CHAPTER-V

SPIRITUALITY AS THE LEITMOTIF IN HIS POETRY (HIS OVERHEAD POTERY)
Spirituality As the Leitmotif in His Poetry
(His Overhead Poetry)

Mira Alfassa who is known to the name of the Mother has once remarked about the philosophic vision of Sri Aurobindo:

It is an enormous spiritual revolution rehabilitating matter and the creation.

Here the term "rehabilitating" denotes a procedure meant for restoring to health or normal life by training and therapy after imprisonment. The term at the same time governs two apparent contradictory processes: matter and creation. It becomes obvious that the presence of matter is therein creation and creation finally denotes two things: the cultural evolution and the upgradation of human consciousness to the level of Satchitananda, the highest form of the evolution of consciousness. Sri Aurobindo talks of the range of poetry which governs the cultural and spiritual processes as the theory of evolution. Sri Aurobindo stresses repeatedly on the Vedantin philosophy for its evolution.

Poetic experience, to Sri Aurobindo, is an experience of the psyche, of human sensibility which, atleast in the responses to the basic vicissitudes of man's life and destiny, does not vary with the colour of skin, eyes or hair. Therefore, as Mira Alfassa suggests in her statement, the situation during Sri Aurobindo's time
was complicated. One sees to have "schizophrenia in the national psyche and again in individual psyche. The divide in the national psyche is between the literatures of the older indigenous traditions who evaluate current literature in the vernaculars which maintain continuities with the classicism and the critics who lost their links due to historical reasons."\(^1\) Here, one frequently finds the schizophrenic behaviour: the critics make an application to the critical criteria of Indian Poetics in their evolutions of old Sanskrit Poetry and current vernacular poetry. They also switch over to the Western critical apparatus in appraising English poetry or even poetry in their mother tongue.

According to Indian Poetics, which Aurobindo applies linguistically in the composition of his mantric poetry, shows the fact that the - "chemistry of emotions is escalated to a magical alchemy in the creative blending of feelings highlighted by Indian theory or clarifies the reluctance of Sanskrit Poetics to equate the final state of repose (visranti) in relish with either specifically ideational (savikalpa) or totally non-ideational (nirvikalpa) meditation."\(^2\) The Indian Poetics finally accomplishes the effective states of mind through its emotional theory (vibhava, anubhava, sancharibhava). Thus Sri Aurobindo concentrates on the state of nirvikalpa (meditation), which becomes his mantric poetry in his philosophic vision; and it provides a vision and a moral lesson to create a perfect harmony and coherence between the spirit and the
matter. For example, in his short poem *The Meditation of Mandavya*, Sri Aurobindo regards God present among all the objects of nature, matter and beyond, not in any form as a conscious *void*:

> And now I say there is no God at all,
> But only a dumb void that belches forth
> Numberless larvae and phantasmal shapes
> Into a void less happy than itself
> Because this feels. O, if this dream were true,
> This iron, brute, gigantic helpless toy
> They call a world, this thing that turns and turns
> And shrieks and bleeds and can not stop, this victim.³

The poem cited above is based on the theory of Indian Poetics that blends the theory of various emotions. God as "dumb void" becomes *adbhuta* rasa. The aesthetic context created by the poet is both a representation and re-representation as the process of rehabilitation. He begins with the abiding affective reactivities of man (*sthayibhava*) which have been shaped by nature (*prakrti*) and aquired culture (*seela*). And they correspond to sentiments of "Organised Constellations around an entity."⁴ Triggered by the stimuli, the latent reactivity becomes manifest as an excited emotional state. As in ancient Greece, aesthetic theory was developed first in relation to drama and then transposed to other literary categories. In drama, human beings are
presented in situation that re-present life. Ultimately, all literatures produce *bibhatasa* as the leitmotif of human emotion and human evolution, because *bibhatasa* inspires and instructs us. One finds the miraculous power of *bibhatasa* when Keats writes the line, "through verdurous glooms and winding mossy ways" or when Racine's Phedre announces the ultimate penance she decided upon:

Par un chemin plus lent  
descendre chez les morts.  
(Through a road more long)  
(descend among the dead)⁵

Sri Aurobindo while analysing the metaphysics of his poetry comes very near to the theory of emotions of Indian Poetics. The theory of rasa finally leads to the realization of the highest through undergoing the experiences of various *bhavas*. For example, Sri Aurobindo comes to the *sthayibhava* of *Santa rasa* through *bibhatasa* in the following lines:

Not Love, but Death disguised that stokes its food  
And all good in the world is only that,  
A death that eats and eating is davoured,  
This is the brutal image of the world.⁶

The term "brutal image" defines yet the range of aesthetics in human life. The figurative expressions were but different modalities of the simile and all that figures were born from the
womb of the simile (an image). It is now appropriate to define the
term image with reference to Sri Aurobindo's phrase "brutal image":

The image is a pure creation of the spirit. It cannot
emerge from a comparison but only from the
bringing together of two more or less distant
realities...... No image is produced by comparing
........... two disproportionate realities. A striking
image on the contrary, one new to the mind, is
produced by bringing into relation without
comparison two distant realities, whose relation the
spirit alone has seized.7

Yet another feature that continues in the evolutionary
theory of Sri Aurobindo is his Overmind/ Overhead philosophic
vision. Aesthetic, as we have analysed, is concerned mainly with
beauty, and more specifically with rasa. It denotes a particular
mind set, the vital feeling and the sense to certain "taste" which
may and may not be with the motifs of spiritual thinking. Aesthetic
covers the mental range of the author and the reader. Sri
Aurobindo distinguishes between the literary aesthetics and his
vision of Overhead. He points out about the philosophy of
Overmind thus:

The Overmind is essentially a spiritual power. Mind
in it surpasses its ordinary self and rises and takes
its stand on a spiritual foundation. It embraces beauty and sublimates it; It has an essential aesthetic which is not limited by rules and canons; it sees a universal and an eternal beauty while it takes up and transforms all that is limited and particular. It is besides concerned with things other than beauty or aesthetics.....It has the truth of spiritual thought, spiritual feeling, spiritual sense and that at its highest the truth that comes by the most intimate spiritual touch or by identity. Ultimately, truth and beauty come together and coincide, but in between there is a difference.⁸

Sri Aurobindo here speaks of two things separately: beauty and truth. If the beauty reveals the physical aspects, it remains at a distance from the essentials of truthfulness. He, at the instance of Indian Poetics, creates two sense of beauty: bhava and its transpersonalization. The real idea of beauty or the highest truth of human life can hardly be confined to any rules and regulations. The range of real poetry is to transform what is personal into the universal validity of human mind; and this universal validity rationalizes the art of objective views or the art of sadharnikarna. This is the stage which is described by the famous Indian poetician, Bharata: "niyatkrit niyam rahitam"- the world of the poet is a world without rules and regulations. This is the stage which is
being described by Keats: "Beauty is truth, truth beauty/ All ye know and all ye need to know." There hardly exists any difference between beauty and truth, because truth finally merges with the eternal beauty.

The following lines of *Savitri* describes in detail the image of "void" which is used recurrently in almost all the poems of Aurobindo. He prefers to use the term "void" in place of "vast" in order to work out his Overhead spiritual vision:

As if a child like finger laid on a cheek
Reminding of the endless need in things
The heedless Mother of the universe,
An infant longing clutched the sombre vast.⁹

He himself explains these lines with the instructions that one might have an objection to the word "finger" and the "clutch" which move one only to change "reminding" to "reminded" in the second line. It is not intended that the two images "finger laid" and "clutch" should correspond exactly to each other; for the "void" and the "Mother of the universe" are not the something. The "void" is only a mask covering the Mother's cheek or face.

What the "void" feels as a clutch is felt by the Mother only as a reminding finger laid on her cheek. It is one of the advantages of the expression "as if" that it leaves the field open for such variation. It is intended to suggest without saying it that
behind the sombre void is the face of a mother. The two other "as if"s ("As if a soul long dead were moved to live/ As if solicited in an alien world")\textsuperscript{10} have the same motive. The second is at a sufficient distance from the first and it is not obstrusive enough to prejudice the third which more nearly follows.\textsuperscript{11} For his Overhead philosophy of the spiritual vision, Sri Aurobindo follows the mantric effects of the Vedas. He is of the opinion that the Veda is primarily intended to serve for spiritual enlightenment and self-culture. He conducts his own enquiry on the hypothesis that the Veda has a double aspect (internal and external) and these two closely related aspects must be put apart. The central motif of the Vedas is the transition of human soul from death to immortality.

It is in this context that the Veda and the Upanishad have addressed man as "Amritasyaputra" (son of immortality). He also finds that the gods, as described in the Vedas, are the children of light and sons of "aditi" (infinity). At the instance of a linguist and philologist, Sri Aurobindo describes that words like the plants have a natural growth and have the organic form with certain seed-sounds as their basis. According to Sri Aurobindo, this world has been called as a place of swar and in this mere exists the Agnirasa (dominant emotion) that is the final emotion of sat-chita-ananda. This plane of super-conscient Truth, the Swarloka of Veda and "vijnanmaya kosha" of the Upanishad is the "summum bonum" of Sri Aurobindo's spiritual philosophy. The aim of his integral yoga
is transformation of man into Superman- a being who is expected for her/his avataar on this earth. In the Super- epic Savitri, he has defined the Vedic "rtan" thus:

The cosmic empire of the Overmind,
Time's buffer state bordering Eternity,
Too vast for the experience of man's soul:
All here gathers beneath one golden sky
The Powers that build the cosmos station take
In its house of infinite possibility;
Each god from there builds his own nature's world;
Ideas are phalanxed like a group of sums
Each marshalling his company of rays,
All Time is one body, Space a single look.¹²

Sri Aurobindo here tells about the unity of the space and the indivisibility of the process of time. The division of time is man-made and is a kind of illusion.

In the continuity of the spiritual vision of Sri Aurobindo, the influence of the Bhagavadgita can be felt and seen in the poetic composition of Sri Aurobindo. The genius of the Gita reveals the essence of the Upanishads, which are accepted as the scriptual tomes of the Vedic lore. Sri Aurobindo like other Rishis of India understood the Gita and has written some remarkable "Essays on the Gita". According to him, the Gita is a great synthesis of Aryan spiritual culture. It teaches us the technique of
action and inaction. It always lays emphasis on non-attachment to action and inaction. Sri Aurobindo has clarified that in the Gita the Sankhya and Yoga are only two convergent parts of the same Vedantic truth; it also deals with the two concurrent ways of approaching its realization: the one philosophical and intellectual analysis and the other institutional, devotional, practical, ethical synthesis.

The teaching of the Gita emphasizes inner askesis (i.e. 'Tapas' or austerity of conscious force) as distinct from physical asceticism. Sri Aurobindo explains Arjuna's dejection and bewilderment and his explanation related to the behavioural aspects of Arjuna becomes the stepping stone to his Overhead vision of life:

The refusal of Arjuna to persevere in his divinely appointed work proceeded from the ego sense in him, "ahamkara." Behind it was a mixture and a confusion and tangled error of ideas and impulsions of the sattwic, rajastic, tamasic ego, the vital nature's fear of sin and its personal consequences, the heart's recoil from individual grief and suffering, the clouded reason's covering of egoistic impulses by self deceptive specious pleas of right and virtue.¹³
Sri Aurobindo regards the renunciation and self-sacrifice as the virtues for the attainment of the highest form of life. The true renunciation lies in the inner rejection of desire and egoism. Without such norms, the outer physical abandoning of works is a thing unreal and ineffective. Knowledge (jnana) is essential, because there is other way to get the liberation from maya (illusion). Devotion is all important, but work with devotion are also important; by the union of knowledge, devotion and work the soul is taken up into the highest status of God.

Sri Aurobindo follows the higher teachings of the Gita in the composition of magnum opus Savitri. Its first character Aswapathy fails to realize the highest form of human actions and the blessed world of God. Savitri follows her journey through the external phenomenology of all the matter with some temptations; but she does not yield to these temptations and finally completes her journey:

Her being entered into the inner worlds
In a narrow passage, the subconscious's gate,
She breathed with difficulty and pain and strove
To find the inner self concealed in sense
Into a dense of subtle matter packed
A cavity filled with a blind mass of power,
An opposition of misleading gleams,
A heavy barrier of unseeing sight,
She forced her way through *body* to the soul,
Across a perilous border line she passed
Where life dips subconscient dusk
Or struggles from Matter into chaos of mind,
A swarm with elemental entities.\textsuperscript{14}

In the cited passage the metaphorical expressions such as "inner worlds", "the narrow passage", "the subconscious gate" bring forth the inner war of the protagonist with her enemies in the form of physical sensuousness and the range of the "subtle matter" which itself is the beginning of Savitri. But the Overhead projection of Savitri is based on the karmas. The actions are meant for *nirvana* and for the negation of lower particles of life or the matter for the realization of the highest boundary of soul. The constant will to force her way among the negatives of *tamas* (from "body to soul") she passes the boundary of the perilous zone of human sensibility where lies the subtle zone of "subconscient dusk" and finally overcomes the "elemental entities" of the physical world. Sri Aurobindo himself comments in his *Letters* about the chief motif of the composition of *Savitri*:

In this poem, I present constantly one partial view of life or another temporarily as if it were the whole in order to give full value to the experience of those who are bound by that view, as for instance, the materialist conception and experience of life, but if any one charges me with philosophical inconsistency then it only
means that he does not understand the technique of the Overmind interpretation of life.\textsuperscript{15}

In his dealing with spiritual Overhead vision, Sri Aurobindo makes an application to reveal the range of Ignorance which almost hinders the onward journey to Godhead of a sadhaka. He even remarks that whenever he is not satisfied with any passage in Savitri, he opts to change it. Even in the beginning of Savitri, one finds the following passage changed one for the philosophic vision of Overhead spirituality:

Then something in the inscrutable darkness stirred;
A nameless movement, an unthought idea
Insistent, dissatisfied, without an aim,
Something that wished but knew not how to be,
Teased with Inconscient to wake Ignorance.
A throe that came and left a quivering trace
Gave room for an old tired want unfilled,
At peace in its subconscious moonless cave
To raise its head and look for absent light
Straining closed eyes of vanished memory,
Like one who searches for a bygone self
And only meets the corpse of his desire.\textsuperscript{16}

Thus, Sri Aurobindo has made an application of the teachings of the Gita in his spiritual Overhead vision. But as bearing upon a practical crisis in the application of ethics and
spirituality to human life, he stresses more and more on human actions. Sri Krishna and Arjuna and the battlefield of Kurukshetra are within us, as also among our mundane environments. It immediately becomes symbolic of truth, consciousness and righteousness. It also symbolizes the struggling soul of Savitri in order to reflect her mental-intellectual apparatus and the trial and the tribulations of life. If one thinks of seriously the inner philosophic sermons of the Gita, one can achieve victory over the kauravas of our lower nature and attain the height of our evolutionary consciousness. This is also called in the philosophy of Sri Aurobindo as the Supramental Consciousness or the Evolutionary Philosophy.

The philosophy of evolution is related to the various theories put forward through Darwin's Origin of Species (1859) and The Descent of Man (1871) and it has since then become the dominant feature of speculative philosophy. Along with Darwin, Henri Bergson also advanced the philosophy of creative evolution. His philosophic vision of "elan vital" as the life force moves forward and backward and decides the divergent views of human life. The Matter has also been personified as elan vital in universe direction. Sri Aurobindo regards this doctrine of elan vital as secret God or veiled divinity; it negates the illusive view (mayic view) of the world. Bergson before Sri Aurobindo reveals in his, Creative Evolution that Matter and Memory give the fact that elan
vital is unceasing creativity without any end or goal. However, Bergson regards the fact that the supreme goal of the elan vital is to create gods or supermen. He also holds that through technology, man would so much mechanize the matter so that it would take the matter in the form of spiritualization. On the other hand, Sri Aurobindo talks of transforming the matter into spiritual mode. Sri Aurobindo not only perfected the way of Yoga, but also introduced newer assumptions in his integral philosophy.

As opposed to the older assumptions, Sri Aurobindo accepts the reality of the world of matter, life and mind that is world revealed by science. Formerly, according to the doctrine of jivanmukta or bodhisattva, the released soul in this earthly frame could preach the right way and through his example a jivanmukta was expected to lift the fallen masses into greater awareness. This leads him/her to the final goal of reality. Here is one example from Savitri: Savitri as a realized soul comes back to earth; she performs her spiritual journey which can also be called the evolutionary process in the words of Sri Aurobindo. She as a perfect female comes back on the earth as a simple human being. She as an ideal wife presses "the living body of Satyavan". She is very much conscious of her human figure and all her "being rejoiced" enfolding the body of her husband. Savitri, after triple forces of journey and as a realized soul, once again takes the form of an earthly lady. Sri Aurobindo paints the sole motif of Savitri as a wife:
Human she was once more, earth's Savitri
Yet felt in her illimitable change
A power dwelt in her soul too great for earth
A bliss lived in her heart too large for heaven;
Light too intense for thought and love too boundless
For earth's emotions lit her skies of mind
And spread through her deep and happy seas of soul
All that is sacred in the world drew near
To her divinity passivity of mood
A marvellous voice of silence breathed its thoughts.\textsuperscript{17}

Sri Aurobindo's integral philosophy is grand and vast, but it is a metaphysics. Metaphysics for me is not nonsense, but it is the deeper poetry of the soul evoking larger intellectual horizons and opening new perspectives and visions. But it can claim no scientific knowledge and cognition. It is enough if it succeeds in elevating people by its conceptual symphony. The Overhead/Supermind philosophy of Sri Aurobindo leaves an impression that nothing remains either to do or to think beyond its range. Freud, Jung and Sri Aurobindo think that social improvement can come about by improving the individual. This stand is consistent with the age old tradition of Indian sages who pleaded repeatedly the process of self-conquest. Society as the life blood of an individual moulds him as an ideal character of it.

Socialism gives meaning to each individual by using and
harnessing it in the service of the whole state. Thus, the evolution of an individual is a matter of state, society and the vigilant intellectuals. The Yogic process of Sri Aurobindo strengthens the resolve of man and makes him a man of national culture. Sri Aurobindo describes the collective responsibility of society and man to mould the ideals in a man in his short poem "Vision of Science":

In these grey cells that quiver to each touch
The secret lies of man; they are the thing called L
Matter insists and matter makes reply.
Shakespeare was this; this force in Jesus yearned
And conquered by the cross; this only learned
The Secrets of suns that blaze afar;
This was Napolean's giant mind of war
I heard and marvelled in myself to see
The infinite deny infinite. ¹⁸

Sri Aurobindo in this scientific poem analyses the mythic as well as the genius of the world. These great men at the instance of their leniency manage their personality among the odds of society. The infinite possibilities that one holds them within are evidenced only through the self-conquest.

As an optimist, he always thinks of Vedic culture which reveals the Vedic enunciation of Truth about the Supreme Reality- the one indivisible, omnipresent (sachchidananda). The
Life Divine of Sri Aurobindo has organized intuitive flashes into a steady light which throws a continuous illumination all along the path of the seeker, the pronouncements of Super-Consciousness in the Veda and the perceptions of pure Reason in the Upanishads. The chief mission of The Life Divine is to manifest the highest characteristics of being, of consciousness and of delight. This is the divine life, which is the aim of human life and its highest fulfilment. Sri Aurobindo is hopeful that in future, there will be a positive growth of the man on the leniency of Superman:

I saw the mornings of the future rise
I heard the voices of an age unborn
That comes behind us and our pallied morn
And from the heart of an approaching light
One said to man, "know thyself infinite
Who shalt do mightier miracles than these, infinite, moving and infinite."
Then from our hills the ancient answer pealed
For thou, O Splendour, art my concealed
And the grey cell contains me not, the Star
I outmaster and am older than the elements are
Whether on earth or far beyond the sun
I, stumbling, clouded, am the Eternal one.19

Evolution at present is an accepted fact, for the modern, elites do believe in its progression. Nietzsche, Bernard
Shaw, Bergson and others project the superman idea. Bergson, the French philosopher, is of the opinion that intuition would be the guide of man in future instead of his instincts, emotions and his vacillating reason. According to Sri Aurobindo, the new race would be truth-conscious and moral would be the hall mark. The main thing in us is our consciousness. It is from that point of view that the Gita declares that the Soul is indestructible. There is something higher and eternal in us and that is the most important part of us. The Gita says that there is Paramatma also in us along with the Atman. Paramatma is not somewhere in the temple, somewhere in the books, somewhere in the mantras of the Vedas or any other religious book. It is in the body that Paramatma, the Super-Conscious, is living, is recognisable, is realizable and that can be done by human efforts.

Sri Aurobindo in his spiritual explorations, finds that any enigmatic issue/problem can be solved in researching the inner Atmic (spiritual) force. There is a distinction between Atom and Atma: the atom is one sided while the atmic power is manifold having the capacity to guide, to mould and to uplift man from matter to metaphysics. The stage that humanity has already attained is not the matter but the efforts of consciousness. That introspection also gives rise to the discovery of our aspiration to hasten our progress towards perfection. Such aspiration is "utsa" (rise above) which pushes us upward, urges us to go onward. That
is the eternal fire (agni) mentioned in the Vedas. Sri Aurobindo has
told us that this inspiration of ours has a meaning. It is not mere
wishful thinking; it is not merely a dream or a hallucination. The
writers of the Upanishads said long ago, Astoma Sadagamaya
(lead me from falsehood to truth); Tamso Ma Jyotirgamaya (lead
me from darkness to light); Mrityorma amrtamgamaya (lead me
from death to immortality). This kind of theoretic postulations, Sri
Aurobindo materializes in the character of Savitri. Savitri, the
magnum opus of Sri Aurobindo brings forth the Overhead
philosophy in detail.

To Sri Aurobindo, human life is an evolutionary
process- a process which transforms man gradually from lower
nature to higher consciousness. Nature evolves Matter and
manifests life beyond life, and it also manifests Mind. Therefore,
"She must evolve beyond Mind and manifest a consciousness and
power of our existence, a Supramental or truthfulness and able to
develop the power and perfection of the spirit."20 What are the
original resources behind the story of Satyavan and Savitri derived
from the Mahabharata? It is rather very difficult to pin point one
reason for his intention for writing this epic. However, his intensive
reading and weighing the story and the life sketch of Satyavan and
Savitri inspired him for working on the superhuman concept. It is
appropriate here to quote a few lines of his letter written to Sri Man
Mohan Ghosh in 1899, his strong liking for a character like Savitri
in the entire narrative of the *Mahabharata*:

Are Rama, Sita, Savitri merely patterns of moral excellence? I, who have read their tales in the 'Swift' and mighty language of Valmiki and Vyasa and thrilled with their joys and sorrows, cannot persuade myself that it is so. Surely, Savitri that strong, silent heart with her powerful and subtly indicated has both life and charm, surely Rama puts too much divine fire into all he does to be a dead thing- Sita is too gracious and sweet, too full of human lovingness of womanly weakness and womanly strength ....... Are these not here sufficient materials of beauty for the artist to weave into immortal vision.21

This letter with some arguments of Sri Aurobindo for the devotion of *Shakti* either in the form of Savitri or Sita exhibits obviously the growth of some seeds in the inner regions of his mind. This way, he intends to work out seriously some philosophic revelations through the character of Savitri. Savitri as a woman of "strong silent heart" and with undaunting will power becomes perennial source to Sri Aurobindo for revealing the evolutionary process of human being. This incessant yearning of a spiritual leader of this country enkindles in him a curiosity to experiment the higher norms of poetry and the gradual growth of supermind in
man. Sri Aurobindo does not regard poetry as the entertaining form of literature; it is a serious art which serves both the purposes of life: *yoga* and *bhoga*. To quote Sri Aurobindo is to define the higher norms of the poetic art:

Poetry, like all art, serves the seeking for these things: this Aesthesis, this Rasa, this Bhoga, this Ananda; it not only brings us a Rasa of word and sound but also of the idea and, through the idea, of the things expressed by the word and sound and thought, a mental or vital or sometimes the spiritual image of their form, quality, impact upon us or even, if the poet is strong enough, of their world-essence, their cosmic reality, the very soul of them, the spirit that resides in them as it resides in all things. Poetry may do more than this, but this at least it must do to however small an extent or it is not poetry.\textsuperscript{22}

In this citation Sri Aurobindo comes near to Indian Poetics, which suggests not merely (though it is) the association of word and sound; but through them there comes a suggestion. This suggestion is named as "idea", "thought" or "world-essence" by Sri Aurobindo. In the opinions of Bhatta Nayak, Lollata and Sankuka, the process of *Rasa* or aesthetic delight takes three different stages to complete itself. The first stage is obviously that of *abidha* (denotation) where the words of dramatic text render
their primary meaning. The second stage is that of bhavana or sadhannikarana (world-essence/transpersonalization of emotions). Because of this phenomenon, the spectator's mind becomes free from all kinds of delusion or ignorance, and he attains the level of an ideal spectator (sahrdaya). In the third stage known as "bhoga" (delectation), his mind is:

Dominated only by satya or purity, to the utter exclusion of rajas and tamas, the tendencies of delusion and stupefaction in human nature; and then only he experiences the supreme joy of art, comparable only to the bliss emanating from the Supreme Brahman.²³

Sri Aurobindo too talks of the Supreme Brahman or the position of Ananda in the highest form of poetry. The sahrdaya (responsive reader) relishes the poetry from the detached angle, and with the necessary aesthetic or psychic distance (tatasthyā). It is only then that the real meaning or beauty of the poetic contents dawns upon him, and he becomes the recipient of the highest aesthetic bliss. Sri Aurobindo too remarks on the line of Indian Poetics about the universal validity of the poetic contents:

It is the universal Ananda that is the parent aesthetic and the universal Ananda takes three major and original forms- beauty, love and delight, the delight of all existence, the delight in things. Universal
Ananda is the artist and creator of the universe witnessing, experiencing and joy in its creation...... Ecstasy is a sign of a return towards the original or supreme Ananda; that art or poetry is supreme which can bring us something of the supreme tone of ecstasy.\textsuperscript{24}

Sri Aurobindo divides the conscious level of man into two parts: the lower consciousness and the higher consciousness or the Overhead spirituality. The former creates the opposites to a sadhaka; it symbolizes the working of ugliness in love and beauty, sense of attraction and repulsion, grief and pain, joy and delight. Thus, the duality of human nature becomes detrimental to the higher self of man. At the higher level of consciousness, there is always the sense tatasthya (neutrality). Sri Aurobindo defines it as the highest spiritual point of human nature and calls it "ecstasy". Sri Aurobindo regards the generic superiority of poetry for the visionary aspects.

\textit{Savitri} as a legend and a symbol serves the two prime motifs of Sri Aurobindo: it symbolically brings into being an evolutionary process; and an awakening in man as to how to cross the existing physical barriers emerging from human body for the higher vision of life. To make subsidiary the lower and sticky particles of human thinking, the character of Savitri attracts him and he writes this great epic for the regeneration of mankind. Sri
Aurobindo borrows the tale of Satyavan and Savitri from the original story of the *Mahabharata*. In the *Mahabharata*, this story has been told in seven cantos in the *Vana Parva* of the *Mahabharata* by Rishi Markandaya. He tells this story before the exiled king Yudhishtra. Aswapathy, the king of Madra, retires in seclusion from his kingdom for eighteen years in order to perform austerities as the representative of humanity. He gets a boon from the Mother Goddess for her incarnation in his house and she takes the form of Savitri. Thus, Savitri as a human being with perfect equanimity of human mind and the purity of conduct symbolizes in this epic a force that removes the prevailing darkness from the earth. The story of *Savitri: A Legend and A Symbol* has been divided into three parts having twelve books of forty nine cantos spread over nearly 24000 lines.

The keynote of Savitri lies in the symbolic presentation of the Overhead vision of Sri Aurobindo:

Satyavan is the soul carrying of the divine truth of being within itself but descended into the grip of death of ignorance; Savitri is word, a daughter of the sun goddess, the supreme truth who comes down and is born to save; Aswapathy, the lord of horses, her human father is the lord of *Tapasya*, the concentrated energy of spiritual endeavour that helps us to rise from the mortal to the immortal
planes; Dyumatsena, lord of shining Hosts, father of Satyavan, is the divine mind here fallen blind loosing its celestial kingdom of glory.  

These words of Sri Aurobindo reveal the fact that varied mythical images and symbols are yoked together for experiencing the evolutionary process in order to become superhuman power.

Sri Aurobindo's spiritual vision does not become a phantasy or an unrealistic-imaginative perception of human life; it is rooted deeply to realistic approach to human life. The earth as an organic force represents the divine force too. Sri Aurobindo thus hardly thinks of giving up any desertion of the divine earth in the quest of heaven. He becomes symbolic and suggestive of availing the fostering elements of the Divine Mother Earth for the pleasure of life. A Sri Aurobindo concept of heaven is not outside of human mind:

Thus, the concept of heaven lies in the mind of man. The evolutionary mind can transform the divine earth into heaven. There are opposite forces which are discernible in the respective sadhana of Aswapathy and Savitri. Some invisible powers create many obstructions in their journey to Godhead; but their strong will-power overcomes them and they finally succeed in their efforts.
The apparent three journeys in this epic bring into focus the inner consciousness of the being for the process of becoming. The journey of Aswapathy, the master of horses, signifies the tapasya of a seeker after God, but he swings between faith and doubt. At the first stage, Aswapathy remains engrossed for his personal emancipation which results into an obsessive stoppage of his journey. Aswapathy's mind was intoxicated "with nectarous rain" and he appears somewhat passionate with his personal desire which was filled "with luminous wine". At the later stage when he comes across the difficulties arising against his sadhana; he questions about his failures, and after sometime he finds an appropriate answer for his questionings thus: "The one he worshipped was within him now/ flame pure ethereal- tressed, a mighty face." As a sadhaka he confronts many difficulties in his onward march to Godhead. The poet also shows some obstacles which result due to an intervention of physical attraction and repulsion:

Against his spirit all is in dire league,
A Titan influence stops his Godward gaze
Around him hungers the unpitying void,
The eternal darkness seeks him with her hands,
Inscrutable Energies drive him and deceive,
Immense implacable deities oppose,
An inert soul and a somnam bulist Force
Have made a world estranged from life and thought.  

Aswapathy as a *sadhaka* is surrounded by some dark forces. He finds no surety of joys on the earth nor the happiness of the heaven. The desire for his personal objective being instils in him the divine power and he now becomes engrossed in the good to humanity enlarge. With a “motionless still” he delves deep and awakens a staunch faith in himself and this leads him to a complete success in his *sadhana*. Amidst such trance-like state and with the perfect equanimity of his mind, he sees the Divine Mother who promises him to incarnate as his daughter for the emancipation of human being:

The spirit of beauty was revealed in sound:
Light floated round the marvellous Vision's brow  
And on her lips the Immortal's joy took shape  
"O Strong forerunner", I have heard thy cry  
One shall descend and break the iron law,  
Change Nature's doom by the lone spirit's power.  
A limitless mind that can contain the world  
All mights and greatness shall join in her;  
Beauty shall walk celestial on the earth.  

The epithet "strong forerunner" describes an extension of Aswapathy's *Sadhana* for Super-Consciousness through the advent of Savitri. The phrase "to change nature's doom" becomes symbolic of removing the *tamas* (ignorance) from this earth. And
again, the phrase "a limitless mind" becomes indicative of the "Overhead" concept of Sri Aurobindo. From time immemorial, it has been the efforts of human beings to overcome the fear-psychosis either of life or of death or worldly pains and sufferings. The metaphor of "iron law" is followed by "all might and greatness". This shows the omnipotence of Savitri in human form.

She is a power who has been gifted with a strong will-power. She believes that "Fate shall be changed by an unchanging will." The arrival of Savitri on the earth symbolizes the overcoming of the fear-psychosis that arises due to the force of darkness. As a perfect human being, she shows an unflinching will to spread the light for others. At the instance of Milton's principle of justifying the ways of God to man in *Paradise Lost*, Sri Aurobindo too portrays the advent of Savitri on the earth with a divine radiance. Christ, a God-in-man, incarnates on the earth for the regeneration and emancipation of suffering of human beings. Savitri too stands for removing all karmic particles and the attachment of the scenes and situations from the earth:

A mightier influx filled the oblivious day;
A lamp was lit, a sacred image made
A meeting ray had touched the earth,
Bridging the gulf between man's mind.\(^{31}\)

As "a mystic acolyte", Savitri is trained in "Nature's school".\(^{32}\) She comes to the earth for seeking "the unknown"; she is a girl of
"superhuman heights" with an "inner vision of motionless verge". Savitri stands to discover "inward-musing shapes".\textsuperscript{33} She is the possession of boundless knowledge which is greater than man's thoughts. She regards the earth as the right place for human love and benevolence.

As a mystic and as a \textit{sadhaka}, she is in the possession of God's grace and sees His form in all beings: "Aware of the universal self in all/ She turned to living hearts and human form".\textsuperscript{34} She 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 the earth. She grows in the house of Aswapathy upto a maiden goddess (\textit{devarupini}). Her father instructs her: "seek and choose a husband for yourself." She thus begins her 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.

As a mystic acolyte, a being of superhuman strength and a girl of self-realization, Savitri never thinks of the warning she meets through the words of sage Narada. Savitri seems in the beginning of her journey an ordinary human being who, through her unconquerable will, aspires to make earth "a stepping stone to conquer heaven".\textsuperscript{35} The human weaknesses, to Sri Aurobindo, can only be overcome when a man being unaware of his consciousness
becomes a biological being who lives merely to feed the physical necessities of lower nature of human body.

Savitri as a ray of hope for humanity spreads the light on the earth. Divine as she is, she also exhibits a complete perfection of a human being and wins over the lower particles of physical self. The images like "Apsara", "luminous eyed on earth" and "lapis lazuli" and "pearl" make Sri Aurobindo an encyclopaedic poet who collects the ores and uses them for the norms of higher poetry:

Our destiny is written in double terms:
Through Nature's contraries we draw near God
Out of the darkness we still grow to light
Death is our road to immortality.36

The reaction of Savitri against the prophecy of Narada about her choice for a divine husband also makes her an introvert and listens to the inner voice of her conscience.

She writes her destiny through her karmas. She decides to marry Satyavan inspite of Narad's warning of his early death. She now realizes that it is through penances and austerities she can overcome the concept of time (death). She now prepares herself to begin her spiritual journey to realize the inner regions of human psyche. Sri Aurobindo concedes to the presence of the brute in the inner contraries of human mind. In Savitri, the canto
entitled *The Entry in Inner Countries and Triple Soul Forces* of Book VII, Sri Aurobindo portrays the character of Savitri like an ordinary human being. She also witnesses the presence of the lower impulses inside her mind when she undergoes Freudian complex of ego and libido. She brings into being the womanly weaknesses when she realizes inside her mind, "the never ending fire" of human nature. Sometimes the "passionate voice" of her mind makes her shirk from the higher pursuits of life, for she perceives a "chainless force" in her mind. The growth of her passions during her *sadhana* brings forth some heady draughts of "nature's primitive joy". She undergoes a kind of sensation that arouses in her

The fire and mystery of forbidden delight  
Drunk from the world- libido's bottomless well  
And the honey sweet poison wine of lust and death  
The cycles of the infinity of desire.

To get rid of the material points of attraction and repulsion is the essence of *karma yoga*. Like Milton's statement of universal validity,"The mind is its own place, and in itself/can make a Heaven of Hell, a Hell of Heaven", Sri Aurobindo also writes in Savitri, "our minds have made the world in which we live." Being aware of his inner conscience and spiritual glow, Savitri "has arisen up from body, mind and life/She was no more a person in a world/She had escaped into infinity." Savitri's oneness or the perfect
equanimity of human mind brings her near to Bhagavadgita's concept of sthitiprajna. Here are two examples: first from Savitri and second from the Bhagavadgita which bring into being Sri Aurobindo's Overhead vision of "Superamental Consciousness" and the state of sthitiprajna:

She was the single self of all these selves
She was in them and they were all in her
What seemed herself was an image of the whole.

In the same manner, Sri Krishna reveals His cosmic form before Arjun thus:

There is nothing else beside Me, Arjuna,
Like clusters yam-beads formed by
Knots on a thread, all this threaded in me.\(^\text{42}\)

As luck would have it, she meets her fate when Satyavan dies in the forest; here she faces the challenge of the dark forces- Death Itself. The physical encounter of Yama and Savitri creates a wonderful scene between the soul and the dark forces of life. Yama calls Savitri's insistence for having the soul of Satyavan back, the yearning of her passions. Savitri as the harbinger of truth negates all the charges put against her by Yama. She replies that the arguments of Yama are based on falsehood; they reflect: "said strains of truth". With a heavy heart she removes all the doubts lurking in the mind of Yama about the right intentions of her:
But I forbid thy voice to slay my soul
My love is not a hunger of the heart
My love is not the craving of the flesh,
It comes to me from God, to God returns.\textsuperscript{43}

Human love and truthfulness are the nucleus in the thematic contents of Sri Aurobindo's \textit{Savitri}. Love bereft of human desires and lust triumphs over death. This is yet another symbolic aspect of \textit{Savitri}. A deeper analysis for higher human love of \textit{Savitri} invites some fine parallels between T.S. Eliot and Sri Aurobindo. In \textit{Four Quartets}, T.S. Eliot also regards love as a regenerative process. He describes at the instance of Sri Aurobindo the higher human love thus:

\begin{quotation}
For liberation not less of love/ but expanding of
love beyond desire,/ and so liberations from the
future as well as the past.\textsuperscript{44}
\end{quotation}

\textit{Savitri} reveals her spiritual power by which she intends for restoring Satyavan's soul. Death as such withdraws its evil forces and restores the soul of Satyavan. This "dire- universal shadow" vanishes now into the "void", leaving Satyavan rejuvenated for the love of man on earth. This withdrawal of Yama symbolizes a triumph (\textit{Savitri}) over the dark forces (\textit{Death}) for the restoration of soul (Satyavan). Finally, she meets the person she adores:
And Satyavan and Savitri were alone
But neither stirred: between these figures rose
A mute invisible translucent wall
In the blank moments pause nothing could move
All waited on the unknown inscrutable will.45

The evolutionary process in Savitri carries a plan of transforming human into divine, earth into heaven and human love as the base for conquering the forces of darkness and ignorance. Savitri, a saviour of human soul, represents an absolute power and Satyavan represents human soul (Atman). So, the unity of Satyavan and Savitri symbolizes Satyam (truthfulness), Shivam (goodness), and Sundaram (beauty). This unity also symbolizes "an evolutionary process as first born of a new supernal race set in the world to refashion human nature and earth nuture."46 Sri Aurobindo in the chapter entitled Eternal Mate of Book XII, plans the transformational dialectics of mind into supermind:

He is my soul that gropes out of the beast
To reach humanity's height of lucent thought
And the vicinity of Truth's sublime
He is the godhead growing in human lives
And in the body of earth being's forms
He is the soul of man climbing to God
In Nature's surge out of earth's ignorance.47
Sri Aurobindo also succeeds in professing his vision of human love and womanly duties in Savitri. Inspite of her spiritual height, she promises Satyavan to her womanly passion:

She closed her arms about his breast and head
As if to keep him on her basom worn
Forever through the journeying of the years
So far a while they stood entwined their kiss
And passion- trenched embrace a meeting point
In their comingling spirits one for ever
Two souled, two bodied for the joy of Time.48

Sri Aurobindo is a mystic first and the last. In a number of poems such as *Thought the Paraclete, Rose of God* and *The Bird of Fire*, Sri Aurobindo has also revealed his mystical experiences and gives us the points of mantric literature. He has not clothed his mystical experiences in human symbols and allegories, in images and figures of earthly and secular life. He represents them in their nakedness, just they are seen and realized and therefore appear obscure to the common human understanding. But there are poems like *A God's Labour* which, with lucidity and ease of expression outline and explain the central beliefs. The poem reveals the poet's belief of God, of the problem of evil and suffering in the world and of man's evolution to greater and more glorious heights:
He who would bring the heavens here
Must descend himself into clay
And the burden of earthly nature bear
And tread to dolorous way.⁴⁹

In his evolutionary and Overhead vision, Sri Aurobindo finds the solution of the universal problem in the process of Transformation. It lies in the descent of higher consciousness into the human mind, vital and body. Man himself is the product of transformation of animal consciousness into human consciousness.

To Sri Aurobindo, man has to strive for self-evolution to accelerate the tardy and cumbersome process of Nature for becoming man-divine. There comes a time when a man surpasses the bounds of animalism and comes to the higher self through the process of evolution. He exemplifies the great mission by transforming himself in the first instance from a political revolutionary into a man-divine. What Mother remarks about the achievement of Sri Aurobindo holds still valid: "What Sri Aurobindo represents in the world's history is not a teaching not even a revelation; It is a decisive action direct from the Supreme."⁵⁰

Sri Aurobindo proclaimed that the appearance of Supramental Beings in the midst of human beings is inevitable, in the same manner as man has appeared in the midst of animals.
Supramental Beings will be the leaders and controllers of humanity. As man directs the activities of animal, the Supramental Being will direct the remaining persons of society. Sri Aurobindo is the poet who always advocated the Universal Town- Auroville at Pondicherry. In fact, the world vision of Sri Aurobindo is meant for uplifting a man from ignorance and bringing him to light and for leading a man from materialism to spiritualism.

The creation of Auroville brings forth "the universal vision of Savitri for it is meant to be the alchemy of a new spiritual faith emerging as a constant aspiration for Life Divine on the earth."¹⁵¹ Sri Aurobindo is an encyclopaedic poet who expresses a kind of spiritual experience in Savitri which very few people would aspirere or admit to aspiring to. His spiritual odyssey- Savitri has also modern relevance for its soothing effects to the tension - tormented men in this high - tech and dangerously ecological imbalanced age.
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