CHAPTER VI.
Relevance of Savitri to modern humanity

Sri Aurobindo's arduous work, the master piece Savitri, is not just his teachings or experience but it has great eternal relevance to modern humanity. The epic serves as one of the best treatises to guide modern humanity. It helps the individual to relate himself to the eternal truths for the present evolution to take another steps.

Sri Aurobindo sums up in his epic all the achievements of man till the present day and sketches out a movement towards the future, the Supramental realisation. He has given subtler treatment to the different facts of humanity such as human unity and peace, education and personality, womanhood, Truth and Love, and conquest of the Death.

Human unity and peace:

The great seer Sri Aurobindo gives a definite assurance in his futuristic epic Savitri that the earth shall totally become divine. What he prophesised, the Gnostic being and the divine life on earth, may be a very slow
process but it will eventually step into humanity. He was not just a yogi who sketched his vision but, he had close association with the world movements. It can be known from his other works. With his seer-vision, Sri Aurobindo visualised the advent of light in man’s life. He says, “In the world outside there are much worse symptoms such as the general increase of cynicism, a refusal in believe in anything at all, a decrease of honesty, a preoccupation with food, money, comfort, pleasure to the exclusion of the higher things, and a general expectation of worse and worse things awaiting the world ... I am not discouraged... after a time, the darkness will fade and begin to disappear and the light will come”

This unshakable faith of Sri Aurobindo in man’s future is not just a prediction but it is his evolutionary vision which he achieved through his yoga sadhana. He has written in his epic that there exists a fundamental Truth of existence which is an omnipresent Reality above the cosmic manifestation and for each individual it is immanent.

There is movement of the self-manifestation a descent into an apparent material inconscience and awakening of the individual out of the inconscience. With
the result, an evolution of the being into the spiritual and supramental consciousness and own universal and transcendent self. This aids the possibility of divine life on earth.

Life has evolved from matter in which the spirit is immersed. Though there are ambiguities and difficulties mind has followed life. As man is a mixture of contraries, good and evil, life and death, love and hate, he has become a transitional being, a mental man. To him the self-transcendence looks something unattainable and very far. To this humanity Sri Aurobindo lays few guidelines to follow for a better humanity and human unity.

According to him the ideal of human unity is likely to figure largely among the determining forces of the future. The intellectual and material circumstances of the present age have imposed it. Especially the scientific discoveries have made earth seem like a province of a single country. He says that it is necessary to build a true world state without expulsions and on the principle of equality and safeguarded by the law of a new international order. A sure justice, a
fundamental equality and combination of rights and interests must be the law of this world state and the basis of it. Due to this exclusion, mental reservations and inequality the league of nations and the united nations organisations have failed. He says that such artificial unity which is based on adjustment of frontiers, redistribution of power and possessions, moulding of commercial relations will not wholly solve the problem. A psychological unity should come, which can effect a change of soul in man and this unity alone will be the lasting unity.

There should be evolution of human mind and life which will move towards an increasing universality. Reason and science help to standardise and fix everything into an artificially arranged and mechanical unity of material life. But for a greater unity of a whole life, a greater whole-being, whole-knowledge, whole power is needed.

The mental constructions of the past are imperfect. They are the combination of association and regulated conflict, accommodation of egos and interests grouped into each other to form a society, a unification by need and by the pressure of struggle with outside forces. All
these can be replaced successfully by a life of unity, mutuality and harmony born of a deeper and wider truth of our being. Humanity is beginning to act to bring out such a change. Hence an inner change is imperative.

Man will get awakened and live the brotherhood of mankind and this will be the 'religion of humanity'. He will find the spirit within all and with such a growth man's oneness with his fellow-man will become the leading principle of his life. It is not merely a principle of co-operation but a deeper brotherhood, a real inner sense of unity and equality.

Man must realise that only in the life of his fellow man, his own life is complete. Sri Aurobindo prefers a loose world union which can recognise and manifest the brotherhood of man and encourage the individual to grow and exceed himself. With these facts we can infer that he has set new factors for the human unity. He has prophesised the emergence of new man, the gnostic man, the pioneer and the forerunner of the racial advance.

Through his epic characters he has given the character sketch of the forerunners and the redeemers. They are Aswapathy and Savitri. Aswapathy is not only a kind but a representative of humanity. To help
humanity he himself undertakes the quest and knows the mission for which he has come to the earth.

Aswapathy takes up the responsibility for the well-being of the race. He is correct in setting himself for the task as he is a man of knowledge, wisdom and realisation. He knows that a perfect human world cannot be created by men who are themselves imperfect. Though education, law, social and political machineries regulate the action and pattern of mind, this cannot re-create the man within. It cannot help for the development of a perfect soul, perfect thinking and perfect growing living being.

The inner growth is more essential than the outer growth. Otherwise all the human endeavours are foredoomed to end only in a success that is a failure. Aswapathy achieves his own spiritual fulfilment as an individual and then he ascends as a typical representative of the human race and wins the possibility of discovery and possession of all the planes of consciousness.

Finally he aspires for a Universal realisation and a new creation. He is a traveller of many worlds in his yoga sadhana. He travels through many symbol worlds
in knowledge, about himself and the universe. Then he gains wide 'god-knowledge' and 'world-knowledge'. His commonest duties also come from an inner light.

Further he gains a psychological unity in which politicians, economists, technologists, jurist militarists become nothing. The realm which he steps in his vision is a place where no 'untruth' can come. All things here have their individuality as well as the unity.

He comes to know that behind the mental and material activities there is a secret nature which is not known to man and this governs the vital and the mental life of him. This secret nature unveils its truth to Aswapathy. It reveals the descent from eternity to time and the ascent from time back to eternity. The imperfect things on the material world have their perfect form in this place.

Aswapathy having gained this knowledge and freedom seeks as a pioneer to help mankind in the lower state to win the same soul's joy and freedom of his to mankind. In his yoga sadhana he gets the vision of the Divine Mother, to whom he makes a vast surrender. She takes him up in her embrace. At this state of extreme bliss, Aswapathy
has remembered the lower stead human conditions on the earth. He makes an impassion plea to her.

"How shall I rest content with mortal days
And the dull measure of terrestrial things,
I who have seen behind the cosmic mask
The glory and beauty of thy face? ....
Let thy infinity in one body live,
All-knowledge, wrap one mind in seas of light,
All-love throb single in one human heart ...
Fark with the eternal night one human hour
And with one gesture change all future time
Let a great word be spoken from the heights
And one great act unlock the doors of fate..."
(34:1-34:1).

To this prayer, he gets a promise of a new being who will affect the liberation of the race and the world. This idea is the symbolic representation of what Sri Aurobindo states in 'the Ideal of Human unity'. The mind of man must be free from all bonds and should be given all means of self-training and self-development. Its powers should be organised for service of humanity.

Aswapathy returns to earth with a great promise. He is assured that the seed of a great change is already lodged in time. Hence the world's desire compels the birth of Savitri. She is born to confront the Death, at its root, prepare struggles and win the adversary forces.
Having conquered death she starts her work for the transformation of man and the earth.

From these facts one can infer that Sri Aurobindo aimed for the manifestation of the spirit in matter. With the development of science and technology, and by the influence of politics, economics, and administrative powers, man has forgotten his 'soul' and the 'world-soul'. As a result, he deceives himself.

An individual who is trying to live for himself ends up in destroying himself. Only the Truth-Consciousness can penetrate the veil of the soul and dispel the hypocrisy. Then it sets, way for a strong human unity. Then redeemers like Aswapathy and Savitri live for others, the human unity is assured among men in future days. Then all shall change and the mechanical universe will be invaded by a mightier race. A superman will evolve as the laid of life and a divine harmony shall be the earth's Law.

Truth and Love:

Love has the power to conquer and vanquish the Death and establishes immortality. This action constitutes the central theme of the epic Savitri.
Savitri with her power of love encounters the Death in its own domain and vanquishes him. This Love which has such a power is not the ordinary love guided by desire and ambitions. It is not the self-regarding feeling but it is self-existent and does not depend on anything outside. It knows all the truth. Savitri's Love is not a brief phenomenon which gets its sap...from the earth and flesh. It has come from the divine and only to the divine it will return.

Man's endeavour must be to discover what is the Truth behind the existence as a conscious being in the material universe and how far this significance will lead an individual towards a divine future. The man who discovers it is the Gnostic being and will not act on the surface sentiment of love and sympathy. But from a close mutual consciousness and intimate oneness he acts.

His action in the world will be enlightened by the truth of vision. He knows that the 'will' of divine reality in him to be present in others. His action will be done for the divine in 'All, the effectuation of the truth, the purpose of the All as seen in the light of the highest consciousness.
The Gnostic being loves the whole universe. Savitri and Aswapathy stood as redeemers and representatives of humanity, as they loved the whole humanity. Sri Aurobindo beautifully says that the whole world can take refuge in the heart of Savitri. She is the mother of universe and love. She finds fulfillment in the fulfillment of others. Her universal individuality effectuates itself in the movement of the divine in all beings towards its greater becoming.

There is no separative ego in her. It is the Transcendent and universal that moves out through her universalised individuality into the action of the universe. As she does not live for a separative ego in the same way, she does not live for the purpose of any collective ego; she lives in and for the Divine in herself, in and for the Divine in the collectivity, in and for the Divine in all beings. This universality in action, organised by the all-seeing will in the sense of the realised oneness of all, is the law of her divine living. The Truth of Savitri’s consciousness establishes itself and finds a harmony with all others’ truth of being around her.

Love should be the union of different consciousnesses but in present day love is like animal’s desire, sweet-madness in the rapturous heart, ardent comrade in the happy
mind. Man's consciousness is separated from each other; it is rooted in a divided ego and tries to find out some relation among the ignorant facts. Though the individual and group harmonies are accomplished, they are only at superficial level. They are confused by imperfect sympathy, imperfect understanding, gross mis-understanding strife, discord and unhappiness.

The True union is possible only by consciousness united on the grounds of self-knowledge, inner mutual knowledge, inner realisation of unity, concord of the inner forces of the being and the inner forces of life. Savitri says love is not joy; love is not extendable; love is neither foolish nor futile. It enlarges, unites, and emancipates and it is not alien to this earth. It is the very stuff of human life on the earth. When such a unity of feeling and experience is established there can be no place for strife and no excuse for egoistic separativity.

Savitri's attitude towards love stands individually because of her supramental consciousness. As supramental consciousness is fundamentally a truth consciousness, it has a direct and inherent awareness of the truth of the being
and the truth of things. It is the truth consciousness the individual should aim for.

The Gnotis being who has evolved will be a consciousness of universal identity and inherent of Truth-knowledge, Truth-sight, Truth-feeling, Truth-will, Truth-sense and Truth-dynamics of action. Which is shown from his identity with the one or with all. It makes Savitri declare to the Death that her 'will' is greater and stranger than the law of the Death and her love is stronger than the bonds of fate.

She proves through her action that man is capable of glimpsing eternity and also truth the infinite. Man who has evolved towards the higher mind, the illumined mind and the over mind can touch the supreme truth. The epic gives a clear picture to the modern humanity how even the unattainable thoughts of man can be attained with the help of love and truth of a supramental consciousness.

Education and Personality:

One of the problems of modern man is the dissatisfaction of the modern educational systems. Although there is an inner wish in man to impart certain
new methods and change in educational system, it is not put in action. Fortunately modern humanity is privileged enough to get new ideals of education from the great collaborators, the Mother and Sri Aurobindo.

Education is one of the indispensable needs of life and man cannot escape from it. He learns from Nature, daily events and experience of life by conscious will and effort. A diversified unity is the very essence of education. If the individual life to be successful the education should be correctly canalised. It is not the material success which education should aim at but it is the education and progress of the Soul.

As the education is the main cause for the outflowering of an individual, it has gained considerable importance in the present days. Good education will be in consistent with the aim of life. The aim of life is the growth of consciousness in its totality. True or good education should help the individual elevate his consciousness in all levels of beings and develop progressively his inner faculties. With the result it brings out the hidden potentialities of the being.
Integral education aims at developing and perfecting the human being to reveal progressively the inner light in man and guide the soul or psychic being. Integral education helps the individual call forth the psychic and make the psychic being to gain experience. Further it helps to harmonise, integrate and perfect the physical, vital and mental beings. With the effect the individual develops potentialities of higher consciousness, which leads him to the realisation of supramental consciousness. The Mother aptly says 'to prepare the man of tomorrow for the new creation' is the aim of the integral education.

The method of education should be in accordance with the need of the hour. Modern education is the academic education which aims at the highest university degree and once attained, it is considered as the fulfillment of education. Although academic education has its values in the present days it does not train the mind, organise the intellect and develop the thinking capacity. It gives importance to outer aspect of the being, which is only a part of the whole being and prepares the individual as a man of society.
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In contrast/integral education aims to shape and bring out the divinity in the individual the real person. Man without the integral education remains ignorant about the presence of vaster inner worlds holding the secrets of which the outerbeing of an individual is a faint picture. In fact, it aims at spiritual fulfilment on a material basis. Hence it is conscious of the different parts of the individual being to bring about a systematic culture of all of them and the genius contain in each of them.

The physical, the vital, the mental, the psychic, the spiritual and the supramental parts of the human being are interdependent. Hence for the perfection of the whole being, the perfection of each one of the parts is imperative. The integral education aims at the education of all these parts of the being making the body strong and healthy, supple and agile, beautiful and graceful is the central motive of physical education. Man to achieve transformation takes a long period of time, so the body must be fit to live as long as possible. This is done by methodical exercises.

Next comes the vital education, the vital has to be purified and transformed by the psychic and the spiritual control. It is done by building up strong
and noble character by controlling desires and impulses. One needs strong endurance to educate his vital. Students must be provided with various aesthetic sensations, and they must learn to aspire to open the vital to higher domains.

Mental education makes an individual's intellect keen and quick and thoughts coherent and organised. It helps the progressive growth of individual and the evolutionary course. It is mind which makes the psychic being to urge the nature to reflect, concentrate, dwell within, discover the unknown and attempt the inaccessible and the impossible. It is because of this fact that subjects like philosophy and science, culture and religion are of the great educational importance.

It is essential not to follow these three types of education in a mechanical way. It should be approached with different spirits and different consciousness to achieve something deeper and higher. Its aim should be to express the psychic personality in its fullness. Hence the first step is perfection from above and the next step is perfection from below. The perfection from above is the spiritual perfection or the perfection of consciousness. The perfection from below is the human perfection or the perfection of the instrument.
Aswapathy and Savitri after having educated their all levels of being progressively develop their inner faculties. With the result their hidden potentialities are made aware to them. Then their aim of spiritual perfection culminates with the discovery of psychic being, which represents what the individual really is. From the psychic being they gain the knowledge of all the secrets of inner realm. Hence the next step of education is to bring out the psychic being from its inner depth to the front of knowledge, inner beauty, love and harmony. In other words it is self-discovery and self-expression. But it is not an easy task when viewed from the education of Aswapathy and Savitri.

One needs strong persistence in exploring his psychic being and if he can succeed in this task, he can successfully discover the further secrets. To attain this, the essential facts are the total surrender and openness to the Divine Mother with the accompaniment of personal will and effort. Only the grace of Iswara or The Mother alone can help him to achieve this task.

Man thinks that what he has attained at present, his mental or intellectual development, to be the last step in the evolutionary ladder. He does not question about
his imperfect development and think about the evolutionary spiral to extend still further breaking the bounds of the mind and unfolding the supermind in the earthly manifestation. It is sure that man will be overtaken by the emergence of superman and the age of reason and intellect replaced by the age of spirit.

It is high time now for humanity to direct its attention on education towards inner culture and the discovery of the true self and express it in actual life. The preparation of mental being by education should be replaced by the preparation of superman, the spiritual being.

This education which Aswapathy and Savitri undertook made them the representatives of humanity and also the reemomers of humanity who plead to the humanity to exceed their present levels of consciousness and grow even higher, deeper and wider in consciousness. The writings of the Divine Mother and Sri Aurobindo will serve the best for modern humanity to get guidance for the proper method of education. The Mother believes and emphasises strongly that for a child to attain spontaneous inner growth and development, he should have complete freedom. Her mother is not in favour of the present day examination
methods. She prefers the psychological contact between the teacher and the student, which will help to attain individual attention on each student as the mental development and inner preparedness of each student differ.

Further the classes should not be made mechanical. It must be interesting enough to awake the children. One should be made to aspire to learn more and more but not just for attaining degrees or passing the examinations. The mother believes that supramental education which is meant for the divine humanity will be the future mode of education. And it will be a complete reverse of the present method of education.

As individual is a part of collectivity, the education must not be considered in individual aspect alone but also in collective aspect. Next comes national education which helps to awake the national consciousness and the spirit of patriotism in the people. Finally comes the international education which helps to develop the sense of oneness and unity among the whole mankind and bring about world unity. True education of Aswatha and Savitri moves even further and transcends the bounds of universality. They experience the joy of the infinite and the supreme unity.
Women are held in great esteem even from our ancient days. Their greatness can be found and portrayed in various literary works. They are immortalised for their great achievements. These women were aware of their potentialities and they actualised them into action. As a result they were able even to control the Nature's elements. In later period there were certain strict impositions laid on them with a motive to guard women from the brutality of the invaders. But these impositions in practise latter become boundaries to them and curbed their awareness of the inner potentialities.

Woman's life path is confused, misunderstood and eventually they become ignorant of their potentialities. The first essential fact is that the modern woman should realise or become aware of her potentialities. For this, she should not give more importance to her outer life like academic education, profession etc. Though it a part of the being it is not the Total. She has to evolve herself to realise her potentialities. This can be achieved only by an inner exploration, which helps her to come in front of Truth and true love and to embrace the whole universe. Savitri succeeds in attaining this truth and confronts the Death at its root. She crowns her husband satyavan with immortality.
The problem of vice is presented to Savitri in its acutest form and she is called upon to face it. She gets ready to face the situation and change the order that has prevailed so far, to assert supremacy of life and love over death. To attain such a great act one's being should not be confined within the play of human emotions and love that normally serve and centre round the ego like in the common man. She gets over her ego's pin point head and her being centre's around her soul. She is discontented with the education and knowledge she gains from her atmosphere via, philosophy, science, music, art etc. She aims for a higher knowledge.

Savitri's consciousness has been wide, large and deep enough to embrace the whole universe and that is why the divine love finds habitation in her. This divine love cannot stay in a heart that is tainted with selfishness and clipped by narrowness. It needs a receptacle that is as pire and wide as itself. She has such a heart, and love in her has been wider than the universe, the whole world can take refuge in her single heart.

She has not been affected by the Narad's word of fate. She has proclaimed her 'will' to be part of the 'eternal will', her strength to be of Gods. She firmly says that the fate's law may change but not her spirit's will.
Though she has undertaken a yogic journey in search of her soul, she has not avoided her daily activities for others. Savitri's being is one with the universal but this does not prevent her from being an individual as this individuality is a measureless point. Through her yoga she has been able to bring down the infinite power of the divine consciousness in herself and in her nature and bring about the change in Nature which is necessary to conquer the Death.

Savitri's love for her fellow-being on the earth made her refuse to climb to the everlasting day. She wants to raise man's soul to the divine and to bring down the immortal in life. And she fulfills the age long quest of conquering the Death.

Conquest of the Death

Man is haunted by the mystery of death through ages. There is no satisfactory answer to convince it. But he refuses to believe the inevitability of death which is a cardinal condition of existence. It is a instinct in man that he must live immortal. He is against death which overtakes him for his no fault.
To solve this problem one has to look into the different aspects of life and death. All know that life versus death. Then what is life? Sri Aurobindo says "Life is a form of the one cosmic energy, a dynamic movement or current of it positive and negative, a constant act or the play of force which builds up forms, energises them by a continual stream of stimulation and maintains them by an unceasing process of disintegration and renewal of substance." Man misunderstands life and death to be the opposition. But in truth it brings into the universal unity. Death cannot exist without life. It can destroy only the material form of the body not the life, and it is again renewed.

Life is a medium of transition from unconscious to consciousness. Death acts as a step for the continuous flow of life which is eternal. Hence life and death are not opposition but they are complementary. Savitri says this in the end of her dialogue with the Death.

"O death, thou art too God and yet not He,
Of God unconscious thou art the dark head,
All contraries are aspects of God's face...
Universal, he is all, transcendent". (1:11 P-650). Sri Aurobindo says "Death is the Question. Nature puts continually to life and her reminder to it has not yet found
itself. If there were no scourge of death, the creature
will be bound forever in the forms of an imperfect
living. Pursued by death he awakes to the idea of
perfect life and seeks out its means and its possibilities.

Man is born in this earth to transform the
lower nature and consciousness of his ego-self and also
to master over his physical body and physical circumstances.
Though he is born out of the material inconscience
he is pressurised and influenced by the psychic being
from within and also by the spirit from above to
transfigure his ordinary ignorant self and to express fully
the Divine consciousness.

A single life span is not sufficient for the
psychic being to attain its full maturity, as the
consciousness—the mental, the vital and the physical—
does not easily express in full the secret divinity
in it. When it is to be achieved the material body
disintegrates and disable. The Mother says, "Yet we
could infuse into this matter sufficient consciousness
so that its rhythm of growth falls in line with that
of the subtler parts of the being and if it becomes
plastic enough to follow the inner progress, then
the rupture of the equilibrium would not occur and
death would no longer be a necessity".
Ignorant human beings think that death is the termination of their life which separates them ever from the world-being. The mother gives few guidelines to get over the fear of death. The first method is reasoning which is suitable for the intellectuals. In the present condition of life man knows that death is inevitable but he refuses to believe this as a result he lands up in problem. He should remain calm and act his best without thinking about death.

Method of introspection is the second method, which is applicable to emotional people. If an individual goes deeper within, he comes in touch with the steady flame of the psychic consciousness which is immortal. Then he cannot be touched by the fear of death.

The third method applies to the people who have faith in God. It can be done by total surrender to God, to his love and protection, with this they can accept all eventualities of life in calm. They don't face fear or anxiety as they feel that everything in action is the will of God.

The last one is the method of war. This is suitable to the individuals who are bold and courageous and have indomitable spirit to conquer the Death as they consider immortality to be the birth-right. Savitri is for this battle.
She fights in from many fronts, in the mind, in the feelings, in the sensations, and in the materials.

The Mother says that mystic tries yet another method of entering into the domains of the Death consciously while remaining in the earthly life. They come back again into physical body and carry on in the life with full knowledge gained. Sri Aurobindo believes that the physical immortality can be attained as death is only man's choice but not Nature's compulsion. Man does not want to confine himself in one narrow and changeless lodging till a long eternity.

To conquer the Death, a much great power than the Death can alone do it. It is the supreme truth and Love that has this power. Savitri says,

"O Death, if thou couldst touch the truth supreme
Thou wouldst grow suddenly wise and cease to be"

and

"Loves golden wings have power to fan thy void
The eyes of love gaze starlike through deaths night,
The feet of love tread naked hardest worlds,
He labours in the depths, excults on the heights,
He shall remake thy universe, O Death" (44:8, 663)

the man to conquer to/Death has to conquer the inconscient first. As the inconscient results in ignorance and falsehood,
suffering and death. Hence the ignorance should be transformed into knowledge, falsehood into truth, suffering into bliss, death into immortality. This action constitutes the great adventure of the spirit in space and time to achieve the impossible.

The great problem that strikes is the problem of transformation, the transformation of the dark unconscience of matter into the luminous consciousness of the spirit. The transformation is a difficult process as it takes place with the gradual evolution of the secret Godhead which is embedded in the Inconscience. Hence the Death remains as a sovereign ruler, and the whole humanity has to submit itself to his ruler.

Now it is evident that to conquer the Death, an individual must exceed his consciousness and grow into superman who has connection with the supramental world or the Truth consciousness. Only a full pledged yogic can attain this. The coming superman with his force of his consciousness will have complete control over his death (ie) mastery over matter and nature. Then the Lord of death and forces of unconscience will submit to the power of the spirit.