds "a joyous axe" and sings "high snatches of a sage's chant" and while felling a branch, he suddenly perspires profusely. He is overcome by fatigue and his head begins to ache. He feels a strange pain and seeks rest from his labour. Satyavan cries to Savitri:

"Such agony rends me as the tree must feel,
When it is sundered and must lose its life."90

Satyavan lays his head upon her lap and urges here to guard him from the 'evil fate'. He expresses the hope that death may pass as Savitri was besides him:
Then Savitri sat under branches wide,
Cool green against the sun, not the hurt tree
Which his keen axe had cloven, - that she shunned;
But leaned beneath a fortunate kingly trunk
She guarded him in her bosom.91

Suddenly, Savitri felt the presence of someone 'vast and dire':
Something had come there conscious, vast and dire.
Near her she felt a silent shade immense
Chilling the noon with darkness of its back.92

There was no noise of animals or birds. The world was then filled with terror and anguish because of the presence of 'Death'. It was Death in visible form. The terror and silence of the atmosphere help Savitri realise that Satyavan has passed away:
There was no cry of birds, no voices of beasts
A terror and an anguish filled the world,
As if annihilation mystery
Had taken a sensible form...
She knew that visible death was standing there
And Satyavan had passed from her embrace.93

Sri Aurobindo says, Satyavan is one who is the seeker of truth and has seen the glimpses of Truth and God in the phenomena; so his mind is liberated but he does not know how to divinise his body. So Satyavan has to meet with his death to liberate his body from the pulls of Inconscient Matter.

Death says Sri Aurobindo, is the force of disintegration; it is the power of ignorance which stands for the complete oblivion of the existence of God. Death comes to those who isolate themselves from the Cosmic Spirit and Transcendent Reality.

"Death of Satyavan", says mother, "becomes the symbol of the earth's creation. Of its fate and through Savitri, of its liberation. Savitri faces the doom in order to give the solution."94
NOTES AND REFERENCES

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60. Sri Aurobindo: Savitri, p.393.
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91. Ibid., p.564.
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