

Indian Poetry in English
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Lecture - 05
Sri Aurobindo – 1

Good morning friends! Welcome back to NPTEL online certification course on Indian poetry in English. Till now, we have been discussing the first phase of Indian poetry in English and as you might remember well that in the previous lecture, we talked about Sri Rabindranath Tagore---- one of the major voices of Indian poetry in English.

But, equally important is a voice which we are going to discuss today in the lectures that follow and this voice is none other than that of Sri Aurobindo, who I think all around the world has become famous because of his seminal work named *Savitri*. My dear friends, I have divided this lecture into two parts.

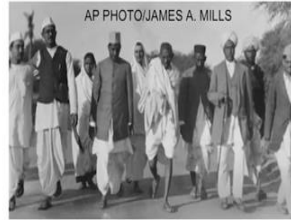
In the first part we shall be talking about Aurobindo's life, his other achievements, influences and then some of his works. And in the second one that will be more detailed we shall be talking about Aurobindo's *Savitri*. But before we begin, let us have a look at who Aurobindo was and what was the political condition during that time when Aurobindo appeared on the scene of Indian literature in English and specially on the scene of Indian poetry in English.

My dear friends, you might well remember that in 1857, the Sepoy Mutiny took place and once the Sepoy Mutiny was over, all the leaders of Indian political struggle they became conscious; there was a sort of new generation. And this sort of consciousness could not be kept away from even the poets.

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Socio-Political Conditions

- India under alien rule
- Unlike in prose, no new major voices in poetry emerged.
- Reflective mystical verse or Romantic-Victorian verse
- New-poetry emerged



India, being under the alien rule, was having all sorts of experiences, and at that time these experiences were recorded through literature both by poems and also by prose. I think when freedom struggle took or gained its momentum, more and more voices in prose appeared.

Of course, in poetry there were only a few and, those few really made a lot of noises and a lot of inspiration actually could be procured through these poets. When Sri Aurobindo appeared on the scene, I think there is much to know about how Aurobindo appeared on the scene.

Because as you might remember well, that most of the poets of the first phase they had an attraction towards English education. And many of them also went to England to see that they were well qualified and of course, some of them returned. You might well remember when we were discussing Tagore, we talked about how Tagore too was influenced by the Western education and it was only in that age that there were some poets, who were affected by a sort of mysticism.

And there was a sort of reflective mystical verse or romantic Victorian verse since many of them were affected by western voices. So, it actually gave a new rise or it provided a sort of emergence of some of the poets, who were not only confined to their tradition, but they are also trying to do something new and one of these such voices was Sri Aurobindo Ghose.

Now, let us have a look at the bio of Sri Aurobindo, Sri Aurobindo Ghose was born in 1872 in a Bengali family in Calcutta. But my dear friends, he did not spend too many years in India. Because one of his elder brothers named Manmohan Ghose who also was a very famous poet. So, along with him only at the age of 7, Aurobindo also went to England and he stayed there till he was 21 years. So, he had all sorts of education, many people often said that Aurobindo did not know much of Bengali language, because he could not spend his beginning years in Bengal.

And when he returned to India what he said, when he returned to India he felt, that there was a new charm, there was a new calm that descended upon him far from the pall of England far from the murkiness of England. And when he came back to India he actually got a job in the Gujarat state, specially in Baroda state from 1893 to 1906.

It is said, that here was the period when Aurobindo not only started writing, but he also wrote some of his major poems. But, what why Aurobindo became famous, that we shall discuss when we proceed in this lecture further. Aurobindo was actually radical when, he saw that India was undergoing a sort of freedoms struggle, his views became very radical, and at times he also had been sent to jails.

On several occasions it is said that when he was sent to Alipore jail he actually got a lot of time where he says, that he felt a sort of mystic experience, a mystical experience. And he says that during those hours it appeared as if he was having a sort of Darshan, he was having a sort of Narayan Darshan.

And it is from there that whenever he went to any jail or whenever he was put into isolation, he actually had a sort of different feeling, an emergence of a new wave that is already reflected in the poems that Aurobindo wrote. Actually, it is so sad that when he was in Alipore and later on he was also in Muzaffarpur jail, but then at the advice of some of his friends he escaped to Pondicherry in 1910 and spent his entire life there as a spiritual guru.

Pondicherry at that time was a French colony and, it so happened that he was visited by one very famous---- a French lady named Mira Richard, who actually found in who found in Aurobindo a guru. And both of them finally, decided to establish Aurobindo Ashram in 1926.

My dear friend, this man had a life, this poet had a life which in one word---- we can say he was not only a poet, but he was a yogi. Because during the hours of silence, during the hours of his mystic experience, when he wanted to communicate, but he actually took an inward journey. And then he felt that he had had the visions.

And in his visions, he created certain things which actually even today he is remembered for that. So, it is Sri Aurobindo who actually gave a new dimension a, new phase to Indian English poetry and we can never forget Aurobindo. Now, initially when Aurobindo started, since he was influenced by western thoughts, some of the western poets as well, even the early romantics he was influenced by, he was also influenced by some of the Victorian poets.

So, we can find in Aurobindo's poem a sort of lyricism, and his poems can be considered to be lyrical, narrative, philosophical because he turned in verse and then there was a sort of epical sweep in his poems. We will see when we discuss his works. Aurobindo, as we have already said, that he was radical in terms of his use, but he did not devote much time into politics.

From politics he actually made an escape route and came to the world of poetry, but through the world of poetry also, he created a sort of revolution in the minds of Indians, in the minds of prosperous poets and writers. And one can find in Aurobindo's poems a sort of audacity, of course, his works are full of technical innovations.

You will find that he was not like other poets who will believe in creating a sort of metrical composition and simply providing a sort of melody. But rather, at times, he also started writing, he also started adapting to blank verse in poetry and that is why in most of his poems which are very longer, you will find, many majority of his poems are quite longer.

And then we find that not only is he experimenting with the blank verse and majority of his poems are longer, but he kept into consideration that he should see because in his psyche there was Indian ethos, Indian mythologies, Indian myths. Of course at times he had to change it in order to serve his own purpose better.

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Aurobindo's Poems and their Features

- ✓ Lyrical, narrative, philosophical, and epic
- ✓ Audacious and full of technical innovation
- ✓ Emotional rapture, verbal exuberance romantic and mystical

- 'Urbasie', 'Love and Death', 'Baji Prabhau'
- Short Poems (1890-1900)
- The Short Poems (1895-1908)
- Short Poems (1902-1930, 1930-1950)

epyllions

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And so initially, he had started with some short poems and the short poems were of various natures. But once he started writing longer poems, the longer poems had the background of ancient Indian history, ancient legions of India and but then love happened to be at the core of majority of his poems, love was in the background.

So, many people often say that the three epyllions that he composed, or three narratives that he composed actually have a central theme and which we can call as the epyllions of love; the epyllions of love. So, the very first was *Urbasie*, then came *Love and Death* and then came *Baji Prabhau*, we shall also give some discussion to it.


Now, in all these poems you, will find while *Urbasie* all of you are familiar with the name *Urbasie* and then *Baji Prabhau*. *Baji Prabhau* actually talks about the exploitations of military warfare and heroism. And in the background is Shivaji and *Bhaji Prabhau* was a soldier who actually could not allow the enemies to enter Shivaji's camp and it is said that he was able to withheld the enemies for more than two hours before Shivaji could return safe to his camp.


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His Narratives

- *Urbasia*
 - A poem of 1500 lines, blank verse
 - Ancient legend of king Pururavus and his love for the celestial damsel
 - Miltonic diction, romantic ethos, with all its agonies and ecstasies
 - Keatsian touch

"The elaborate epic machinery has the look of an intruder in this narrative with its essentially romantic ethos; and the best parts of the poem are those which offer a lyrical evocation of intense love with all its agonies and ecstasies". (Naik)




5

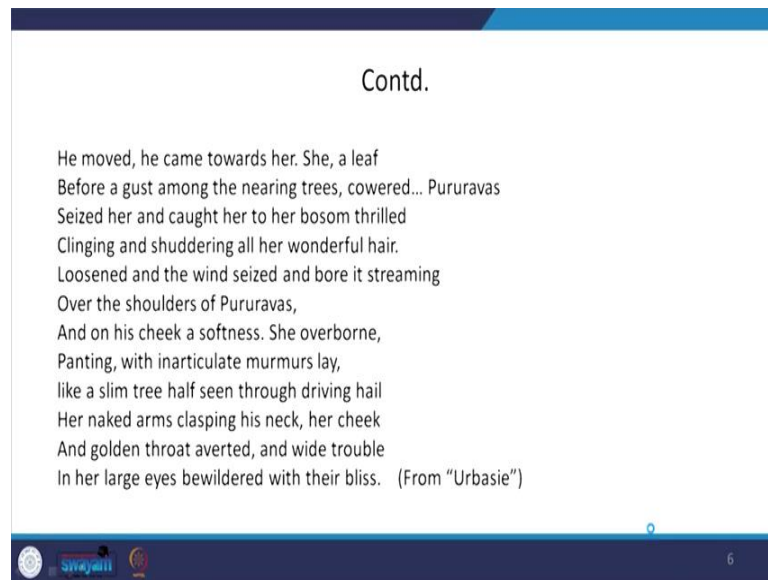
Now, talking about *Urbasia* we will see that *Urbasia* is out and out a love poem. And here you will find for the first time that *Urbasia* is not only written in blank verse, but it has got around 1500 lines, majority of them are written in blank verse. The story goes well that ancient legend of king it is based upon the love between Pururavas and his love for Urbasia.

It is said, that in order to gain the favor of Urbasia this person, I mean Pururavas, did not think much about his own people, even though he was a king. And the entire poem *Urbasia* is full of Miltonic diction. There are romantic ethos here and there, and it also has got all the agonies and ecstasies. It is said that Pururavas in order to gain the hand of Urbasia he actually could also visit the regions which was not possible for humans.

There is a sort of Keatsian touch, you may at times call it a bit sensuous though not sensual, we will go to the lines and then we will find. But before that let us have what M. K. Naik in his book *Indian literature in English history of Indian literature in English*, where he says, 'the elaborate epic machinery has the look of an intruder in this narrative with its essentially romantic ethos'.

The entire poem is full of romantic ethos, and 'the best parts of the poem are those which offer a lyrical evocation of intense love with all its agonies and ecstasies'. Now, let us have some lines from *Urbasia* so that you can find that even though Aurobindo, who actually was writing about ancient legend king of Pururavas and Urbasia but then he was so influenced by the romantic poets that you can find a description here.

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Contd.

He moved, he came towards her. She, a leaf
Before a gust among the nearing trees, cowered... Pururavas
Seized her and caught her to her bosom thrilled
Clinging and shuddering all her wonderful hair.
Loosened and the wind seized and bore it streaming
Over the shoulders of Pururavas,
And on his cheek a softness. She overborne,
Panting, with inarticulate murmurs lay,
like a slim tree half seen through driving hail
Her naked arms clasping his neck, her cheek
And golden throat averted, and wide trouble
In her large eyes bewildered with their bliss. (From "Urbasie")

For example, I have taken some of the lines from Urbasie.

He moved, he came towards her. She, a leaf
before a gust among the nearing trees, cowered. Pururavas
seized her and caught her to her bosom thrilled
clinging and shuddering all her wonderful hair.
Loosened and the wind seized and bore it streaming
over the shoulders of Pururavas
and on his cheek a softness. She overborne,
panting with inarticulate murmurs lay,
like a slim tree half seen through driving hail
her naked arms clasping his neck, her cheek
and golden throat averted and wide trouble
in her large eyes bewildered with their bliss.

Now, look at these lines, how we can find here a sort of sensuousness, a sensuous touch that may remind us of the famous romantic English poet John Keats, but it may appear to be sensuous yet it is not sensual.


Here it is the description of Pururavas and Urbasie----- how when they met and how when they came across, what sort of description. And you see, the description that Aurobindo provides actually takes us back to majority of the romantic poets. Especially John Keats, where you can also find the same sort of description, whether it is in *Lamia* or whether it is in eve of *Saint Agnes* or in some other my dear friend.

Now, moving to another epyllion of Aurobindo, as I had already mentioned that all these three epyllions are centered in love, you might be thinking that we remember Aurobindo because of his *Savitri*. But my dear friends, initially Aurobindo was experimenting a different sort of pattern, and from there we can find there is a sort of transformation.

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Aurobindo's Narratives

- ❑ *Love and Death*(1899)
- 1100 lines of blank verse
- The story of Ruru and Priyamvada
- Resembles the Greek legend of Orpheus and Euridice
- Ruru invades Patala to reclaim lost Priyamvada
- Lovers have failed and preferred 'personal felicity to the realization of world realization and total transformation'



Love and Death
SRI AUROBINDO
Critical Essays
Edited by
ANANDA REDDY

So, even in the other poem entitled *Love and Death* which is also based on an ancient legend, which is based on the legend of king Ruru and Priyamvada which is the Pramadra, but then the poet has actually composed it like Priyamvada in order that people may remember it well. And this Ruru was the son of Rishi Bhrgu.

So, a lot of Indian you know, grounding is there and this Priyamvada was the daughter of the famous Menaka. And in their love episode it is found because you know in every love there is bound to be some sort of tragedy. And the tragedy in this part is so, that Priyamvada dies of snake bite and in order to get back, or in order to find Priyamvada this Ruru actually undertakes even the journey of the Patala or the hell.

Now, see the height of romanticism that has been created by Aurobindo. But then, it is written in a fashion that reminds us of a Homeric style of Homeric pattern the Greek legend of Orpheus and Eurydice my dear friend. Ruru has I told you Ruru invades Patala to reclaim lost Priyamvada. It is said many many critics have said, that most of these lovers, whether it is Ruru or be it Pururavas they actually, what they do is they have failed and preferred personal felicity to the realization of world realization and total transformation. Now, there is something that actually is worth mentioning here my dear friend.


Now, Aurobindo while he was depicting all these Indian kings, legends, Indian beauties and all so, there we could find a different sort of pattern, but then what he intends is that, man can have different stages and from one stage to other, there can be a sort of progression, there can be a sort of transformation.

My dear friends, Aurobindo also was not an exception and Aurobindo also transformed himself, and you know the life that he spent at Pondicherry in the Aurobindo Ashram that actually transformed him. And that he has depicted or delineated in one of his poems which we shall discuss later on.



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“Ahana” and “Ilion”

- Ahana was originally written at Pondicherry, and it has 250 rhymed lines
- Attempt to naturalize the classical Hexametre in English
- Ahana is the Divine dawn who descends into the world and is greeted by the Hunters of joy, Seekers of knowledge and Climbers in quest of power
- Rhymes can be used for poems of reflective thought or lyrical feeling” without resulting in ‘melodic monotone



‘Thou shall not suffer always nor cry to me , lured and forsaken.’



8

Here, there is a need to mention two other major works by Aurobindo, which are entitled *Ahana and Ilion*. I have already told you that Aurobindo was influenced by Western philosophy and Western education. So, this *Ahana* was originally written at Pondicherry

and it has got 250 rhymed lines. Now, you might be wondering as to who Ahana is and why Ahana is so important?

Ahana is actually the divine deity, Ahana is actually the divine deity and Ahana comes once to see what is being done and there from the hill Ahana sees. And when Ahana comes there, she actually finds Ahana as I told you is the divine dawn, a new change. So, who descends into the world and she is welcomed by hunters of joy, seekers of knowledge and climbers in quest of power. Now, these are all symbolical my dear friends, and through this Aurobindo tries to convey a message and message to mankind. Because when Ahana comes these people actually gather and they try to greet, but then in this poem Ahana what happens is finally, this Ahana deity tells man, 'thou shall not suffer always nor cry to me, lured and forsaken'. But how can that be?

Only when they could recall, only when they could think of this deity without any bias, without any allurements and all. So, Ahana was also written in a blank verse, but here is one experiment that Aurobindo does, and the experiment is that he actually makes use of a lyrical feeling and these lyrical feeling, he brings there a sort of hexameter in English, classical hexameter in English which is very rarely found in English, but he brings that.

And when he is asked for that to explain, what he says? Rhymes can be used for poems of reflective thought, or lyrical feeling, without resulting in melodic monotone. In fact, what he tries to do here is----- he introduces the classical hexameter to make it melodic, but then if it becomes very melodic people may get tired of it, people may get weary of it. And that is why Aurobindo says, that they can be used even for reflective thoughts and lyrical feeling without resulting in melodic monotone, my dear friend.

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Contd.

- More ambitious attempt than *Ahana*
- A Homeric exercise in the heroic
- Background of Trojan war
- Built around Achilles and Pentheselia, the Amazonian queen
- The actual action of the epic takes on a single day.
- Inner epic, few characters, and takes place on a symbolic plane.
- Prophetic vision of a glorious future.

Now, apart from *Ahana* we should also think of *Ilion*, which is actually a more ambitious project than *Ahana*, it is also an exercise in Homeric and written in the heroic mode. But the basis of this is Trojan war. Here the basis of this is Trojan war and the king Achilles and Pentheselia who is the Amazonian queen----- they are in the background. And the actual scene takes place only in a single day.

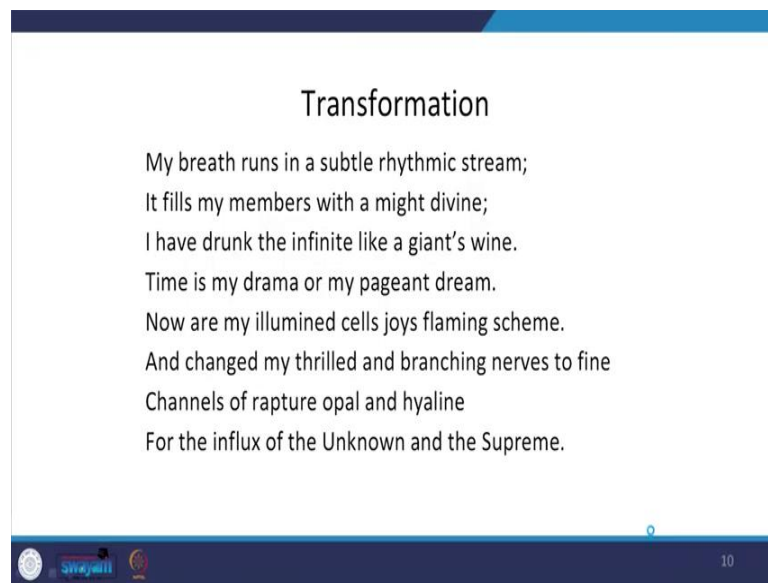
We can come across inner epics. There are a few characters---- not many characters as it happens in the case of epic and it takes place only on a symbolic plane my dear friend. It is often said, that after *Ilion* only there was a sort of prophetic vision in Aurobindo. And many people often say, that these were just a prologue to the magnum opus of Aurobindo which we shall discuss in the lecture to come. And what was that? That was actually *Savitri*.

But before that let us try to find out what underwent? What actually happened? How this transformation came? And how the poet actually describes that, how he mentions? He does that through one of his very important poems, which actually needs to be mentioned. The title of the poem is 'Transformation'.

If you read the lines of the poem, you can yourself find how the poet is progressing towards a different sphere, where he will become' spiritual, where he will talk about man's civilization not only of the terrestrial forces, but of the cosmic reason that man can create, that man can generate in him or her.

Let us look at some of the lines, and you will find that some of the lines themselves symbolize that there is undergoing a sort of transformation in the poet who used to talk about the romantic ethos and used to talk about the sensuousness touch. You have already found my dear friend, let us read some of the lines of the poem ‘Transformation’.

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My breath runs in a subtle rhythmic stream,

it fills my members with the might divine.

I have drunk the infinite like a giant’s wine.

Time is my drama or my pageant dream.

Now are my illumined cells joys flaming scheme

and changed my thrilled and branching nerves to fine

channels of rapture opal and hyaline,

for the influx of the unknown and the supreme.

You see before this there was no such use, but now he talks about for the influx of the unknown and the supreme.

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Contd.

I am no more a vassal of the flesh.
A slave to Nature and her leaden rule;
I am caught no more in the senses' narrow mesh.
My soul unhorizoned widens to measureless sight,
My body is God's happy living tool,
My spirit is a vast sun of deathless light.

So, the poet's progression now,

I am no more a vassal of the flesh.'

So, from this ethereal you know feeling from this ethereal experience that is experience of the body, experience of the materialistic tendency of man on this earth.

“A slave to nature and her leaden rule,

I am caught no more in the senses narrow mesh,

my soul unhorizoned widens to measureless sight.

My body is God's happy living tool.


My spirit is a vast sun of deathless light.”

Dear friends, it is said that when Aurobindo settled at a Pondicherry, he actually entered different phase, where for a long time he did not speak. And at one place I have read, that there were some people who also could throw stones, but yet he was unmoved my dear friend; because he was entering a new sphere a new sphere of a spirituality, a new sphere of a cosmic vision, that he could have which he had started when being in the Alipore jail or in some other jail.

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Characteristics of the Poem

- Poet, part of the material world, experiences mystical transformation.
- Joy of the spiritual world
- Tantric elements
- Human to Divine
- Development of the psyche
- Process of being without unnecessary epistemological concerns

12

Now, when we have a detailed discussion of this poem ‘Transformation’ you can find my dear friend, that this poem actually talks about not only about the poet, but he actually talks about the material world, the world which every now and then we are in and the experiences that we have, but then there can be a mystical transformation as the poet also himself is experiencing.

And this transformation may lead him to the joy of the spiritual world and through what? Through Tantric elements, through Mantric elements because they say that a poetry or poem is a soul to soul communication, and here the mysticism that Aurobindo was having that can come to support this view, from transformation from human to divine; you will find from human to divine.

And it is not the development of the body, but it is actually the development of the psyche, when you go inward and you can find the inner rhythms and that inner joy that are radiated on your face my dear friend, the process of being without unnecessarily unnecessary epistemological concerns.

Because the knowledge that you are having on this earth, this knowledge may be transmuted for a better being for a better sphere. And how is that possible my dear friend? That is possible when, you can start realizing the inner chaos within you, and as men all of us at a certain phase of our life, at a certain stage we come across such feelings.

But my dear friends, we have been saying that many of these poets who were imitating of course, one can say that in the beginning Aurobindo also imitated the Western tradition. But then Aurobindo did not have his mother tongue as Bangla which we should have, but he did not have as he left India only at the age of 7.

But when he came to India and he had a changed notion and then you will find what he did. Majority of these poets whether we talk about Toru Dutt, we talk about Rabindranatha---QW all these people they also started searching resources from our ancient texts like from Sanskrit from some other language. And Aurobindo also translated many of the works from Sanskrit.

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The slide is titled "Aurobindo's Translations" and features a list of works on the left and a sample translation on the right. The list includes:

- The Hero and the Nymph* (from *Vikramorvasie*)
- The Century of Life* (From *Bhartrihari*)
- Devotional songs of Vidyapati and Chandidas*
- Vidula* (from the *Mahabharata*)
- Songs of Sea* (from *C.R. Das*)

The sample translation on the right is:

What word is it thou sing'st? What tune
My heart is filled with, and it soon
Must overflow? What mystical unborn
Spirit is singing in thy white foam-caves?
What voice turns heaven to music from
thy waves?

(*Songs of Sea*, C.R.Das)

The slide also contains a logo for "swjain" and the number "13" in the bottom left corner.

And one such is and you know there were different resources, for example, *The Hero and the Nymph* which has been translated from Kalidasa *Vikramorvasie*. So, this was translated by Aurobindo and the translation goes like this, *The Hero and the Nymph*. We have also we have already talked about *Urbasie*, which also appears in Kalidasa *Vikramorvasie*. And then another was from *Bhartrihari*. All of you are acquainted with the name of *Bhartrihari*.

So, what he when he translated *Bhartrihari*'s works he titled it *The Century of Life* and then there were some devotional songs of *Vidyapati* and *Chandidas* also were translated by Aurobindo and, then *Vidula* from the *Mahabharata*. And then you will be surprised to

note that while he was in jail C. R. Das was actually fighting as an advocate, he was actually pursuing Aurobindo's case as a lawyer and C. R. Das was himself a poet.

He wrote in Bengali, but those were the poems those he had called Songs of Sea, has always been an inspiration my dear friend and Aurobindo translated that. If you look at the translation you will find that it is not only a translation, but it is more than a sort of transcreation.

What word is it thou sing'st?

What tune my heart filled with, and it soon

must overflow? What mystical unborn

spirit is singing in thy white foam-caves?

What voice turns heaven to music from

thy waves?

So, this is how he translated my dear friend.

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Levels of Reality as presented in the Poems of Aurobindo-
Kees W. Bolle

1. Existence, divine existence, Pure existence, Ultimate reality
2. Absolute spirit, *Saccidananda* (unmanifest)
3. Bliss
4. Supermind, Gnosis.
5. Mind
6. Psyche, Soul.
7. Life.
8. Matter.

14

Actually while Aurobindo was having these transformations, there are people and critics who have had different sorts of experiences and different sorts of views about

Aurobindo's levels of reality. In one such is Kees W. B. Bolle, who has found levels of reality in the poems of Aurobindo, the reality of existence, of absolute spirit, a bliss, of supermind, then of mind, psyche, life and matter my dear friend.

So, we will come across that unless and until you, read *Savitri* which is actually a magnum opus. And I am so much influenced by *Savitri*, and like me majority of the people who have understood or who have heard the story of Savitri and Satyavan might be knowing the story but the way this story has been given an epical sweep, actually reminds us of what can be done by a poet.

A poet who is not only a poet, but a prophet. A poet who is not only a composer, but a seer. A poet who has brought a sort of integrity through yoga in his works and ,that he finds that how our mind can be concentrated in and transformed into a new sort of energy.

So, when Aurobindo wrote *Savitri*, it actually it is said that *Savitri* got many versions many corrections, and it took 50 years my dear friend, when the final *Savitri* came. And what she gave the name to this book was, *Savitri: A Legend and a Symbol*. All of us are familiar with the *Savitri* story in the Mahabharata, where around 700 lines have been devoted to the depiction of *Savitri* and *Satyavan*.

But then, Aurobindo actually adds it further, and he actually presents it in a different way, though he does not change the storyline, but he actually makes it so, that it actually appears as if *Savitri* could have traveled years and years to get that cosmic vision, otherwise no one can have that cosmic vision to save a human being who is already dead. And then *Savitri* because of her *Sadhana*, because of her yogic concentration and all brings *Satyavan* back to life.

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Savitri: A Legend and a Symbol

SRI AUROBINDO

- 'A sort of poetic philosophy of the spirit and life' and 'an experiment in mystic poetry and spiritual poetry cast into a symbolic figure' - **Aurobindo**
- A magnum opus in three parts comprising 24000 lines, 12 books and 49 Cantos.
- Legendary verse narrative on the legend of Satyavan and Savitri

15

So, this Savitri epic which he has named as *A Legend and A symbol*, it is actually a sort of as Aurobindo himself says; it is a sort of poetic philosophy. It is a sort of poetic philosophy of the spirit and life, and an experiment in mystic poetry. Now, I think you are familiar with the mystic experience, where what you want to communicate you do not communicate fine? But you communicate in a different manner fine?


It is a sort of communication in different manner and a spiritual poetry cast into a symbolic figure, that is why he names it *Savitri: A Legend and a Symbol*. And this book, this epic has this is in 12 books my dear friends and it has got more than it has got around 24000 lines----- 24000 lines my dear friend. It is a legendary verse. It is of course, a retelling of the legend of Savitri and Satyavan and it is in 49 cantos. It is often seen that some of the cantos are incomplete.

But when we discuss we will find, how Aurobindo has given it, not only a spiritual color, but he has also delineated it in such a manner that once you start reading *Savitri*, you will never feel that it is an incomplete work. The division of this book *Savitri* is, I mean the book is in three parts, my dear friend as I told you. The book has got 12 books, there are 12 books and these 12 books are divided into three parts.

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Division of Savitri

- ❖ Part I (Book I to III): Aswapathy's spiritual quest
- ❖ Part II(Books IV to VIII):Savitri's upbringing
- ❖ Part III(IX to XII): Savitri's encounter with Death and her claim for Divine Truth
- ❖ Forceful presence of the poet's own voice- '**Internal yoga**'
- ❖ An epic of humanity and divinity of the death and life divine



SRI AUROBINDO'S SAVITRI

16

The 1st part has book I to III where Aswapathy's spiritual quest is there and, from the 2nd part--- the 2nd part from book IV to VIII it is about Savitri's upbringing, her birth, her upbringing. And then part III which comprises books IX to XII it is actually this is the most important one of the book, where Savitri has a sort of encounter with death. I mean the death God Yama. And Savitri advocates the case of Satyavan before Yama and finally, you will find the Yama has to be defeated before Savitri's yogic Sadhana and Savitri's a divine stature. So, there is a sort of forceful presence of the poet's own voice, it is through the internal yoga, many people often say there is a it is a sort of supramental poem--- an epic of humanity and divinity of the death and life divine.

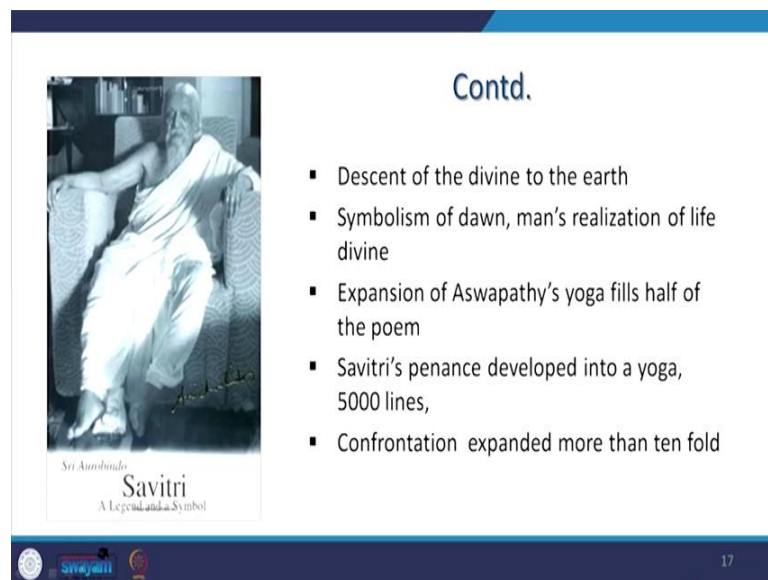
So, this is how Savitri has been divided. We could have got ample time to discuss it, but since time runs short out of our schedule, so, we shall be discussing further about Savitri in the next talk. But then we should also remember, that when Aurobindo was writing it what he had in mind is he ,had in mind the decent of the divine to the earth.

That man has got in him a sort of energy which also can be transformed. This energy can be transformed, and this transformed energy can have a better vision can have a better phase my dear friend. So, here we will find the yoga is being shown through Aswapathy, who is Savitri's father as we shall discuss further. And Savitri's penance has also been developed into a yoga and 5000 lines have been dedicated to it.

It is often said that even though in Mahabharata there are only 700 lines dedicated to Savitri and Satyavan, but then how could Aurobindo make it 24000 lines. And as I tell you, time and again my dear friend, once you start reading it, my aim through these lectures is not only to familiarize people with Indian poetry in English, but to let them realize that how powerful Indian poetry, Indian ethos, Indian strength, Indian influences can be there.

And how we should how we should not look only upon the West rather we should also look upon the East our own influences, in the form of, not only in the form of Savitri and Satyavan, Urbasie and others, but there are quite a good number of.

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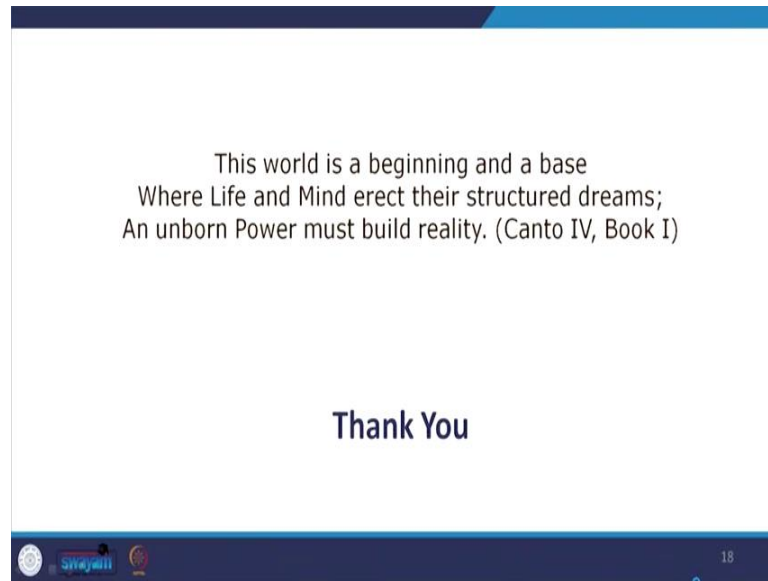
The slide features a book cover on the left and a list of points on the right. The book cover shows a black and white photograph of Sri Aurobindo sitting in a chair, with the text 'Sri Aurobindo Savitri A Legend and a Symbol' below it. The slide title is 'Contd.' and the list contains four bullet points.

Contd.

- Descent of the divine to the earth
- Symbolism of dawn, man's realization of life divine
- Expansion of Aswapathy's yoga fills half of the poem
- Savitri's penance developed into a yoga, 5000 lines,
- Confrontation expanded more than ten fold

So, the confrontation between Yama God and Savitri has been expanded more than tenfold my dear friend. So, it is now time that we have to stop this lecture.

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But before I stop let, me quote one line from Savitri where it is said,

This world is a beginning and a base

Where life and mind erect their structured dreams,

An unborn power must build reality.

And we will see how this reality emerges, how this reality can be transformed and for that let us wait for the next lecture. Till then thank you very much have a nice day.