PREFACE

Sri Aurobindo ranks among the great personalities of the world. A Mahayogi, a politician, a freedom fighter, a nationalist, a social reformer, a prose writer, a critic, a story writer, a dramatist – Sri Aurobindo holds a unique place among the great poets of the world. He is the poet who is gifted with poetic talent for working on the basic instincts and the higher nature of man.

Sri Aurobindo nurtured entirely on European literature and culture for the first twenty years of his life. It was only after his return to India in 1893 that he plunged into the mainstream of Indian life and literature and he learnt several native languages including classical Sanskrit. In this period, Sri Aurobindo studied the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, the Puranas, works of Kalidasa and other authors and he also mastered Vedas, Upanishads and other Scriptural writings. Thus, he delved deep for working out the Indian myths, legends and symbols in his poetry.

In chapter 1, the growth of Indian English poetry have been analysed. Sri Aurobindo is a pioneer poet in the sense that his spiritual poetic creation reveals humanistic aspects of life. Sri Aurobindo holds an unique place among the great poets of the world. Sri Aurobindo’s spiritualism is revealed through Savitri and
other poems. **Savitri** becomes an *Odyssey* of world literature written in English.

In chapter II, **Savitri: A Legend and a Symbol** and other poems of Sri Aurobindo have been critically analysed. The different characters involved in these works have also been dealt with. Different journeys of the mind is an important message of this work. Sri Aurobindo’s aim in writing **Savitri** was to create an awakening in man as how to cross the existing physical barriers emerging of human body for the higher vision of life. Savtiri is a superhuman who can put life into death. The aim of this thesis is to communicate the message of **Savitri** to the common man of society. In our society, there is need to bring an awareness of linking physical and spiritual together so that men can achieve happiness to maximum possible extent on this earth. Sri Aurobindo regards earth as the right place for worshipping and for helping men.

In chapter III, Legend and symbol in the poetry of Sri Aurobindo have been analysed. The greatness of the art of symbolic expression depends on the closeness of the Truth seen by the poet and its expression through the image. The whole of **Savitri** is, according to the title (**Savitri: A legend and a symbol**) a legend that
is a symbol. The keynote of *Savitri* thus lies in symbolism. Sri Aurobindo links together the varied mythical images and symbols for highlighting the evolutionary process of an ordinary human being in order to achieve the super human spiritual powers.

In chapter IV, the many sided vision as expressed by Sri Aurobindo in his poetry have been analysed. *Savitri* is the ‘Supreme revelation of Sri Aurobindo’s vision. It’s subject is universal and its revelation is prophetic. *Savitri* is, at its highest, a revelation and a flame: a revelation of the supra-mental Truth and a flame of man’s aspiration for immortality. The main theme of *Savitri* is the conquest over Ignorance and Death represented by Savitri. Savitri comes to earth for seeking ‘the unknown’, she is a lady of ‘super human heights’ with an inner vision of ‘motionless verge’. Savitri represents boundless knowledge which is greater than man’s thought. She regards earth as the right place for human love and desires to create heaven here. She is in the possession of God’s grace and sees His form in all beings.

Savitri sails the boat of her journey against the currents on the rudder of human love. She is self poised character who begins her life after death on this earth. She grows in the house of Aswapathy up to a maiden goddess (devarupini). Her father
instructs her to seek and choose a husband for herself. She thus begins the journey of the interior regions of human consciousness in the quest of her divine husband and finally she finds one in Satyavan (truthfulness). She chooses him as her husband inspite of the warning by sage Narada for the short span of Satyavan’s life.

In chapter V, the similarities between *Srimad Bhagvadgita* and the poetry of Sri Aurobindo have been analysed. The supreme objective of Gita is that man’s salvation must be ensured in every situation. According to Gita, there is no condition in the world, which make man’s salvation impossible. The reason behind is that God is present everywhere. By ‘right use’, man rises above, both pain and pleasure – a stage which becomes a steadfast wisdom of Gita and the knowledge of over-soul in Sri Aurobindo’s philosophy.

To attain eternal unison, three yoga ways have been expounded in the *Gita* – the Path of Action, the Path of knowledge and the Path of Devotion. To employ these three in the service of others is the Path of Action. The realization of one’s identity and judgment within one’s own self after dissociating from it is the path of knowledge and surrendering oneself to God, in the path of Devotion.
In chapter VI, Language and Versification, the poetic craft of Sri Aurobindo have been analysed. It is important to understand and appreciate the form and structure of a poem as *Savitri* precisely because the form is the vehicle which carries the divine message. The most impressive thing about the form of this poem is the integral relationship of its structure to imagery. In fact, Savitri is Sri Aurobindo’s mantric epic. One of the great achievements of Sri Aurobindo in *Savitri* is the creation of a great epic diction which is commensurate with the lordliness of the theme.

To Sri Aurobindo, Savitri was a field of experimentation to see how far poetry could be written from one’s own yogic consciousness and how that could be made creative. It was the result of many retouching that such a perfect work of art 'Savitri’ could be made. *Savitri* as a magnum opus of Sri Aurobindo’s poetical work becomes an Odyssey of world literature written in English. It is a precise and colourful expression of the subtlest possible spiritual states as well as integrated expression of all the variety of Sri Aurobindo’s own experience. He had, therefore, to evolve a poetic diction for this purpose. He needed to do this in English not only because that was the only language in which he could express himself but also because he wished to communicate his vision in a
language which had a world status. Sri Aurobindo used the English language to convey his total vision to the modern world. Apart from Savitri, his other poems also work on the Indian aesthetic values and the spiritual principles of life.

Sri Aurobindo is an extra-ordinary poet. Extra-ordinary in two senses: generally religious poets do not reveal the worldly aspect and humanistic vision; they concentrate themselves only to the divine attributes and providing some clues which merely remain religious perspectives of life. Sri Aurobindo is such a poet who tries to seek divine in man beyond too much formalism. He stresses again and again that by concentrating and by training, human mind can be developed so as to attain the status of divinity itself. These are the reasons which attract my attention to study Sri Aurobindo as a divine and human poet.

Before closing these prefatory observations, I would like to place on record my gratitude to a number of scholars, critics, my teachers and authorities of many institutions of higher learning and education who have directly or indirectly contributed to the completion of this work. It would be impossible to mention them all by name, I would gratefully acknowledge my indebtedness to some
of them from whom I have received direct help and advice in the pursuance of this work.

In the first place, I would like to express my profound gratitude to my renowned and learned supervisor Dr. O.P. Budholia, Professor, Govt. College, Bhitarwar, Gwalior (M.P.). He supervised my work from its inception to the final stage. Without his scholarly help and guidance this work would not have been completed.

I am also thankful to the Librarians of Delhi University Library, Jiwaji University Library, K.R.G. College Library, M.L.B. College Library for providing me with all facilities I needed towards the completion of this work.

I would like to dedicate this work to my grandfather Late Sri Nihal Singhji (Scholar). I am obliged to my parents Shri Manmohan Singh and Smt. Satpaul Kaur for their moral support. I am thankful to my daughters Aastha and Jasmeet for their cooperation. I also owe my thanks to Dr. (Smt.) Hemlata Bitharia and Smt. Mridula Budholia for their inspiration for completing this work.