achievements flowing spontaneously from his yogic experiences, as if his yogic life and his poetic career have gone through a process of gradual entwined evolution. His poetic development followed the evolution of consciousness in his real life and thus his poetry reveals “The Adventure of Consciousness”.

Sri Aurobindo concerns himself with the principle of unity of human being with all existence and works out the complex interprocess of the individual, universe and God as a whole. The poet’s adventure is directed towards the realization of this human unity, universal peace and happiness, in real life based on a spiritual foundation, which ensure orderly progress and the fulfillment of man’s destiny.

His poetic genius born as the spontaneous lyrical impulse, grew and matured in narrative and dramatic poetry and reached to perfection in the epic - *Savitri*.

Though he accepts the influence of Milton, Spencer, Keats, Stephen Philips, Meredith, Tennyson, Swinburne, Arnold and classical literature on his early poetry, he was influenced by Vyasa, Valmiki, Kalidasa, Bhavabhuti, Bhritarhari, Tulsidas and Chandidas in later
period. The most important influence on him was that of *Vedas* and *Upanishads*.

In his teens he started writing verses in English, Greek and Latin. His first book of Verse, *Songs to Myrtilla* contains poems written in his teen age. These poems deal with love and beauty, youthful outburst of joy and despair and of patriotic zeal. His *More poems* reveals the poet’s deep interest in the *Sanskrit* classics. He was active translator who translated poems from different languages like *Sanskrit*, English, Latin etc. At Baroda he translated classical Sanskrit works - *Meghduta, Vikramorvasie* and *Niti Shataka* in English. He also translated poems of *Vaishnava* poets in English. He wrote *Urvasie*, a narrative poem in 1893 and with that started his adventure in the narrative sphere. The mature version of it is seen in *Love and death*. He has taken up various themes in his poems. The range is enormous. This poem is about victory of love over death. *Baji Prabhu* and *Vidula* are patriotic poems written by him. Poems like *Rishi* and *Ahana* represent *Vedic* and *Upanishadic* philosophy. The lyrics of higher realisation published in *Poems : past and present* and *Last Poems* which express his yogic and mystical experiences.

*Sri Aurobindo* reveals his astonishing power and range as a literary critic who moves with ease among the literature of the East and the West.
He has achieved a fusion between creation and criticism. He has made the art of literary criticism as fully creative literary activity as poetry itself and like other arts, an instrument of illuminating and uplifting human consciousness.

The basic terms of poetry like inspiration, creation, beauty, truth, vision, symbol, rhythm, style, technique has been discussed with a new and original interpretation by him. His opinions and criticism on poetry is an important step towards the perfection in the field of poetry.

Sri Aurobindo’s most original contribution to the theory of art is his clear perception to the higher plane of consciousness which is the originating source of inspiration. His critical work *The Future Poetry* is devoted to analyse the characteristic of this creative force.

The levels of consciousness from which the poet draws his inspiration are classified by Sri Aurobindo as - Subtle mind, Vital mind, Intellectual mind, Higher mind, Illumined mind, Intuition and finally Overmind. Poetry written out of the above last four states of mind is called as ‘Overhead Poetry’. This is future poetry, the poetry of perfection. *Savitri* is the best example of Overhead poetry.
Sri Aurobindo's long poetic career finally achieved its perfection in the cosmic creation of *Savitri* written in 49 cantos. It contains symbolic and epic qualities and the inner drama of a growing soul through various stages of human life to the supramental world of light, love and immortality. Love has been placed on the highest level by which Savitri conquers even Death. Both in quantity and quality *Savitri* can be ranked amongst the great epics of the world.

In *Savitri* Sri Aurobindo has symbolised the legendary episode of the *Mahabharata*. By his own spiritual attainment and realisation he has shown the ‘quest for perfection’ and the descent of supramental force and consciousness on the earth through Savitri and Satyavan.

The canvas of Savitri is panoramic. The poem folds past, present and future in it. It talks about man, superman, demi - god and god. The action in it takes place not only on earth, Heaven or Hell but different planes of light, consciousness and bliss and the world of truth. Wide range is the distinguishing mark of *Savitri*. It is a record of human quest for perfection at different levels and its achievement.
The epic describes the battle of the human soul against the omnipotent powers of the Inconscient, the descent of the soul into abysses of the Night, and finally the battle against the Death.

The narrations of the epic are based on poet’s yogic experiences. This pure subjective element in the narration is the newness of Savitri. It has brought a new method in epic tradition.

Among Sri Aurobido’s writings, Savitri occupies in many ways a special place. It is a great yogi’s mature and complete poetic testament of our time. At a single glance one can appreciate the rich variety and contents. The famous ancient Hindu legend is transformed into a cosmic epic by Sri Aurobindo which happens to be the longest epic in English language. It is the story of heroine enshrined in immemorial Hindu legend. It spans around the past, present and future as well as man, nature and God; encompassing cosmic background.

It demonstrates that, the epic poetry though getting obsolete, still exists. Textually and contextually in Savitri, there is a fundamental epic theme of the struggle against adverse forces and death. However the theme cannot be hurriedly and concisely reviewed. It asks for a metaphysical inquiry. There is a clear emphasis on the gradual growth of
consciousness that defends the mighty demonic power. It is consistent in introducing renewed impediments. There seems to be genuine efforts levelled to establish consciousness at the highest rung debarring further scope for the physical entities. There is an inner urge to transcend consciousness at the cosmic level that generates an intrinsic quality which otherwise could easily get restricted on the physical and personal levels.

Since *Savitri* was originally written with an admixture of demands of the inner mind’s poetic imaginations and intuition at impersonal level, it underwent several revisions. Despite this, the homogeneous final form presents different levels of consciousness leading to perfection.

The epic is nothing but the verbalization of Sri Aurobindo’s own spiritual experiences and realizations. Along with its theme it represents the spiritual quest of Sri Aurobindo himself. It is his own quest for perfection as a yogi and a philosopher. Secondly, half of the epic is dominated by King Aswapati’s quest for perfection, who is a seer-king, the representative of human race. Lastly, second half of the epic covers the heroic figure -Savitri - whose quest for perfection is certainly not for her but for the human race and the universe at large.
Sri Aurobindo’s aim in re-telling the familiar story of Savitri is to show how the mind at first partakes the ‘inconscience’ of the lowest depths or rungs of life, passes through successive stages of evolution, and at last attains the highest, the ‘superconscient’, the perfection. There are different levels of perfection in the epic Savitri.

The Divine Being, the Sachidananda is the Supreme Reality. It is Infinite, Force and Consciousness. This Supreme Being manifests itself into the world. The world is not an illusion, but only a lower order of reality. Human beings and the Universe are mutually dependent and complementary manifestations of the Being. The Universe is the unlimited, multi layered, mystic, multi faceted space for the individual. He alone is privileged to consciously recognise his spiritual destiny and put efforts towards its fulfillment. A complete freedom from the ignorance is perfection.

For the perfection, one has to ascend through various levels of consciousness. Supermind is the highest level of consciousness whose realization frees man from Ignorance. Its descent will bring the complete perfection on the earth.
Yoga is a rapid and concentrated conscious evolution of the being. It hastens the process of evolution in single life for which the natural course may take centuries or hundreds of lives.

First, individual perfection is achieved and then only the perfection of world becomes possible.

The Divine life on the earth would be an embodiment of eternal Peace, Beauty, Harmony and Love. It would be the life far beyond the faltering shadows of the undivine forces which gnaw us away from our real being.

Sri Aurobindo’s concept of perfection can be compared with Hindu spiritual, philosophic schools such as Samkhya, Shankara and Warkari sect.

Dnyaneshwara and Sri Aurobindo, in spite of minor differences, have shown a surprising degree of agreement in their approach to the goal and its attainment. Both believe that liberation is not withdrawal from the world. On the contrary the liberated soul with the most stable and profound delight, work for the ‘God’s labour.’
Saint Tukaram goes forward in this regard, rejects *moksha*, and demands earthly life again and again to serve the God and enjoy divine ecstasy on the earth.

Study of important textual characters viz. Dyumatsena, Satyavan, Narad, Aswapati and Savitri shows that they have individual status and symbolic significance. It seems that they represent different stages of evolution on the way to perfection. Sri Aurobindo himself has stated in the author’s note that the characters of the epic are neither personified qualities, nor allegorical but are incarnation of different living forces working in the process of evolution. Every character has different symbolic significance. They symbolise different stages of human being who aspired to be perfect. Their speeches and actions focus on Sri Aurobindo’s idea of evolution. These forces have taken human shape to help man and show him the way from ignorance to perfection.

Dyumatsena symbolises the fall of man who was once enjoying kingly status. Satyavan is the soul of man climbing to God, who is engrossed in Yoga of evolution. In this process, he has to go through ‘inconscient’ horrors and sufferings and cross the last ditch: death. Narad, the divine sage, messenger of the heaven, plays significant role by timely
revealing the death of Satyavan. So that Savitri should thrust aside the veil and rise to her full stature of divinity to fight against the Death.

Aswapati, the Lord of the Horse, is the Lord of *Tapasya*, the concentrated energy of spiritual endeavour that helps us to rise from the mortal to the immortal planes. He wants to make an end of misery on earth. He bears the ‘burden of the world’s desire’ in his heart. His *tapasya* seen in this context turns out to be an invocation to the Divine power to descend and bring about the miracle of transformation.

Savitri is the Divine word, daughter of the Sun, and is born to save. As it is the necessity of the age and evolutionary urge, the Divine power has to come down in the fullness of its divinity. Her birth on the earth as daughter of Aswapati and her marriage with Satyavan who is destined to die after twelve months of their marriage is a part of cosmic intention. Her task is to raise humanity to divinity.

Aswapati’s quest for perfection occupies significant part of the epic. Nature of his quest, his exploration in outer worlds proves how he is a traveller of the worlds.
Along with his strife for individual quest, as a seer-king, representative of aspiring humanity, Aswapati’s quest is for the creative principle which is powerful enough to put an end to all human frustrations, discontent and ills.

Savitri’s quest can be studied at three different planes. First, when she achieves perfection for herself. Secondly as she confronts with Death and wins back the soul of her husband Satyavan. Lastly, her quest is to strive and make the world perfect.

Though Savitri is the Divine power, she is born as a human being hence she has to unveil her Divinity by performing yogic sadhana like other human beings. Only twelve months are given for preparation which is of practice of the shakti-yoga.

Satyavan’s death on the destined day is an essential incident having deliberate intention, bearing far-reaching consequences. It gives Savitri an opportunity to reveal the mystery of death, defeat him as well as to show her divine power and bring out the revolution in earth consciousness.
After the victory over Death, even more subtle trial awaits Savitri in Heaven. Here, heavenly Bliss and enjoyment forever is offered to her and Satyavan. But she believes that service on earth is greater than ‘all the glorious liberties of heaven’. Hence Savitri rejects heaven and chooses to go back to earth to build the house of Divine on it.

Then there is speech of the Supreme foretelling the Divine life on earth as well as man’s ultimate destiny, the complete perfection on earth.

To Conclude, Sri Arobindo’s *Savitri* is an epic poem of high spiritual challenge in the yoga or Divine Union or goal of self realization. Its spiritual conception is so all- encompassing, so integral that it gives birth to a power which transforms life on earth to a life of divine activity rather than leading to an escape from life. The epic is the *Mantric* expression of this great seer-sage’s inner findings and conquests, leading to his vision of an age of truth – consciousness and immortality. It portrays in living drama the daring climb within of a king- soul through progressive states of consciousness to *Nirvanic* heights and beyond to summits never reached before. The poet reveals how at meditation’s peak at one with God, where many cease their search, he becomes aware of a Presence, God’s Consciousness, Power and Bliss, which he calls the Divine Mother. He reveals how this union of Boundless Love and
Wisdom – Splendour comes down to Earth to transform Darkness into Light, the Unreal into the Real, and Death into Immortality.

Adapting the famous legend of Savitri from *Mahabharata*, as a symbol for a great living spiritual experience, Sri Aurobindo changes King Aswapati’s sacrificial asceticism into the *Tapasya* or conscious spiritualization of an aspiring soul of humanity. Savitri is not only the incarnation of a Goddess but Divine Grace born in answer to Aswapati’s longing for help in bringing some living form of God on earth to relieve it of its burden of ‘inconscience’. The marriage of Savitri and Satyavan is the divine linking of their lives for the raising of the world and man to God and the bringing of God to earth to transform it into an abode of Divine Delight. Thus Sri Aurobindo’s main intention in taking up the story of Satyavan and Savitri is to use it as a framework for projecting his views of man’s evolutionary journey on earth which ultimately ends with his individual perfection and then with world perfection.

*Savitri* is the multidimensional epic having many themes, but ‘Quest for Perfection’ is certainly the major theme of the epic. *Savitri* is about poetic, physical, mental and spiritual perfection. Different levels of consciousness and journeys in the epic denote this.
Sri Aurobindo was a yogi and poet and *Savitri* was his field of poetic experimentation in ‘Overhead poetry’. With every new yogic ascension he used to make a recast of the poem. Thus it was re-written many a times, some part of it even eleven times. Sri Aurobindo spent fifty years of his life for the composition of this epic. Thus composition of *Savitri* was a quest for Perfection in writing a new poetry. It is also a quest for Perfection of Sri Aurobindo as the yogi and the poet, which finally ended in the completion of it.

*Savitri* mainly deals with the spiritual quest for Perfection of man. Sri Aurobindo deeply believes in the Vedic truth that every man is potentially divine. Manifestation of this divinity in man and transformation of the earthly life into the Life Divine is the quest. This quest for perfection is the main theme of the epic, which is expressed with the creations of major characters like Aswapati and Savitri.

The traditional concept of perfection that ends with individual’s salvation is extended by Sri Aurobindo in *Savitri*. The epic reveals that a liberated soul should not aspire to merge his consciousness into the Absolute nor should he choose to enter into the heaven of everlasting day. He must, after realizing the highest consciousness, come down to work for the supramentalisation of man and matter.
Physical perfection is also indicated in *Savitri* in various ways. Nature’s beauty and bounty is celebrated by the poet. Savitri is portrayed as *kanya - Tejaswini* - bright and beautiful, Satyavan is strong and handsome, Dyumatsena regains his eyesight, hundred sons are promised to Satyavan and Savitri. Thus physical perfection is also suggested in the epic.

The epic is not about the perfection of the good only; it also talks about the perfection of the evil. Evil is deliberately created to intensify human efforts towards the divinity, to purify man and to increase his power and confidence. When man achieves perfection, the purpose of the evil ends and it reaches a kind of perfection and looses its power. In *Savitri*, at last, the Dark God is eliminated by light and Savitri again finds him in heaven. So evil also reaches the Perfection.

The aim of Sri Aurobindo is to focus on the human quest to attain victory over one’s false-self and death. He denotes in the epic that the ultimate truth in man is found in the illumination of the mind, in the extension of consciousness, in the steady evolution of the self, in the recognition of ‘the one truth’, in the recognition for the harmony of contrary forces, in the realization that all things are linked with the principle of oneness, and in acquiring self-knowledge and self-
transcendence. He intends to awaken the self, to raise the life and existence to a higher level of consciousness. *Savitri* shows how an individual begins with himself by raising his consciousness, purifies himself and finally realizes a wider meaning of life. It is through this conscious and consistent process a man can transcend the limitations imposed on him by both, the intrinsic and extrinsic forces and achieve perfection— a state of absolutely purified and chaste being.
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