CHAPTER V

SAVITRI — ITS VERSE, DICTATION, STYLE AND IMAGERY

I

SAVITRI'S VERSE:

Regarding the verse of Savitri, the reviewer of The Poetry Review, London, wrote: "In total impact his (Sri Aurobindo's) blank-verse ... thousands of lines... is Miltonic." Though it is meant to be complementary, it does not seem to be the appropriate description of Savitri's verse. Milton, as we know, uses mostly the run-over lines in his epics, but Savitri apparently abounds in end-stopped lines.

Sri Aurobindo's blank verse has its own distinctive quality. It is usually end-stopped, but at times it runs on and forms a passage of not more than seven lines. It is not like the blank verse of Shakespeare, for example. The Shakespearean blank verse may, with only a little shift in tone and arrangement, be read like a prose paragraphs; but Savitri always keeps the distinction of poetry from prose.
It appears that each line of Savitri is a thing by itself. It may, in fact, be considered as a vision or a purged image presented in a single speech. But it is to be noted that the separate single-lined utterances do not look like fragmentary units. Each line has its own light and still forms the part of the whole general brilliance. Moreover, each line has its own poetic nuance and yet merges itself into the organ's general music. For example,

His being now exceeded thinkable Space,
His boundless thought was neighbour to cosmic sight;
A universal light was in his eyes,
A golden influx flowed through heart and brain;
A force came down into his mortal limbs,
A current from eternal seas of Bliss;
He felt the invasion and the nameless joy.

In this passage no line has enjambment. Written in iambic pentameter, it has a rising rhythm that suggests the spiritual transformation of Aswapati. Here, each line appears like the wave of the ocean and as such it expressed the intensity of a mystic experience.

Savitri, says Sri Aurobindo, embodies the poetic effusion from the Overmind and so its verse may be considered as the mantra. Commenting on Savitri, The Mother says:

"Each verse of Savitri is like a mantra which surpasses man's entire knowledge and the words are used and arranged in such a fashion that the sound of the rhythm itself takes you to the original sound of 'Om'."
The mantra is construed as a creative force emanating from the highest Overhead level. Its revelatory words are vibrant with the glory of the Spirit. Rhythm, verbal form and thought-substance fuse together to produce the effect of an incantation. The mantra really surges from the soul of a seer and sinks into the soul of the hearer or reader. Savitri reveals this process thus:

As when the mantra sinks in Yogananda's ear,
Its message enters stirring the blind brain
And keeps in the dim ignorant cells its sound;
The hearer understands a form of words
And, musing on the index thought it holds,
He strives to read it with the laboured mind,
But finds bright hints, not the embodied truth.
Then, falling silent in himself to know,
He meets the deeper listening of his soul;
The Word repeats itself in rhythmical strains;
Thought, vision, feeling, sense, the body's self
Are seized unalterably and he endures
An ecstasy and an immortal change;
He feels a wideness and becomes a power,
All knowledge rushes on him like a sea;
Transmuted by the white spiritual ray,
He walks in naked heavens of joy and calm,
Sees the God-face and hears transcendent speech.

Bringing out the essential characteristics of the mantra
Shri Aurobindo writes:

"The mantra... is a word of power and light that comes from the Overmind inspiration or some very high plane of Intuition. Its characteristics are a language that conveys infinitely more than the mere surface sense of the words seem to indicate, rhythm that means even more than the language and is born out of the Infinite and disappears into it, and the power to convey not merely the mental, vital or physical contents or indications or values of thinking uttered but its significance and figure in some fundamental and original consciousness which is behind all these and greater."
Poetic rhythm and poetic words are said to be the chief characteristics of the mantra. The poetic rhythm is a soul-movement which carries the wave of thought-movement in the word. It is really the musical sound-image which helps to extend or deepen the thought-impression. The poetic words seem to be different from the common words. We generally use those words which represent certain objects, ideas or perceptions. But the poetic word is a vehicle of the spirit and the chosen medium of the soul's self-expression. It makes us see and feel even abstract things. Take, for instance, the words used in the very first line of Savitri:

"It was the hour before the Gods awake."  

Here, the word 'hour' suggests so many layers of meaning. It stands for a particular state of nature, a particular state of mind as well as the particular state of cosmic mind. To an enlightened reader, it means the primordial time of creation, but for Savitri it is an hour of utter darkness because the day to follow is ordained for her husband's death. Symbolically, the hour means the point of time before consciousness itself comes into being.

The phrase 'the Gods awake' refers to the Vedic Dawn. It is generally said that the Gods have their own days and nights and Dawn, 'Usha', comes to wake them up from
'Yoga-mindra'. Since the Gods are not awakened by Dawn, it is the time of utter darkness and quietude. The use of the past tense 'was' and the present tense 'awake' is to be specially noted because it suggests that the Gods will certainly awake and Dawn of the Supermind will surely arise on the horizon of human consciousness. The opening line of Savitri, thus, epitomises the world's as well as the soul's history, which may be considered as its central theme. The reader does not labour to make out this meaning, but it is apparently suggested by the sound and rhythm-intensity of the line itself.

Savitri has its own mantric rhythm, within the limits of the generally end-stopped iambic pentameter, purposive variation and modulation, assonance and internal rhyme heighten the subtle effects of its rhythm. Explaining the distinct features of Savitri's verse Sri Aurobindo observes:

"The structure of the pentameter blank verse in Savitri is that of its own kind and different in plan from the blank verse that has come to be ordinarily used in English poetry. It dispenses with enjambment or uses it very sparingly and only when a special effect is intended; each line must be strong enough to stand by itself, while at the same time it fits harmoniously into the sentence or paragraph like stone added to stone; the sentence consists usually of one, two, three or four lines, more rarely five or six or seven; a strong close for the line and a strong close for the sentence are almost indispensable except when some kind of inconclusive cadence is desirable, there must be no laxity or diffusiveness in the rhythm or in the metrical flow anywhere—there must be a flow but not a loose flux".
Sri Aurobindo formulates a diction which is commensurate with the loftiness of his theme. It is not restricted to poetic words only as in Tennyson, Swinburne and the Decadent poets, but it includes words from almost all branches of human knowledge. A daring originality may be seen in his choice of words. For example:

We must fill the immense lacuna we have made;  
Re-see the closed finite's lonely, consonant  
With the open vowels of Infinity;  
A hyphen must connect letter and mind;  
The narrow isthmus of the ascending soul;  

The following passage beautifully uses the words connected with the printery:

Then in Illusion's occult factory,  
And in the Inconscient's magic printing house  
Torn were the formats of the primal night  
And shattered the stereotypes of Ignorance.  

Sometimes even the prosaic words are employed to objectify a vision:

Imposing schemes of Knowledge on the Vast  
They clamped to syllogisms of finite thought  
The free logic of an infinite consciousness,  
Grammered the hidden rhythms of Nature's dance,  
Critiqued the plot of the drama of the worlds,  
Made figure and number a key to all that is;
The psycho-analysis of cosmic Self,  
was traced, its secrets hunted down, and read  
The unknown pathology of the Unique. 10

The poet makes use of the military terms to describe the  
Spirit's battle till the goal is reached:

Across the dust and mire of the earthly plain,  
On many-guarded lines and dangerous fronts,  
In dire assaults, in wounded slow retreats,  
Or holding the ideal's battered fort,  
Or fighting against odds in lonely posts,  
Or camped in night around the bivouac's fires  
Awaiting the tardy trumpets of the dawn,  
In hunger and in plenty and in pain,  
Through peril and through triumph and through fall,  
Through life's green lanes and over her desert sands,  
Up the bald moor, along the sunlit ridge  
In serried columns with a straggling rear  
Led by its nomad vanguard's signal fires,  
Marches the army of the waylost god. 11

The effective use of an archaism is also found there:

Man-harbours dangerous forces in his house.  
The Titan and the Fury and the Djinn  
Lie bound in the subconscient's cavern pit  
And the Beast grovels in his earthy den: 12

Words with technical connotations are abundantly employed  
in the poem. Take, for instance, words like Void, Nescience,  
Over-soul, Overmind, Supermind etc. Like the astrological  
words of Milton and theological terms of Dante, they convey  
to us their meaning only when we set out to study them.  
Justifying the use of technical terms in Savitri,  
Sri Aurobindo writes:
"It expresses or tries to express a total and many-sided vision and experience of all the planes of being and their action upon each other. Whatever language, whatever terms are necessary to convey this truth of vision and experience it uses without scruple or admitting any mental rule of what is or is not poetic. It does not hesitate to employ terms which might be considered as technical when these can be turned to express something direct, vivid and powerful. 15

The special feature of Sri Aurobindo's diction is the use of hyphenated substantives as epithets. Take, for instance, words like 'dream-fact', 'Truth-light', 'moon-flame', 'sun-thoughts', 'Ocean-Silence' etc. The hyphen in such cases serves as if it were the narrow isthmus of the ascending soul, while the juxtaposed substantives make mighty images. They awaken the reader at some moment to the realisation of the unity of the two ultimates: man and nature, human and divine.

In order to achieve the Upanishadic depth and Kalidāsian richness, Sri Aurobindo almost emulates the Elizabethan predilection for old and romantic words. He also resorts to the use of Latinism and the involved sentence like Milton. In his satirical passage he instinctively goes back to the vigour of Dryden and Pope and adopts their epigrammatical and antithetical manner. For example,
There is no miracle I shall not achieve
What God imperfect left, I will complete,
Out of a tangled mind and half-made soul
His sin and error I will eliminate;
What he invented not, I shall invent,
He was the first creator, I am the last.

Savitri has oblique and indirect references to famous phrases and lines of English poetry. Only a few examples are quoted here to substantiate this point. The following lines remind us of Shakespeare's description of Cleopatra:

Time cannot weary her nor the Void subdue,
The ages have not made her passion less;

Describing the disappearance of the dawn the poet writes:

The rarity and wonder lived no more,
There was the common light of earthly day.

Here, the phrase "the common light of earthly day" refers to Wordsworth's line - "And fades into the light of common day" - from 'Ode on the Intimations of Immortality'.

When, on the fated day, Savitri and Satyavan set out to the forest, the poet says:

Then the doom'd husband and the woman who knew
Went with linked hands into that solemn world...
The following lines from Keats's Isabella come to our mind when we read this passage:

So the two brothers and their murder'd man
Rode past fair Florence.

There are numerous allusions to English poets in Savitri. On this ground some critics have gone to the length of decrying Sri Aurobindo of plagiarism, maintaining that his poetry is full of echoes from the Romantics, but it is a partial criticism of Sri Aurobindo's diction. Sri Aurobindo uses the technique of allusions mainly for two reasons. First, it helps him to evolve in the English language a poetic diction that can build up the atmosphere and imagery for interpreting the subtle soul-states. Secondly, they show the link of continuity with the English literary tradition to the students of English poetry. By alluding, directly or indirectly, to the words, phrases, images or symbols used in English poetry Sri Aurobindo seems to extend the connotations of the English poetic vocabulary.

III

Savitri's Style:

Sri Aurobindo employs many poetic styles to express his vision effectively. With the help of the narrative style he introduces a character and presents a situation. Take,
for instance, the following lines which introduce the characters of Savitri and Satyavan to the reader:

Musing she answered: 'I am Savitri; Princess of Madra, who art thou? What name Musical on earth expresses thee to men? What trunk of Kings watered by fortunate streams Has flowered at last upon one happy branch?

Satyavan replied:

In days when yet his sight looked clear on life, King Dyumathasaena once, the Shalwa, reigned
Son of that king, I, Satyavan, have lived Contended, for not yet of thee aware. In my high peopled loneliness of spirit And this huge vital murmur kin to me. Nursed by the vastness, pupil of solitude.

This passage has hardly any involved sentences. It consists of brief lines with familiar words. A few metaphors lift the style from the level of mere narration and exemplify that this kind of style can result in great poetry.

As an example of the narration of a situation we may refer to the description of Satyavan's death in the forest:

There was no cry of birds, no voice of beasts. A terror and an anguish filled the world, As if annihilation's mystery Had taken a sensible form. She knew that visible death was standing there And Satyavan had passed from her embrace.
The changing seasons are described in the lyrical style. Take, for example, the picture of the Spring:

Then Spring, an ardent lover, leaped through leaves and caught the earth-bridge in his eager clasp; His advent was a fire of irised hues, His arms were circle of the arrival of joy, His voice was a call to the Transcendent's sphere.

Sri Aurobindo's use of the dramatic style centres around situations like Aswapathy's colloquy with the Divine Mother or the dialogue between Savitri and Death. It also extends to characters like the triple soul-forces and their mouth-pieces. These speeches are long but not uninspiring because they are punctuated by questions and exclamations which make them animated. Many of them, in fact, rise to the highest level of poetry. Take, for example, the colloquy between Death and Savitri. Death says:

Hast thou beheld thy source, 0 transient heart, And known from what, the dream thou art was made? In this stark sincerity of nide emptiness Hopest thou still always to last and love?

Savitri replies:

I bow not to thee, 0 huge mask of Death, Black lie of night to the crowded soul of man, Unreal, inescapé end of things, Thou grim jest played with the immortal spirit.
The facts of the higher or lower consciousness are communicated to us in the expository style. For example,

All there was soul or made of sheer soul-stuff;  
A sky of soul covered a deep soul-ground.  
All here was known by a spiritual sense:  
Thought was not there but a knowledge near and one  
Seized on all things by a moved identity... 23

Savitri also illustrates the four types of poetic style  
which Sri Aurobindo suggests in The Future Poetry. They  
are the adequate, the rhetorical poetic manner, the  
illuminative style and inspired utterances. The adequate  
style may be equated with the expository style. For an  
example of the rhetoric poetic manner, we may read the  
following passage:

In the Witness's occult rooms with mind - built walls  
On hidden interiors, linking passages  
Opened the windows of the inner sight  
He owned the house of undivided Time.  
Lifting the heavy curtain of the flesh  
He stood upon a threshold serpent-watched  
And peered into gleaming endless corridors  
Silent and listening in the silent heart  
For the coming of the new and the unknown. 24

The living picture of the heavens of the Ideal exemplifies  
the illuminative style:

What here is in the bud has blossomed there.  
There is the secrecy of the House of Flame.  
The blaze of Godlike thought and golden bliss  
The rapt idealism of heavenly sense; 25.
Savitri's reply to the Supreme may be taken as an apt illustration of inspired utterances:

In vain thou temptest with solitary bliss
Two spirits saved out of a suffering world;
My soul and his indissolubly linked
In the one task for which our lives were born;
To raise the world to God in deathless Light,
To bring God down to the world on earth we came
To change the earthly life to life divine. 26

In addition to these styles, Savitri exhibits the poetic qualities of the great poets of the world. It has the Homeric notes of simplicity and depth:

But Narada answered not; silent he sat,
Knowing that words are vain and fate is lord. 27

There is a Virgilian touch of poignancy and dignity:

His words were theirs who live unforced to grieve
And help by calm the swaying wheels of life. 28

Its description of love is typically Fantasque:

His steps familiar with the lights of heaven
Tread without pain the sword-paved courts of hell,
There he descends to edge eternal joy. 29

Like Vyasa, Sri Aurobindo gives us the living picture of Nature. For example,

Next through its fiery swoon or dotted knot
Rain-tide burst in upon torn wings of heat,
Startled with lightnings air's unquiet drowse,
Lashed with life-giving streams the torpid soil,
Overcast with flare and sound and storm-winged dark
The star-defended doors of heaven's dim sleep,
Or from the gold eye of her paramour
Covered with packed cloud-veils the earth's brown face.

Like Kālidās, he employs imagery which displays a harmony
between the human life and the objects of Nature:

As a star, uncompanioned, moves in heaven
Unastonished by the immensities of space
Travelling infinity by its own light,
The great are strongest when they stand alone.

Savitri, thus, illustrates a number of styles and embodies
many genuine poetic qualities. Its long apocalyptic speeches
may appear to be obscure and unnecessary to a careless
reader, but they have their own significance. In Savitri,
these speeches express and interpret the mystic experiences
and spiritual realisation of the higher planes of consciousness.
Its style is remarkable for the felicity and novelty
which sometimes take the epigrammatic form:

Earth's winged chimeras are Truth's steed in Heaven
The impossible God's sign of things to be.

IV

Imagery in Savitri:

"Image" is generally said to be a word picture of a
sensation. But Ezra Pound defines it as "that which presents
an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time,
a unification of disparate ideas. A poetic image renders
the particular exactly and presents even the abstract
thoughts and feelings in a living language.

Savitri, a spiritual poem, abounds in concrete images
drawn from many quarters—Nature, society, science,
technology, daily life and the cosmos itself. These images
are of many kinds—visual, aural, kinetic and kinesthetic.
They appear to be mainly in the forms of symbols, similes,
and metaphors. An attempt is here made to discuss some
images which will give only the glimpses of Sri Aurobindo's
use of imagery.

Symbolic images—

The Night, the Dawn, the Sun, and the Fire are the
recurrent symbolic images in Savitri. They have a direct
affinity with the Veda. Savitri begins with a living image
of Night:

Across the path of the divine Event
The huge foreboding mind of Night, alone
In her unlit temple of eternity
Lay stretched, immobile upon Silence' marge.

The Night lay immobile across the path of the divine Event.
The divine Event is the emergence of dawn. The Night stands
for the primordial Inconscience that spread over the whole
The temple of Night is unlit because the unconsciousness has not evolved itself in it as yet. The word 'foreboding' suggests a vague possibility of the transformation of the Inconscience. The phrase 'lay stretched' indicates a condition of absolute torpor, lethargy, inertia and adds weight to the word 'immobile'. Thus, the Night symbolises the Inconscience which obstructs the emergence of consciousness in the very inception of creation. Its darkness reminds us of the primordial condition of creation which is described in the Rig Veda thus:

"Then existence was not, nor non-existence, the mid world was not, nor the ether, nor what is beyond. What covered all? What was that ocean dense and deep? Death was not nor immortality nor the knowledge of day and night. That One lived without breath by his self-law; there was nothing else nor aught beyond it. In the beginning darkness was hidden by darkness; all this was an ocean of inconscience."

The emerging Dawn is beautifully described with a lively image:

A wandering hand of pale enchanted light
That glowed along a fading moment's brink,
Fixed with gold panel and opalescent hinge.
A gate of dreams ajar on mystery's verge.

It is said that a wandering hand of light, which glowed along a fading moment's brink, fixed a gate of dreams with gold panel and opalescent hinge, ajar on mystery's verge.

The hand of Light is the ray of the Sun. It is said to be
wandering because it is hesitating to appear first and it is pale because it comes from far beyond. Dawn is such a brief moment of transition that the band of pale light can stay only for a while. On the brink of Dawn is the mystery of Solar effulgence, the splendour of Illumination. The first slit of light gives us a foretaste of the splendour beyond which may be perceived only in dreams or mystic visions.

The Dawn is, Savitri reveals, a glamour from the Transcendent:

A message from the unknown immortal Light
Ablaze upon creation's quivering edge,
Dawn built her aura of magnificent hues
An instant visitor the godhead alone;
On the life's thin border awhile the vision stood
And went over earth's pondering forehead curve.

Ordinarily dawn stands for the eternal life. But in Savitri, it symbolises the perpetual awakening of the light of consciousness from the night of Nescience which gives rise to the cosmos and awakens in man the aspiration for the Spirit. It also suggests the continuity of the process of Time. As such it is obviously related to the Vedic goddess Usha whom the Rig Veda represents thus:
"This is the awakening of the Light of consciousness from the mass of darkness of the Night of the Inconscient. In man's life Usha is his awakening to the need of spiritual life from his state of normal human Ignorance".

"Usha is the divine illumination. The result of the birth of divine vision is that man's path manifests itself to him and those journeys of the gods which lead the infinite wideness of the divine existence".

"The eye of Dawn has come into being in front. The path of man is that of his journey to the supreme plane. There is the divine law of life into which the soul has to grow". 38

The images of Night and Dawn suggest the central theme of the epic. Just as Dawn emerges out of Night, so the human soul will grow from Ignorance to Knowledge and from Mortality to Immortality. Dawn inspires ephemeral humanity to strive and attain a life of immortality in the realm of Time.

Sketching the character of Aswapathy Sri Aurobindo writes:

A skyward being nourishing its roots
On sustenance from occult spiritual founts
Climbed through white rays to meet an unseen Sun. 39

Aswapathy is said to be a skyward being who is aware of his root and gets his sustenance from it. The word 'root'
alludes to the well-known phrase of the Gītā, "Urdhva mūlamadhah Šakham". Aswāpathya, an inspiring soul, moves on to meet the unseen Sun. The unseen Sun is the God of Light or the superconscient Divine. He is unseen because He has not overtly evolved Himself on earth at this stage of evolution.

The unseen Sun of Savitri seems to have a close affinity with the Vedic Sūrya. In the Veda, the Sun is invoked as the Light of Truth rising on human consciousness in the wake of Dawn. Luminous vision and luminous creation are said to be the two functions of the Sun. Commenting on the symbolism of Vedic Sūrya Sri Aurobindo writes:

"This is the first aspect of Sūrya that he is the supreme Light of the truth attained by the human being after his liberation from the ignorance. Beholding a higher light beyond this darkness we have followed it and reached the highest light of all; Sūrya the divine in the divine Being". (1-50-10). This is the Vedic way of putting the idea which we find more openly expressed in the Upanishads, the fairest form of Sūrya in which man sees everywhere the one Purusha with the liberated vision 'He am I'. The higher light of Sūrya is that by which vision rises on our darkness and moves towards the superconscient, the highest, that other greater Truth-vision which, having attained, moves in the farthest supreme world of the Infinite". 40

Describing the process of evolution the poet says:
A slow reversal’s movement then took place,  
A gas belched out from some invisible Fire,  
Of its dense rings were formed these million stars  
Upon earth’s new born soil God’s tread was heard.  

"A slow reversal’s movement" appears to be the journey of  
the involved Spirit from the Inconscience to the Super-  
consciousness. It is here said that a gas belches out from  
Fire and forms the stars and the earth. The Fire may be  
considered as a divine Will or Force in the cosmos which has  
created the physical world. It resembles the mystic Fire  
of the Veda which Sri Aurobindo explains thus:  

"But in the Vedic cosmos Agni appears first as a  
front of divine Force compact of burning heat  
and light which forms, assails, enters into,  
envelops, devours, rebuilds all things in matter,  
He is no random fire; his is a flame of force  
instinct with the divine knowledge... His mission  
is to purify all that he works upon and to raise  
up the soul struggling in Nature from obscurity  
to the Light, from the strife and the suffering  
to love and joy, from the heat and the labour to  
the peace and the bliss”.  

These four symbolic images are interrelated. The  
Night of Ignorance precedes the Dawn of Illumination which  
gives a message that the Invisible Sun of Knowledge will  
descend into earth-consciousness. The energy of this unseen  
Sun may be called the Fire which creates and sustains the  
universe. One has to ascend, like Aswadha, to the Sun in  
order to receive the God-Knowledge and the World-Knowledge.
The simile is said to be an important ingredient of mantrio poetry. It enables the poet to interpret his vision of abstract things. Only a few similes are cited here to show that the simile can be an effective medium for the expression of mystic experiences. In the following passage, a tired and dishearted traveller of life is compared with the eternal soul:

As might a soul fly like a hunted bird,  
Escaping with tired wings from a world of storms,  
And a quiet reach like a remembered breast,  
In a heaven of safety and splendid soft repose  
One could drink like back in streams of honey fire,  
Recover the lost habit of happiness,  
Feel her bright nature's glorious ambiance.  
And preen joy in her warmth and colour's rule. 43

While speaking of the glory and fall of Life the poet introduces us to the inhabitants of the higher vital plane and says:

As through a magic television's glass  
Outlined to some magnifying inner eye  
They shone like images thrown from a far scene  
Too high and glad for mortal lids to seize.44

This is the process of occult vision by which a person is able to perceive the subtle worlds. The simile of television gives it not only a great sense of concreteness but also of a convincing reality. It is suggested that just as a
television can make distant objects visible and near,
so the inner faculty of sight can also reflect the beings
of the mystic worlds.

The inhabitants of the vital planes are said to feel
each other's emotion and thrill. They, in fact, melt in
each other just like fire joins fire when two houses burn:

They felt each other's thrill in the flesh and nerves
Or melted each in each and grew immense
As when two houses burn and fire joins fire
Hate grappled hate and love broke into one love,
Will wrestled with will or mind's invisible ground.

It is said that in childhood Savitri used to dwell in a
separate air like a strange bird that sojourns on a secret
fruited bough or flies above divine unreachable tops:

As needing nothing but its own rapt flight
Her nature dwelt in a strong separate air
Like a strange bird with a large rich colored breast
That sojourns on a secret fruited bough
Lost in the emerald glory of the woods
Or flies above divine unreachable tops.

Sri Aurobindo also magnificently employs many similes drawn
from the sea-voyage. The following sea-image shows us how
stray thoughts from the cosmic source came to Savitri only
to be thrown back at once:

As smoothly glides a ship nearing its port,
Ignorant of embargo and blockade,
Confident of entrance and the visa's seal,
It came to the silent city of the brain
Towards its accustomed and expectant quay,
But met a barring will, a blow of Force
And sank vanishing in the immensity. 47.

The sea-image is again effectively used when Savitri
confronts Death:

As when the storm-haired Titan-striding sea
Throws on a swimmer its tremendous laugh
Remembering all the joy its waves have drowned
So from the darkness of the sovereign night
Against the woman's boundless heart arose
The mighty cry of universal Death: 49

Death is said to have drowned with a laugh millions of life-
emamoured mariners. Just as the waves strike down the
swimmer so Death abridges human life and just as the sea
roars its defiance so does universal Death.

The God of Death alleges that Savitri's love for
Satyavan is just a conscious desire of her body. Savitri
refutes this charge and, with the help of a sea-image,
asserts the eternity of her love:

Unsatisfied he yearned for me through time,
Sometimes with wrath and sometimes with sweet peace,
Desiring me since first the world began
He rose like a wild wave out of the floods 49
And dragged me helpless into seas of bliss.
This passage expresses the intensity of Satyavan's love for Savitri. Just as mighty waves on the crest of floods drag a person into a sea, so the arms of Satyavan coming out of the past ages dragged her into the ocean of bliss.

Metaphors:

Wellek and Warren suggest four fundamental elements of metaphor. They are analogy, double vision, sensuous image and animistic projection. In Savitri, the double vision is central and the rest are ancillary. The poet describes the emerging Dawn with a beautiful metaphor:

Interpreting a recondite beauty and bliss
In colour's hieroglyphs of mystic sense,
It wrote the lines of a significant myth
Telling of a greatness of spiritual dawns;
A brilliant code penned with the sky for page.

The Purusa is said to be a hesitant voyager and a timid explorer in the dark ocean of the Inconscient:

An expert captain of a fragile craft,
A trafficker in small impermanent waves,
At first he hugs the shore and shuns the breadths,
Dares not to affront the far-off perilous main.
He in a petty coastal traffic plies,
His pay doled out from port to neighbour port,
Content with his safe round's unchanging course,
He hazards not the new and the unseen.
In the absence of the divine light the world looks like a vast prison where Ignorance rules with karmic laws:

A gaol is this immense material world,
Across each road stands armed a stone-eyed law,
At every gate the huge dim sentinels pace,
A grey tribunal of the Ignorance,
An Inquisition of the priests of Night,
In judgment sit on the adventurer soul,
And the dual tables and the karmic norm
Restrain the Titan in us and the God.

The birth of Savitri is narrated in a metaphorical language:

As yet a prophecy only and a hint,
The glowing arc of a charmed unseen whole,
It came into the sky of mortal life
Bright like the crescent horn of a gold moon
Returning in a faint illumined eve.

Imagery is certainly the significant feature of Savitri. There is not even a single page which may be said to be devoid of images. Sri Aurobindo has to use images to express his spiritual realisations in the living language. Savitri aims to be a veritable translation of philosophy and yoga and images seem to be of great help in this transfiguration. To a careless reader, the language of the poem may appear obscure; but a sensitive re-reading should certainly clear up the apparent ambiguities and reveal more fully the intended meaning of the epic.
REFERENCES

2. Savitri, p. 79.
3. Hrodebaran, Twelve Years with Sri Aurobindo, 1972, Pondicherry, p. 190.
7. Ibid., pp. 793 - 794
8. Ibid., p. 36
9. Ibid., p. 251
10. Ibid., p. 269
11. Ibid., p. 459
12. Ibid., p. 480
13. Ibid., p. 738
14. Ibid., p. 512
15. Ibid., p. 354
16. Ibid., pp. 5 - 6
17. Ibid., p. 562
18. Ibid., pp. 402 - 403
19. Ibid., p. 565
20. Ibid., p. 351
21. Ibid., p. 586
22. Ibid., p. 586
23. Ibid., pp. 291 - 292
24  ibid.,  p. 28
25  ibid.,  p. 279
26  ibid.,  p. 692
27  ibid.,  p. 423
28  ibid.,  p. 427
29  ibid.,  p. 592
30  ibid.,  p. 349
31  ibid.,  p. 460
32  ibid.,  p. 32
34  Savitri,  p. 1
36  Savitri,  p. 3
37  ibid.,  pp. 3–4
39  Savitri,  pp. 22–23
40  On the Veda,  p. 532.
41  Savitri,  p. 101
43  Savitri,  p. 15
44  ibid.,  p. 119
45  ibid.,  p. 186
46  ibid.,  p. 355
47  ibid.,  p. 544
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>Ibid.</td>
<td>p. 590</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>Ibid.</td>
<td>p. 614</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>Ibid.</td>
<td>p. 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td>Ibid.</td>
<td>pp. 69 - 70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>Ibid.</td>
<td>p. 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>Ibid.</td>
<td>p. 334</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>