

The Journey Within: Sri Aurobindo's vision in *Savitri*

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Abstract

Sri Aurobindo explores the interplay between the individual soul and the Universal Soul in his epic poem *Savitri: A Legend and a Symbol*. The moment the spiritual seeker rejects material pleasures and frees himself from egoism, and surrenders to the Divine, He takes the burden of fighting the battle for the individual against the evil forces- external and internal-that bound him to the earthly plane, removes the cosmic mask of illusion, and reveals Himself. Aswapathi who is on a spiritual journey symbolizes the individual soul.

Key words: Myth, Savitri A Legend and a Symbol, spiritual journey

Sri Aurobindo's epic poem *Savitri : A Legend and a Symbol* is a saga of the human soul that embarks on a transcendental journey searching for the truth and reality. In fact, every individual is on this spiritual odyssey, whether s/he is aware of it or not, whether s/he likes it or not, whether s/he accepts it or not. However, the pace of one's journey, which is inward, depends on how actively one collaborates with the Divine plan.

In Sri Aurobindo's *Savitri*, Aswapathy represents the human soul at the individual level and the humanity at the collective level. The journey Aswapathy makes internally is nothing but the evolution of consciousness. It is a journey from ego to altruism, from darkness to light, from ignorance to enlightenment, from bondage to freedom and from mortality to immortality.

Aswapathy, the powerful king of Madra is a great scholar. Not satisfied by his learning, material possessions, power he wields over his subjects, and the limitations of the earth-bound human consciousness, he seeks the guidance of sages to unravel the mysteries of the universe. He prays, contemplates, meditates, studies scriptures and undertakes ascetic practices. As he progresses in his sadhana, he experiences several planes of consciousness. His interaction with the Divine Mother Savitri leads him to the knowledge of the self. He understands the relationship between the individual soul and the supreme soul and realizes that the Divine consciousness is manifest in the entire universe.

M P Pandit in his work *Introducing Savitri* says:

Sri Aurobindo points out how the human soul being a spark of God, is always a coveted prize for the army of the Adversary, the dark forces; they fight the hosts of Light for its possession. The being of a man is a battlefield, where a constant war goes on between the forces of light and forces of darkness, and the issue, whether the gods win or the titans, in each case, depends upon the individual concerned. In each indulgence of my desires, each wrong association of my ego, each participation in falsehood, I add my strength to the side of the dark forces. Each time I reject these things and make a positive upward movement, I add my weight on the side of the gods. Thus, it is left to each individual to decide who shall win and who shall lose. This is an occult fact of life which is true in the case of everyone. (14)

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In his transcendental journey Aswapathy undergoes many troubles, setbacks but can tread the spiritual path courageously with determination and realizes that the divine drace is the key element for his transformation for his spiritual evolution and for his enlightenment.

Grace descends only when the individual fulfils certain conditions: In addition to the heightened aspiration for attaining the ultimate experience of the knowledge of the self, the seeker should reject every thought and abstain from every deed that prevents him from receiving grace. Detachment from worldly desires, freedom from ego, and surrendering to the Divine help him in making giant strides on the path that leads to Divine Consciousness.

Sri Aurobindo and the Mother of Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry say:

To walk through life armoured against all fear, peril, and disaster, only two things are needed, two that go always together-the Grace of the Divine Mother and on your side an inner state made up of faith, sincerity, and surrender. Let your faith be pure, candid, and perfect. An egoistic faith in the mental and vital being tainted by ambition, pride, vanity, metal arrogance, vital self-will, personal demand, desire for the petty satisfaction of the lower nature is a low and smoke-obscured flame that cannot burn upwards to heaven. Regard your life as given to you only for the divine work and to help in the divine manifestation. Desire nothing but the purity, force, light, wideness, calm, Ananda of the divine consciousness and its insistence to transform and perfect your mind, life, and body. Ask for nothing but the divine, spiritual and Supramental Truth, its realisation on earth and in you and in all who are called and chosen, and the conditions needed for its creation and its victory over all opposing forces. (9-10)

Aswapathy's episode in the tale of Savitri throws light on the conflicting attitudes of human beings, the ephemeral nature of material world, the significance of following the spiritual path with the goal of attaining divine consciousness and emphasises the role of self-effort in attracting the divine intervention. Aswapathy's experiences reveal that one can reach the goal only by the grace of God.

Reference

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