

Transformation of Consciousness and Spiritual Power in Sri Aurobindo's *Savitri*

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Abstract: The paper focuses on Sri Aurobindo's epic emerges as a veritable cartographer of consciousness who guides the seekers through different planes of consciousness. In his monumental epic the Savitri, Sri Aurobindo unfolds the old mystery of the evolution of consciousness and life on the earth. It explores the transformation of consciousness. Savitri offers spirituality, realism and vision of truth.

Key Words: Spiritual, transformation, consciousness, mind, Supramental and philosophy

Introduction: Sri Aurobindo is among the top literary giants and philosophers of modern times. As a poet, He has a special place of his own in the literary firmament. In his writings, he also provides answers to those seeking the knowledge of consciousness, of evolution, of Yoga, of alchemy, and also of the problematic of the age, in the field of literature; he has given us an epic *Savitri* which is a marvel both in content and philosophy. Though *Savitri* is a love poem, it goes deeper into the study of philosophy, psychology and Yog. The epic takes its readers into pure consciousness and then into Supra consciousness. In *Savitri*, One finds how his idea of a divine life can lead human consciousness to Supra consciousness.

Before giving an analysis of the epic, it would be worthwhile to understand the basic principles and factors involved in the process of transformation of matter according to Aurobindean philosophical system. Sri Aurobindo outlines his gradation of human consciousness as physical. Mental and supramental with their subdivisions, the lowest one is physical-lower and higher. This level is akin to muladhar, and swadhishthan, the energy centres in the subtle body according of the Yogic postulates. The next level, Is vital level further divided into the lower vital, emotional vital and higher vital. This centre is the place of all desires and ambitions. This level is akin to the Yogic centre Manipura. The third level is that of Mind which is further

divided into three states of Mind as the Higher, intuitive and the illumined Mind. Above these levels of consciousness is the Supra mental level which is capable of transcending matter. So in the Aurobindean model, the levels of consciousness is shown as the physical, the vital, the Mind, the over mind and the Supra mind. According to Sri Aurobindo, by transcending the lower levels consciousness with their limitations, one can establish oneself in the higher realms of consciousness, this will help man to develop the supra ordinate personality whom Sri Aurobindo calls the superman. This superman equipped with the Yogic power will become the forerunner leading the human race to a divine life.

Sri Aurobindo's vision is universal which is applicable to philosophy and literature and also the emergence of a new world order. Sir Ghose calls him "the *Ved Vyasa* of inner consciousness" Sri Aurobindo's Philosophical system considers the present man in a transitional phase. His consciousness is still evolving and will evolve to the condition of superman. This task will be done by some forerunners by initiating the earth plane into a divine order. He believes that spirit is the ultimate reality and it is spirit which becomes Matter. Life and Mind, This process of transformation of these three levels of consciousness are called the Triple transformation of the psychic. Spiritual and the Gnostic, Raman Maharishi also has declared that consciousness is the only existing reality.

Man, once a unicellular organism has evolved himself through ages and will continue to do so. At present, human consciousness is not the final goal of evolution; it is a milestone pointing towards an apocalypse where the race of superman will rule the world. Many neuroscientists have shown in their researches that man uses only ten percent of his brain cells whom they call neurons, and the remaining ninety brain cells whom they call neurons. Inactivated and utilized. If we make use of all the cells. One can't even imagine about the potential of man. This will make him a superman, a being higher in the evolutionary ladder with heightened capacities. Then he can be capable of performing Herculean tasks. This will herald a new age of Superman on earth and this Sri Aurobindo calls divine life. Sri Aurobindo comments on the present condition of man as: "At present mankind is undergoing an evolutionary crisis in which is concealed a choice of its destiny; for the stage has been reached in which the human mind has achieved in certain directions an enormous developments-which in others it stands arrested and bewildered and can no longer find its way. The evolution of mind working upon life has developed an organization and use of matter which can no longer be supported by human

capacity without an inner change. The problem is fundamental and in putting its evolutionary Nature is confronting man with a critical choice which must one day be solved in the true sense if the race is to arrive or even to survive.”(Ray, 34)

So, Aurobindo asserts that there is a need to develop a paradigm of reality based on a holistic and evolutionary weltanschauung. In his writings, Sri Aurobindo has provided an integral weltanschauung embodying a synthesis of the East and the West. In his epic *Savitri*, Sri Aurobindo emerges a veritable cartographer and an explorer of consciousness.

“Savitri ranges symbolically from a primordial cosmic World through earth’s darkness and struggle to the highest realms of supramental spiritual existence. And illumines every important concern of man, through verse unparalleled massiveness. Magnificence and metaphorical brilliance.”(Iyengar , 201)

In *Savitri*, Sri Aurobindo through the love story of Savitri and Satyavan unfolds many. Secrets of life and death. It is a tale, rich symbolism. S. Krishna Sharma observes:

‘The name Savitri Symbolizes divine grace and illumination. She is the embodiment of solar illumination. The Supramental descending into the vital planes to activate and aid the ascending consciousness to the higher planes of sup remind and to bliss. She is an incarnation of the divine, “a branch of heaven” transplanted to human soil in response to Ashwapathy’s appeal she is the embassadress to call herself “world’s deputy”’(Ray 47)

Sri Aurobindo while narrating the epic-saga of both King Ashwapathy and his divine daughter Savitri shows them soaring in the higher realms of consciousness. As a legend, the epic contains highly dramatic moments in the inner countries of being travelled by both Ashwapathy and Savitri. Sri Aurobindo himself explains the symbolic Significance of the legend of Savitri and Satyavan.

The tale of Satyavan and Savitri is recited in the Mahabharata as a story of conjugal love conquering death. But this legend, is, as shown by many features of the human. Tale. One of the many symbolic myths of the Vedic cycle. Satyavan is the soul carrying the divine truth of being within but descended into the grip of death and ignorance: Savitri is the divine Word, daughter of the Sun, goodness of the Supreme Truth who comes down and is born to Save: Aswapati, the Lord of the Horse. Her human father, is the Lord of

Tapasya, the concentrated energy of spiritual endeavor that helps us to rise from the mortal to the immortal planes; dyumatsena , Lord of the Shining Hosts, father of Satyavan, is the Divine Mind here fallen blind; losing its celestial Kingdom of vision, and through that loss its kingdom of glory, still this is not a mere allegory. The characters are not personified qualities, but incarnations or emanations of living and consciousness Force with whom we can enter into concrete touch and they take human bodies in order to help man and show him the way from his mortal state to a divine to a divine consciousness and immortal life.

Thus, the legend of Satyavan-Savitri becomes a medium to show the dramatized version of man's predicament on the earth. In his epic Savitri, Sri Aurobindo provides a method to perceive an integral weltanschauung by practicing the integral Yoga. Though the Sadhana done by Ashwapathy and Savitri, Sri Aurobindo introduces his readers to the world of the occult and the Overmind. Here, the analysis of the different stages of Consciousness will be done by enlisting the mystic experiences of Ashwapathy and Savitri.

In the first part of the epic Savitri, king Ashwapathy has been introduced as a Raja Yogi par excellence whose Yogic and occult experience have been enlisted by the Seer-poet. Ashwapathy's Sadhana begins from Canto III The Yoga of the King: The Yoga of the Soul's Release' of Book I. one finds that Ashwapathy undergoes a roller coaster journey through various planes of consciousness.

King Ashwapathy begins as a Raja Yogi and goes through an epic introversion after having a number of Samadhi experiences. He has a vision of the Indian classic conjunction of Shiva and Shakti. Now armed with rich Yogic experiences he embarks upon Journey into the hell purgatory and heaven. The numerous planes of hell, purgatory and heaven such as the kingdoms of little life and Greater Life Mind and Greater Mind have been presented through the divine of contrast. This idea of the planes of consciousness is a widely accepted Indian proposition. It is a part of occult and it is also central to Gnosticism. So one finds that after winning the dazzle of his individual self. He comes to realize the eternal cosmic Shiva-Shakti Syzygy which enables him to go on a roller coaster ascent and descent of the Supramental.

Sri Aurobindo provides a graphic description of the planes of consciousness and the plexuses (chakras) present in our subtle body. One finds a great deal of literature in ancient

Indian treatises on Yoga like the ‘Yoga Sutra, Gheranda Samhita, Hatha Yoga Pradipika and many more. In the following illustration, The Aurobindean model of consciousness has been equated with the traditional Yogic model of energy centre in the body.

It becomes obvious that Ashwapathy practices Raja Yoga whereas his divine daughter Savitri’s Yoga is Kundalini Yoga which will be illustrated with suitable quotations in the end. Savitri’s quest is different from her father’s quest for self. She realizes from her father’s quest for self. She realizes herself through Kundalini Sadhana. She moves from concrete to the abstract. After the awakening of her Kundalini, Savitri prepares herself to counter Yama. The God of death. When Savitri enters the occult world-stair in her being (in her subtle body). She faces the trials of the subtle matter. She encounters the entities of the first three levels of consciousness namely Muladhar, Swadhishtan, and Manilpura which belong to the unconscious part of the psyche. In the initial stages of the entry into the unconscious, one may succumb to temptations. In her journey, the occult figures lure and urge Savitri to stay there but she has miles to go. On her way, she is assisted by spiritual Psychopomps in her ascent to supernal heights. There she meets three complementary pairs of feminine power who claim to be her true soul. The first pair is to Madonna of suffering and her warped echo the man of Sorrows Pormentheus. The second pair is the Mother of Might Durga and her warped echo Titan. The third pair is that of the Madonna of Light and the echo Mind. Savitri tells these three divine entities that after discovering her true soul, she will meet them again.

In the next stage of her journey to find her soul, Savitri too has to enter into “a night of God” Like her father, her occult experience culminate in her massive arousal of Kundalini. In Savitri, Sri Aurobindo provides graphic details of the arousal of the Serpent power in these evocative words:

“Kundalini Awakening, A flaming serpent rose released from sleep. It rose bellowing its coils and stood erect... It touched her centers with its flaming mouth: As if a fiery kiss had broken their sleep. They bloomed and laughed surcharged with light and bliss; Then at the crown it jointed the Eternal’s space” (p. 528)

A Jivan-mukta, the liberated one, an individual, one with cosmic self in the heart of the transient’s miracle and the secret of World-personality was the creator and the lord of all” (p. 556). A formless liberation came on her. Once sepulchered in brain and flesh she had risen up.

“From body, mind and life; she was no more a Person in a world, she had escaped into Infinity” (p. 548)

Nirvanic consciousness; In that absolute stillness bare and formidable. “The was glimpsed on all-negating Void supreme That claimed its mystic Nihil’s sovereign right To cancel Nature and deny the soul. Even the nude sense of self grew pale and thin... A black pure consciousness had replaced the mind” (p. 545)

With these experiences of pure consciousness, Savitri stands on the threshold of the greatest experience, the experience of Nirvana. This newly acquired Nirvanic strength becomes her Strength to counter Yama and also enables her to save Satyavan from the grip of death. This experience of nirvanic consciousness is akin to Nirvichar Samadhi (thoughtless) which enables her to become a witness and a spectator of the cosmic drama. She sees the entire creation in its evolutionary stages. Her ego-oriented personality has been dissolved in “God’s night” and she is able to identify herself with the cosmic self.

Like a skilled craftsman. Sri Aurobindo, the cartographer of consciousness provides a glimpse into these otherwise inaccessible realms of these occult experiences at once transport the readers to these luminous regions. So far, no other writer or yogi has provided such a detailed map of the inner worlds. While going through Savitri’s experiences, one finds that the main thrust of her Sadhana is not to achieve individualistic Nirvana or corporeal immortality. She even forgoes her Nirvanic experience so that humanity in the form Satyavana can be saved. She becomes a veritable guide of humanity. Her Sadhana is a continuation of Ashwapathy’s Sadhana. Savitri embraces the entire mankind in a cosmic commitment.

Conclusion: Savitri the greatest epic of modern times contains the roadmap and guidelines to those who on their way to immortality the trough of life and consciousness. Sri Aurobindo’s Vision is universal and points towards the emergence of a new world order which he calls the divine life. He has rightly been called by Sisir Ghosh the Ved Vyasa of inner consciousness.

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