SRI AUROBINDO
AND HIS
SAVITRI: A LEGEND AND A SYMBOL
CHAPTER I

SRI AUROBINDO AND HIS SAVITRI: A LEGEND AND A SYMBOL (1)

Life of Sri Aurobindo

Sri Aurobindo is so very well-known today that no detailed account of his biography need be furnished for an understanding of the significance of his life. As stated in an Ashram Publication commemorating the seventy-fifth anniversary of Sri Aurobindo's arrival in Pondicherry:

Sri Aurobindo was born in Calcutta on 15th August 1872. In 1879, at the age of seven, he was taken with his two elder brothers to England for education and lived there for fourteen years. Brought up at first in an English family at Manchester, he joined St. Paul's School in London in 1884 and in 1890 went from it with a senior classical scholarship to King's College, Cambridge, where he studied for two years. In 1890 he passed also the open competition for the Indian Civil Service, but at the end of two years of probation failed to present himself at the riding examination and was disqualified for the Service. At this time the Gaekwar of Baroda was in London. Sri Aurobindo saw him, obtained an appointment in the Baroda Service and left England for India in January 1893.

Sri Aurobindo passed thirteen years, from 1893 to 1906 in the Baroda Service, first in the Revenue Department and in secretariat work for the Maharaja, afterwards as Professor of English and, finally, Vice-Principal in the Baroda College. These were years of self-culture, of literary activity -- for much of the poetry afterwards published from Pondicherry was written at this time -- and of preparation for his future work. In England he had received, according to his father's express instructions, an entirely occidental education without any contact with the culture of India and the East. At Baroda he made up the
deficiency, learned Sanskrit and several modern Indian languages, assimilated the spirit of Indian civilisation and its forms past and present. A great part of the last years of this period was spent on leave in silent political activity, ... The outbreak of the agitation against the partition of Bengal in 1905 gave him the opportunity to give up the Baroda Service and join openly in the political movement. He left Baroda in 1906 and went to Calcutta as Principal of the newly-founded Bengal National College.

The political action of Sri Aurobindo covered eight years, from 1902 to 1910...

Sri Aurobindo was prosecuted for sedition in 1907 and acquitted... In may, 1908 he was arrested in the Alipur Conspiracy Case as implicated in the doings of the revolutionary group led by his brother Barindra, but no evidence of any value could be established against him and in this case too he was acquitted. After a detention of one year as undertrial prisoner in the Alipur Jail, he came out in May 1909,... For almost a year he strove single-handed as the sole remaining leader of the Nationalists in India to revive the movement... But at last he was compelled to recognise that the nation was not yet sufficiently trained to carry out his policy and programme.... Moreover, since his twelve months' detention in the Alipur Jail, which had been spent entirely in practice of Yoga, his inner spiritual life was pressing upon him for an exclusive concentration. He resolved therefore to withdraw from the political field, at least for a time.

In February 1910, he withdrew to a secret retirement at Chandernagore and in the beginning of April sailed for Pondicherry in French India... Sri Aurobindo had left Bengal with some intention of returning to the political field under more favourable circumstances; but very soon the magnitude of the spiritual work he had taken up appeared to him and he saw that it would need the exclusive concentration of all his energies. Eventually he cut off connection with politics, refused repeatedly to accept the Presidency of the National Congress and went into a complete retirement. During all his stay at Pondicherry from 1910 onward he remained more and more exclusively devoted to his spiritual work and his Sadhana.

In 1914 after four years of silent Yoga he began the publication of a philosophical monthly,
the *Arya*. Most of his more important works, *The Life Divine*, *The Synthesis of Yoga*, *Essays on the Gita*, *The Isha Upanishad*, appeared serially in the *Arya*. These works embodied much of the inner knowledge that had come to him in his practice of Yoga. Others were concerned with the spirit and significance of Indian civilisation and culture (*The Foundations of Indian Culture*), the true meaning of the Vedas (*The Secret of the Veda*), the progress of human society (*The Human Cycle*), the nature and evolution of poetry (*The Future Poetry*), the possibility of the unification of the human race (*The Ideal of Human Unity*). At this time also he began to publish his poems, both those written in England and at Baroda and those, fewer in number, added during his period of political activity and in the first years of his residence at Pondicherry. The *Arya* ceased publication in 1921 after six years and a half of uninterrupted appearance...

Sri Aurobindo began his practice of Yoga in 1904. At first gathering into it the essential elements of spiritual experience that are gained by the paths of divine communion and spiritual realisation followed till now in India, he passed on in search of a more complete experience uniting and harmonising the two ends of existence, Spirit and Matter. Most ways of Yoga are paths to the Beyond leading to the Spirit and, in the end, away from life; Sri Aurobindo rises to the Spirit to redescend with its gains bringing the light and power and bliss of the Spirit into life to transform it. Man's present existence in the material world is in his view or vision of things a life in the Ignorance with the Inconscient at its base but even in its darkness and nescience there are involved the presence and possibilities of the Divine. The created world is not a mistake or a vanity and illusion to be cast aside by the soul returning to heaven or Nirvana, but the scene of a spiritual evolution by which out of this material inconscience is to be manifested progressively the Divine Consciousness in things. Mind is the highest term yet reached in the evolution, but it is not the highest of which it is capable. There is above it a Supermind or eternal Truth-Consciousness which is in its nature the self-aware and self-determining light and power of a Divine Knowledge. Mind is an ignorance seeking after Truth, but this is a self-existent Knowledge harmoniously manifesting the play of its forms and forces. It is only by the descent of this Supermind that the perfection dreamed by all that is highest in humanity can come. It is possible by opening to a greater Divine...
Consciousness to rise to this power of light and bliss, discover one's true self, remain in constant union with the Divine and bring down the supramental Force for the transformation of mind and life and body. To realise this possibility has been the dynamic aim of Sri Aurobindo's Yoga.

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Sri Aurobindo left his body on 5th December 1950.

The corpus of Sri Aurobindo's complete works is astonishingly tremendous. 'In 1972, on the occasion of' his 'birth centenary, his collected works were published in thirty volumes of large uniform size. They included all the works known at that time and covered nearly 16,000 pages. Their titles are:

1. Bande Mataram
2. Karmayogin
3. The Harmony of Virtue
4. Writings in Bengali
5. Collected Poems
6-7. Collected Plays and Short Stories
8. Translations
9. The Future Poetry
10. The Secret of the Veda
11. Hymns to the Mystic Fire
12. The Upanishads
13. Essays on the Gita
14. The Foundations of Indian Culture
15. Social and Political Thought
16. The Supramental Manifestation
17. *The Hour of God*
8-19. *The Life Divine*
20-21. *The Synthesis of Yoga*
22-24. *Letters on Yoga*
25. *The Mother*
26. *On Himself*
27. *Supplement*
28-29. *Savitri*
30. *Index and Glossary.*

Clearly these works include the various kinds of literature Sri Aurobindo produced: journalistic writings; poetry, poetic plays and epics; translations; literary criticism; spiritual writings and philosophical works; socio-political writings; autobiographical writings and letters. All of them put together prove indeed that:

Aurobindo has to his credit a very remarkable record as a great scholar and man of letters. He has written voluminously... and on a variety of subjects. His great originality, his rare mastery over the material he handles, and his inspired language combined to invest his writings with a quality and dignity which is very conspicuous. The subjects that he has specially written about are literature, politics, spirituality, philosophy, culture, yoga and society. In almost every one of these subjects his contribution has been unique.⁴
Savitri: A Legend and a Symbol

Sri Aurobindo has transformed his philosophical teaching into a supreme poetic revelation in *Savitri*. It is as extraordinary a poetic masterpiece as *The Life Divine* is a philosophical treatise. Its magnitude is as considerable as that of *The Life Divine*. It consists of 23,813 lines in blank verse.

Though *Savitri* was completed by Sri Aurobindo in 1950 'The first versions were written as early as 1899, in Baroda' and was 'composed and revised, composed and revised, over a long period of time.'

Describing *Savitri* as 'a work by itself unlike all the others', Sri Aurobindo himself says, *Savitri* was originally written many years ago as a narrative poem in two parts, each of four books - rather Part Two consisted of three books and an epilogue. He further adds, 'I made some eight or ten recasts of it originally under the old insufficient inspiration. Afterwards I am altogether rewriting it...'. Speaking about its final shape he said, 'In the new form it will be a sort of poetic philosophy of the Spirit and of Life ... covering most subjects of philosophical thought and vision and many aspects of spiritual experience...'. In view of this, it is indeed true that *Savitri* 'is not the intellectual
expression of the power of speech itself taking form in
words which ... is like the prophetic history of the
earth, embodying in itself the fulfilment of man's life
on earth'. As such, the canvas of Savitri is as wide as
the cosmos... It takes into its purview worlds of being
that are concerned with humanity which are not perceived
by it because of its limitations of ignorance... These
levels act upon human consciousness. They also include
higher planes of consciousness which have not yet
manifested here but which are pressing upon the earth-
consciousness for manifestation. They contain beings,
powers and presences that live on these planes of Light,
Consciousness and Bliss, the worlds of Truth.
Furthermore, Savitri deals with 'The problem... of man's
imperfection and his unquenchable thirst for perfection,
of his groping in the Darkness of ignorance and his
seeking for Light, of his mortality and his thirst for
immortality.' In keeping with the twentieth century
belief, Savitri maintains that 'man's problems are all
inner psychological and spiritual' in nature. Therefore,
'the roots of man's conflicts are within him... This
inner conflict projects itself into his outer life.' In
this way, Savitri reveals that 'Great spiritual battles...
are fought within man's soul... as in the case of Christ
and Buddha.' After all, 'all the inner spiritual
experiences of man' are 'real, concrete and direct.'
This fact may, and generally does, escape the notice of the ordinary reader of *Savitri* which is 'a record of a seeing, of an experience which is not of the common kind, and it is often very far from what the general human mind sees and experiences.' All such extraordinary characteristics of *Savitri* make it a poem which 'demands a minimum of capacity of vision' and 'a broad cosmopolitan enlightened outlook familiar with the latest advances in several branches of human knowledge.' Because of this, *Savitri* is not a rendering, or a vision of the world in terms of the current laws of human evolution... It enunciates a new law, a new world of consciousness transcending—and yet fulfilling at the same time—the evolution attained by man up till now... It succeeds in making the rare experience concrete to our minds.' In this way, *Savitri* is full of diverse excellences woven together... it does not reject any strand of life, it includes and absorbs every theme of import in man’s evolution towards deity. Ancient motifs and motifs of our own day are equally caught up in it. 'It is Legend as well as Symbol, a story with many themes and levels of development at the same time that it is instinct with a mystical light.' It is 'hieratic poetry, demanding a keen sense of the occult and spiritual to compass both its subjective and objective values' and presents an 'audacious and multi-dimensional picture of a highly
yogic state of embodied being.' This is but natural because 'Sri Aurobindo put forth' 'colossal labour' 'to build this unique structure' which reminds one 'of those majestic ancient temples like Konarak or of a Gothic cathedral like Notre Dame before which we stand and stare with speechless ecstasy, your soul takes a flight beyond time and space.' Yet another important characteristic of Savitri is that 'like the Veda which is the Book of Knowledge for the current age,' it 'is the Revelation for the New Age of the Spirit that is dawning.' 'Savitri is thus a new kind of poem, a poem whose making was Yoga Sadhana and whose reading too should be such Sadhana.' It is a new poem in its declaration that 'man should change, and his world should change, and that the Superman or the Supramentalised man of tomorrow, inhabiting a transformed world or supernature, should render earth and heaven equal, transfiguring our life mundane... into the Life Divine with its immaculate intensities, life-movements and realisations.' As Raymond Frank Piper, a Western philosopher-critic observes, in Savitri

I Sri Aurobindo I created what is probably the greatest epic in the English language.... it is the most comprehensive, integrated, beautiful and perfect cosmic poem ever composed. It ranges symbolically from a primordial cosmic void, through earth's darkness and struggles, to the highest realms of Supramental spiritual existence, and illumines every important concern of man, through verse of unparalleled massiveness, magnificence, and metaphorical brilliance.
Savitri is perhaps the most powerful artistic work in the world for expanding man's mind towards the Absolute. 23

It is as much 'about Satyavan and Savitri' as it is 'on a different level about Sri Aurobindo and the Mother; and it is about us too - it does something to us, it does involve us in the action that is only superficially about a husband and a wife but has really a terrestrial, even a cosmic, significance.' 24

As it is rightly observed, 'Savitri has been regarded by some distinguished critics as a magnificent achievement making a new beginning in cosmic art.' 25 For, 'Sri Aurobindo had a Homeric mastery of the natural and supernatural... Like Dante and Milton he produced, in Savitri, an epic of universal significance. Like Goethe, he picked up an ancient story and developed it as a legend summing up the past, a symbol projecting the future and a philosophy based on his own experience. He fulfilled the promise of the subjective epic and of introspective lyricism which had opened so brilliantly with Wordsworth, Shelley and Keats.' 26 Savitri is indeed, 'the epic of the new age, an epic which is more revealingly autobiographical than Paradise Lost or Hyperion, more radiantly inclusive than The Divine Comedy and more intimately and intensely human than The Iliad or The Odyssey.' 27 'Like Dante's The Divine Comedy and Milton's Paradise Lost, Savitri has a universality in
its theme, being concerned with the destiny of Man and his relations with the Divine. Like the two Indian epics, *Savitri* has a romantic inwardness, an insistent stress on the mystical, ...\(^{28}\) What is more, 'The spiritual experiences of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother are the quarry from which the epic hews its subtle and fascinating material for this purpose.'\(^{29}\) 'In a deeper sense, the poem is more than a triumph of individual talent. It is a whole tradition come alive again, in a modern medium, concentrating centuries of development, not of a race and a culture, but of many races and cultures. At the heart of the poem is an oecumenical image of Man, an awareness of destiny, ... Like his own Aswapathy, our poet is the Representative Man: ... Both events and locale are within us. Our lives are its grand theatre... the action takes place, as the poet is careful to indicate, in the inner or "soul-space", in "a larger self that lives within us, by ourselves unseen" ... All its action, the plunge into the inner realms, the debate, the encounter with Death or destiny, is seen under the aspect of a cosmic drama or myth.' 'But its main motive is always love' and its 'real theme is self-knowledge,' or "the soul's (everlasting) search for lost Reality" and, ... immortality'.\(^{30}\) 'The exploration of the world-stair and the corresponding planes of the being in man' presented in *Savitri* 'is a resounding recovery of dimensions for which the only parallel is in the
archetypal Vedic and occult poetry. 31 It is 'a vision, an experience, a realisation', 32 'a sort of poetic source-book of the origins of the Cosmos, a dramatisation of the present predicament, and a Book of Prophecy about the future' a 'momentous and comprehensive ... relation of events and projection of future' possibility'. 33 That is why it is rightly observed that 'By any standards, Savitri is a most remarkable epic; it is surely among the greatest poetic achievements of this century.' 34 'In Savitri's supreme heroism' Sri Aurobindo 'saw in a seed form the symbolic affirmation of life on earth... as he progressed in his Yoga of transformation' and 'each major siddhi' of his 'saw him on the peaks of a higher level of consciousness,... he attempted to write the poem of Savitri from that new level of consciousness.' 35 This is borne out by Sri Aurobindo himself who says in one of his letters, 'I used Savitri as a means of ascension. I began with it on a certain mental level; each time I could reach a higher level I rewrote from that level.' 36 Hence the observation made by 'Sri Krishna Prem, a fine scholar and a great Yogi':

Sri Aurobindo has closed a gulf that has yawned in the human psyche for many many centuries. In the ancient world, poetry... was--above all--revelation. Its subject matter was the eternal truth which dwells in the heart of all life... The poet... was the Seer, the Prophet, the Magician, and his speech was mantra and enchantment...

Gradually,... head sundered itself from heart, knowledge from feeling...
In this poem (Savitri) the fissure has been closed. Savitri... is neither subjective fancy nor yet philosophical thought, but vision and revelation of the actual inner structure of the Cosmos and of the pilgrim of life within its sphere... worlds of Light above, worlds of Darkness below—and we see also ever circling life.37

The same opinion is echoed in such other observations as the following:

...In Savitri, Sri Aurobindo presents a synthetic and integral vision of the essentials of all yogic and religious realisations of the world. The seven planes of existence, and the seven worlds of Matter, Life, Mind, Supermind, Sat, Chit and Ananda are revealed to the pilgrim soul in its ascent to the light. In fact, the occult cosmogony and geography of the entire universe are unveiled to the spirit's eye. Savitri is the story of the evolution of man through the various stages of his development,—the physical—material creature, the vital—rajasic man and the satwic—mental being. Sri Aurobindo discusses too the various planes and parts of mental man, his sufferings and limitations, his potentialities and possibilities, as well as the problem of Freewill, Determinism, Karma, the Psychical centres, the Chakras and their coiled-up power. The whole gamut of life is covered as it were in one titanic sweep.

Savitri is a perfect utterance of the unmanifest, manifesting itself through eternal time. It is the cumulative aspiration of ages upon ages divinely directed to transform the earth—nature into its spirit—nature. Its theme is the transfiguration of Death into the radiant godhead of Immortality through love divine. Savitri is an epic of affirmative spirituality with the descent of the Divine as its oft-repeated refrain. Its objective is... the fulfilment of the very heavens upon the earth....

Savitri is the first luminous testimony of Truth-Consciousness to the emerging New Race, and the last testament of Truth to the old humanity. It is the mother of a new radiant future, the age of Truth, ... the mother of a new spiral of celestial evolution taking with her the truth of all the by-gone cycles of human existence. It is a proclamation in the language of self-effectuating Mantra of the birth of cosmic man in the household
It is of utmost significance and importance that all observations made by these and other various readers, admirers and critics of Savitri are directly or indirectly, consciously or unconsciously, based entirely on the two reported talks on Savitri given by the Mother of Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, the first called "A Talk of the Mother on Savitri" and the second entitled "On Savitri". They are 'a report written from memory'. The date of the first talk as mentioned at its end is '5-11-1967'. The Mother's observations on Savitri contained in these talks are astonishingly all-inclusive. On the one hand they cover the characteristics of Savitri discerned and articulated by numerous scholars and critics such as those mentioned above. On the other "A Talk of the Mother on Savitri" clearly spells out almost all the characteristic features of Savitri both as apocalyptic literature in general and as a twentieth century Indian specimen of apocalyptic literature in particular. What is still more remarkable about the "Talk" is that all those characteristics of apocalyptic literature which are found mentioned and analysed in such renowned books as The New Encyclopaedia Britannica (1987) and The Encyclopedia of Religion (1987) are either clearly included or implied in it. In view of such overwhelming relevance of the "Talk" to the central purpose of the present thesis, several portions of it
such as the following need to be quoted extensively:

... *Savitri* is a revelation, it is a meditation, it is a quest of the Infinite, the Eternal. If it is read with this aspiration for Immortality, the reading itself will serve as a guide to Immortality. To read *Savitri* is indeed to practise Yoga, spiritual concentration; one can find there all that is needed to realise the Divine. Each step of Yoga is noted here, including the secret of all other Yogas. Surely, if one sincerely follows what is revealed here in each line one will reach finally the transformation of the Supramental Yoga. It is truly the infallible guide who never abandons you; its support is always there for him who wants to follow the path. Each verse of *Savitri* is like a revealed *Mantra* which surpasses all that man possessed by way of knowledge, and I repeat this, the words are expressed and arranged in such a way that the sonority of the rhythm leads you to the origin of sound, which is *OM*.

...yes, everything is there: mysticism, occultism, philosophy, the history of evolution, the history of man, of the gods, of creation, of Nature. How the universe was created, why, for what purpose, what destiny - all is there. You can find all the answers to all your questions there. Everything is explained, even the future of man and of the evolution, all that nobody yet knows. He has described it all in beautiful and clear words so that spiritual adventurers who wish to solve the mysteries of the world may understand it more easily. But this mystery is well hidden behind the words and lines and one must rise to the required level of true consciousness to discover it. All prophecies, all that is going to come is presented with a precise and wonderful clarity. Sri Aurobindo gives you here the key to find the Truth, to discover the Consciousness, to solve the problem of what the universe is. He has also indicated how to open the door of the Inconscience so that the light may penetrate there and transform it. He has shown the path, the way to liberate oneself from the ignorance and climb up to the superconscience; each stage, each plane of consciousness, how they can be scaled, how one can cross even the barrier of death and attain immortality. You will find the whole journey in detail, and as you go forward you can discover things altogether unknown to man. That is *Savitri*, and much more yet. It is a real experience - reading *Savitri*. All the secrets that man possessed, He has revealed, as well as all that awaits him in the future; all this is found in the
depths of *Savitri*. But one must have the knowledge to discover it all, the experience of the planes of consciousness, the experience of the Supermind, even the experience of the conquest of Death. He has noted all the stages, marked each step in order to advance integrally in the integral Yoga.

All this is His own experience, and what is most surprising is that it is my own experience also. It is my Sadhana which He has worked out. Each object, each event, each realisation, all the descriptions, even the colours are exactly what I saw and the words, phrases are also exactly what I heard. And all this before having read the book. I read *Savitri* many times afterwards, but earlier, when He was writing He used to read it to me. Every morning I used to hear Him read *Savitri*. During the night He would write and in the morning read it to me. And I observed something curious, that day after day the experiences He read out to me in the morning were those I had the previous night, word by word. Yes, all the descriptions, the colours, the pictures I had seen, the words I had heard, all, all, I heard it all, put by Him into poetry, into miraculous poetry. Yes, they were exactly my experiences of the previous night which He read out to me the following morning. And it was not just one day by chance, but for days and days together. And every time I used to compare what He said with my previous experiences and they were always the same. I repeat, it was not that I had told Him my experiences and that He had noted them down afterwards, no He knew already what I had seen. It is my experiences He has presented at length and they were His experiences also. It is, moreover, the picture of Our joint adventure into the unknown or rather into the Supermind.

These are experiences lived by Him, realities, supracosmic truths. He experienced all these as one experiences joy or sorrow physically. He walked in the darkness of inconscience, even in the neighbourhood of death, endured the sufferings of perdition, and emerged from the mud, the world-misery to breathe the sovereign plenitude and enter the supreme Ananda. He crossed all these realms, went through the consequences, suffered and endured physically what one cannot imagine. Nobody till today has suffered like Him. He accepted suffering to transform suffering into the joy of union with the Supreme. It is something unique and incomparable in the history of the world. It is something that has never happened before, He is the first to have traced the path in the Unknown, so
that we may be able to walk with certitude towards the Supermind. He has made the work easy for us. Savitri is his whole Yoga of transformation, and this Yoga appears now for the first time in the earth-consciousness.

And I think that man is not yet ready to receive it. It is too high and too vast for him. He cannot understand it, grasp it, for it is not by the mind that one can understand Savitri. One needs spiritual experiences in order to understand and assimilate it. The farther one advances on the path of Yoga, the more does one assimilate and the better. No, it is something which will be appreciated only in the future, it is the poetry of tomorrow of which He has spoken in The Future Poetry. It is too subtle, too refined,—it is not in the mind or through the mind, it is in meditation that Savitri is revealed.

And men have the audacity to compare it with the work of Virgil or Homer and to find it inferior. They do not understand, they cannot understand. What do they know? Nothing at all. And it is useless to try to make them understand. Men will know what it is, but in a distant future. It is only the new race with the new consciousness which will be able to understand. I assure you there is nothing under the blue sky to compare with Savitri. It is the mystery of mysteries. It is a super-epic, it is super-literature, super-poetry, super-vision, it is a super-work even if one considers the number of lines He has written. No, these human words are not adequate to describe Savitri. Yes, one needs superlatives, hyperboles to describe it. It is a hyper-epic. No, words express nothing of what Savitri is, at least I do not find them. It is of immense value—spiritual value and all other values; it is eternal in its subject, and infinite in its appeal, miraculous in its mode and power of execution; it is a unique thing, the more you come in contact with it, the higher will you be uplifted... It is the most beautiful thing He has left for man, the highest possible...

...read Savitri; read properly, with the right attitude, concentrating a little before opening the pages and trying to keep the mind as empty as possible, absolutely without a thought... I tell you, if you try to really concentrate with this aspiration you can light the flame... of purification in a very short time... Try and you will see how very different it is, how new, if you read with this attitude... You know it is charged,
fully charged with consciousness; as if Savitri were a being, a real guide. I tell you, whoever, wanting to practise Yoga, tries sincerely and feels the necessity for it, will be able to climb with the help of Savitri to the highest rung of the ladder of Yoga, will be able to find the secret that Savitri represents. And this without the help of a Guru...

For him Savitri alone will be the guide, for all that he needs he will find in Savitri...

Indeed, Savitri is something concrete, living, it is all replete, packed with consciousness, it is the supreme knowledge above all human philosophies and religions. It is the spiritual path, it is Yoga, Tapasya, Sadhana, everything in its single body. Savitri has an extraordinary power, it gives out vibrations for him who can receive them, the true vibrations of each stage of consciousness. It is incomparable, it is truth in its plenitude, the Truth Sri Aurobindo brought down on the earth... one must try to find the secret that Savitri represents, the prophetic message Sri Aurobindo reveals there for us. This is the work before you, it is hard but it is worth the trouble.

But you must not read it as you read other books or newspapers. You must read with an empty head, a blank and vacant mind, without there being any other thought; you must concentrate much, remain empty, calm and open; then the words, rhythms, vibrations will penetrate directly to this white page, will put their stamp upon the brain, will explain themselves without your making any effort.

It does not matter if you do not understand it—Savitri, read it always. Your will see that very time you read it, something new will be revealed to you. Each time you will get a new glimpse, each time a new experience; things which were not there, things you did not understand arise and suddenly become clear. Always an unexpected vision comes up through the words and lines. Every time you try to read and understand, you will see that something is added, something which was hidden behind is revealed clearly and vividly. I tell you the very verses you have read once before, will appear to you in a different light each time you re-read them. This is what happens invariably. Always your experience is enriched, it is a revelation at each step.

Savitri alone is sufficient to make you climb to the highest peaks. If truly one knows how to meditate on Savitri, one will receive all the help
one needs. For him who wishes to follow this path, it is a concrete help as though the Lord himself were taking you by the hand and leading you to the destined goal. And then, every question, however personal it may be, has its answer here, every difficulty finds its solution herein; indeed there is everything that is necessary for doing the Yoga.

He has crammed the whole universe in a single book. It is a marvellous work, magnificent and of an incomparable perfection.45

In truth, the entire form of Savitri has descended "en masse" from the highest region and Sri Aurobindo with His genius only arranged the lines - in a superb and magnificent style. Sometimes entire lines were revealed and He has left them intact; He worked hard, untiringly, so that the inspiration could come from the highest possible summit. And what a work He has created! Yes, it is a true creation in itself. It is an unequalled work. Everything is there, and it is put in such a simple, such a clear form; verses perfectly harmonious, limpid and eternally true... I have read so many things, but I have never come across anything which could be compared with Savitri. I have studied the best works in Greek, Latin, English and of course in French literature, also in German and all the great creations of the West and the East, including the great epics; but I repeat it, I have not found anywhere anything comparable with Savitri. All these literary works seem to me empty, flat, hollow, without any deep reality - apart from a few rare exceptions, and these too represent only a small fraction of what Savitri is ... I tell you once again there is nothing like it in the whole world. Even if one puts aside the vision of reality, that is, the essential substance which is the heart of the inspiration, and considers only the lines in themselves, one will find them unique, of the highest classical kind. What He has created is something man cannot imagine. For, everything is there, everthing.46
Chapter Notes:


2. 'It may be observed that Sri Aurobindo's education in England gave him a wide introduction to the culture of ancient, of mediaeval and modern Europe. He was a brilliant scholar in Greek and Latin. He had learned French from his childhood in Manchester and studied for himself German and Italian sufficiently to study Goethe and Dante in the original tongues. (He passed the tripos in Cambridge in the first class and obtained record marks in Greek and Latin in the examination for the Indian Civil Service.)

3. Sri Aurobindo and His Ashram, p.47.


7. Ibid.


11. Ibid. p.33.

12. Ibid. p.34


15. Ibid. p.38


17. Ibid. p.156.

18. Ibid. p.155.


22. Ibid. p.636.

23. Ibid.

24. Ibid. p.637.

28. Ibid. p.20.

29. Ibid. p.21.


31. Ibid. p.106.


33. Ibid. p.421.


40. Ibid. p.21.

41. Ibid. p.32.

42. Ibid. pp.24-32.
43. Ibid. p.22.
44. Ibid. pp.21-2.
45. Ibid. p.22.