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Walking the Path is a serious issue which can take many pages to delve into and expound upon. One believes ardently in the 'thousand ways' to reach the Divine and thus, to each his own. In one of the ancient scriptures, it is said:

"...a person who has not understood the universal consciousness of the atman and not understood the importance of serving the poor, or has not given thought to the improvement of society, or who is not patriotic, it is better for him not to exist. Such a life is useless."

From a purely superficial point of view this could mean giving of alms to the poor, not littering outside one's home, singing the national anthem, feeling that one belongs to the world.

But if one was to dive deeper into its significance, it could also mean amongst other things, serving those who are not just below the poverty line but anyone who is less privileged than ourselves, in any way, materially or spiritually - giving of alms is not simply giving money or clothes but one can also give wisdom, education, encouragement, dignity, respect; improvement of society goes beyond mere acquiescence to social laws - it also means being less dependent on society and more responsible for it, making a concerted effort towards positive change and very consciously lifting the standards from step to higher step, beginning at the level of the individual and thereby effecting a shift on a collective scale; to be patriotic is not enough when one participates in the obligatory injunctions laid out by the law or by cheering for one's national team in an international arena - it also means inculcating in oneself a feeling of constant devotion and dedication towards the Motherland, and being ever vigilant to ensure that no evil, in thought or deed, from within or without, can infiltrate and destroy the millennium old fabric worn by Her. Finally, embracing the world through a process of globalization is not the only way but by broadening one's narrow confines of identity from the personal

self to the universal self, realizing the truth behind such lofty ideas as Unity and Oneness, and aspiring incessantly to attain and act under the inspiration of a Universal Consciousness could be more the need of the hour.

It is possible that if one is able to follow this age old advice, this too may be just one step by which one can come closer to the Divine. In any case, it is certainly a step towards the making of a better world and being more 'useful' rather than 'useless'.

Until the next time...

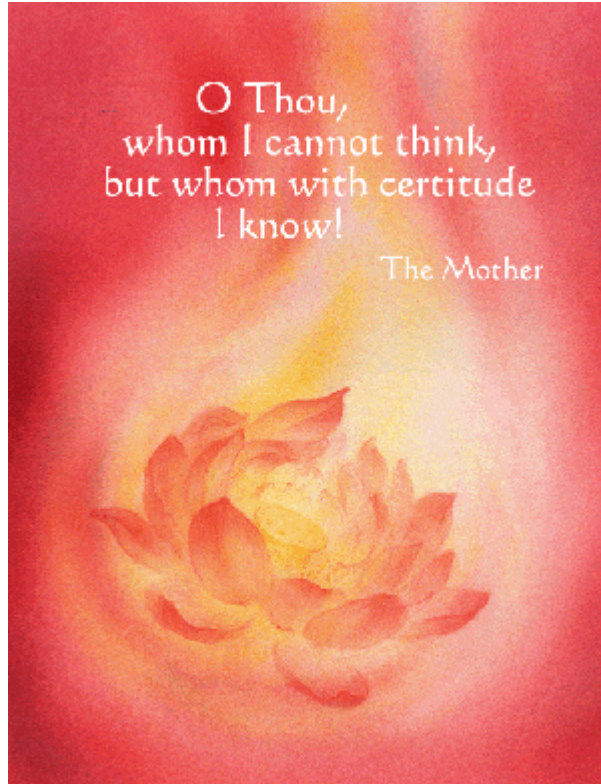
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# *Eternally Yours*

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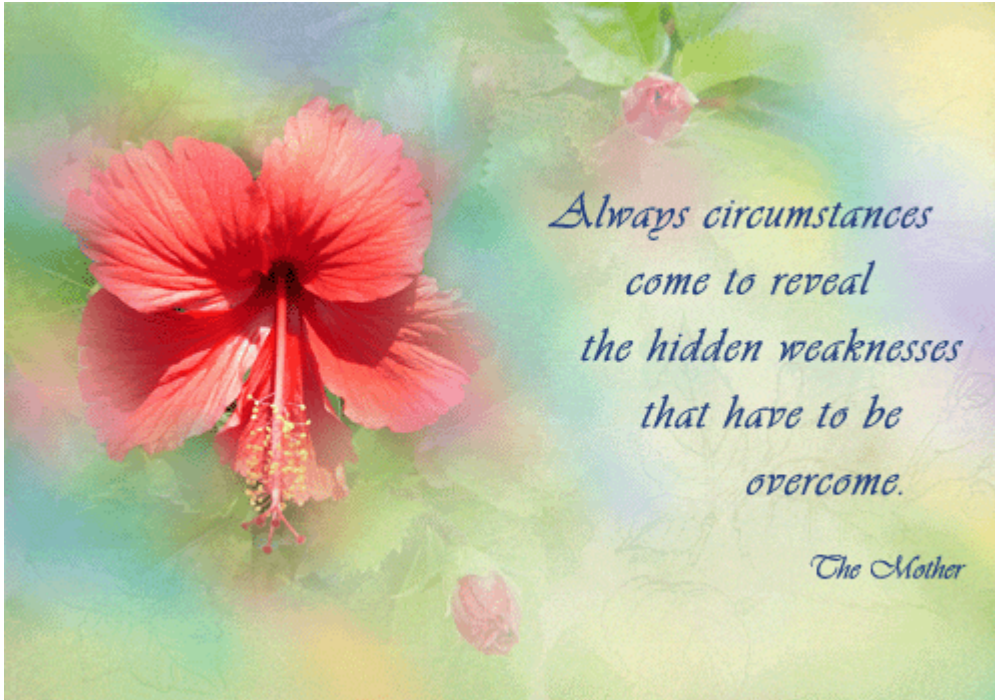
O Thou,  
whom I cannot think,  
but whom with certitude  
I know!

The Mother



# Living Words

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# Flowers and their Messages

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For the month of September we had selected the flower signifying endurance. For this month we have taken flower called "Nobility".



<b>Spiritual Name</b>	Nobility "The incapacity for any pettiness of feeling or action."
<b>Botanical Name</b>	Dahlia Cav. Spp.
<b>Common Name</b>	Dahlia

## General Description

Nobility is a tender tuberous perennial herb with rough, heart shaped leaves. The flowers are very large (over 16 cm), fully double, with deep wine red colour. They are composed of broadly cupped ray florets symmetrically arranged in a dense rounded cushion like head. They are borne singly. Nobility can be used for flowering beds, border plantations and flower cuttings.

Nobility can be propagated by soft cuttings taken in spring or by careful division of the tubers. It thrives best in rich soil with good drainage. And it needs adequate water supply. At planting time, colonies of aphids can rapidly develop on the tips of plants and it is advisable to give a precautionary spray with a systemic organic insecticide. Once the young plants have become established, they grow rapidly, and it is important that the new growth is securely tied. A common method of supporting growing dahlia plants is to insert two further canes at an angle to each plant and then tie twine around the three canes at intervals to form an inverted funnel which will hold the plants firmly despite the

strongest winds. An alternative method is to use wire or plastic netting with a six inch mesh tied horizontally to the canes about two feet above ground. The plants grow through the netting and are secure against the strongest winds.

### **The Mother on Nobility**

Here are some very striking quotations from the Mother on Nobility.

.....nobility which makes it impossible for you to act like an ordinary person, which infuses into you a bravery, a courage which may almost be taken for rashness because the attitude, the experience demands that you face danger without showing the least fear.

\*

For one who has developed a truly refined taste will, because of this very refinement, feel incapable of acting in a crude, brutal or vulgar manner. This refinement, if it is sincere, brings to the being a nobility and generosity which will spontaneously find expression in his behaviour and will protect him from many base and perverse movements.

\*


To speak always the truth is the highest title of nobility.

\*

... It takes nobility of character not to resent someone who does you good.

The Mother

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## Question of the Month

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### Accidents and the Moment of Choice

We often receive questions from aspirants, who are not satisfied with their present lives, who are trying to find a meaning in their lives, a deeper reason for why things happen as they do, and who are searching for a light to guide them in their actions.

Each month we take a question of this nature and present an answer based on the writings of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, with the belief that this could be of help to a larger number of persons. We welcome further comments on making our endeavour beneficial to all.

*Question : Why or how is it that some persons seem to come out unhurt, even without a scratch, from major accidents, while for others, even the slightest thing turns into something very serious? Is it all a play of chance or is there something behind of which we are not usually aware but which is the determining factor?*

The Mother, in one of her talks, took up this issue and explained how there is always a moment of choice where one can decide whether one will be saved or not, whether the accident will be very minor or end up in something very serious. And it all depends on whether one has an awakened Consciousness within and it is possible for everyone to have it.

### **The Moment of Choice**

There is a moment for choice, even in an accident. For instance, one slips and falls. Just between the moment one has slipped and the moment one falls there is a fraction of a second. At that moment one has the choice: it may be nothing much, it may be very serious. Only, the consciousness must naturally be wide awake and one must be in contact with one's psychic being constantly-there is no time to make the contact, one must be in contact. Between the moment one slips and the moment one is on the ground, if the mental and psychic formation is sufficiently strong, then there is nothing, nothing will happen-nothing happens. But if at that moment, the mind according to its habit becomes a pessimist and tells itself: "Oh! I have slipped...." That lasts the fraction of a second; that doesn't take even a minute, it is a fraction of a second; during a fraction of a second one has the choice. But one must be so awake, every minute of one's life! For a fraction of a second one has the choice, there is a fraction of a second in which one can prevent the accident from being serious, can prevent the illness from entering in. One always has the choice. But it is for a fraction of a second and one must not miss it. If one misses it, it is finished.

*One can make it afterwards?*

No. Afterwards there is yet another moment.... One has fallen, one is already hurt; but there is still a moment when one can change things for the better or worse, so that it may be something very fugitive the bad effects of which will quickly disappear or something which becomes as serious, as grave as it can be. I don't know if you have noticed that there are people who never miss the opportunity of an accident! Every time there is the possibility of an accident, they have it. And never is their accident ordinary. Every time the accident can be serious, it is serious. Well, usually in life one says: "Oh! he is unlucky, he is unfortunate, indeed he has no luck." But all that is ignorance. It depends absolutely on the working of his consciousness. I could give you examples -only I would have to speak about certain people and I don't want to. But I could give you striking examples! And this-this is the sort of thing one sees all the time, all the time here! There are people who could have been killed and who come out of it unscathed; there are others for whom it was not serious, and it becomes serious.

But that does not depend on thought, on the working of the ordinary thought. They may apparently have thoughts as good as the others-it is not that. It is the second of the choice -people knowing how to react just in the right way at the right time. I could give you hundreds of examples. It is quite interesting.

### **An Awakened Consciousness**

This depends absolutely on character. Some have such an awakened consciousness, so alert, that they are not asleep, they are awake within. Just at the second it is required they call the help. Or they invoke the divine Force. But just at the second it is needed. So the danger is averted, nothing happens. They could have been killed: they come out of it absolutely unhurt. Others, on the contrary, as soon as they have the least little scratch, something gets dislocated in their being: a sort of fright or pessimism or defeatism in their consciousness which automatically comes up-it was nothing, they had just twisted their leg and the next minute they break it. There is no reason for it. They could very well have not broken their leg.

There are others who climb up to a first floor on a ladder which gives way under them. They could have collapsed-they come out of that without the least hurt. How did they manage it? Apparently this seems wonderful, and still this is how things happen to them. They find themselves lying on the ground in an altogether fine state; nothing has happened to them. I could give you the names, I am telling you exact facts.

So, on what does this depend? It depends on whether one is sufficiently awake for the second of the choice.... And note that this is not at all mental, it is not that: it is an attitude of the being, it is the consciousness reacting in the right way. It goes quite far, very far, it is formidable, the power of this attitude. But as it is just a fraction of a second, it implies an altogether awakened consciousness which never sleeps, never enters the inconscient. For one does not know when these things are going to happen, isn't that so? Hence, one does not have the time to wake up. One must be awake.

I knew someone who, indeed, should have died and did not die because of this. For his consciousness reacted very fast. He had taken poison by mistake: instead of taking one dose of a certain medicine, he had taken twelve and it was a poison; he should have died, the heart should have stopped (it was many years ago) and he is still quite alive! He reacted in the right way.

If these things were narrated they would be called miracles. They are not miracles: it is an awakened consciousness.

The Mother

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*The Mother's commentaries on the Dhammapada were given between August 1957 and September 1958 to the members of Her Friday class at the Ashram Playground. After reading a chapter of the text, the Mother spoke about the points which interested Her and then asked the class to meditate on them. She did not systematically discuss all the Dhammapada verses, but she did cover most of the central ideas in the text.*

*We will be reproducing each of the sessions in order of sequence in this series.*

### **The life of the disciples of the Blessed One**

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#### **The Mother**

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#### **Conjugate Verses**

*Even though he may recite a great number of sacred texts, if he does not act accordingly, the foolish one will be like the cowherd who counts the cows of others. He cannot share in the life of the disciples of the Blessed One.*

*Though he may recite only a tiny portion of the sacred texts, if he puts into practice their teaching, having rejected all passion, all ill-will and all delusion, he possesses the true wisdom; his mind completely freed, no longer attached to anything, belonging neither to this world nor to any other, he shares in the life of the disciples of the Blessed One.*

The thing has been so often said and repeated that it seems quite unnecessary to insist on the fact that a mite of practice is infinitely more precious than mountains of talk. Surely, all the energy that one spends in explaining a theory would be much better utilised in overcoming in oneself a weakness or a defect.

Therefore to conform to the wisdom of this teaching, we shall consider the best means of rejecting all passion and ill-will and delusion.

The delusion consists in taking the appearance for the reality and transient things for the only thing worthy of pursuit, the everlasting Truth.

It is rather interesting to note that the Dhammapada clearly underlines that it is not enough to be free from the bonds of this world only, but of all the worlds.

For the true and zealous Buddhists tell you that ordinary religions captivate you by enticing you with the glittering advantages that you will find after death in their Paradise, if you practise their principles. Buddhism, on the other hand, has neither hell nor heaven. It does not terrify you with eternal punishment nor does it tempt you with celestial felicities.

It is in the pure Truth that you will find your satisfaction and the reward of all your efforts.

*10 January 1958*

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# Integral Health

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## An End to the Endless Search

**Dr. Alok Pandey**

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Man is constantly in search of miracles. He looks for the new fad, the wonder drug, the alternative system that can satisfy his need for an instant solution to his suffering and ills. He goes from pillar to post: changing doctors and masters, in search of the ultimate power that could rescue him from the siege of anxiety and fear, disease and death. But the only certainty he seems to find is the uncertainty of life, the only predictability is the unpredictability of death. He lifts his hands to the blue azure and prostrates himself upon the green earth to grant this one boon, a life free of torments and ills, suffering and disease.

Time passes, systems change, the doctors who had discovered the wonder drug themselves die. The promises of miracles fade and fail.

And so it shall be till we turn inward and seek the miracle within us: our soul, the supreme Alchemist who has built the system of worlds, yet chooses to dwell inside our hearts, the subtlest of subtle, that little seed of divinity. This is the real doer of miracles or the door to them. This is the secret upholder of immortality. It is towards this that all our suffering secretly and painfully leads. For its discovery and enjoyment, the earth was made. The earth still struggles to deliver this flame-child from the night of Ignorance that is Death.

"A Magician's formulas have made Matter's laws  
And while they last, all things by them are bound;  
But the Spirit's consent is needed for each act  
And freedom walks in the same pace with Law.  
All here can change if the Magician choose.  
If human will could be made one with God's,  
If human thought could echo the thoughts of God,  
Man might be all-knowing and omnipotent;  
But now he walks in Nature's doubtful ray.  
Yet can the mind of man receive God's light,  
The force of man can be driven by God's force,  
Then is he a miracle doing miracles.  
For only so can he be Nature's king."\*

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*(Dr. Alok Pandey has been working in the field of psychiatry with a spiritual approach for more than 15 years. He has developed a working concept of integral health and integral psychology which he is using in his life and practice. He is one of the founders of SAIHR).*

*\* Sri Aurobindo; Savitri, Bk. VI Canto 2. Pondicherry; Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1970, pp. 457-8.*



# Integral Education

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*Education is perhaps the most important domain related to human progress. Except, here we do not mean the kind of syllabus oriented teaching imparted solely in school or college, but rather a form of constant learning that takes place through the life of an individual. This kind of education is integral and complete, leaving no area ignored within the human being. Its objective is to forever widen itself, and by developing the right consciousness, be able to rise from truth to higher truth.*

*Each one has to actively work towards this, framing one's own agenda, aspiring for one's own goal. It isn't a discipline meant only for the chosen few but in fact if practiced consciously can transform the very nature of every being. At the end, it all boils down to something extremely basic but easily forgotten... in the words of The Mother, "Of one thing you can be sure - your future is in your hands. You will become the man you want to be and the higher your ideal and your aspiration, the higher will be your realization, but you must keep a firm resolution and never forget your true aim in life."*

*In our section called Integral Education, we will put forth concrete ideas of how such a thorough form of learning can be both inculcated in oneself as well as imparted to another.*

## Sadhana and Sports

### **Sri Aurobindo**

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The Mother does not want anybody to take up the sports if he has no inclination or natural bent for them; to join or not to join must be quite voluntary and those who do not join are not cold-shouldered or looked down upon by her for that reason. It would be absurd for her to take that attitude: there are those who do her faithful service which she deeply appreciates and whom she regards with affection and confidence but who never go to the playground either because they have no turn for it or no time, - can you imagine that for that reason she will turn away from them and regard them with coldness? The Mother could never intend that sports should be the sole or the chief preoccupation of the inmates of the Ashram; even the children of the school for whose physical development these sports and athletic exercises are important and for whom they were originally intended, have other things to do, their work, their studies and other occupations and amusements in which they are as interested as in these athletics. There are other things more important: there are Yoga, spiritual progress, Bhakti, devotion, service....

I do not understand what you mean by my "giving time to sports": I am not giving any time to it except that I have written at Mother's request an article for the first number of the Bulletin and another for the forthcoming number. It is the Mother who is doing all the

rest of the work for the organisation of the sports and that she must do, obviously, till it is sufficiently organised to go on of itself with only a general supervision from above and her actual presence once in the day. I put out my force to support her as in all the other work of the Ashram, but otherwise I am not giving any time for the sports.

*4 March 1949*

There is no need for anyone to take up sports as indispensable for Yoga or enjoying the Mother's affection and kindness. Yoga has its own object and has its own means and conditions; sports is something quite different as the Mother herself indicated to you when she said that the concentration practised on the playground was not meditation and was used for the efficacy in the movements and not for any purpose of Yoga.

*14 March 1949*

It is also not a fact that either the Mother or I are turning away from Yoga and intend to interest ourselves only in sport; we have no intention whatever of altering the fundamental character of the Ashram and replacing it by a sportive association. If we did that it would be a most idiotic act and if anybody should have told you anything like that, he must be off his head or in a temporary crisis of delirious enthusiasm for a very upsidedown idea. The Mother told you very clearly once that what was being done in the playground was not meditation or a concentration for Yoga but only an ordinary concentration for the physical exercises alone. If she is busy with the organisation of these things - and it is not true that she is busy with that alone - it is in order to get finished with that as soon as possible after which it will go on of itself without her being at all engrossed or specially occupied by it, as is the case with other works of the Ashram. As for myself, it is surely absurd to think that I am neglecting meditation and Yoga and interested only in running, jumping and marching! There seem to have been strange misunderstandings about my second message in the Bulletin. In the first, I wrote about sports and their utility just as I have written on politics or social development or any other matter. In the second, I took up the question incidentally because people are expressing ignorance as to why the Ashram should concern itself with sports at all. I explained why it had been done and dealt with the more general question of how this and other human activities could be part of a search for a total perfection of all parts of the being including the body and more especially what would be the nature of the perfection of the body. I indicated clearly that only by Yoga could there come a supreme and total perfection of all the instruments of the Spirit and the ascent of the whole being to the highest level and a divine life on earth and the assumption of a divine body. I made it clear that by human and physical means such as sports only a limited and precarious human perfection could come. In all this there is nothing to justify the idea that sport could be a means for jumping into the Supermind or that the Supermind was going to descend on the playground and nowhere else and only those who are there will receive it; that would be a bad look-out for me as I would have no chance!

*27 April 1949*

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## *Hymn to the Mother (Bande Matram)*

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**Bankim**

**Chandra**

**Chatterjee**

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The...supreme service of Bankim to his nation was that he gave us the vision of our Mother. The bare intellectual idea of the Motherland is not in itself a great driving force; the mere recognition of the desirability of freedom is not an inspiring motive. There are few Indians at present, whether loyalist, moderate or nationalist in their political views, who do not recognise that the country has claims on them or that freedom in the abstract is a desirable thing. But most of us, when it is a question between the claims of the country and other claims, do not in practice prefer the service of the country; and while many may have the wish to see freedom accomplished, few have the will to accomplish it. There are other things which we hold dearer and which we fear to see imperilled either in the struggle for freedom or by its accomplishment. It is not till the Motherland reveals herself to the eye of the mind as something more than a stretch of earth or a mass of individuals, it is not till she takes shape as a great Divine and Maternal Power in a form of beauty that can dominate the mind and seize the heart that these petty fears and hopes vanish in the all-absorbing passion for the Mother and her service, and the patriotism that works miracles and saves a doomed nation is born. To some men it is given to have that vision and reveal it to others. It was thirty-two years ago that Bankim wrote his great song and few listened; but in a sudden moment of awakening from long delusions the people of Bengal looked round for the truth and in a fated moment somebody sang *Bande Mataram*. The Mantra had been given and in a single day a whole people had been converted to the religion of patriotism. The Mother had revealed herself.

Sri Aurobindo

Mother, I bow to thee!  
Rich with thy hurrying streams,  
Bright with thy orchard gleams,  
Cool with thy winds of delight,  
Dark fields waving, Mother of might,  
Mother free.  
Glory of moonlight dreams  
Over thy branches and lordly streams,  
Clad in thy blossoming trees,  
Mother, giver of ease,  
Laughing low and sweet!  
Mother, I kiss thy feet,  
Speaker sweet and low!  
Mother, to thee I bow.

Who hath said thou art weak in thy lands,  
When the swords flash out in twice seventy  
million hands

And seventy million voices roar  
Thy dreadful name from shore to shore?  
With many strengths who art mighty and  
stored,  
To thee I call, Mother and Lord!  
Thou who savest, arise and save!  
To her I cry who ever her foemen drave  
Back from plain and sea  
And shook herself free.

Thou art wisdom, thou art law, Thou our  
heart, our soul, our breath,  
Thou the love divine, the awe  
In our hearts that conquers death.  
Thine the strength that nerves the arm,  
Thine the beauty, thine the charm.  
Every image made divine  
In our temples is but thine.

Thou art Durga, Lady and Queen,  
With her hands that strike and her swords of  
sheen,  
Thou art Lakshmi lotus-throned,  
And the Muse a hundred-toned.  
Pure and perfect without peer,  
Mother, lend thine ear.  
Rich with thy hurrying streams,

वन्दे मातरम्  
सुजलां सुफलां मलयजशीतलाम्  
शस्य श्यामलां मातरं ।  
शुभ्र ज्योत्स्ना पुलकित धामिनीम्  
कुल कुसुमित द्रुमदलशोमिनीम्  
सुहासिनीं सुमधुर भाषिणीम् ।  
सुखदां वरदां मातरम् ॥ वन्दे मातरम्

सप्त कोटि कण्ठ कलकल निनाद कराले  
निसप्त कोटि मुजैर्धृत खरकरवाले  
के बोले मा तुमी अबले  
बहुबल धारिणीं नमामि तारिणीम्  
रिपुदलवारिणीं मातरम् ॥ वन्दे मातरम्

तुमि विद्या तुमि धर्म तुमि हृदि तुमि मर्म  
त्वं हि प्राणाः शरीरे  
बाहुते तुमि मा शक्ति  
हृदये तुमि मा शक्ति  
तोमारै प्रतिमा गढि मंदिरे मंदिरे ॥ वन्दे मातरम्

त्वं हि दुर्गा दशप्रहरणधारिणी  
कमला कमलदल विहारिणी  
वाणी विद्यादायिनी नमामि त्वाम्  
नमामि कमलां अमलां अतुलाम्  
सुजलां सुफलां मातरम् ॥ वन्दे मातरम्  
श्यामलां सरलां सुस्मितां भूषिताम्  
धरणीं भरणीं मातरम् ॥ वन्दे मातरम्

Bright with thy orchard gleams,  
Dark of hue, O candid-fair  
In thy soul, with jewelled hair  
And thy glorious smile divine,  
Loveliest of all earthly lands,  
Showering wealth from well-stored hands!  
Mother, mother mine!  
Mother sweet, I bow to thee,  
Mother great and free!

*(Written by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee; Translated by Sri Aurobindo)*



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**Shonar**

**Joshi**

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As for the recent controversy surrounding the national song of India, those who object, may be right in voicing their objections. For they are cent percent correct when they say that Bande Mataram is a song of worship.

Bande Mataram was a mantra used first by the people of Bengal and later by the rest of Hindustan during the freedom struggle. It chased tamas out of the national bloodstream and helped the Indian vitality to strike hard at the British armour, denting it by its very force. People irrespective of caste, religion, gender sang it with such conviction and fervour, rending the air of the country, from the north to the south, the east to the west, with an intensity of purpose - the purpose of freeing the nation from the shackles of British Empire. There were other songs in other languages but none came close to the burst of patriotic zeal as generated by Bande Mataram. It resurrected the nation, awakening a sense of beauty in what lay all around us, filling us with pride and the will to fight and survive, making us revere the very soil beneath our feet, such that we lie prostrate, touching our foreheads to the sacred soil of the Motherland, from whose womb we have all emerged. And this is what makes Bande Mataram a song Divine.

But then the politics began. Objections were raised. Concessions were made. The mindset was tuned to suit the times. Bande Mataram was suddenly felt to be too contentious even though it was sung with love and devotion until the day before. But the power of the song that almost seemed to have led us to freedom was such that it couldn't be simply discarded overnight and so National Song is what it became although National Anthem is what it deserved to become. Even then, the objections did not cease. And barring the first two stanzas the rest were struck off as offensive.

It is a shame that we are now living in times where the symbology of poetic language is misconstrued by a narrow-minded perception. The whole premise of poetry lies in its art of ambiguity and its grandness of vision where things abstract are able to manifest. To prescribe any poetic utterance, especially the kind that is mantric in nature or that which is inspired by the higher mind, in a literal and word for word translation is to murder the very thought that went behind it. And that is what we have succeeded in doing.

If one were to study the song carefully, one sees the progression of the poet's thought as he moves from the purely physical aspects and descriptions of the country, to the more

emotional strands in the middle stanzas and finally culminating in the spiritual (not religious) where the country is no longer just a geographical entity but a living Presence and Force. This Force is what those who sang the song recognized and worshipped, revered and respected. It took the imagery of goddesses because that was what appealed to the poet but it was never the goddess herself - it was the essence of that godhead, the significance of what she represented, that resided in this land, making one bow down and kiss the earth.

To read, understand and sing Bande Mataram without taking into consideration the play of words and thoughts, is to denigrate a work of the highest order. Likewise, to regard Bharat from only a superficial view, giving credence only to her physical attributes, is even more disrespectful.

That this is precisely what has happened as is evident from the widely televised snippets of national shame. People from all walks of life were interviewed regarding the meaning of the song, the words of the song, the sentiments of the song. All to end in a big zero. Ignorance sang a high note when those who clamoured for or against the song were exposed in their meagre knowledge of the words, meanings or even the great mind that authored their subject of protest. Children rattled it off like well trained parrots, oblivious of all else except that 'this is what we must do'. Older students being groomed to manage the country and its affairs in the future, ostensibly with 'questioning minds' never once thought to put up their hands and say, "what are we singing?" Interviewers themselves, hungry for a sensational soundbyte, failed to provide the answers, or insights that could have removed hazy clouds and even now continue to use it as bait for viewer entertainment.

The only thing that has emerged is that it is not so much the song that seems to have caused the problem, but the shift in attitude towards it. A hundred years ago, people were willing to die with the song on their lips. Their children today shift uneasily, mumbling the song, if at all, as if it is something to be ashamed of. If we need to examine anything, it is ourselves, we who have changed, for the song remains what it was. In an extraordinary way, perhaps this unfortunate exposure was essential and part of a bigger plan. It is possible yet, that a mind here or a mind there, may snap out of this comfortable state of slumber, and try to dive into the heart of the matter. Perhaps, embarrassed by its state of nationwide ignorance, schools and teachers will take it upon themselves to learn before they teach. Perhaps politicians and others who voice their opinions vehemently will at least do the necessary homework before making a display of their utter lack of knowledge and in turn, a grand mockery of the community or position that they represent. On a larger scale, perhaps, the nation had to indulge in this masochistic exercise in order to reinvoke a sense of dignity and pride in what it means to be an Indian, starting with at least having the most basic knowledge of the various tools that chiseled unceasingly to make the country what it is today. Bande Mataram with its lofty ideal and zealous approach to one's Motherland was one such tool.

Irrespective of religion, caste, creed, gender and even nationality, if you choose not to understand the essence or the spirit behind the words that make up Bande Mataram, it is

perhaps best, that it remains unsung. For to sing it with no heart and no soul, is perhaps a bigger disgrace than to find in it cause for discomfort on personal and religious grounds. The truth is, as most other works of high inspiration, this too is far above and far removed from a bigoted and blinkered perception, unstained and detached from attack of an ignorant mindset. Whispered into the consciousness of a nation, it served a cause many years ago, and perhaps, it is serving another cause, yet again.

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*(Note: We have retained the original spelling of the song although it is now written and accepted as Vande instead of Bande.)*

*(Shonar likes to dabble with words and experiences, creating a moment that can be shared with others. Having tired of the politics of enviro-radicalism, she is now content with simply doing her own bit, as consciously as possible, hoping that it would make a difference.)*



## Resurgent India

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### Sculpting the Past with the Present

"A small bronze statuette of a dancing girl in the buried city of Mohenjo Daro in Sind shows that the process of lost wax [cire perdue] was known to India some 5000 years ago", says historian Chintamani Kar [ 'Indian Metal Sculpture', London, 1952].

In keeping with its penchant to astonish anyone who cares to look, India is home to this art even today. The art draws its grammar from ancient Sanskrit verses, connects with modern life, sustains a robust economy and promises to thrive on.

The capital of the lost wax metal casting is the town of Swamimalai, about 8 km from Kumbakonam, in the Thanjavoor [Tanjore] district. For 350 years a clan of Sthapathys have nurtured this art and helped it to survive . They claim descent from Viswa Karma, the emissary of Brahma, sent to support man's endeavours in this world. But the Sthapathys are not some secret guild keeping others out. They have helped found and run a school in Swamimalai that teaches this craft. We shall see how this unbroken thread, beginning in the early mists of time wrapped in myths and legends, is to be found today as a vigorous industry, maintaining high standards of aesthetics and quality.

### **Finest Clay**

Vijayanagar Empire had sustained fine arts and crafts and lasted for 300 years. Its court was a patron to thousands of artists in various fields. When it finally broke up in 1640, the Sthapathys, among other artists and scholars, were scattered everywhere. From a small settlement of them in Senji near Chennai [Madras] came Devasenapathy's ancestor. A Nayak [ a minor king], had sought him out for casting icons for temples. The famous granite temples of Thanjavoor had been in place for over 500 years, and the art of metal casting was now to make its home here. Devasenapathy Sthapathy is the oldest living descendant of the clan.

"My ancestor found on the banks of river Cauvery, near Swamimalai, a clay so fine that it will reproduce the clearest of finger prints!", says he. Also when fired, it did not crack. So the Sthapathys decided to settle and set shop. It was an era of great temple building activity and icons were in demand both for temples and homes. Kingly patronage gave the Sthapathys a high social standing and they went on to create a great cultural enterprise.

Devasenapathy Sthapathy's mind moves effortlessly between the mythical and the modern. He is an artist decorated by the national government, has traveled as far as London and heads a profitable export business, but he remains connected with his belief system.

Start with Rig Veda!

And his dictates begin in divine texts!

Rig Veda refers to lost wax casting technique as 'maduchchista vidhana'. And Manushya Purana, another hoary text, refers to Viswa Karma's five skills as those of, Manu [ iron monger], Maya [wood worker], Twastha [vessel maker], Viswajhan [gold smith] and Silpi [ icon maker]. A practitioner may call himself a Sthapathy if he is proficient in at least 3 of the five skills.

Lost wax [cire perdue, in French] bronze casting falls under Silpa Shastra and has its established grammar, tools, techniques and metallurgy.

Let's quickly run through the steps: First the figure is hand moulded in hard wax. The finished wax figure is encased in clay and sun dried. Then the clay case is heated to melt and drain the wax. Into the hollow space, molten alloy is poured. The rough cast is finally hand finished and polished. Single pieces can weigh over 2 tonnes and stand upwards of 15 feet!

Moulding the wax figure is done from memory and given that Hindu gods and savants number in the hundreds and have their immutable characteristics, the scale of the task can be imagined with some effort!

### **Palm Leaf Scale and Allegories**

The sculptor first makes a measuring tape out of a ribbon of coconut palm leaf, about half an inch wide and a length exactly equal to the height of the intended figure. He then folds it in units of 1/124 equal parts. The parts of the anatomy are defined in terms of this unit, like say brow = 3 units, the circumference of the bosom =18 units and so on. The creased palm ribbon is kept in a bowl of water and preserved until the figure is done.

That's about measure. As for the aesthetics of the image, a sculptor is aided by poetic allegories in the verses. The head is to resemble a hen's egg; the eye- brow is to be curved like a neem leaf; the eye shall be patterned on a small and fast swimming fish; the ear is defined by the edges of a lily bloom; the nose shall remind you of a sesame flower; the upper lip, a bow; the lower, a ripe tinda; the chin, a small mango pit; the neck, the flutes of a shell; the torso , a cow's head; arm, the fall of an elephant's trunk; thighs, the lower trunk of a banana plant; knee, a crab and leg, a large fish!

This is not to mean that there is no freedom for the artist. Devasenapathy Sthapathy says, "An artist sits and moulds the wax meditating on his subject. He remembers legends and deeds, prescriptions and rules but finally it's a unique piece. No two images are ever

identical. There may even be delightful little errors of detail but never one that inhibits affection and veneration."

### **Rajan, a Rare Product**

Devasenapathy Sthapathy himself does not create non-ecclesiastical images. In fact when mortals are cast, they are accorded only the coarser 1/8 unit for details. But secular works are indeed created and the practitioners today are not all descended from the clan of Sthapathys.

The state government runs a school in Swamimalai which admits about 15 students once every three years. The Sthapathys have helped found the school and transfer the techniques to the teachers there. Since 1957, about 150 skilled craftsmen have passed out and set up workshops all over India.

A remarkable modern product of this ancient stream is, Rajan. A man in his forties, he was born as one of nine in the family of a traditional stone sculptor, whose family moved from Kerala to Tiruchi about 150 years ago. Rajan had completed his pre university studies when he decided to break from the family trade and study metal casting in Swamimalai. The family disowned him, but he fought his way through. "I did face opposition from a few local people in Swamimalai, but there were many others who supported me."

Rajan Industries, located in the outskirts of Swamimalai, is a large premises from where about 42 skilled workers are engaged in putting out products worth Rs.7.5 million annually! Tradition is adhered to but modern marketing is practiced.

There is nothing traditional about Rajan's mental make up, though he lives and works in traditionalist Swamimalai: he is a bachelor who thinks marriage will come in the way of his work. He gives away 25% of his profits to local charities, has bequeathed his business to his workers and builds a house every year for a worker [current score, 6]. He is widely traveled, speaks four languages including fluent English! He paints, does magic shows for children and surfs the net!

Thus, Swamimalai! Not atypical of modern India, where several layers co-exist: an ancient one, one of hard nosed business and another of social transformation; each expected to be in conflict with the other, but on closer look, reasonably harmoniously connected.

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*(This article was taken from <http://www.goodnewsindia.com> GoodNewsIndia is dedicated to little known stories of positive action and is published by D. V. Sridharan)*

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## *A Mystic Symbolism and the Future of Symbols*

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**M.S.**

**Srinivasan**

---

"To commit adultery with God is the perfect experience for which the world is created." - Sri Aurobindo

Here, Sri Aurobindo, with a sparkling humour provides a luminous clue to understand the meaning of a potent symbolism of the Vaishnava mysticism.

In most of the mystical traditions the human soul is the bride and God is the bridegroom. Hence, the union of the human soul with the Divine is a respectable bourgeois marriage. But in Vaishnava mysticism the symbolism is something radically bold and different. Here, the husband of the human soul is not God but the World or the ordinary earthly life. The human soul is the adulterous and unchaste wife. God is not the legitimate bridegroom, but the clandestine divine lover and paramour with whom the human soul (like the adulterous wife) unites secretly in the nuptial chamber of the heart, unknown to the World who is her husband.

In the final act, the human soul deserts her earthly husband and elopes with her divine paramour to Brindavan, the celestial abode of the divine lover.

This Vaishnava symbolism may appear revolting to the puritanical mind, but it is much more bold, revealing and expressive of the mystic path, the *via mystica*. However, this ideal of traditional mysticism, deserting the world and running away with God to heaven, may not be the highest or the most integral spiritual ideal.

Most of the ancient mysticism was world-denying and indulged too much in secrecy, keeping the beloved divine behind a brilliant mist of riddling symbols and esoteric mysteries which as Sri Aurobindo describes "...hid the sense they claimed to show"<sup>1</sup> and "By mysteries they explained a Mystery. A riddling answer met the riddle of things."<sup>2</sup> Spirituality of the future will perhaps bring forward the divine lover into the open from the esoteric caves of mysticism and dungeons of religion and make the whole world his nuptial chamber and all humanity his bride. When this happens then there will be no need for symbols.<sup>3</sup>

Symbols belong to the intermediate planes of existence and serve a purpose up to a certain stage in our spiritual evolution. But at a higher stage when we are able to see, feel, touch, live and become one with the truth of the spirit, then there is no need for symbols to understand the truth. We are still very far away from such a realisation. But, as the spiritual evolution of humanity progresses rapidly in the future, we may expect that this

higher knowledge of the spirit will express itself in a less symbolic and more and more direct language like, for example, the language of the Upanishads or the spiritual poetry of Sri Aurobindo.

In Sri Aurobindo's poetic literature we can see such a direct description of the various planes of cosmic existence without using symbols. For instance, Sri Aurobindo's epic Savitri is like a cosmic and spiritual travelogue in which, the Traveller describes what he sees, feels and experiences, in various levels of cosmic existence from the worlds of subtle matter to the highest spiritual worlds, in which, the eternal Truth lives unveiled in Her own self-existing and self luminous light.

As the Mother said in one of her conversations, "Savitri is an exact description - not literature, not poetry (although the form is very poetical) - an exact description, step by step, paragraph by paragraph, page by page, as I read, I relived it all.... The realism of it is astounding". 4

As a sample, here is a description of a higher spiritual world.

"All there was soul or made of sheet soul-stuff  
A sky of soul covered a deep soul-ground  
All here was known by spiritual sense  
Thought was not there but a knowledge near and one  
Seized on all things by a moved identity  
A sympathy of self with other selves  
The touch of consciousness on consciousness  
And being's look on being with inmost gaze...."5

Most of the religious art and literature depicts gods in their symbolic form. But in the following passage from Savitri, Sri Aurobindo gives a more direct, exact and non-symbolic description of Gods as impersonal cosmic forces of the transcendent.

"In the unchanging Silence white and nude,  
Aloof, resplendent like gold dazzling suns  
Veiled by the ray no mortal eye can bear  
The Spirit's bare and absolute potencies  
Burn in the solitude of the thoughts of God.  
A rapture, radiance and a hush  
.....  
In his inalienable bliss they live  
Immaculate in self-knowledge and self-power  
Calm they repose on the eternal will." 6

The main purpose of such a spiritual poetry of the future is not merely aesthetic amusement of the literati; its aim is to reproduce as perfectly and faithfully as possible within the limitations of human speech, the sound, rhythm and vibration of the inner experience and transmit it to the reader. For in the ancient Indian thought all creation is

the rhythmic expression of an eternal vibration in the Absolute. Every human and cosmic experience is in its essence, part of this eternal vibration. The aim of spiritual poetry is to catch the rhythmic vibration behind the inner experience and transmit it to the reader. This is a more direct form of spiritual communication than symbolism.

But poetry and literature are only one form of expression. There are other forms of expression like painting, sculpture or architecture in which use of symbols cannot perhaps be avoided. However, a spiritual art of the future, using the modern audio-visual media, may possibly create a new form of art in which, the spiritual experiences can be presented with as much direct realism that we find in Sri Aurobindo's poetry, along with the sensuous concreteness provided by the audio-visual media.

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*(M.S. Srinivasan is a research associate in Sri Aurobindo Society.)*

#### **Notes and References**

1. Sri Aurobindo, Savitri, 175
2. *ibid*, P.187
3. The word symbol here is used in its simpler sense as the imaged representation of an idea or experience and not in a broadphilosophical sense in which it is sometimes used, for example in statements like "language is a symbol" or "the whole world is a symbol of the Transcendent". In this philosophical sense, except the Divine who is the only Real everything else is a symbol.
4. The Mother, Invocation, Savitri Bhavan News Letter, August 2003, P.46
5. Sri Aurobindo, Savitri, P.292
6. *ibid*, P.57

## The Wonder that is Sanskrit

"...it will not be a good day for India when the ancient tongue ceases entirely to be written or spoken."

*So prophesied Sri Aurobindo about Devabhasha, the language of the gods, otherwise known as Sanskrit. There is a growing awareness of late of the genius behind this ancient language. People from all walks of life are discovering how it relates to their life and more importantly, how it enhances the quality of life itself. Over the next twelve months we will put across some of these views from around the world which will help our readers appreciate and understand the worth of Sanskrit and the need for a conscious resurgence.*

### To Speak or Not to Speak?

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**Shonar**

**Joshi**

---

"If you have to adopt a language, why not adopt the world's greatest language?" <sup>1</sup>

A striking suggestion in favour of Sanskrit which unfortunately went unheeded. Ironically, there were those at the time, amongst the decision-makers, the builders of Modern India who shared this view, but lacked the foresight, lacked the courage. The vernaculars had set deep into the machinery of each community. English had taken precedence over the entire world. Our people wanted to be part of that world and part of their own community. The rift on the basis of caste and religion, language and land had already begun. The people conceded to two their own tongue and the international binder.

And so ignored, our language of the gods already in the shadows was now relegated to the annals of history, to the vestiges of the past the treasure chest firmly closed, the padlock inserted. But by grace and fortune, the key remained unturned. The key, which could have shrouded the luminescence of Sanskrit into musty darkness, forgot to do its job and left the chest unguarded, open to those who were curious enough to walk up and dip their hands into the gems, every once in a while.

Some of these gems proved more precious than one had imagined. Our adventurous souls, instead of pocketing them in silence, did the unexpected. They exposed them to the world; they shone the spotlight and the world saw, the glitter of these priceless stones. And that's how, in bits and pieces, India restored some of her history, gave to herself some memories to ponder on, drew pictures that depicted the cultures of yore, let out fragrances of the pressed flowers, and made some of her children, a heart here, a soul there, swell with pride.

The others disparaged their histories and coldly asserted, 'Sanskrit is a dead language'.

Dead? If Sanskrit is dead, so must India be dead. If Sanskrit is dead, then we have to put our beautiful poetry and their creators into a single grave. We have to bury Magha and Kalidasa, Vyasa and Valmiki; we have to throw in Bana, Jonaraja, Panini, Kalhana, Bhavabhuti, Jayadeva and dozens of others. We have to stop telling our children stories of Bhima and Duryodhana, Rama and Sita. We have to stop believing in the gospel of Truth shared by Krishna in the 'Gita'; we have to shun the sounds of worship as the priest chants into the night. We have to throw into the grave our lofty ideal of satyamev jayate (truth alone triumphs). How can a language, as living as this be dead?

"Dead to whom? Dead to you, because you have become dead to all sense of grandeur. You have become dead to all that is great and rich in your own culture and civilization. You have been chasing the shadow and never stopped to grasp the substance which is contained in your great literature. If Sanskrit is dead, may I say that Sanskrit is ruling us from her grave." <sup>2</sup>

This language is ours and flows through our blood and our soil. It has woven us the most intricate and delicate embroideries of its varied literature, which has no religion, no caste, no creed. By using it in temples, it does not become Hindu. Ayurveda is an ancient system of medicine, whose texts have been inscribed in Sanskrit does that make it a Hindu form of treatment? The 'Natyashastra' is an actor's bible, a dancer's guide. It is in Sanskrit. Does it mean a non-Hindu cannot gain from its immense wealth of knowledge?

Innumerable non-Hindus' over the ages have used this language as a means of communication and expression, not to mention research and further academic exploration.

The country has been subjected to the unqualified and incompetent judgement from those who were entirely alien to the way she breathed and bore her children. It is little wonder then that these ill-equipped doctors prescribed the worst remedies for her festering wounds and what could have beautifully healed, leaving not even the hint of a scar, instead became a deep blemish that spread through her entire body. The politically motivated of pre-independence and the politically motivated of independent India are two extremes that share a different motive but have struck the same result. Division. Localization. Disharmony. Segregation. Hostility. All playing a tug of war with Sanskrit.

True, Sanskrit is difficult, but no more than any other language. Besides, is it not a slap on the face of one's conscience that we have to run away from something merely because it is 'difficult'? Instead, a solution can always be found and something of such immense value, saved from becoming a member of the extinct species... "it must get rid of the curse of the heavy pedantic style contracted by it in its decline, with the lumbering impossible compounds and the overweight of hair-splitting erudition." (Sri Aurobindo)

Ironically, when a foreign letter of commendation eulogises about the goodness of our literature, extolling in a particular case that "there is no poetical representation of womanhood or of more beautiful a life in the whole of Greek antiquity that might reach the 'Shakuntala' even from a distance"<sup>3</sup> or that the 'Gita' "is the only true philosophical

poem which we can find in all the literature known to us,"<sup>4</sup> then a miraculous turn of events takes place in our psyche and suddenly we begin to laud our previously ignored language as something unique in the world of literature, divine in origin and priceless in content! Even such hypocrisy sometimes works to our benefit, for it stalls us in the act of turning the key.

The biggest hindrance that now lies in its path is of unskilled tutors, for this breed of instructors can do more harm than gambled for. They can nip in the bud the growing affinity towards the language. They can paint a drab and dull, jaundiced sketch of all that is Sanskrit, instead of letting Sanskrit itself draw out its own colourful portrait. In order for Sanskrit to capture the hearts of the young and unprejudiced minds, it is imperative that the knowledge is imparted not by languid attitudes but by fiery enthusiasm.

The regional languages fare no better and are themselves slowly losing their hold upon the people. It seems as if a smattering is all that one needs to get by and hence a deeper probe is done away with. One can be Gujarati or Bengali and still not know any of its literature. This is because our schools no longer put emphasis on the mother tongue but instead on English, which, although necessary, at the end of the day is still a poor replacement for our culture.

We drink greedily from the fountain of European Literature. We can quote readily Homer and Virgil, Dante and Goethe. We produce plays by Shakespeare and Brecht. But who was Kamban and who was Chandidas? Why cannot we quote from our favourite poet of all times: Kalidasa? Poetry of Shelley and Keats stimulates the senses. But are Kabir's dohas any less? Do the likes of Tiruvalluvar and Tukaram not give us enough food for thought? We prescribe to the religious teachings of our new-age gurus. Why not go a little deeper to the inspiration of the guru the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Gita?

The average Indian is all too familiar with the stories of the epics. They have been passed on ceaselessly over the centuries, from parent to child, by word and song. But it is only a few in a nation full of people that have taken the trouble to read the texts in the original language. It is no wonder then that one is faced with a blank repartee when the genius of the style is brought into the forefront of a debate. Television and regional interpretations have undoubtedly popularized the epics in ways that were unimaginable; for the reigning chaos of modern times, it is but a blessing to have the wisdom and knowledge, the subtle and bold suggestions of nobility of character and aspirations for the Divine reach out to the general populace. But unfortunately, while striving towards a wider wingspan, we have inadvertently cut short the flight to the heavens that one takes on reading the works in their original tongue. There is an essence, an innate potency, an immense power, a subtle magic that resides in the heart of the Sanskrit word, particularly one which has arrived with its baggage of Truth and Insight. This in most part is lost in the multilingual renditions of the epics.

"Its (Sanskrit's) great power lies in bringing body, mind and spirit into harmonic alignment. Physically, its resonating power promotes healing. Mentally it awakens the natural brightness, agility and order of the mind. Spiritually, it facilitates an expansion of

awareness, tranquility and bliss...there is no other language which models life itself so perfectly as Sanskrit. No other language in fact even begins to approach the power which Sanskrit has to penetrate to the very heart of life." 5

To remedy this one drawback we could use these masterworks themselves as the agents and channels by which we can teach our children the ancient tongue. This would serve as the most convenient, most appropriate and most ideal solution to the present case of lacking enthusiasm for Sanskrit and the inevitable loss of beauty of the epic content. And if one argues that the epics speak the language of the Hindus, then answer this what is Hindu about aspiring to be the perfect man? Rama is a universal figure, not restricted to any sect or creed and certainly not the exclusive right only of those who call themselves Hindus. If some choose to elevate him to the position of a God, if some choose to worship him, then that is their prerogative; the rest can merely aspire for the phenomenal qualities of our epic heroes.

To learn Sanskrit, one doesn't have to dip into the mystic wells of the Vedas or commit to memory the endless permutations and combinations that the grammar offers. Just a taste, one that leaves not an evanescent flavour but one that lingers for all time to come. Sanskrit has the ability to do so, for, "Sanskrit is the language of every man to whatever race he may belong." 6

Without Sanskrit, India is without a past, without a culture, without a soul.  
Without a soul, where would we be?

"...it will not be a good day for India when the ancient tongue ceases entirely to be written or spoken."-Sri Aurobindo

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*(This excerpt has been taken from the book Of Past Dawns and Future Noons)*

1. Shri Najiruddin Ahmed, ex Member of Parliament
2. Professor Lakshmikanta Maitra
3. Schiller
4. Wilhelm von Humbolt
5. anonymous
6. Dr. Shaidullah, Professor of Dhaka University



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*Sri Aurobindo observed that the "Upanishads are at once profound religious scriptures, - for they are a record of the deepest spiritual experiences, - documents of revelatory and intuitive philosophy of an inexhaustible light, power and largeness and, whether written in verse or in cadenced prose, spiritual poems of an absolute, an unfailing inspiration inevitable in phrase, wonderful in rhythm and expression." He further writes about the structure of the Upanishads: "There is a perfect totality, a comprehensive connection of harmonious parts in the structure of each Upanishad; but it is done in the way of a mind that sees masses of truth at a time and stops to bring only the needed word out of a filled silence. The rhythm in verse or cadenced prose corresponds to the sculpture of the thought and the phrase. The metrical forms of the Upanishads are made up of the four half-lines each clearly cut, the lines mostly complete in themselves and integral in sense, the half-lines presenting two thoughts or distinct parts of a thought that are wedded to and complete each other, and the sound movement follows a corresponding principle, each step brief and marked off by the distinctness of its pause, full of echoing cadences that remain long vibrating in the inner hearing: each is as if a wave of the infinite that carries in it the whole voice and rumour of the ocean. It is a kind of poetry, - word of vision, rhythm of the spirit, - that has not been written before or after."*

*We present below the verses two to eight of the Kena Upanishad translated by Sri Aurobindo along with a commentary.*

केनोपनिषत्

kenopanishat

श्रोत्रस्य श्रोत्रं मनसो मनो यद्

वाचो ह वाचं स उ प्राणस्य प्राणः ।

चक्षुषश्चक्षुरतिमुच्य धीराः

प्रेत्यास्माल्लोकादमृता भवन्ति ॥

śrotrasya śrotraṁ manaso mano yad  
vāco ha vācaṁ sa u prāṇasya prāṇaḥ  
cakṣuṣaścakṣuratimucya dhīrāḥ  
pretyāsmāllokādamṛtā bhavanti

That which is hearing of our hearing, mind of our mind, speech of our speech, that too is life of our life-breath and sight of our sight. The wise are released beyond and they pass from this world and become immortal.

न तत्र चक्षुर्गच्छति न वाग्गच्छति नो मनः  
न विद्मो न विजानीमो यथैतदनुशिष्यात् ।  
अन्यदेव तद्विदितादथो अविदितादधि  
इति शुश्रुम पूर्वेषां ये नस्तद्व्याचक्षिरे ॥

na tatra cakṣurgacchati na vāggacchati no manaḥ  
na vidmo na vijānīmo yathaitadanuśiṣyāt  
anyadeva tadviditādatho aviditādadhi  
iti śuśrūma pūrveṣāṁ ye nastadvyācakaṣire

There sight travels not, nor speech, nor the mind. We know It not nor can distinguish how one should teach of It: for It is other than the known; It is there above the unknown. It is so we have heard from men of old who declared That to our understanding.

यद्वाचाऽनभ्युदितं येन वागभ्युद्यते ।  
तदेव ब्रह्म त्वं विद्धि नेदं यदिदमुपासते ॥

yadvācā'nabhyuditaṁ yena vāgabhyudyate  
tadeva brahma tvaṁ viddhi nedaṁ yadidamupāstate

That which is unexpressed by the word, that by which the word is expressed, know That to be the Brahman and not this which men follow after here.

यन्मनसा न मनुते येनाहुर्मनो मतम् ।  
तदेव ब्रह्म त्वं विद्धि नेदं यदिदमुपासते ॥

yanmanasā na manute yena'hurmano matam  
tadeva brahma tvaṁ viddhi nedaṁ yadidamupāstate

That which thinks not by the mind hat by which the mind is thought, know That to be the Brahman and not this which men follow after here.

यच्चक्षुषा न पश्यति येन चक्षूषि पश्यति ।

तदेव ब्रह्म त्वं विद्धि नेदं यदिदमुपासते ॥

yaccakṣuṣā na paśyati yena cakṣūṣi paśyati  
tadeva brahma tvaṁ vid dhi nedam yadidamupāsate

That which sees not with the eye, that by which one sees the eye's seeings, know That to be the Brahman and not this which men follow after here.

यच्छ्रोत्रेण न शृणोति येन श्रोत्रमिदं श्रुतम् ।

तदेव ब्रह्म त्वं विद्धि नेदं यदिदमुपासते ॥

yacchrotreṇa na śṛṇoti yena śrotramidaṁ śrutam  
tadeva brahma tvaṁ vid dhi nedam yadidamupāsate

That which hears not with the ear, that by which the ear's hearing is heard, know That to be the Brahman and not this which men follow after here.

यत्प्राणेन न प्राणिति येन प्राणः प्रणीयते ।

तदेव ब्रह्म त्वं विद्धि नेदं यदिदमुपासते ॥

yatprāṇena na prāṇiti yena prāṇaḥ praṇīyate  
tadeva brahma tvaṁ vid dhi nedam yadidamupāsate

That which breathes not with the breath, that by which the life-breath is led forward in its paths, know That to be the Brahman and not this which men follow after here.

## Commentary

### The Supramental Godhead

The eternal question has been put which turns man's eyes away from the visible and the outward to that which is utterly within, away from the little known that he has become to the vast unknown he is behind these surfaces and must yet grow into and be, because that is his Reality and out of all masquerade of phenomenon and becoming the Real Being must eventually deliver itself. The human soul once seized by this compelling direction can no longer be satisfied with looking forth at mortalities and seemings through those doors of the mind and sense which the Self-existent has made to open outward upon a world of forms; it is driven to gaze inward into a new world of realities.

Here in the world that man knows, he possesses something which, however imperfect and insecure, he yet values. For he aims at and to some extent he procures enlarged being,

increasing knowledge, more and more joy and satisfaction and these things are so precious to him that for what he can get of them he is ready to pay the price of continual suffering from the shock of their opposites. If then he has to abandon what he here pursues and clasps, there must be a far more powerful attraction drawing him to the Beyond, a secret offer of something so great as to be a full reward for all possible renunciation that can be demanded of him here. This is offered, -not an enlarged becoming, but infinite being; not always relative piecings of knowledge mistaken in their hour for the whole of knowledge, but the possession of our essential consciousness and the flood of its luminous realities; not partial satisfactions, but the delight. In a word, Immortality.

The language of the Upanishad makes it strikingly clear that it is no metaphysical abstraction, no void Silence, no indeterminate Absolute which is offered to the soul that aspires, but rather the absolute of all that is possessed by it here in the relative world of its sojourning. All here in the mental is a growing light, consciousness and life; all there in the supramental is an infinite life, light and consciousness. That which is here shadowed, is there found; the incomplete here is there the fulfilled. The Beyond is not an annihilation, but a transfiguration of all that we are here in our world of forms; it is sovran Mind of this mind, secret Life of this life, the absolute Sense which supports and justifies our limited senses.

We renounce ourselves in order to find ourselves; for in the mental life there is only a seeking, but never an ultimate finding till mind is overpassed. Therefore there is behind all our mentality a perfection of ourselves which appears to us as an antinomy and contrast to what we are. For here we are a constant becoming; there we possess our eternal being. Here we conceive of ourselves as a changeful consciousness developed and always developing by a hampered effort in the drive of Time; there we are an immutable consciousness of which Time is not the master but the instrument as well as the field of all that it creates and watches. Here we live in an organisation of mortal consciousness which takes the form of a transient world; there we are liberated into the harmonies of an infinite self-seeing which knows all world in the light of the eternal and immortal. The Beyond is our reality; that is our plenitude; that is the absolute satisfaction of our self-existence. It is immortality and it is "That Delight".

Here in our imprisoned mentality the ego strives to be master and possessor of its inner field and its outer environment, yet cannot hold anything to enjoy it, because it is not possible really to possess what is not-self to us. But there in the freedom of the eternal our self-existence possesses without strife by the sufficient fact that all things are itself. Here is the apparent man, there the real man, the Purusha: here are gods, there is the Divine: here is the attempt to exist, Life flowering out of an all-devouring death, there Existence itself and a dateless immortality.

The answer that is thus given is involved in the very form of the original question. The Truth behind Mind, Life, Sense must be that which controls by exceeding it; it is the Lord, the all-possessing Deva. This was the conclusion at which the Isha Upanishad arrived by the synthesis of all existences; the Kena arrives at it by the antithesis of one governing self-existence to all this that exists variously by another power of being than its

own. Each follows its own method for the resolution of all things into the one Reality, but the conclusion is identical. It is the All-possessing and All-enjoying, who is reached by the renunciation of separate being, separate possession and separate delight.

But the Isha addresses itself to the awakened seeker; it begins therefore with the all-inhabiting Lord, proceeds to the all-becoming Self and returns to the Lord as the Self of the cosmic movement, because it has to justify works to the seeker of the Uncreated and to institute a divine life founded on the joy of immortality and on the unified consciousness of the individual made one with the universal. The Kena addresses itself to the soul still attracted by the external life, not yet wholly awakened nor wholly a seeker; it begins therefore with the Brahman as the Self beyond Mind and proceeds to the Brahman as the hidden Lord of all our mental and vital activities, because it has to point this soul upward beyond its apparent and outward existence. But the two opening chapters of the Kena only state less widely from this other view point the Isha's doctrine of the Self and its becomings; the last two repeat in other terms of thought the Isha's doctrine of the Lord and His movement.

### **The Eternal Beyond the Mind**

The Upanishad first affirms the existence of this profounder, vaster, more puissant consciousness behind our mental being.

That, it affirms, is Brahman. Mind, Life, Sense, Speech are not the utter Brahman; they are only inferior modes and external instruments. Brahman-consciousness is our real self and our true existence.

Mind and body are not our real self; they are mutable formations or images which we go on constructing in the drive of Time as a result of the mass of our past energies. For although those energies seem to us to lie dead in the past because their history is behind us, yet are they still existent in their mass and always active in the present and the future. Neither is the ego-function our real self. Ego is only a faculty put forward by the discriminative mind to centralise round itself the experiences of the sense-mind and to serve as a sort of lynch-pin in the wheel which keeps together the movement. It is no more than an instrument, although it is true that so long as we are limited by our normal mentality, we are compelled by the nature of that mentality and the purpose of the instrument to mistake our ego-function for our very self.

Neither is it the memory that constitutes our real self. Memory is another instrument, a selective instrument for the practical management of our conscious activities. The ego-function uses it as a rest and support so as to preserve the sense of continuity without which our mental and vital activities could not be organised for a spacious enjoyment by the individual.

But even our mental self comprises and is influenced in its being by a host of things which are not present to our memory, are subconscious and hardly grasped at all by our

surface existence. Memory is essential to the continuity of the ego-sense, but it is not the constituent of the ego-sense, still less of the being.

Neither is moral personality our real self. It is only a changing formation, a pliable mould framed and used by our subjective life in order to give some appearance of fixity to the constantly mutable becoming which our mental limitations successfully tempt us to call ourselves.

Neither is the totality of that mutable conscious becoming, although enriched by all that subconsciously underlies it, our real self. What we become is a fluent mass of life, a stream of experience pouring through time, a flux of Nature upon the crest of which our mentality rides. What we are is the eternal essence of that life, the immutable consciousness that bears the experience, the immortal substance of Nature and mentality. For behind all and dominating all that we become and experience, there is something that originates, uses, determines, enjoys, yet is not changed by its origination, not affected by its instruments, not determined by its determinations, not worked upon by its enjoyings. What that is, we cannot know unless we go behind the veil of our mental being which knows only what is affected, what is determined, what is worked upon, what is changed. The mind can only be aware of that as something which we indefinably are, not as something which it definably knows. For the moment our mentality tries to fix this something, it loses itself in the flux and the movement, grasps at parts, functions, fictions, appearances which it uses as planks of safety in the welter or tries to cut out a form from the infinite and say, "This is I." In the words of the Veda, "when the mind approaches That and studies it, That vanishes." But behind the Mind is this other or Brahman-consciousness, Mind of our mind, Sense of our senses, Speech of our speech, Life of our life. Arriving at that, we arrive at Self; we can draw back from mind the image into Brahman the Reality.

But what differentiates that real from this apparent self? Or-since we can say no more than we have said already in the way of definition, since we can only indicate that "That" is not what "this" is, but is the mentally inexpressible absolute of all that is here,-what is the relation of this phenomenon to that reality? For it is the question of the relation that the Upanishad makes its starting-point; its opening question assumes that there is a relation and that the reality originates and governs the phenomenon.

Obviously, Brahman is not a thing subject to our mind, senses, speech or life-force; it is no object seen, heard, expressed, sensed, formed by thought, nor any state of body or mind that we become in the changing movement of the life. But the thought of the Upanishad attempts to awaken deeper echoes from our gulfs than this obvious denial of the mental and sensuous objectivity of the Brahman. It affirms that not only is it not an object of mind or a formation of life, but it is not even dependent on our mind, life and senses for the exercise of its lordship and activity. It is that which does not think by the mind, does not live by the life, does not sense by the senses, does not find expression in the speech, but rather makes these things themselves the object of its superior, all-comprehending, all-knowing consciousness.

Brahman thinks out the mind by that which is beyond mind; it sees the sight and hears the hearing by that absolute vision and audition which are not phenomenal and instrumental but direct and inherent; it forms our expressive speech out of its creative word; it speeds out this life we cling to from that eternal movement of its energy which is not parceled out into forms but has always the freedom of its own inexhaustible infinity.

Thus the Upanishad begins its reply to its own question. It first describes Brahman as Mind of the mind, Sight of the sight, Hearing of the hearing, Speech of the speech, Life of the life. It then takes up each of these expressions and throws them successively into a more expanded form so as to suggest a more definite and ample idea of their meaning, so far as that can be done by words. To the expression "Mind of the mind" corresponds the expanded phrase "That which thinks not with the mind, that by which the mind is thought" and so on with each of the original descriptive expressions to the closing definition of the Life behind this life as "That which breathes not with the life-breath, that by which the life-power is brought forward into its movement".

And each of these exegetic lines is emphasised by the reiterated admonition, "That Brahman seek to know and not this which men follow after here." Neither Mind, Life, Sense and Speech nor their objects and expressions are the Reality which we have to know and pursue. True knowledge is of That which forms these instruments for us but is itself independent of their utilities. True possession and enjoyment is of that which, while it creates these objects of our pursuit, itself makes nothing the object of its pursuit and passion, but is eternally satisfied with all things in the joy of its immortal being.

Sri Aurobindo

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*One can live in a number of ways, and no one can be a judge of how life is to be lived. But there are times when we may find that life itself has become an art &--; the entire process of living is transformed from something mechanical and separate to ourselves to something which is deeply personal and conducted with the finesse of an artist. Our attitude which may have been complacent at one time, may at another become ever-changing and persevering, similar to the persistence of the painter's stroke until he arrives at the perfection that he seeks. Along the way, much happens &--; much is learnt. In the end we have the masterpiece of the realization.*

*In the Art of Life, we will introduce such instances where a perception, an attitude, an insight, an experience, can bring out some beautiful aspects of human nature. Each tale may not be true in the strictest sense of the word or that which is apparent to the eye and understood by the mind, but underneath the surface, in subtle terms it explores and expresses itself, and lets out the fragrance of its inner truth for all to take in.*

### **The Meaning of Success**

One man began a speech to his fellow college alumni with the statement, "Some of you are successes, and some of you are failures -- only God knows which are which!" There are many kinds of successes, many kinds of winners; and which is which may not at first be apparent.

Esther Kim is a true champion with a heartwarming story. She competed against her childhood friend, Kay Poe, in the U.S. Olympic Trials for her sport -- Taekwondo. Esther lost the match, but she went on to win all her other fights, which still qualified her for the finals.

Her friend, Kay, also won her successive matches. But in her last fight before the finals, disaster struck. Kay dislocated her knee and went down in great pain. Her knee was reset as she lay in agony on the mat. All the while, her friend Esther encouraged her from

the sidelines to finish the fight. Courageously, Kay finally stood up and, on one good leg, concluded the match for a win.

The only contestants now remaining were Kay Poe, with an injured leg, and her friend, Esther Kim. One woman would be chosen from these trials for the Olympic team. "I looked at her with one good leg against me with two good legs," Esther Kim recalled, "and I said, 'It's not fair!'"

On the spot, Esther made a hard decision. She forfeited the match to her friend Kay, whose leg was sure to be fully healed for the 2000 Olympic Games. For her part, Kay bought Esther a ticket to Sydney, Australia, so she might watch and cheer from the stands.

"This was our dream, going to the Olympics," Esther said. "It's so hard! I have cried about it." But Esther discovered something important. "I gave her my dream," she said, "but for the first time ever, I feel like a champ." Esther Kim won a victory far greater than one fought on the mats. She won a victory of the spirit, which qualifies her as a true champion.

As Kay Poe's father remarked, "The champions aren't always the ones who have all the medals." No, sometimes they are cheering from the sidelines. For success and winning is often about victories won in the hidden recesses of the heart. And any of us who will fight and win such a victory will know the meaning of the word "success."

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*(This reading can be found in Steve Goodier's book: PRESCRIPTION FOR PEACE)*



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## Two Beings of Light

**Anahita**

**Sanjana**

---

Two radiant beings of light emerge,  
From the fading traces of darkness' verge,  
Hewing through all with a surreal smile,  
Gold spangled magic flecking that pregnant while.

Smiling hauntingly they hijack,  
With an occult maneuver bringing back,  
The wanton thought streams,  
From their futile, quicksilver dreams,  
To the love drenched heart space that faithfully sings,  
Its lilting serenades to two radiant beings.

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# TALES TOLD BY MYSTICS

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*The Indian tradition of literature, unique for its content as well as chronological development, ran in two lines : Mythological and Pragmatic.*

*Beginning with the Vedas at the dawn of civilisation the first line branched out into the Upanishads, gave way to the epics and the Mahapuranas, followed by Upapuranas and the rest.*

*The second line consisted of the Brihat Katha (the precursor of the Kathasaritsagara), the Jatakas and the Panchatantra, etc. They shed light on different aspects of life, on its worldly and other worldly complexities, sometimes didactic (as in the Jatakas) but more often simply expository of the various possibilities of life.*

*Between these two lines quietly ran a third, the treasure of tales told by the hermits, mendicants, ascetics and other mystics. Profound for psychological studies, sharp with mystic experiences, these tales of light, wit and delight remained a oral tradition for the most part.*

*We propose to serialise some of them, "retold by a master story teller of our time - one of the best-loved writers of India" - as the India's National Academy of Letters introduces the author, Manoj Das.*



**The Hand that Thrashed is the Hand that Nursed**

## Manoj Das

---

The bearded thief who had entered the landlord's house tried to escape under the cover of darkness when found out and given a chase. Meanwhile Sadhu Bholababa, an inmate of a nearby Ashram, who happened to pass by, was pounced upon by some pursuers who mistook him to be the thief. Without waiting to hear the Sadhu, they began to thrash him mercilessly.

Just then the real thief was caught by another group of people. The Sadhu's persecutors realised their blunder. But it was by then too late. Sadhu Bholababa was in a state of swoon.

He was carried to his Ashram by the repentant villagers. They laid him down on his bed and fanned him and sprinkled water on his face. Some of them applied medicine on his wounds.

"Pour a little warm milk into his mouth. That should help him to regain consciousness," said an experienced elder. Accordingly warm milk was brought. An inmate of the Ashram slowly poured it into his mouth.

Sadhu Bholababa opened his eyes. As usual, a smile appeared on his face. The anxious Ashramites realised that he was out of danger.

But they were anxious to know if he had regained his wit and if his perception was normal.

"Bholababa, who is pouring milk into your mouth?" asked a friend.

"The same person," replied Bholababa. That sounded enigmatic.

"Bholababa, what do you mean by the same person?" the friend asked.

"The person who beat me is also the one who is feeding me," replied Bholababa.

*There is a state of consciousness in which one sees a single force at work behind everything. A person living in such a consciousness is incapable of feeling hatred even towards his persecutors.*

---

*(Manoj Das is an internationally known creative writer. He is the recipient of India's national recognition, the Sahitya Akademi Award and the nation's most prestigious literacy award, the Saraswati Samman. As a social commentator, his columns in India's national dailies like The Times of India, The Hindustan Times, The Hindu and The Statesman, revealing the deeper truth and the untraced aspects behind current issues, have been highly appreciated.)*



# SAVITRI

the Golden Bridge, the Wonderful Fire

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**Mangesh Nadkarni**

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## Instalment-38

We are now ready to begin our exploration of Book Eleven of Savitri, which consists of only one Canto, and this has the title "The Eternal Day: The Soul's Choice and the Supreme Consciousness". Incidentally this is the longest single canto among the 49 cantos of this epic poem.

We saw at that at the end of a long colloquy between Savitri and the God of Death, which takes up the two cantos of Book IX and the four cantos of Book X, ends with Savitri's triumph over Death. Savitri answers all the questions and problems raised by the God of Death against her plea to him to release Satyavan's soul from the clutches of death and take him back with her to earth. She also effectively meets the challenge thrown by the God of Death in these words:

But where is thy strength to conquer Time and Death?  
Hast thou God's force to build heaven's values here?  
For truth and knowledge are an idle gleam  
If Knowledge brings not power to change the world,  
If Might comes not to give to Truth her right.  
A blind Force, not Truth has made this ignorant world,  
A blind Force, not Truth orders the lives of men:  
By Power, not Light, the great Gods rule the world;  
Power is the arm of God, the seal of Fate.  
O human claimant to immortality,  
Reveal thy power, lay bare thy spirit's force,  
Then will I give back to thee Satyavan.  
Or if the Mighty Mother is with thee,  
Show me her face that I may worship her;  
Let deathless eyes look into the eyes of Death,  
An imperishable Force touching brute things  
Transform earth's death into immortal life.  
Then can thy dead return to thee and live.  
The prostrate earth perhaps shall lift her gaze

And feel near her the secret body of God  
And love and joy overtake fleeing Time. (page: 664)

On hearing this, Savitri felt that the world's darkness which had worn the symbol shape of the God of Death was now ready for Heaven-light and revealed to him her real form. Then came upon Savitri a transformation described in these lines:

A mighty transformation came on her.  
A halo of the indwelling Deity,  
The Immortal's lustre that had lit her face  
And tented its radiance in her body's house,  
Overflowing made the air a luminous sea.  
In a flaming moment of apocalypse  
The Incarnation thrust aside its veil.  
A little figure in infinity  
Yet stood and seemed the Eternal's very house,  
As if the world's centre was her very soul  
And all wide space was but its outer robe. (page: 664)

With this transformation, a descent comes over Savitri. In a flaming moment of apocalypse the Incarnation thrust aside its veil. The Powers that she had so far kept back came down and descended into her being all the way from the sahasrara to the muladhara. Eternity saw into the eyes of Death and darkness saw God's living reality.

Then a voice was heard, which sounded like the calm utterance of Infinity. We have already analysed the content of this speech of Savitri. She hails him as "victorious Death" for constantly prompting man to seek the immortal being in him. The God of Death is asked to live a while and still be the instrument of the Divine until one day man will understand his real nature. She concludes the speech with these words:

But now, O timeless Mightiness, stand aside  
And leave the path of my incarnate Force.  
Relieve the radiant God from thy black mask:  
Release the soul of the world called Satyavan  
Freed from thy clutch of pain and ignorance  
That he may stand master of life and fate,  
Man's representative in the house of God,  
The mate of Wisdom and the spouse of Light,  
The eternal bridegroom of the eternal bride. (page 666)

Death knew he was defeated and yet he stood there defiant. A pressure of intolerable force weighed down on him from all sides. Light surrounded him from all sides. He called to Night and hell and none came to his aid. Even the Inconscient from which he was born was unable to help him. At last he knew his defeat was inevitable. His shape began to crumble and finally the universal Shadow (the God of Death) disappeared into void of the dream twilight.

With that the twilight realm passed and faded from the souls of Savitri and Satyavan and they were alone. Neither of them stirred. Between them arose a mute, invisible and translucent wall. "All waited on the unknown inscrutable Will."

Now we are at the very beginning of Book XI. The first section of this canto which consists of 267 lines begins with a description of the Eternal day. The God of Death has already taken Savitri through several worlds, namely, the world of Eternal Night, the world of the Dream Twilight of the Ideal and of the Dream Twilight of the Earthly Real. And the poet graphically and very aptly describes these worlds, and so does he with this world of God's Everlasting Day.

The opening section of this Canto is a splendid poetic attempt to describe God's everlasting day. From the description, it would appear that this is not an entirely imaginary scene described by the poet. The several details suggest that this is based on a direct experience of some of the God's everlasting day. Everything seen, heard and experienced here seems to come from the eternal source and from the eternal's own substance without any diminution or dilution. A cosmic rapture seems to manifest here in an endless figuring of the spirit. All the occult planes are seen and are found active. Even the earth nature seems to have changed here; air and matter were transformed, other earths are seen and also other beings. Savitri sees here children of God's day living in a happiness never lost. All sounds here are musical, with birds with coloured feathers singing, and with breeze full of fragrance, flowers with laughing eyes. One felt the embrace of God in every touch. There was no suffering of any kind here, only bliss. On this plane rapture was a common incident. There were also seen great forms of deities, with bright bodies exuding delight. Apsaras and Gandharvas were there. The great forefathers of mankind were also seen moving in splendour. It must be remembered that this is a description of something actually seen and experienced by the poet and not something woven out of his imagination.

From the skies of ecstasy a marvellous sun shone on worlds of deathless bliss; these worlds looked like the home of perfection, like the magical revelations of the Eternal's smile. Savitri's body quivered with the eternity's touch; she felt as though her soul stood close to the springs of the infinite. Savitri was surrounded by God's everlasting day.

She felt that she lived in the finite projections of the Infinite, which looked ever new. Infinity multiplied its vast self-look and translated its mightiness and joy into delight which souls which lived in the realm of Time could share in ever-new vistas, in grandeurs ever newborn from the unknown depths, in powers that leaped immortal from unknown heights, in passionate heart-beats of an undying love, in scenes of a sweetness that could never fade. Thoughts sublimely born in the still beauty of creative joy came as answers to the deep demand of an infinite sense and its need for forms to house its bodiless thrill. Plains were there that looked like the expanse of God's wide sleep. Even the very air seemed an ocean of felicity. A vast and calm serenity swallowed all sound into a voicelessness of utter bliss. Even in Matter there was an intimate spiritual touch. Twilight and mist were banished from this air. Where there is such radiance, there cannot be a night.

The divine Artist who had dreamed these worlds into existence created in a cosmic rapture a pageant of universal power in Time, a harmonious order of the vasts of the self in cyclic patterns and rhythmic planes. Eternity was the source and the substance of the beauty and the marvel here. They were not moulded from the mist of Matter; they showed the great power from whose depths they had emerged.

A march of universal powers in Time,  
The harmonic order of self's vastitudes  
In cyclic symmetries and metric planes  
Harboured a cosmic rapture's revelry,  
An endless figuring of the spirit in things  
Planned by the artist who has dreamed the worlds;  
Of all the beauty and the marvel here,  
Of all Time's intricate variety  
Eternity was the substance and the source;  
Not from a plastic mist of Matter made,  
They offered the suggestion of their depths  
And opened the great series of their powers. (page 672)

A spirit wandered happily in the wind, and it brooded in the leaf and the stone. There were eternal mountains rising ridge on gleaming ridge, like lines engraved on a sapphire plate. From the secrecies of blue mountains, there descended murmuring rivers which slipped past trees with branches fragrant with flowers; there were ripples and eddies of delight in these rivers which gradually widened and acquired and flowed into many estuaries of dream until they formed themselves into the whispering lakes of peace.

Since she was delivered from our narrowing limits of thought and from the narrowness of our hearts, Savitri saw all Nature as something marvellous and without any fault. Around her lived the children of God's day in an indescribable felicity, a glad eternity's blissful multitude. There were souls of radiant celestial joy, faces of sheer beauty, limbs of the divine Ray of Light moulded in form. In cities cut like gems of conscious stone were seen bright forms, the luminous tribes of eternity. Ecstatic voices assailed the ears, there each movement had a music of its own. Birds, the colour of whose plumage had been caught from the rainbow, sang thrilled from the unfading branches. Immortal fragrance wafted with the quivering breeze. The million flowers of the undying spring, sheltered in the green of the grass, bloomed like so many stars of delightful hues these flower-masses looked like fairies with laughter in their eyes.

This is how the poet describes "the dancing chaos", the iridescence of the colourful flowers:

A dancing chaos, an iridescent sea  
Eternised to Heaven's ever-wakeful sight  
The crowding petal-glow of marvel's tints  
Which float across the curtained lids of dream. (page: 674)

This is how he describes the immortal harmonies that fill Savitri's ears:

Immortal harmonies filled her listening ear;  
A great spontaneous utterance of the heights  
On Titan wings of rhythmic grandeur borne  
Poured from some deep spiritual heart of sound,  
Strains trembling with the secrets of the gods. (page. 674)

Savitri's experience of oneness with all other forms is described vividly in these lines:

Invaded by beauty's universal revel  
Her being's fibre reached out vibrating  
And claimed deep union with its outer selves,  
And on the heart's chords made pure to seize all tones  
Heaven's subtleties of touch unwearying forced  
More vivid raptures than earth's life can bear.  
What would be suffering here, was fiery bliss. (p. 675)

What Savitri had so far seen were the initial domains, the outer courts; they were immense but least in their range and value. Now Savitri's vision soared higher and she was admitted through large sapphire gates into the wideness of a light beyond to worlds nobler and more felicitously fair. These heavens too kept climbing endlessly. Then in what looked like one summit of ascent, where the finite and the infinite join, she beheld the seats of the immortal gods who live for a celestial joy and preside over the middle regions of the unfading Ray. The deities with their magnificent forms were seen here in deathless tiers; they all looked at Savitri through a transparency of crystal fire.

In the beauty of bodies wrought from rapture's lines,  
Shapes of entrancing sweetness spilling bliss,  
Feet glimmering upon the sunstone courts of mind,  
Heaven's cupbearers bore round the Eternal's wine.  
A tangle of bright bodies, of moved souls  
Tracing the close and intertwined delight,  
The harmonious tread of lives for ever joined  
In the passionate oneness of a mystic joy  
As if sunbeams made living and divine,  
The golden-bosomed Apsara goddesses,  
In groves flooded from an argent disk of bliss  
That floated through a luminous sapphire dream,  
In a cloud of raiment lit with golden limbs  
And gleaming footfalls treading faery swards,  
Virgin motions of bacchant innocences  
Who know their riot for a dance of God,  
Whirled linked in moonlit revels of the heart. (pages 675-76)

Heaven's cup-bearers went round bearing the Eternal's celestial wine. Like sun-beams made living and divine, the golden-bosomed Apsaras (heavenly nymphs) whirled, linked in the passionate oneness of a mystic joy. These Apsaras circle arm in arm in groves

flooded with the silver light of the moon of bliss that floated through a luminous sapphire dream. Then there were the Gandharvas, the celestial musicians, magic builders of sound and harmonic words; these heavenly minstrels had wind-like hair, and their songs gave rise to and shaped the universal thought. There were also seen our great ancestors moving in that splendour, immortal figures with illumined brows. They had great power but they were satisfied with knowledge. They seemed to enjoy the essence of all that for which we mortals try. There were high seers and inspired poets who saw the eternal thoughts coming from the higher regions and arriving into our world deformed because of our restless search for them. She saw how mind disfigures them. The great words of these saints and seers become feeble sounds when they are caught by the mortal tongue for their rapture is too difficult for us express.

Savitri's human nature was overwhelmed by the delight of this world. Her nature was filled with flashes of glory; it melted in waves of sympathy and sight. She was like a harp and responded to the throbs of bliss from everywhere. She saw and bore the touch and clasp of the unveiled love denied to earth. Worlds after worlds revealed themselves to her on the ever-soaring heights, beyond the reach of mind. They spread out infinitely on the rising stair of Nature.

A greater tranquil sweetness reigned there. It was a subtler and a profounder ether's field, a scheme mightier than the most heavenly scheme one can imagine. There, breath carried a stream of seeing mind, form was a tenuous (thin), fragile covering of the soul instead of being an obscuring veil; colour was significant, visual tone ecstasy. There shapes that seemed half immaterial to the eye were yet sensuously palpable (easily perceptible) to the touch. Each feeling here was a mighty wave of the Infinite, each thought vibrated with a sweet flame of god.

The very air was vibrant with luminous soul-feeling; every sound carried a soul-voice; sunlight was a vision of the soul and moonlight its dream. All was pervaded by a lucid joy accompanied by a calm. Savitri's soul went floating high into the summit of the worlds of this plane, like a soaring bird who mounts unseen, voicing as it soars the throbbing heart of melody, until pause comes when the wings closed with a last contented cry, and the soul is silent because it has delivered the entire burden of delight it carried. Savitri arrived at a place where Time companions with Eternity and a vast felicity was one with a self-rapt repose.

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*(Mangesh Nadkarni retired as professor of Linguistics a few years ago. He enjoys sharing with as many people as possible what he receives from his study of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother)*



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### Spontaneity in Aspiration

#### **The Mother**

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*Mother, when we make an effort, there's something in us which becomes very self-satisfied and boastful and contented with this effort, and that spoils everything. Then how can we get rid of this?*

Ah, that's what looks on at what it is doing! There is always someone who observes when one is doing something. Now sometimes, he becomes proud. Obviously, this takes away much strength from the effort. I think it is that: it is the habit of looking at oneself acting, looking at oneself living. It is necessary to observe oneself but I think it is still more necessary to try to be absolutely sincere and spontaneous, very spontaneous in what one does: not always to go on observing oneself, looking at what one is doing, judging oneself-sometimes severely. In fact it is almost as bad as patting oneself with satisfaction, the two are equally bad. One should be so sincere in his aspiration that he doesn't even know he is aspiring, that he becomes the aspiration itself. When this indeed can be realised, one truly attains to an extraordinary power.

One minute, one minute of this, and you can prepare years of realisation. When one is no longer a self-regarding being, an ego looking at itself acting, when one becomes the action itself, above all in the aspiration, this truly is good. When there is no longer a person who is aspiring, when it is an aspiration which leaps up with a fully concentrated impulsion, then truly it goes very far. Otherwise there is always mixed up in it a little vanity, a little self-complacency, a little self-pity also, all kinds of little things which come and spoil everything. But it is difficult.

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# Spotlight

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## A Huge Chariot



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*The temple of Konarak is represented as a huge chariot, drawn by the seven horses of the Sun God, all but one destroyed. Animal representation belongs to the finest features of the Indian artist. Sun Temple of Konarak. Photograph by Elizabeth Beck.*



## *Your Voice*

*Enthusiasm is quite possibly the most important ingredient of any new venture. Without it, there is nothing exceptional, spontaneous or living about what one is trying to create. Your Voice is a section where we invite opinions and view points from our readers and where we showcase letters with suggestions, ideas, support and criticism. We entreat you to feel free and write to us about anything that may strike you regarding Next Future in its concrete form as well as from a larger perspective. There is a possibility that we may not have enough space to feature all letters coming in, but we will try our utmost to do so.*

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1. Excellent and inspiring editorial. It gives a new lease to our lives.

Amal Sircar

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2. The prayer by the Mother is really very inspiring. In your editorial, the idea about life is very interesting.

Kiran

\*

3. The 'Next Future' is really a very thought provoking e-magazine which I regularly read. This month the subject 'Life is a sport' is supremely fine. Also, Mother's thoughts take me in-ward.

Bhanudas

\*

4. This says it all...

"Life is not merely a game. It is the greatest sport. Played on a glorious and vast playing field. With the most endearing companions ever. And most importantly, a Leader who never gives up on the players. All we need is the right team spirit and the race is won."  
(Editorial Sept issue)

It is so touching that HE never gives up on us. And we find a million ways to say HE is never there for us. And still SHE gives and gives and gives HER GRACE.

Puni

\*

5. I am delighted by reading your editorial & it inspired me to take the big leap into the sport of life.

Ramesh Mishra

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