

**Indian Poetry in English**  
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**Lecture - 06**  
**Sri Aurobindo - II**

Good morning friends, and welcome back to NPTEL online certification course on Indian Poetry in English. Dear friends, all of you might remember that in the previous lecture we discussed Sri Aurobindo and we had stopped on a particular note and had also decided that in the next lecture we shall be continuing with Aurobindo's *Savitri*. Before I go ahead let me remind you of how Aurobindo had started writing his major poems, composing his major poems in the form of epyllions.

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**(Recap) *Savitri* Introduction**

- ❖ 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

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Now, you all might be thinking about what these epyllions are. From the epyllions, Aurobindo moved to the epic. Now these epyllions are also narratives which appear quite longer, but they are shorter than epics and *Savitri* is an epic. So, when we had stopped the previous lecture we had been talking about the division of *Savitri* and you once again must remember that *Savitri* is divided into 12 books, 49 cantos and of course, they are included or they have been composed in three parts.

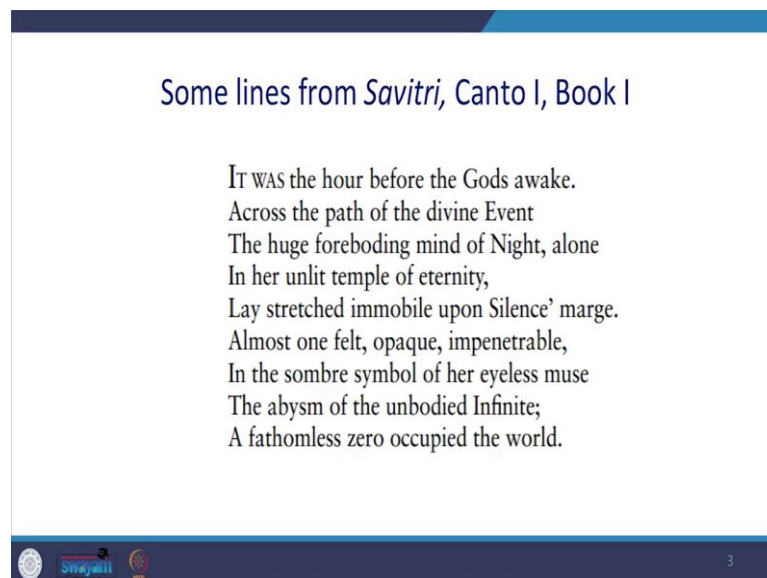
There is a presence of the poet's own voice through internal yoga, but then in this lecture we will find how this epic *Savitri* begins. My dear friends, as I told you earlier that this

book *Savitri* is in 49 cantos and they are in three parts and the books are 12. How does the first book begin? It is said that the first book or the beginning is actually in medias res; medias res means any epic when it begins, it does not begin from the beginning, rather it begins from the middle of the plot. And here also *Savitri* begins with the middle of the plot.

Now, very first book it actually talks about, it does not talk about how Savitri Satyavan met and whatsoever, but it actually talks about the scene of the night. You know in every epic you will find that when it begins it begins with a particular scene. So, this is the scene of the night and then this night is a night when Savitri has got a sort of fear. What sort of fear? Because this book has been taken from the middle and here the description is that of the dawn, description is that of the dawn.

My dear friends, Savitri knew that Satyavan will not live longer and as the story goes that they could spend only 12 months together. Both Savitri and Satyavan, they spent only 12 months together. But then since it has been taken from the middle and this beginning here, I mean this beginning here talks about the fear that is actually in the mind of Savitri because she knows that the next day Satyavan will die.

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Some lines from *Savitri*, Canto I, Book I

IT WAS the hour before the Gods awake.  
Across the path of the divine Event  
The huge foreboding mind of Night, alone  
In her unlit temple of eternity,  
Lay stretched immobile upon Silence' marge.  
Almost one felt, opaque, impenetrable,  
In the sombre symbol of her eyeless muse  
The abysm of the unbodied Infinite;  
A fathomless zero occupied the world.

Now see how it begins.

It was the hour before the Gods awake.

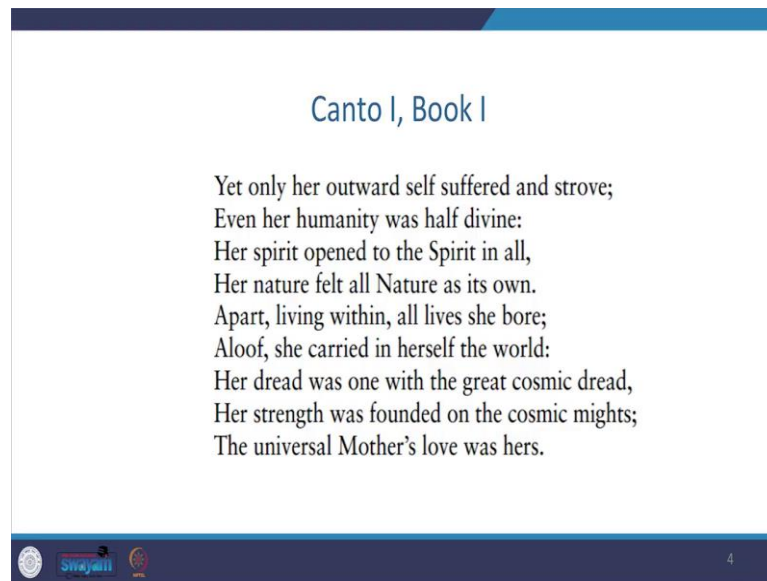
Across the path of the divine Event  
the huge foreboding mind of Night, alone

in her unlit temple of eternity,  
lay stretched immobile upon silences marge.  
Almost one felt, opaque, impenetrable,  
in the sombre symbol of her eyeless muse;

### **Eyeless muse she was not able to sleep**

the abysm of the unbodied infinite;  
a fathomless zero occupied the world.

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Yet only her outward self-suffered and strove;

No other person could know what was going on in the mind of Savitri, because Savitri was afraid of and Savitri knew that the next day Satyavan is going to die. So, the epic begins with this,

even her humanity was half divine,

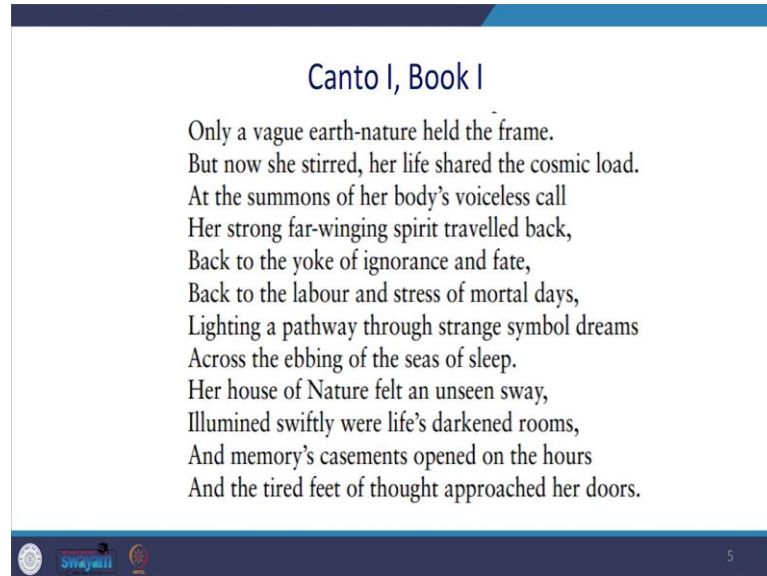
Savitri was not a natural creature my dear friends. Savitri was a sort of cosmic personality and that is what Aurobindo wanted to show.

But then she also had a human figure; her spirit opened to the spirit in all,

Her nature felt all Nature as its own.  
Apart, living within, all lives she bore;  
Aloof, she carried in herself the world;

her dread was one with a great cosmic dread,  
her strength was founded on the cosmic might;  
the universal Mother's love was hers.

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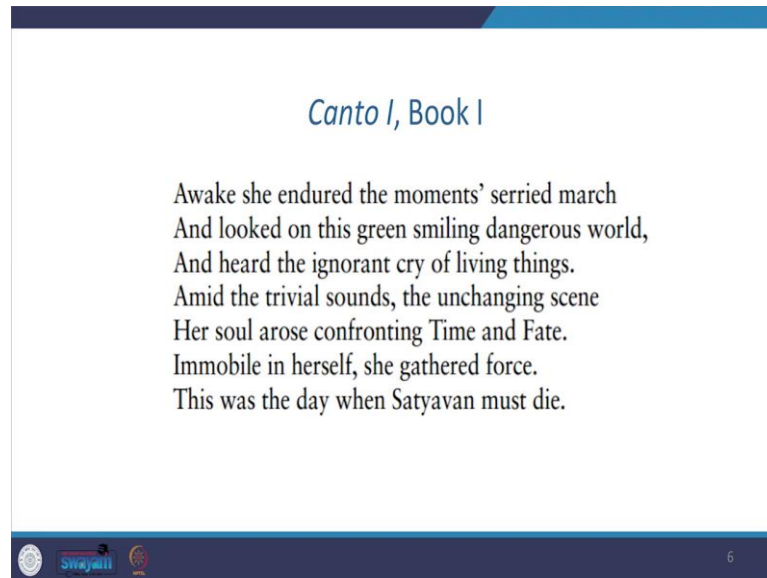
But Savitri had got some supernatural powers. And, only a vague earth-nature held the frame. / But now she stirred.

You know when you are not able to sleep properly what do you do? You take turns, you know, sometimes left sometimes right. So,

But now she stirred, her life shared the cosmic load.  
At the summons of her body's voiceless call  
her strong far winged spirit travelled back,  
back to the yoke of ignorance and fate,  
back to the labour and stress of mortal days,  
lighting a pathway through strange symbol dreams....  
And memory's casements opened on the hours  
and the tired feet of thought approached her doors.

See, how symbolically the poet actually delineates it and the tired feet of thought approached her doors. So, on her mind she actually was having a sort of fear and the fear was time and again, it was actually haunting her.

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Awake she endured the moments serried march/

And when she gets up;

Awake she endured the moments' serried march/ and looked on this green smiling dangerous world/.

You know when we get up in the morning, we find everything to be so bright beautiful momentous you know, but then what about Savitri, Savitri is actually having a sort of a fear a sort of apprehension.

And heard the ignorant cry of living things;/

Life begins but for Savitri as a human being life is going to come to an end because she is going to lose are the most loved thing on earth her husband Satyavan.

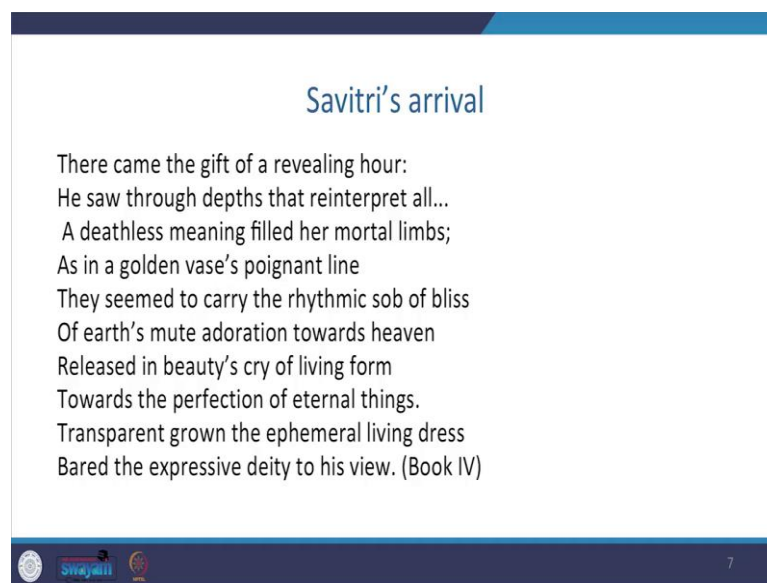
Amid the trivial sounds, the unchanging scene/ her soul arose confronting Time and Fate;/

Time and fate what will happen though she knew that Satyavan is not going to live any more. Immobile in herself, she gathered force. Because Savitri, when we come further we will come to know how she had her own penance and through her own penance she had attained a spiritual power, she had a attained a sort of divine force. This was the day when Satyavan must die.

So, this is actually the opening scene here, but as I told you this actually been taken from the middle. The story goes like this the first several books are actually devoted to Aswapathy. Now who is Aswapathy? Aswapathy is Savitri's father and Aswapathy through his penance, through his *tapasya* , through his *sadhana* you know and through his practice of yoga and *mantra*, he has actually consent he has he stands for a concentrated energy.

Aswapathy is stands for concentrated energy fine. And then, so Aswapathy when he had attained that power, he once asks God-- How can now I go back to that earth and what should I do there? Fine; and then the divine mother will tell that on that earth you will find another divine creature appearing and when we come across the lines you will find, my dear friend.

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**Savitri's arrival**

There came the gift of a revealing hour:  
He saw through depths that reinterpret all...  
A deathless meaning filled her mortal limbs;  
As in a golden vase's poignant line  
They seemed to carry the rhythmic sob of bliss  
Of earth's mute adoration towards heaven  
Released in beauty's cry of living form  
Towards the perfection of eternal things.  
Transparent grown the ephemeral living dress  
Bared the expressive deity to his view. (Book IV)

Now and what happens? So, the mother says that when you go to that earth you must not think that you are alone, that there will emerge a new force and that divine power will appear on that earth.

There came the gift of a revealing hour./

Now so, one day when Aswapathy was lost in his own *sadhana* and then because he had already been informed that some new creature will appear there and that creature will have a cosmic look fine.

So, now, Savitri comes; and how she comes? Look at the lines of the poem.

There came the gift of a revealing hour:

he saw through depths that reinterpret all.

Now Aswapathy sees, Aswapathy who stands for concentrated energy fine. A deathless meaning filled her mortal limbs; now here come Savitri.

A deathless meaning filled her mortal limbs;  
even though she had a mortal limb mortal hands, but then,  
a deathless meaning as in a golden vase's poignant line  
they seemed to carry the rhythmic sob of bliss  
of earth's mute adoration towards heaven  
released in beauty's cry of living form;  
released in beauty's cry of living form

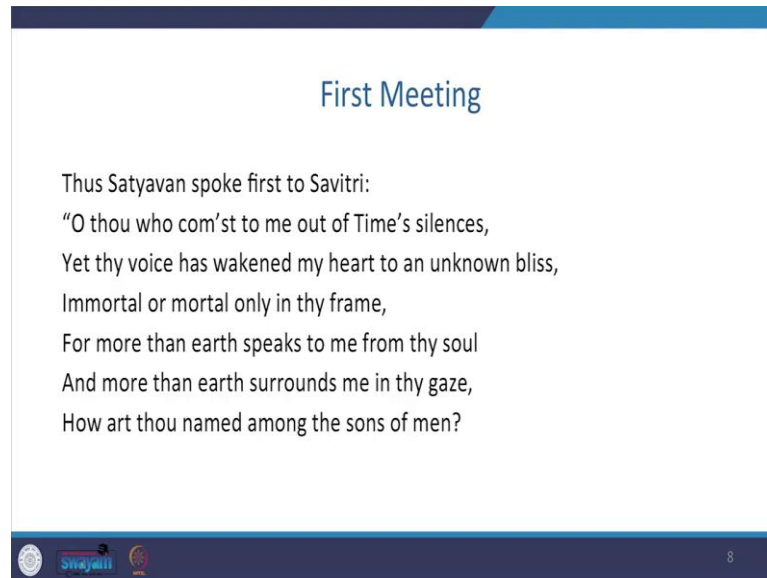
Savitri appeared here in a living form towards the perfection of eternal things.  
Transparent grown the ephemeral living dress

She had an ephemeral fine living dress the dress that other people also wear 'bared the expressive deity to his view.'

And so when Aswapathy looks at Savitri. So, he is confounded he is actually surprised, but then what happens later on? Now, Savitri has come and Savitri had been given a word, it is said that Savitri was to think of her own partner, she had to search for her own partner.

And now, but where could she find it? So, once upon a time while she is going while she is passing through a forest suddenly her eyes fall upon a young person. So, beautiful and this is none other than Satyavan. So, we can also see here how there is the first meet and how Savitri comes to see the darling of her own soul and when Satyavan also looks at Savitri, Satyavan is also infatuated, attracted, fascinated.

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First Meeting

Thus Satyavan spoke first to Savitri:  
“O thou who com’st to me out of Time’s silences,  
Yet thy voice has wakened my heart to an unknown bliss,  
Immortal or mortal only in thy frame,  
For more than earth speaks to me from thy soul  
And more than earth surrounds me in thy gaze,  
How art thou named among the sons of men?”

And Satyavan says;

Thus Satyavan spoke first to Savitri:

“O thou who com’st to me out of Time’s silences,

O thou who com’st to me out of Time’s silences,

yet thy voice has wakened my heart to an unknown bliss”

You have come here out of time silences because nobody comes here and the story goes well that Satyavans father Dyumatsena, Dyumatsena once upon a time was a king, but since he was deprived of his kingdom, he had to take shelter in a forest. And this is how they were living in the forest and this is how Satyavan was there.

So, when Satyavan for the first time seen Savitri, Satyavan says: Oh thou com’st to me out of time silences, / yet thy voice has wakened my heart to an unknown bliss,/ immortal or mortal only in thy frame,/ for more than earth speaks to me from thy soul.

He is not able to decide whether this creature is mortal or immortal or mortal So, from thy soul I can understand more than earth can tell me

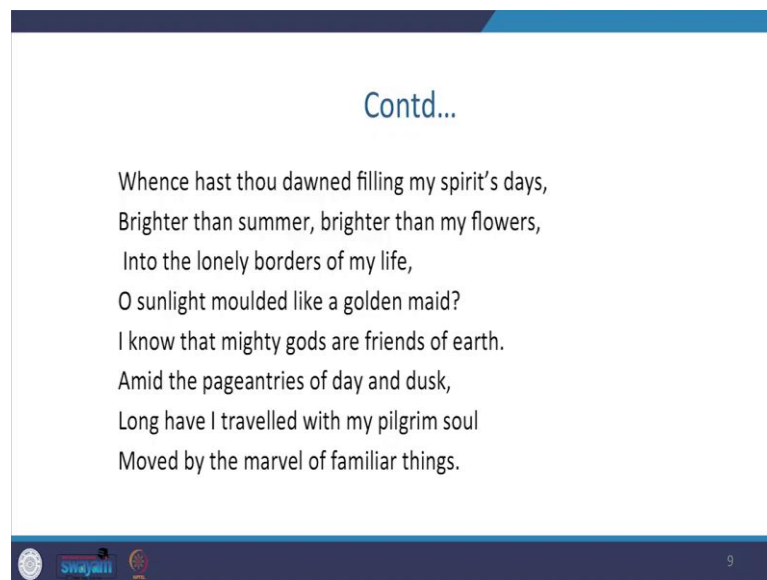
and more than earths surrounds me in thy gaze;

In the gaze in your eyes I can see more, I can find more meanings in it-- How art thou named among the sons of men?



So, this is the first meeting-- the introduction. So, what are you called? So, by which adjective or by which name are you called? How art thou named among the sons of men? You can also find here in these lines the influences of the influences of the romantics thou, art, thou, thy, thy, like this; fine.

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Whence hast thou dawned filling my spirit's days,  
brighter than summer, brighter than my flowers,  
into the lonely borders of my life,  
O sunlight moulded like a golden maid?

Look at the comparison; O sunlight moulded like a golden maid? Simile here, you know the use of simile here; I know that mighty gods are friends on earth, I know that mighty gods are friends of earth. Satyavan says that I know that even mighty gods are very friendly to the people of the earth, but you do not appear to be earthly.

Amid the pageantries of day and dusk,  
long have I travelled with my pilgrim soul  
moved by the marvel of familiar things.

So, this long have I travelled reminds us of Keats who says long have I traveled in the realms of Gold. So, here we can find the romantic ethos that he has taken from Keats,

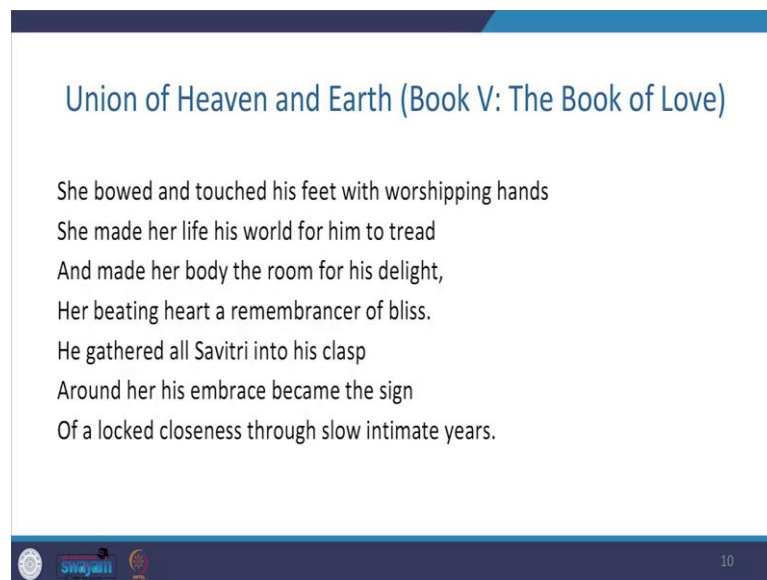
moved by the marvel of familiar things.

So, this is how they meet for the first time.

And when they meet for the first time my dear friends what happens you know? When Savitri has met the person who would be her own lover she is actually filled with joy, she bubbles with delight and wants to go and tell Aswapathy that I have found the mate of my soul. But my dear friend, do you know what will happen there is somebody sitting there and that person is Narad. Narad knows everything about and Narad will object that how can you, how can this earthly creature fine.

Because Narad knew what Savitri was and Narad also knew that Satyavan was not going to live for more than a year. Now when they meet for the first time and how they meet after the introduction.

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Now Savitri:

She bowed and touched his feet with worshipping hands

Because Satyavan was not able to believe that she is an earthly creature. So, what she did?

She bowed and touched his feet with worshipping hands  
She made her life his world for him to tread  
And made her body for the room for his delight,  
her beating heart a remembrance of bliss.  
He gathered all Savitri into his clasp  
around her his embrace became the sign  
of a locked closeness through slow intimate years.

So, this is how they met physically, you know this is how they met physically.

So, here again a sort of a romantic touch that we can find, but this meeting of earth with heaven, the meeting or the union of heaven and the earth we can call it my dear friends.

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Union of Heaven and Earth (Book V: The Book of Love)

In a wide moment of two souls that meet  
She felt her being flow into him as in waves  
A river pours into a mighty sea.  
Her consciousness was a wave of him alone  
And all her separate self was lost in his...

Her happy voice cried out to Satyavan:  
“My heart will stay here on this forest verge

But.

In a wide moment of two souls that meet/ she felt her being flow into him as in waves/

You will come across several such comparisons, my dear friend.

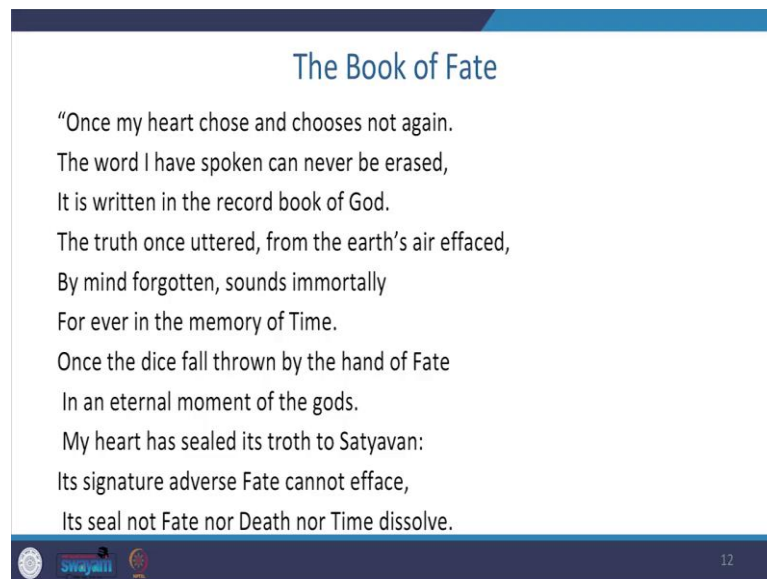
A river pours into a mighty sea. / Her consciousness was a wave of him alone/ and all her separate self was lost in his.... Her happy voice cried out to Satyavan: “My heart will stay here on this forest verge” /

Whatever I be, but I have actually been captivated and I want to stay here, I am actually bound to be here and my heart wants to stay here only in this forest which is actually isolated.

Because Satyavan had said- how come you come to this earth, but my dear friend! As it was fated that their union will be very temporary and you know Narad knew it all. So, when Savitri goes there, Narad actually expresses his own apprehension and Narad says this cannot happen because this man I mean the choice is not good and at this even Aswapathy also tried to convince his daughter.

But Aswapathy failed and then Savitri's mother also tried to persuade Savitri, but all this persuasion could not have an effect Savitri actually tried to convince and by convincing you see what her reasons are because Savitri knew that she had some other power also apart from the power that all earthly creatures can have. And you see what she replies when Narad and Aswapathy and Aswapathy's wife they actually object.

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**The Book of Fate**

“Once my heart chose and chooses not again.  
The word I have spoken can never be erased,  
It is written in the record book of God.  
The truth once uttered, from the earth's air effaced,  
By mind forgotten, sounds immortally  
For ever in the memory of Time.  
Once the dice fall thrown by the hand of Fate  
In an eternal moment of the gods.  
My heart has sealed its troth to Satyavan:  
Its signature adverse Fate cannot efface,  
Its seal not Fate nor Death nor Time dissolve.

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So, Savitri now says: Once my heart chose and chooses not again./

So, once I have decided I am not going to shirk from my decision.

The word I have spoken can never be erased, / you say that he is going to die very soon, but the word I have spoken the words that I have exchanged can never be erased,

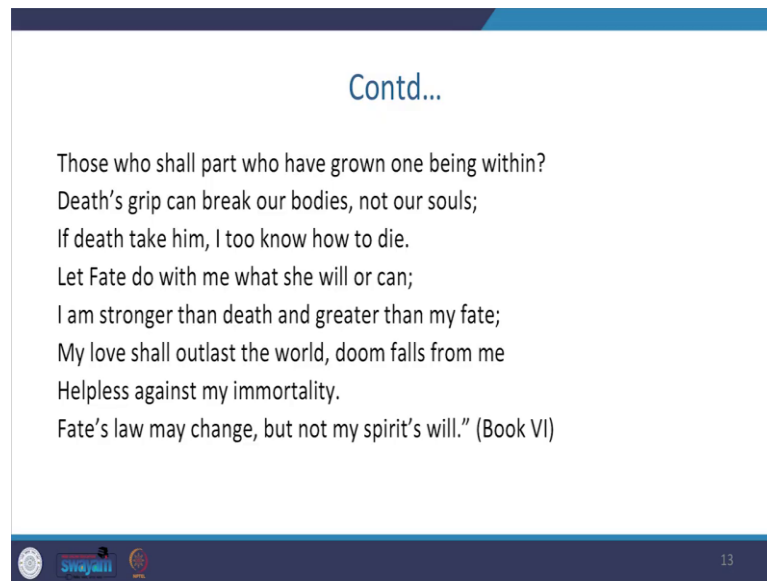
it is written in the record book of God. / The truth once uttered, from the earth's air effaced, / by mind forgotten, sounds immortally/ forever in the memory of time. / Once the dice fall through thrown by the hand of fate/ in an eternal moment of the gods. / My heart has sealed its troth to Satyavan../

So, I have already submitted, I have already surrendered my heart to Satyavan: its signature adverse fate even fate cannot efface. And it can. you know. even fate cannot change it now. So, at this waywardness what Narad could do and Narad finally, said you know let her help herself fine and you know finally, at Savitri's insistence my dear friend

they are married. Savitri and Satyavan are married, but remember one thing, Savitri knew that after 12 months Satyavan will die.

But then through her own power, through her own *sadhana* Savitri will try to win back the soul of Satyavan through her divine force because Savitri stands for truth Savitri stands for truth, and Savitri stands for love, and Satyavan also stood for the truth of the soul and Aswapathy was an energy that was full of concentration.

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And Savitri continues:

those who shall part who have grown one being within? / Death's grip can break our bodies, but not our souls. /

Let me underline this line :

“Death's grip can break our bodies, but not our souls.”

So, we are united by souls not by bodies,

If death take him, I too know how to die.  
Let fate do with me what she will or can;  
I am stronger than death and greater than my fate.

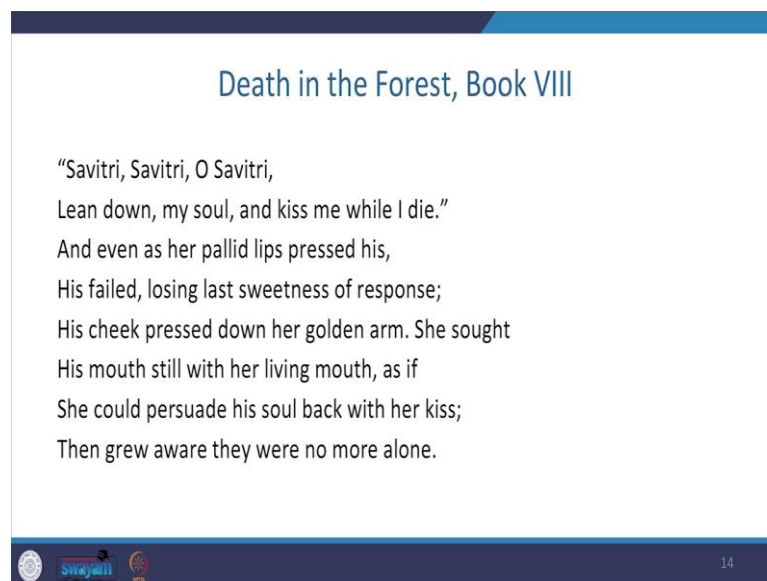
My love shall outlast the world; doom falls from me  
Helpless again my immortality.  
Fate's law may change, but not my spirit's will.

Fate's law may change, but not my spirit's will.

So, this is what Savitri decides and she has decided that she will marry. Now we can again come back to the beginning where now after having spent 12 months. Savitri is in a state of fear. But what should Savitri do when the Death of god will take away Satyavan, what should Savitri do? So, she actually moves inwards and undertakes several journeys, she meets mother of Sorrow she meets mother of might, she meets mother of Joys and then through all these meetings she actually gains immense power, she actually gains immense energy she actually becomes a cosmic thing.

And you know, and that is why when she says fate's law may change, but not my spirits will. And finally, because Savitri knew so and when we had begun, we had begun on a note that Savitri stirred and she was not able to enjoy the cry of other living beings. So, she decides well, she will go to the forest because when she goes to the forest and Satyavan will die, my dear friends.

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Death in the Forest, Book VIII

“Savitri, Savitri, O Savitri,  
Lean down, my soul, and kiss me while I die.”  
And even as her pallid lips pressed his,  
His failed, losing last sweetness of response;  
His cheek pressed down her golden arm. She sought  
His mouth still with her living mouth, as if  
She could persuade his soul back with her kiss;  
Then grew aware they were no more alone.

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So, when Satyavan was a nearing death Satyavan cried: “Savitri, Savitri, O Savitri,/ lean down, my soul, and kiss me while I die.”

Before I die, please kiss me ‘And even as her pallid lips pressed his/ failed, losing last sweetness of response;/ his cheek pressed down her golden arm. She sought/ his mouth still with her living mouth, as if/ she could persuade his soul back with her kiss;/

But all her attempts she knew well will go futile.

She will not be able to bring back the soul of Satyavan so soon, but then she knows well that she has that power and she will be able to do that. Let Savitri face the Death god the Yama and when Yama appears Savitri actually decides that she will encounter Yama and she will have a sort of debate and so she goes there and with Satyavan's soul, she actually follows Death God.

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**Death's Queries to Savitri**

Eternal truth lives not with mortal men.  
Or if she dwells within thy mortal heart,  
Show me the body of the living Truth  
Or draw for me the outline of her face  
That I too may obey and worship her.  
Then will I give thee back thy Satyavan.  
But here are only facts and steel-bound Law.  
This truth I know that Satyavan is dead  
And even thy sweetness cannot lure him back.  
No magic Truth can bring the dead to life,

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And then Death actually has several questions, Savitri actually requests Death to spare Satyavan's soul, but Death has its own, as is the tradition my dear friend, if the body dies the body dies and the body cannot be returned, the soul actually visits a new sphere the soul actually visits a new region (Refer Time: 25:45) and then Savitri questions death.

Eternal truths lives not with mortal men.

If you might be thinking because death has already said that this is actually the rule that when people die they have to leave this earth. So, Savitri raises the queries and she says:

Eternal truth lives not with mortal men.  
Or if she dwells within thy mortal heart,  
show me the body of the living truth.

So, now death questions that if you can show me because you say that you want to get it back and then there is a tradition, there is a custom;

Show me the body of the living truth

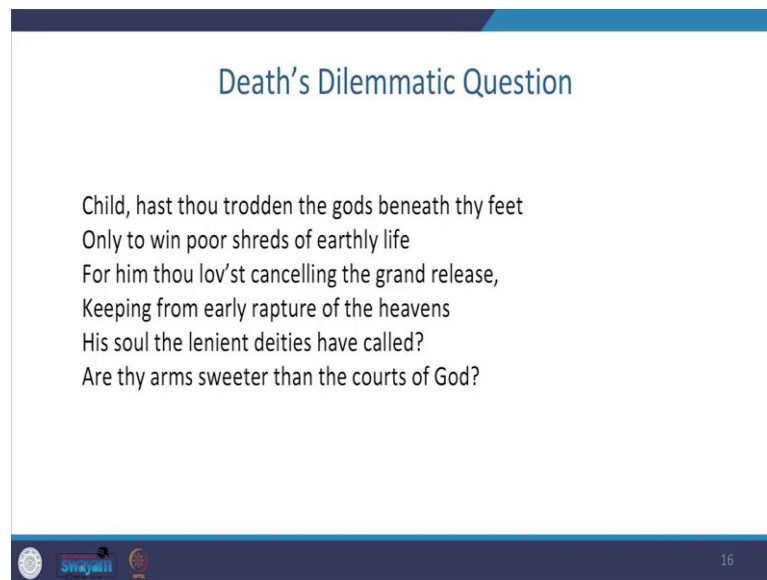
If you know that Satyavan's soul is true because there is an encounter between death and Savitri.

Or draw for me the outline of her face/ that I too may obey and worship her/; if you stand for all that let me see/ then I will give thee back thy Satyavan. / But here are only facts and steel-bound law./ This truth I know that Satyavan is dead. Satyavan is dead.

Why are you hankering after somebody who is dead? No magic truth can bring the dead to life, but is Savitri going to be cowed down is Savitri going to be placated?

No. Savitri knows well her own powers and question after questions that death puts to Savitri and the questions are also valid, because it is actually a tradition, it is a custom that when people die their souls their bodies die, but the soul is alive. But here once again death puts a dilemmatic question because Savitri says that a Satyavan stands for truth.

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Child, hast thou trodden the gods beneath thy feet,

Have you trampled have you trample god beneath your feet only to win poor shreds of earthly life, for him thou lovest cancelling the grand release.

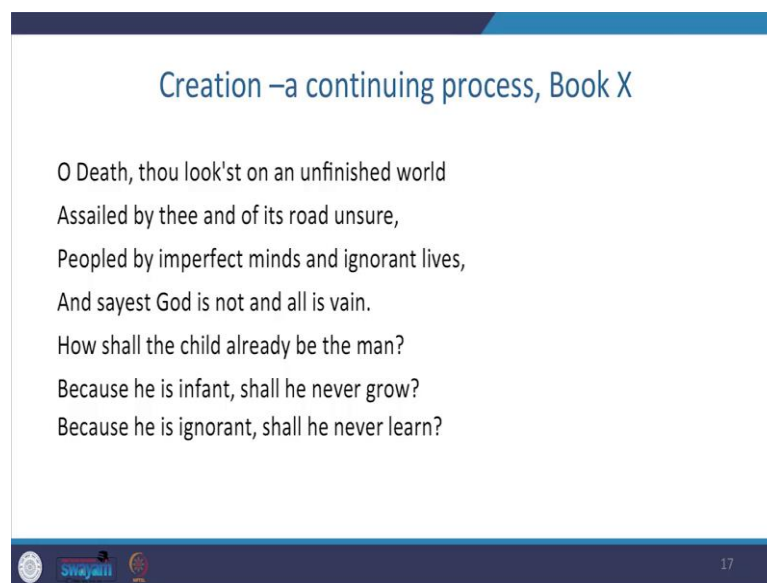
And then towards the end what death says? Are thy arms sweeter than the courts of God?



My dear friend here the question is not between arms and the man, but the question is between arms and the arms, the arms are that of Savitri and the other arms are of the death.

So, death says are your arms sweeter even than the courts of God, are you even more powerful than god that you really want to bring back Satyavan creation and destruction it is actually a continuing process and you know, but then when we say creation by creation we mean a progression you know some growth.

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And Savitri says: O death, thou look'st on an unfinished world.

You only have seen an unfinished world

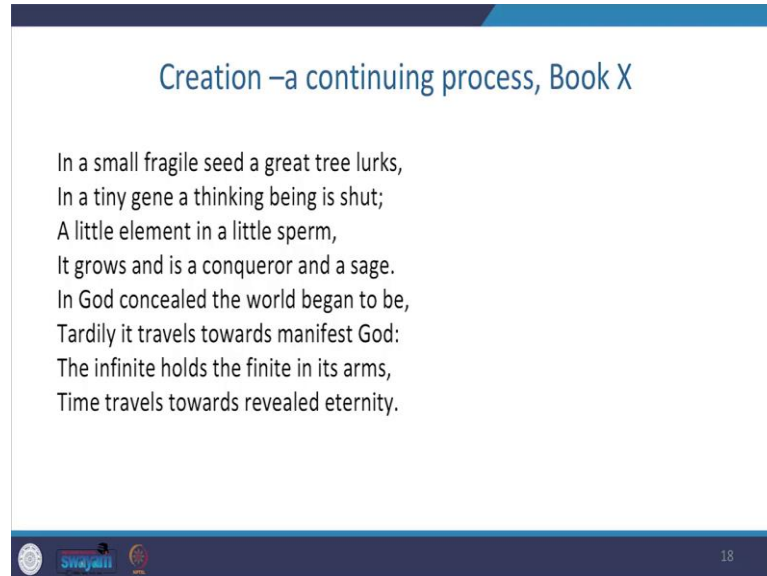
assailed by thee and off its road unsure, peopled by imperfect minds and ignorant lives/  
and sayest god is not and all is vain./ How shall the child already be the man?/

If you say that my arms are not sweeter than the courts of God, now what you are trying to tell me that god is not and all is in vain?I mean a child that has come to the earth should he not become the man? Because creation is a continuous process how shall the child already be the man because she is infant shall he never grow. Shall he never grow if the child is infant, if the child is infant should the child not grow?

Because he is ignorant, shall he never learn?

So, here there is reference to man. So, long as man is ignorant, but man has to grow, man has to grow from the earth to the divine creature.

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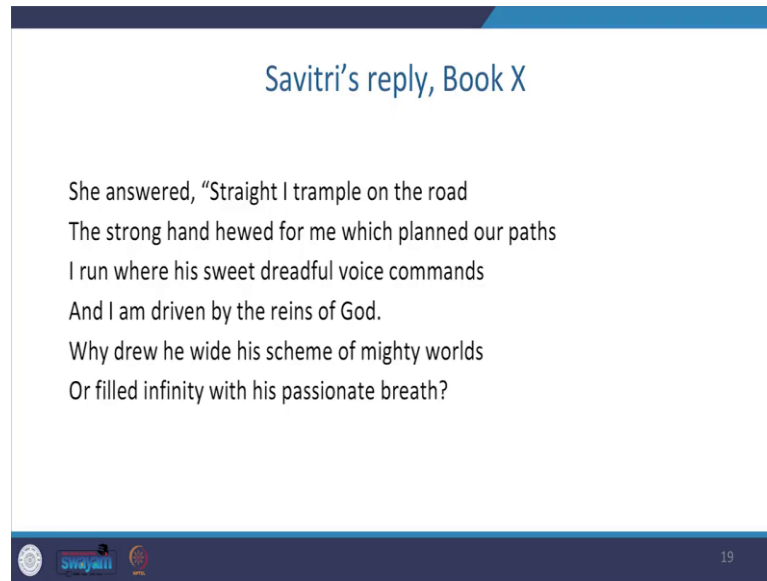
And that is possible when you are talking about the truth that is possible, man can grow –  
in a small fragile seed a great tree lurks,

So, it is only a seed and that can be developed into a tree in a tiny gene a thinking being  
is shut;

In a little element in a little sperm, / it grows and is a conqueror and a sage. / In God  
concealed the world began to be, / tardily it travels towards manifest god/ the infinite  
holds the finite in its arm.

Look at the lines, the infinite holds the finite in its arm. You are talking about the finite,  
but the infinite holds the finite in its arm time travels towards revealed eternity and time  
will travel dear death. And you know. So, when all these are being said Savitri finally,  
because you know the questions continue and Savitri also continues to answer and she  
answered.

(Refer Slide Time: 31:32)



**Savitri's reply, Book X**

She answered, "Straight I trample on the road  
The strong hand hewed for me which planned our paths  
I run where his sweet dreadful voice commands  
And I am driven by the reins of God.  
Why drew he wide his scheme of mighty worlds  
Or filled infinity with his passionate breath?"

swajati 19

Because she had already said can you trod all gods? So, she says: Straight I trample on the road/ the strong hand hewed for me which planned our paths/ I run where his sweet dreadful voice commands.

Perhaps you do not know who I am I run where his sweet dreadful voice commands 'and I am driven by the reins of God.'

You do not know 'I am driven by the reins of God. Why drew he wide his scheme of mighty worlds/ or filled infinity with his passionate breath. So, and you know as Savitri's answers continue, death also responds. But finally, when we go towards the end we will find that death is defeated before the alibis of Savitri.

(Refer Slide Time: 32:26)

**Savitri's reply, Book X**

Or wherefore did he build my mortal form  
And sow in me his bright and proud desires,  
If not to achieve, to flower in me, to love,  
Carving his human image richly shaped  
In thoughts and largenesses and golden powers?  
Far Heaven can wait our coming in its calm.  
Easy the heavens were to build for God.

swajali 20

Or wherefore did he build my mortal form./ So, from where did he build my mortal frame or my form/ and sow in me his bright and proud desires,/ if not to achieve because she has already said that creation no creation. So, in response to that if not to achieve to flower in me to love,/ every infant that comes to this earth blooms flowers in me, to love, 'carving his human image richly shaped/ in thoughts and largenesses and golden powers?/ For Heaven can wait our coming in its calm./ Easy the heavens were to build for Gods.

(Refer Slide Time: 33:17)

**Contd...**

Earth was his difficult matter, earth the glory  
Gave of the problem and the race and strife.  
There are the ominous masks, the terrible powers;  
There it is greatness to create the gods.  
Is not the spirit immortal and absolved  
Always, delivered from the grasp of Time?  
Why came it down into the mortal's Space?  
A charge he gave to his high spirit in man  
And wrote a hidden decree on Nature's tops.

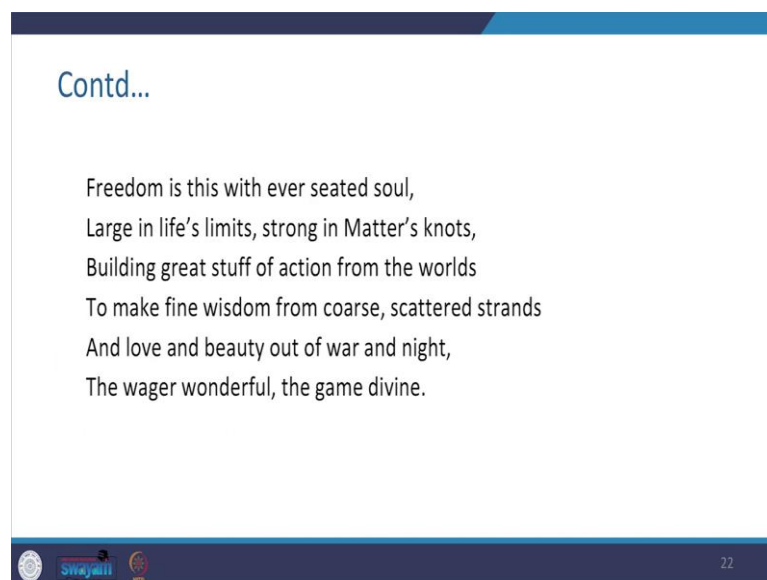
swajali 21

It was quite easy for god to build heavens, but what about earth. How much do you know about earth?

Earth was his difficult matter, earth the glory  
gave of the problem and the race and strife  
There are the ominous masks, the terrible powers;  
there it is greatness to create the gods.

Gods can be created even by an earthly figure, earthly frame is not the spirit immortal and absolved. So, this spirit is immortal and absolved always delivered from the grasp of time. So, any body, any terrestrial that attains the status of a spirit earlier it might have been earthly.

(Refer Slide Time: 34:05)



Contd...

Freedom is this with ever seated soul,  
Large in life's limits, strong in Matter's knots,  
Building great stuff of action from the worlds  
To make fine wisdom from coarse, scattered strands  
And love and beauty out of war and night,  
The wager wonderful, the game divine.

Swayam 22

“Why came it down into the mortal’s space? /Why came it down into the mortal space?  
/Why to the human accompaniment? / A charge he gave to his high spirit in man. / So, a  
spirit is all powerful ‘and wrote a hidden decree on natures tops, /freedom is this with  
ever seated soul./ Large in life’s limits, strong in matters knots,/ building great stuff of  
action from the worlds/ to make fine wisdom from coarse, scattered strands/ and love and  
beauty out of war and night, the wager wonderful, and the game divine./

(Refer Slide Time: 34:50)

Contd...

What liberty has the soul which feels not free  
Unless stripped bare and cannot kiss the bonds  
The Lover winds around his playmate's limbs,  
Choosing his tyranny, crushed in his embrace?  
To seize him better with her boundless heart  
She accepts the limiting circle of his arms,  
Bows full of bliss beneath his mastering hands  
And laughs in his rich constraints, most bound, most free.  
This is my answer to thy lures, O Death."

Swajati 23

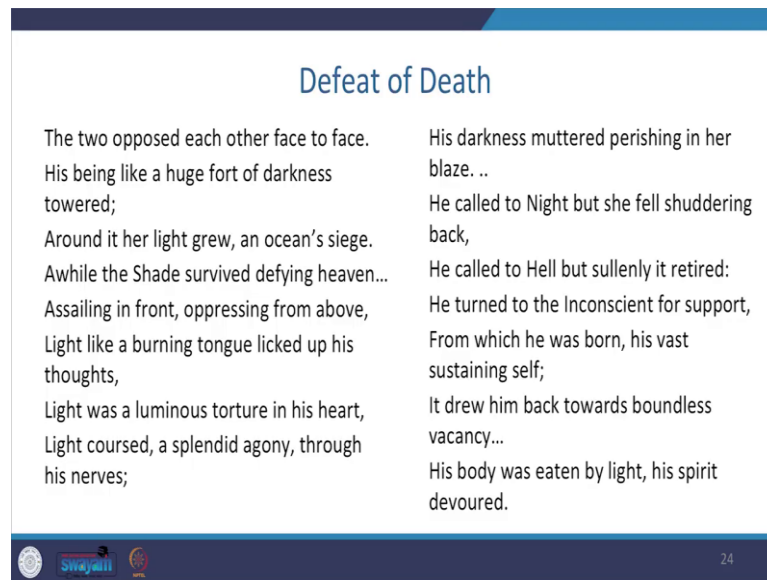
And finally, she will tell—“This is my answer to the O death, what liberty has the soul which feels not free”

I mean if you simply say that the soul is revealed. So, where is the liberty of the soul, is the soul, does the soul not have freedom. What liberty has the soul which feels not, free if the soul is always confined and if the soul is not free what liberty does it have, unless a stripped bare and cannot kiss the bonds.

If it cannot kiss the bonds the human bonds, you know the union between two people, two bodies, two souls; “the lover winds around his playmate’s limbs, choosing his tyranny, crushed in his embrace? To seize him better with her boundless heart she accepts the limiting circle of his arms, bows full of bliss beneath his mastering hands and laughs in his rich constraints, most bound, most free. This is my answer to thy lures.”

You are actually trying to tempt me by your questions, but this is my answer to thee, O Death. What liberty has the soul which feels not free? The soul also should have liberty and later on you will find that after listening to all these alibis, after listening to all these logical philosophical and all these debatable things all these reasons that Savitri gives. Finally, death is defeated. Death does not have any answer to all the queries of Savitri and there comes a time when death finally, feels death is defeated.

(Refer Slide Time: 36:41)



The slide is titled "Defeat of Death" in a blue font. It contains two columns of text. The left column describes the state of darkness and light, while the right column describes the defeat of death. At the bottom of the slide, there are logos for "Swajati" and "24".

**Defeat of Death**

The two opposed each other face to face. His being like a huge fort of darkness towered; Around it her light grew, an ocean's siege. Awhile the Shade survived defying heaven... Assailing in front, oppressing from above, Light like a burning tongue licked up his thoughts, Light was a luminous torture in his heart, Light coursed, a splendid agony, through his nerves;	His darkness muttered perishing in her blaze. .. He called to Night but she fell shuddering back, He called to Hell but sullenly it retired: He turned to the Inconscient for support, From which he was born, his vast sustaining self; It drew him back towards boundless vacancy... His body was eaten by light, his spirit devoured.
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“The two opposed each other face to face.” Who are these two? Death and Savitri. His being like a huge fort of darkness towered; around it her light grew, an ocean siege. Awhile the shade survived defying heaven.” Assailing in front, oppressing from above,/ light like a burning tongue licked up his thoughts./

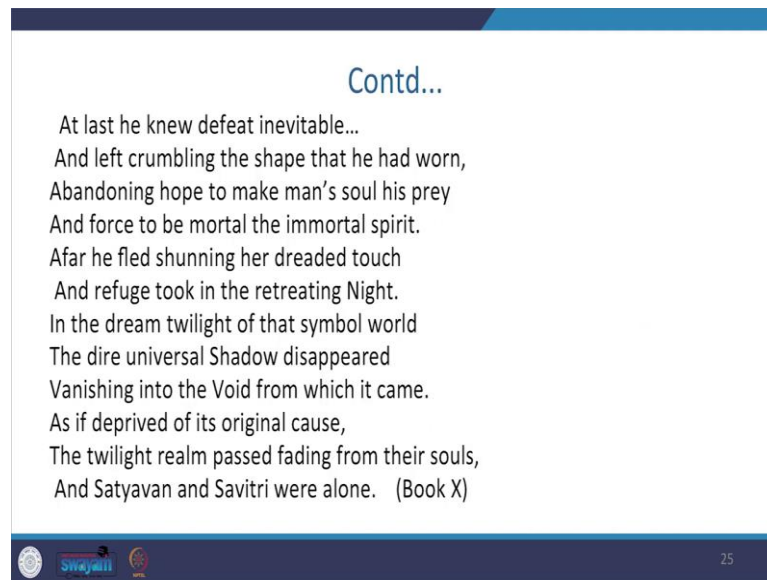
Now, now see the beauty there may be at times you will find repetitions and these repetitions these are actually, I mean I have been talking about the *darshana* and finally, this light this new light that new before this new light death is also defeated.

Light like a burning tongue licked up his thoughts, / light was a luminous torture in his heart, / light coursed, a splendid agony, through his nerves;/ his darkness muttered perishing in her blaze. / He called to night; so finally, death called to night, but she felt shuddering back./

So, night which stands for darkness, night which stands for ignorance. So, night also felt shuddering back, .he called to hell. now he now the death god Yama called to hell, but sullenly it replied; sadly, it also retired.

He turned to the inconscient for support/ from which he was born, his vast sustaining self;/ it drew him back towards boundless vacancy./ His body was eaten by light,/ the light that was there the light before Savitri.

(Refer Slide Time: 38:22)



Contd...

At last he knew defeat inevitable...  
And left crumbling the shape that he had worn,  
Abandoning hope to make man's soul his prey  
And force to be mortal the immortal spirit.  
Afar he fled shunning her dreaded touch  
And refuge took in the retreating Night.  
In the dream twilight of that symbol world  
The dire universal Shadow disappeared  
Vanishing into the Void from which it came.  
As if deprived of its original cause,  
The twilight realm passed fading from their souls,  
And Satyavan and Savitri were alone. (Book X)

25

So, his body was eaten by light/ his spirit devoured at last he knew/ at last he knew defeat inevitable.

So, defeat was mandatory and defeat came and left crumbling on the shape that he had worn, because Yama or the death God, he had a different form and Aurobindo says 'and left crumbling the shape that he had worn abandoning hope to make man's soul his prey.'

Because there was a fight between man's soul and then the Yama and so it is found that now there was no need, now it was rather futile to make man's soul his prey. Body can die, but the soul cannot 'and forced to be mortal the immortal spirit. And afar he fled shunning her dreaded touch and refuge took in the retreating night/. In the dream twilight of that symbol world;

Again, remember what it has been titled Savitri a legend and a symbol fine.

So, 'the dire universal shadow disappeared, /vanishing into the Void from which it came/. As if deprived of its original cause,/ the twilight realm passed fearing from their souls,/ and Satyavan and Savitri were alone./

So, finally, before a Savitri's deliberations and Savitri's reply and Savitri's reasoning Yama or the death god could not sustain and he was defeated. He was not able to make




man's soul his prey and that is what Aurobindo says, because at a when he was writing that, Savitri was planned to be written only in two parts fine.

But later on it was developed and Aurobindo had said that there will come a time when the mind will be invaded by or superseded by the super mind. So, before Savitri's super mind, before Savitri's super mind death could not sustain and death had to die, fine.

(Refer Slide Time: 40:41)

**Savitri's firmness**

<p>"In vain thou tempest with solitary bliss Two spirits saved out of a suffering world; My soul and his indissolubly linked In the one task for which our lives were born, To raise the world to God in deathless Light, To bring God down to the world on earth we came, To change the earthly life to life divine... Since God has made earth, earth must make in her God; What hides within her breast she must reveal.</p>	<p>I claim thee for the world that thou hast made. If man lives bound by his humanity, If he is tied for ever to his pain, Let a greater being then arise from man, The superhuman with the Eternal mate And the Immortal shine through earthly forms. Else were creation vain and this great world A nothing that in Time's moments seems to be. (Book XI)</p>
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 26

Now even, but this was not the end, even when death finally, was defeated then there were other offers also to Savitri because Savitri had become a divine thing a thing which had a cosmic tinge. And they offered some other you know other temptations too, but Savitri always wanted to be with Satyavan and Savitri stood firm.

In vain thou tempest with solitary bliss/

Because a Savitri had been offered solitary bliss and Savitri should not go to the earth, should not become earthly creature whatsoever.

But then there are several temptations which Savitri says:" In vain thou tempest with solitary bliss/ Two spirits saved out of a suffering world;/ we have the two spirits we have been saved out of this suffering world, 'my soul and his indissolubly linked/ in the one task for which our lives were born our lives were born,/ for one task to raise the world to God in deathless light./

What was the aim?

“To raise the world to God in deathless light,/ to bring god down to the world on earth we came./ To change the earthly life to divine/ which also Aurobindo wanted that this human creature, this human frame this human experience can be transformed into a new experience into a sort of spiritual experience, to change the earthly life to life divine.

“Since god has made earth, earth must make in her God;”, see the purity of vision. “What hides within her breast she must reveal/. I claim thee for the world that thou hast made./ If man lives bound by his humanity, if he is tied for ever to pain,/ let a greater being then arise from man.”

Man is not always to be confined only to pain and to flames rather if man has come to this earth and he is bound by his humanity if he is tied forever to his pain let a greater being then arise.

“The superhuman with the Eternal mate/ and the immortal shines through earthly forms. / Else were creation vain and this great world/ A nothing that is in times moments seems to be.

So, if it does not happen, then what will happen? Else, this creation will be in vain it will be futile. So, man if man has been sent to this earth, let man also have the power to make this earth divine, to make this earth a pleasant place and that can be done, that is why finally, she is rewarded.

(Refer Slide Time: 43:40)

**The Book of Everlasting Day**

<p>“Descend to life with him thy heart desires. O Satyavan, O luminous Savitri, I sent you forth of old beneath the stars, A dual power of God in an ignorant world, In a hedged creation shut from limitless self, Bringing down God to the insentient globe, Lifting earth-beings to immortality.</p>	<p>The frontiers of the Ignorance shall recede, More and more souls shall enter into light, Minds lit, inspired, the occult summoner hear And lives blaze with a sudden inner flame And hearts grow enamoured of divine delight And human wills tune to the divine will,</p>
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Swajati 27

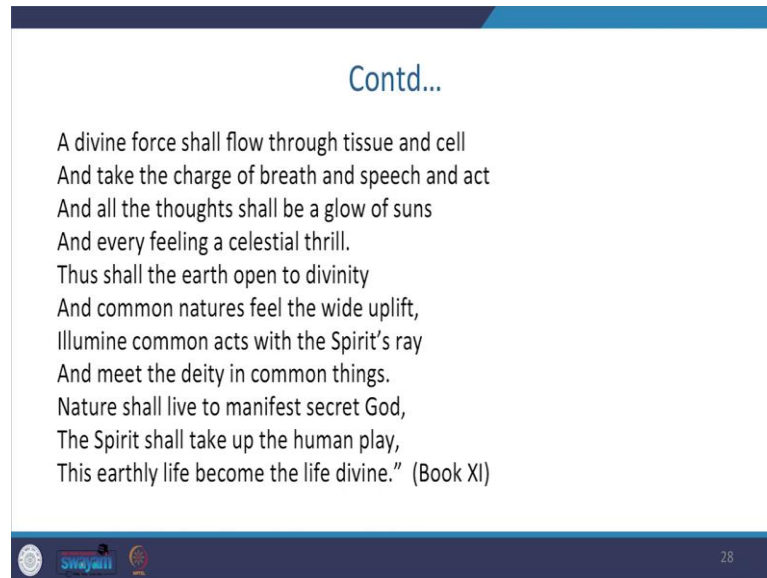
And then these lines: “Descend to life with him thy heart desires./ O Satyavan, O luminous Savitri,”

These are the blessings:

“I sent you forth of old beneath the stars,/ a dual power of God in an ignorant world,/ in a hedged creation shut from limitless self./ Bringing down God to the insentient globe/..

And as it goes and finally, and hearts grow enamoured of divine delight /and human wills tune to the divine will.

(Refer Slide Time: 44:18)



Contd...

A divine force shall flow through tissue and cell  
And take the charge of breath and speech and act  
And all the thoughts shall be a glow of suns  
And every feeling a celestial thrill.  
Thus shall the earth open to divinity  
And common natures feel the wide uplift,  
Illumine common acts with the Spirit's ray  
And meet the deity in common things.  
Nature shall live to manifest secret God,  
The Spirit shall take up the human play,  
This earthly life become the life divine." (Book XI)

28

I can go on and on, my dear friends because the lines are so beautiful and so inspiring, but we have some way or the other to understand that this, divine force shall flow through tissue and cell and take the charge of breath and speech and act. Aurobindo also wanted to make man conscious, make man even more conscious to take the charge of breath and speech and act, fine. All through our lives, we speak lies in order to get an easy access to several things--- of power, of joy, of knowledge.

But then there is another purpose also in this life, and that is ‘and meet the deity in common things’. Are we really able to see the deity or the divine in common things? “Nature shall live to manifest secret god/ the Spirit shall take up the human play/ this earthly life can also become the life divine”.

And that is what Aurobindo’s purpose was there and when Savitri could bring Satyavan back. Now, who was who actually was in a great puzzle or wonder? It was Dyumatsena. Dyumatsena was Satyavan’s father and when he could see that Satyavan came back and he asks Satyavan, how could this happen? And finally, you see Satyavan says this is not because of me, but this is only because of her.

And then what she says? In a way also she says that the entire power, the entire shakti lies not only with man, but also with another power that is the divine mother that is *shakti* my dear friend and that Shakti is in a woman. And Savitri has come in the form of woman and Savitri can do that and she has been able to do that.

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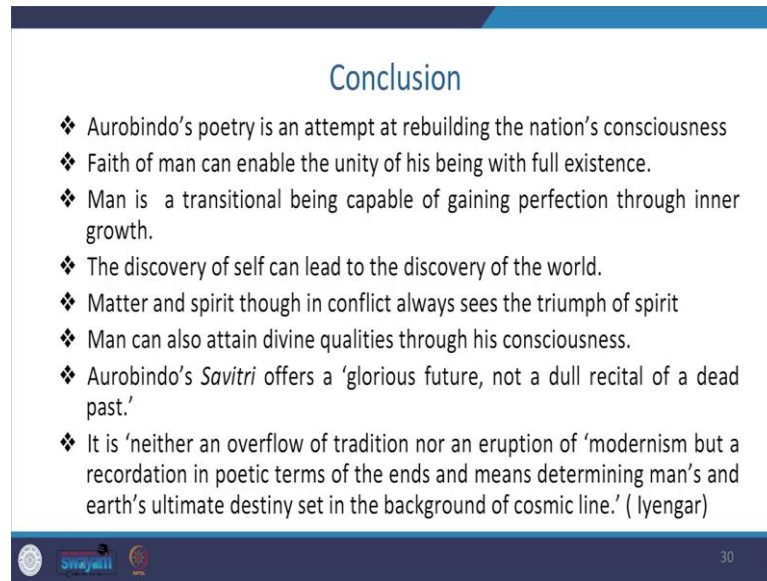
The slide features a title in blue text: "Satyavan's Reply to Dyumatsena's Wonder, Book XII". Below the title is a quote in black text: "Lay all on her; she is the cause of all. With her enchantments she has twined me round. Behold, at noon leaving this house of clay I wandered in far-off eternities, Yet still, a captive in her golden hands, I tread your little hillock called green earth And in the moments of your transient sun Live glad among the busy works of men." The slide has a dark blue header and footer. The footer contains a small logo on the left, the word "Srijan" in the center, and the number "29" on the right.

“Lay all on her; she is the cause of all./ With her enchantments she has twined me round./ Behold, at noon leaving this house of clay/ I wandered in far-off eternities/, yet still, a captive in her golden hands/, I tread your little hillock called green earth./ And in the moments of your transient sun/ live glad among the busy works of men.”

Because it is only because of Savitri that I have been able to, I have been able to get back, I have been able to be mortal once again. Finally, when we have seen the entire drama that is being played through all these 12 books, 49 cantos and 3 parts. What should we conclude? Can *Savitri* be concluded? Many people have gone to the extent of saying that Savitri is actually the quintessence of the life divine Savitri is the quintessence of *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*.

Savitri may be longer, but the message that Savitri leaves before us is for all times to be carried. So, my dear friends when we have a look at the entire corpus of Aurobindo's writings which has witnessed a transformation from the romantic sweeps of imagination to the supernatural, and the spiritual power and the force of reality.

(Refer Slide Time: 47:29)



### Conclusion

- ❖ Aurobindo's poetry is an attempt at rebuilding the nation's consciousness
- ❖ Faith of man can enable the unity of his being with full existence.
- ❖ Man is a transitional being capable of gaining perfection through inner growth.
- ❖ The discovery of self can lead to the discovery of the world.
- ❖ Matter and spirit though in conflict always sees the triumph of spirit
- ❖ Man can also attain divine qualities through his consciousness.
- ❖ Aurobindo's *Savitri* offers a 'glorious future, not a dull recital of a dead past.'
- ❖ It is 'neither an overflow of tradition nor an eruption of 'modernism but a recordation in poetic terms of the ends and means determining man's and earth's ultimate destiny set in the background of cosmic line.' ( Iyengar)

Then we find Aurobindo's poetry is only an attempt at building the nation's consciousness, through speech, through act, through good faith, faith of man can enable the unity of his being with full existence. Man, even though he is an earthly creature, he is a transitional being and he has the capacity to gain perfection through inner growth through integral yoga, through sadhana..

The discovery of self my dear friend according to Aurobindo can lead to the discovery of the world. Matter and spirit-- because there is a fight between since Aswapathy, Aswapathy is stands for the concentrated energy, Aswapathy stands for an energy that can challenge anything. And then Savitri which stands for truth and Satyavan which stands for truth which is actually; which is actually now involved and which has been victimized in the sufferings.

So, man can attain divine qualities through his consciousness. So, what is at the core of it? At the core of it is actually the consciousness that has a driving force for man to bring the divine on the earth, Aurobindo's *Savitri* can be considered to offer a glorious future, it is not a dull recital of a dead past.

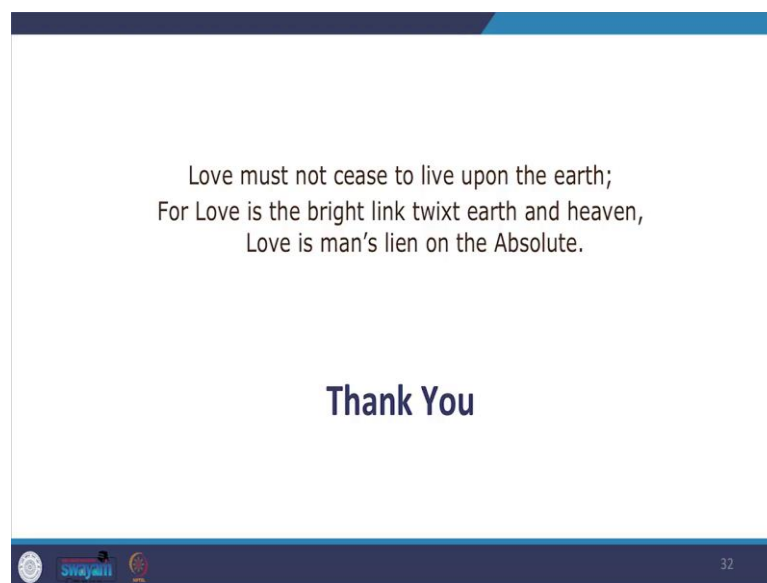
There has been some criticism also that *Savitri* is very repetitive, *Savitri* is very long how can the western readers understand *Savitri*? My dear friends, Aurobindo's aim was also to disseminate the power of the East to the West and that has also been done earlier by Tagore. So, finally, let us say and let us try to take a note of what Srinivasa Iyengar---

one of the proponents of Indian English literature says about Savitri: . “It is neither an overflow of tradition nor an eruption of modernism, but a recordation in poetic terms of the ends and means, ends and ends and means determining mans and earths ultimate destiny set in the background of cosmic line.”

So, there can be end number of conclusions, but what makes *Savitri* beautiful and all times great is it has got layers of meaning, it has got layers of wisdom. It is written in a fashion that once you start reading, you are spell bound and you will not leave the book before you have completed my dear friend. But today’s lecture has to come to an end by saying that man has in him the power to bring the divine to the earth, my dear friend.

And we can really do that. Let us try to do that through our act, through our mind through our super mind, mansa, vacha, karmana, I mean the interpretations might be different.

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But before I come to wind up this lecture let me once again quote from the same Savitri where it is said- “Love must not cease to live upon the earth,” because it is only in the love that everything else is possible for “love is the bright link be twixt earth and heaven. Love is man’s lien on the absolute. “

And I think with this love, our lectures will also continue to have its flow to make us transform and to make us realize the power, the might, the glory and also the beauty of

Indian poetry in English. With this we come to the first phase of Indian poetry in English. We have already completed the major voices whom we can call the path breakers.

And next time when we meet, we will start a new phase that is how Indian English poetry after having, after being felt that it was confined only to traditions. Now, it how it can come from the traditions and how it can also adopt a sort of modernity and it can also make its strength and presence felt to the outside world to the audiences all over the world. With this let me thank you for your patience for listening to this lecture.

Thank you very much. I wish you all a good day ahead.