

SAVITRI
in the Mother's Agenda

A compilation of passages,
arranged chronologically

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*This is an adaptation of Savitri Bhavan's selection, originally
published in 2006*

November 25, 1959

The difference between immortality and the deathless state

There is a difference between immortality and the deathless state. Sri Aurobindo has described it very well in *Savitri*.

The deathless state is what can be envisaged for the human physical body in the future: it is constant rebirth. Instead of again tumbling backwards and falling apart due to a lack of plasticity and an incapacity to adapt to the universal movement, the body is undone ‘futurewards,’ as it were.

There is one element that remains fixed: for each type of atom, the inner organization of the elements is different, which is what creates the difference in their substance. So perhaps similarly, each individual has a different, particular way of organizing the cells of his body, and it is this particular way that persists through all the outer changes. All the rest is undone and redone, but undone in a forward thrust towards the new instead of collapsing backwards into death, and redone in a constant aspiration to follow the progressive movement of the divine Truth.

But for that, the body — the body-consciousness — must first learn to widen itself. It is indispensable, for otherwise all the cells become a kind of boiling porridge under the pressure of the supramental light.

What usually happens is that when the body reaches its maximum intensity of aspiration or of ecstasy of Love, it is unable to contain it. It becomes flat, motionless. It falls back. Things settle

down — you are enriched with a new vibration, but then everything resumes its course. So you must widen yourself in order to learn to bear unflinchingly the intensities of the supramental force, to go forward always, always with the ascending movement of the divine Truth, without falling backwards into the decrepitude of the body.

That is what Sri Aurobindo means when he speaks of an *intolerable ecstasy*¹; it is not an intolerable ecstasy: it is an unflinching ecstasy.

* * *

November 12, 1960

Love can change the Law

You asked me just now if we have a say in the matter. Well, last year I didn't go out; I had no intention of going to the Sportsground or to the theater for the December 2 program, but I was often asked to see that the weather be good. So while I was doing my japa upstairs, I started saying that it shouldn't rain. But 'they' weren't in a very good mood! (When I used to go out myself, it had an effect, for it kept the thing in check, and even if it had been raining earlier, that day it would stop.) So they said, 'But you aren't going out, so what does it matter.' I said I was counting on it. Then they answered, 'Are you prepared to have it rain the next time you go out?' — 'Do what you like,' I replied. And when I went out on November 24 for the prize distribution, there was a deluge. It came pouring down and we had to

¹ *Thoughts and Aphorisms*: 'Cruelty transfigured becomes Love that is intolerable ecstasy...'

run for shelter in the gymnasium — everyone was splashing around, the band playing on the verandah was half-drenched, it was dreadful! — the day before it hadn't rained, the day after it didn't rain. But on that day they had their revenge!

I don't want that to happen this time. Once is enough. So I'm going to see about it.

(silence)

But it's explained very well in *Savitri*! All these things have their laws and their conventions (and truly speaking, a really FORMIDABLE power is needed to change anything of their rights, for they have rights — what they call 'laws') ... Sri Aurobindo explains this very well when Savitri, following Satyavan into death, argues with the god of Death². 'It's the Law, and who has the right to change the Law?' he says. And then comes this wonderful passage at the end where she replies, 'My God can change it. And my God is a God of Love.'³ Oh, how magnificent!

And by force of repeating this to him, he yields ... She replies in this way to EVERYTHING.

It's all right for winning a Victory, but not for stopping the rain for one day!

So I'm trying to come to an understanding, to reach an agreement — these are very complicated matters (!). For it's a whole totality ... You see, we are trying something here which really is contrary to all those laws and practices, something which disturbs everything. So 'they' propose things that have me advancing like this (*sinuous motion*), without disturbing things too much, and without having to

² Yama: the god of Death. He is also the guardian of the Law.

³ Book Nine, Canto 2, lines 345-364, esp. lines 351 and 364. — S.

call in forces ... (Mother *makes a gesture of a lance thrust into the pack*) forces a bit too great, which may disturb things too much. Like that, we can keep tacking back and forth.

. . .

But things are PULLING backwards — phew, how they pull! ... ‘The Law, the Law, it’s a Law. Don’t you understand, it’s a LAW, you can’t change the Law.’

— ‘But I CAME to change the Law.’

— ‘Then pay the price.’

(*silence*)

What can make them yield?

Divine Love.

It’s the only thing.

Sri Aurobindo has explained it in *Savitri*. Only when Divine Love has manifested in all its purity will everything yield, will it all yield — it will then be done.

It’s the only thing that can do it.

It will be the great Victory.

(*silence*)

On a small scale, in very small details, I feel that of all the forces, this is the strongest. And it’s the only one with a power over hostile wills. Only ... for the world to change, it must manifest here in all its fullness. We have to be up to it ...

Sri Aurobindo had also written to the effect, ‘If Divine Love were to manifest now in all its fullness and totality, not a single material organism would but burst.’ So we must learn to widen, widen, widen

not only the inner consciousness (that is relatively easy — at least feasible), but even this conglomeration of cells. And I’ve experienced this: you have to be able to widen this sort of crystallization if you want to be able to hold this Force. I know. Two or three times, upstairs (*in Mother’s room*), I felt the body about to burst. Actually, I was on the verge of saying, ‘burst and be done with.’ But Sri Aurobindo always intervened — all three times he intervened in an entirely tangible, living and concrete way ... and he arranged everything so that I was forced to wait.

* * *

January 12, 1961⁴

“For ever love, O beautiful slave of God”

I am going downstairs on the 21st, for Saraswati Puja.⁵ They have prepared a folder with a long quotation from *Savitri* and five photos of my face taken from five different angles.

The title of the folder is the line from *Savitri* that gave me the most overpowering experience of the entire book (because, as I told you, as I read, I would LIVE the experiences — reading brought, instantly, a living experience). And when I came to this particular line .. I was as if suddenly swept up and engulfed in ... (‘the’ is wrong,

⁴ See also talk of May 11, 1963

⁵ Saraswati represents the universal Mother’s aspect of Knowledge and artistic creativity. On this occasion, Mother would go down to the Meditation Hall and the disciples would silently pass in front of her to receive a message. This year they would receive a folder containing five photographs of Mother.

‘an’ is wrong — it’s neither one nor the other, it’s something else) ... eternal Truth. Everything was abolished except this:

*For ever love, O beautiful slave of God*⁶

That alone existed.

* * *

January 22, 1961

Savitri reflects the Mother’s own experience. The Symbolism

(Mother had been unwell the past few days.

She speaks here of the causes behind the physical disorder.)

Yes, I am disrupting their work — I know perfectly well that I am disrupting their domination of the world! All these vital beings have taken possession of the whole of Matter (*Mother touches her body*) — life and action — and have made it their domain, this is evident. But they are beings of the lower vital, for they seemed artificial — they didn’t express any higher form, but an entire range of artificial mechanisms, artificial will, artificial organization, all deriving from their own imagination and not at all from a higher inspiration⁷. The symbol was very clear.

⁶ *Savitri*, Book Eleven, line 1114, p. 702

⁷ These seem to be the forces ruling the subconscious mechanisms or reactions of the body: all the automatism produced by evolution and atavism — what might be termed evolutionary habits. This is the ‘descending path,’ which started forty

. . .

Evidently all the vital forces who have taken the habit of ruling the earth (last night it had the proportions of the earth, it wasn't universal) are the very ones who refuse to listen; they don't at all like what I am doing.

You see, personal *surrender* and devotion is an excellent solution for the individual, but it doesn't work for the collectivity. For example, as soon as I am alone and lying on my bed — peace! ... As soon as I stretch out and make a total *surrender* of all the cells — no more activity, nothing — everything goes well.

But I am well aware that this surrender has an effect on the action only to the extent that the Supreme Lord has decided upon the action, and those movements stretch over long periods of time⁸: all sorts of things may happen before the final Victory is won. Because, for us, the scale is very small; even if it were of terrestrial proportions, it would be a very small scale; but on a universal scale.... These forces have their place and their action, their universe, and as long as their place and their action are maintained, they will be here. So before

years earlier, as Mother said (or the 'physical plunge' referred to by Sri Aurobindo), leading to the pure cellular consciousness.

⁸ Later, on the 27th, Mother remarked: 'I was reading about this very thing yesterday in *The Secret of the Veda*, in the first hymn translated by Sri Aurobindo (the reference is to the colloquy between Indra and Agastya, Rig Veda 1.170-cf. *The Secret of the Veda*, Cent. Ed., X.241 ft.), and it helped me put my finger on the problem. In this hymn there is a dispute between Indra and the Rishi because the Rishi wants to progress too quickly without first passing through Indra [the god of the Mind], and Indra stops him; finally they reach an agreement. Sri Aurobindo's commentary is quite interesting: when one has the INDIVIDUAL power to go directly, but neglects the steps which are still necessary for the whole, for the universal movement, then one is stopped short. That is absolutely my experience.'

their action can be exhausted or become useless, many things can happen....

Individually, however, there is almost instantaneous bliss. But this is not a true solution ... it's a solution in the long run, by repercussion. To have true command here in this world, all of that must be mastered.

And this is the confusion made by all those people who believed that their ... what they called their 'personal salvation' was the salvation of the world — it's not true at all! It isn't true — it's a PERSONAL salvation.

(silence)

But all of that is wonderfully, accurately expressed and EXPLAINED in *Savitri*. Only you must know how to read it! The entire last part, from the moment she goes to seek Satyavan in the realm of Death (which affords an occasion to explain this), the whole description of what happens there, right up to the end, where every possible offer is made to tempt her, everything she must refuse to continue her terrestrial labor ... it is my experience EXACTLY.

Savitri is really a condensation, a concentration of the universal Mother — the eternal universal Mother, Mother of all universes from all eternity — in an earthly personality for the Earth's salvation. And Satyavan is the soul of the Earth, the Earth's *jiva*. So when the Lord says, 'he whom you love and whom you have chosen,' it means the earth.

All the details are there! When she comes back down, when Death has yielded at last, when all has been settled and the Supreme tells her, 'Go, go with him, the one you have chosen,' how does Sri Aurobindo describe it? He says that she very carefully takes the SOUL of Satyavan into her arms, like a little child, to pass through

all the realms and come back down to earth.⁹ Everything is there! He hasn't forgotten a single detail to make it easy to understand — for someone who knows how to understand. And it is when Savitri reaches the earth that Satyavan regains his full human stature.

* * *

January 27, 1961

The Primal Sound

I told you something concerning the power of the will, didn't I?...

Well, yesterday I saw R. He was asking me questions about his work and particularly about the knowledge of languages (he's a scholar, you know, and very familiar with the old traditions). This put me in contact with that whole world and I began speaking to him a little about what I had already said to you concerning my experience with the Vedas. And all at once, in the same [*absolute*] way as I told you, when I entered into contact with that world a whole domain seemed to open up, a whole field of knowledge from the standpoint of languages, of the Word, of the essential Vibration, that vibration which would be able to reproduce the supramental consciousness. It all came, so clear, so clear, luminous, indisputable — but unfortunately there was no tape recorder!

It was about the Word, the primal sound. Sri Aurobindo speaks of it in *Savitri*: the essence of the Word and how it will express itself, how it will bring in the possibility of a supramental expression that will take the place of languages.... I began by speaking to him about

⁹ Book Eleven, lines 1456-64. S.

the different languages, their limitations and possibilities; and I warned him against the deformations imposed on languages with the idea of making them a more flexible means of expressing something else. I told him how completely ridiculous it all was, and that it didn't correspond at all to the truth. Then little by little I began ascending to the Origin. So yesterday again, I had this same experience: a whole world of knowledge, of consciousness and of CERTAINTY — precluding the least possibility of contradiction, discussion, or opposition; the possibility DOES NOT EXIST, it doesn't exist. And the mind was absolutely silent and immobile, listening with obvious pleasure because these things had never before come into my consciousness; I had never been concerned with them in that way. It was completely new — not new in principle but completely new in action.

The experiences are multiplying.

A sound that can bring in the supramental Force?

Yes. While speaking, you see, I went back to the origin of sound (Sri Aurobindo describes it very clearly in *Savitri*: the origin of sound, the moment when what we called 'the Word' becomes a sound¹⁰). So I had a kind of perception of the essential sound before it becomes a material sound. And I said, 'When this essential sound becomes a material sound, it will give birth to the new expression which will express the supramental world.' I had the experience itself at that moment, it came directly. I spoke in English and Sri Aurobindo was concretely, almost palpably, present.

¹⁰ Perhaps Book Two, Canto 15, lines 92-102, p. 299? – S

Now it has gone away.

* * *

June 6, 1961

How did Truth become Falsehood?

I am up against this fact: how did Truth become Falsehood? I am not asking myself intellectually — that doesn't interest me at all! It is here, in Matter, that the thing must be found.

It is double, it is double.

How did it happen? (But not just 'how' as in a story: the MECHANISM). And how will we get out of it?

You see, all the things that have been told, even all the things Sri Aurobindo has said (he has said the most in *Savitri*), all that is necessarily ... (what can it be called?) mental, the super-intellectual spiritualised mind. But it is not THAT! It's a form, it's an image, it's not ... the concrete fact.

(*silence*)

And with a sort of prescience I see that only the body can know — that's the extraordinary thing!

(*silence*)

* * *

July 4, 1961¹¹

Mother's own experiences reflected in *Savitri*

(Mother remarks in passing that the inspiration coming to her from Sri Aurobindo when she writes is sometimes in French and sometimes in English, and adds:)

Sri Aurobindo told me he had been French in a previous life and that French flowed back to him like a spontaneous memory — he understood all the subtleties of French.

How is your work going?

Tomorrow I'll begin on 'Savitri'.

O lucky man! What joy!

You know, *Savitri* is an exact description — not literature, not poetry (although the form is very poetical) — an exact description, step by step, paragraph by paragraph, page by page; as I read, I relived it all. Besides, many of my own experiences that I recounted to Sri Aurobindo seem to have been incorporated into *Savitri*. He has included many of them — Nolini says so; he was familiar with the first version Sri Aurobindo wrote long ago, and he said that an enormous number of experiences were added when it was taken up again. This explained to me why ... suddenly, as I read it, I live the experience — line by line, page by page. The realism of it is astounding.

* * *

¹¹ See also talk of January 17, 1968. — S.

July 7, 1961

. . . What are you doing?

I'm re-reading 'Savitri'.

Lucky man! I would love to read it again. And the more you read, the more marvelous it becomes.

* * *

July 15, 1961

**Hostile forces (in Matter). Intervention of the
Supreme Will to abolish all established laws**

For the past two days there has been the feeling of not knowing anything — NOTHING at all. I have had this feeling for a very long time, but now it has become extremely acute, as it always does at times of crisis, at times when things are on the verge of changing — or of getting clarified, or of exploding, or.... From the purely material standpoint — chemically, biologically, medically, therapeutically speaking — I don't believe many people do know (there may be some). But it doesn't seem very clear to me — in any case, I don't know. Yogically (I don't mean spiritually: that was the first stage of my sadhana), it's very easy to be a saint! Oh, even to be a sage is very easy. I feel I was born with it — it's spontaneous and natural for me, and so simple! You know all that has to be done, and doing it is as easy as knowing it. it's nothing. But this transformation of Matter ...! What has to be done? How is it to be done? What is the path?

Is there a path? Is there a procedure? Probably not.

...

From experience, I know perfectly well that when one is satisfied with being a saint or a sage and constantly maintains the right attitude, all goes well — the body doesn't get sick, and even if there are attacks it recovers very easily; all goes very well ... AS LONG AS THERE IS NOT THIS WILL TO TRANSFORM. All the difficulties arise in protest against the will to transform; while if one says, 'Very well, it's all right, let things be as they are, I don't care, I am perfectly happy, in a blissful state,' then the body begins to feel content!

That's the problem: something totally new is being introduced into Matter, and the body is protesting.

...

Everything depends upon the balance (not the equilibrium, the proportion) between the amount of resistance in physical substance, and the Power.

But are these merely material resistances or are they rather hostile forces?

No; outside Matter, the hostile forces don't have even a BIT of power: NONE.

Their power is in Matter?

In Matter; practically inconscient Matter.

They are in inconscient Matter?

More accurately, they represent the unconsciousness of Matter.

...

This work is so formidable!

In the final analysis, everything obviously depends upon the Supreme's Will because, if one looks deeply enough into the question, even physical laws and resistances are nothing for Him. But this kind of direct intervention takes place only at the extreme limit; if His Will is to be expressed in opposition, as it were, to the whole set of laws governing the Manifestation — well, that only comes ... at the very last second. Sri Aurobindo has expressed this so well in *Savitri*, so well! At least three times in the book he has expressed this Will that abolishes all established laws, all of them, and all the consequences of these laws, the whole formidable colossus of the Manifestation, so that in the face of it all, That can express itself — and this takes place at the very last 'second,' so to speak, at the extreme limit of possibility.

* * *

July 28, 1961

The earth, Savitri – the Mother, Satyavan – the soul of the earth

The earth is a representative and symbolic world, a kind of crystallization and concentration of the evolutionary labour giving it a ... more concrete reality. It has to be taken like this: the history of the earth is a symbolic history. And it is on earth that this Descent takes place (it's not the history of the universal but of the terrestrial

creation); the Descent occurs in the individual TERRESTRIAL being, in the individual terrestrial atmosphere.

Let's take *Savitri*, which is very explicit on this: the universal Mother is universally present and at work in the universe, but the earth is where concrete form is given to all the work to be done to bring evolution to its perfection, its goal. Well, at first there's a sort of emanation representative of the universal Mother, which is always on earth to help it prepare itself; then, when the preparation is complete, the universal Mother herself will descend upon earth to finish her work. And this She does with Satyavan — Satyavan is the soul of the earth. She lives in close union with the soul of the earth and together they do the work; She has chosen the soul of the earth for her work, saying, 'HERE is where I will do my work.' Elsewhere (*Mother indicates regions of higher Consciousness*), it's enough just to BE and things Simply ARE. Here on earth you have to work.

There are clearly universal repercussions and effects, of course, but the thing is WORKED OUT here, the place of work is HERE. So instead of living beatifically in Her universal state and beyond, in the extra-universal eternity outside of time, She says, 'No, I am going to do my work HERE, I choose to work HERE.' The Supreme then tells her, 'What you have expressed is My Will.'.... 'I want to work HERE, and when all is ready, when the earth is ready, when humanity is ready (even if no one is aware of it), when the Great Moment comes, well ... I will descend to finish my work.'¹²

That's the story.

* * *

¹² *Savitri*, Book Eleven, line 1216, p. 705

July 28, 1961

The Story of Creation Descent

Sri Aurobindo says that everything is involved down here — the mind, the vital, the supermind — and that what is involved evolves. But if everything is involved, including the supermind, what is the need for a ‘descent’? Can’t things evolve by themselves?

There is always what could almost be called a popular way of presenting things. Take the whole Story of the Creation, of how things have come about: it can be told as an unfolding story (this is what Theon did in a book he called *The Tradition* — he told the whole story in the Biblical manner, with psychological knowledge hidden in symbols and forms) . . .

Why a descent? Why should there be an intervention from a higher plane?

I beg your pardon, but what was built up through this involution had to be unbuilt. The CAUSE of this involution had to be undone.

The way Theon told it, there was first the universal Mother (he didn’t call her the universal Mother, but Sri Aurobindo used that name), the universal Mother in charge of creation. For creating she made four emanations: Consciousness or Light; Life; Love or Beatitude and (*Mother tries in vain to remember the fourth*) ... I must have cerebral anemia today! In India they speak only of three: Sat-Chit-Ananda (Sat is Existence, expressed by Life; Chit is

Consciousness, expressed by Power; Ananda is Bliss, synonymous with Love). But according to Theon, there were four (I knew them by heart). Well, these emanations (Theon narrated it in such a way that someone not a philosopher, someone with a childlike mind, could understand), these emanations, conscious of their own power, separated themselves from their Origin; that is, instead of being entirely surrendered to the supreme Will and expressing only.... Ah, the fourth emanation is Truth! Instead of carrying out only the supreme Will, they seem to have acquired a sense of personal power. (They were personalities of sorts, universal personalities, each representing a mode of being.) Instead of remaining connected, they cut the link — each acted on his own, to put it simply. Then, naturally, Light became darkness, Life became death, Bliss became suffering and Truth became falsehood. And these are the four great Asuras: the Asura of Inconscience, the Asura of Falsehood, the Asura of Suffering and the Asura of Death.

Once this had occurred, the divine Consciousness turned towards the Supreme and said (*Mother laughs*): 'Well, here's what has happened. What's to be done?' Then from the Divine came an emanation of Love (in the first emanation it wasn't Love, it was Ananda, Bliss, the Delight of being which became Suffering), and from the Supreme came Love; and Love descended into this domain of Inconscience, the result of the creation of the first emanation, Consciousness — Consciousness and Light had become Inconscience and Darkness. Love descended straight from the Supreme into this Inconscience; the Supreme, that is, created a new emanation, which didn't pass through the intermediate worlds (because, according to the story, the universal Mother first created all the gods who, when they descended, remained in contact with the

Supreme and created all the intermediate worlds to counterbalance this fall — it's the old story of the 'Fall,' this fall into the Inconscient. But that wasn't enough). Simultaneously with the creation of the gods, then, came this direct Descent of Love into Matter, without passing through all the intermediate worlds. That's the story of the first Descent.¹³ But you're speaking of the descent heralded by Sri Aurobindo, the Supramental Descent, aren't you?

Not only that. For example, Sri Aurobindo says that when Life appeared there was a pressure from below, from evolution, to make Life emerge from Matter, and simultaneously a descent of Life from its own plane. Then, when Mind emerged out of Life, the same thing from above happened again. Why this intervention from above each time? Why don't things emerge normally, one after another, without needing a 'descent'?

You may as well ask why everything has gone wrong! No, with experience it becomes easy to understand.

Take the experience of Mind, for example: Mind, in the evolution of Nature, gradually emerging from its involution; well — and this is a very concrete experience — these initial 'mentalized forms,' if we can call them that, were necessarily incomplete and imperfect, because Nature's evolution is slow and hesitant and complicated. Thus these forms inevitably had an aspiration towards a sort of

¹³ In "About Savitri Part One" — the Mother's explanations about *Savitri* given to Huta, she relates this Story of Creation in connection with the very first line of the poem, "It was the hour before the gods awake." She also told it on several other occasions, in the course of her Playground talks, published as "Questions and Answers" in her Collected Works. — Shraddhavan.

perfection and a truly perfect mental state, and this aspiration brought the descent of already fully conscious beings from the mental world who united with terrestrial forms — this is a very, very concrete experience. What emerges from the Inconscient in this way is an almost impersonal possibility (yes, an impersonal possibility, and perhaps not altogether universal, since it's connected with the history of the earth); but anyway it's a general possibility, not personal. And the Response from above is what makes it concrete, so to speak, bringing in a sort of perfection of the state and an individual mastery of the new creation. These beings in corresponding worlds (like the gods of the overmind¹⁴, or the beings of higher regions) came upon earth as soon as the corresponding element began to evolve out of its involution. This accelerates the action, first of all, but also makes it more perfect — more perfect, more powerful, more conscious. It gives a sort of sanction to the realization. Sri Aurobindo writes of this in *Savitri* — Savitri lives always on earth, with the soul of the earth, to make the whole earth progress as quickly as possible. Well, when the time comes and things on earth are ready, then the divine Mother incarnates with her full power — when things are ready. Then will come the perfection of the realization. A splendor of creation

¹⁴ In Sri Aurobindo's terminology, the 'Overmind' represents the highest level of the mind, the world of the gods and origin of all the revelations and highest artistic creations — the world that has ruled mental man till now. In his gradations of the worlds, Sri Aurobindo speaks of two hemispheres, the upper hemisphere and the lower. The Overmind is the line between these two hemispheres, 'This line is the intermediary overmind which, though luminous itself, keeps from us the full indivisible supramental Light, but in receiving it divides, distributes, breaks up into separated aspects, powers, multiplicities of all kinds.' In the words of the Upanishad, 'The face of the Truth is covered by a golden lid.' [*Satprem's footnote*]

exceeding all logic! It brings in a fullness and a power completely beyond the petty shallow logic of human mentality.¹⁵

* * *

July 28, 1961

**Vision of a prismatic being in the depths of the
Inconscient:
“the reclining body of a god”**

Here is something important. Sri Aurobindo says that everything is involved down here — the mind, the vital, the supermind — and that what is involved evolves. But if everything is involved, including the supermind, what is the need for a ‘descent’? Can’t things evolve by themselves?

...

There are two lines in the ancient traditions, two ways of explaining this. One says it is by the ‘descent’ of what already exists in all its perfection that what is involved can be awakened to consciousness and evolution. It’s like the old story: when what Sri Aurobindo calls the universal Mother or the Shakti (or *Sachchidananda*) realised what had happened in Matter (that is, in what had created Matter) and that this involution had led to a state of Inconscience, total unconsciousness, the ancient lore says that at once the divine Love descended straight from the Lord into Matter and began to awaken what was involved there.

¹⁵ *Savitri*, Book Eleven, line 1216, p. 705

Other traditions speak of the Consciousness, the divine Consciousness, instead of Love. One even finds accounts full of imagery depicting a Being of prismatic light lying in deep sleep in the cave of the Inconscient; and this Descent awakens him to an activity which is still (how to put it?) inner, an immobile activity, an activity by radiation. Countless rays issue from his body and spread throughout the Inconscient, and little by little they awaken in each thing, in each atom, as it were, the aspiration to Consciousness and the beginning of evolution.

I have had this experience.

I have had the experience of being ‘missioned,’ so to speak, in a form of Love and Consciousness combined — divine Love in its supreme purity, divine Consciousness in its supreme purity — and emanated DIRECTLY, without passing through all the intermediate states, directly into the nethermost depths of the Inconscient. And there I had the impression of being, or rather of finding a symbolic Being in deep sleep ... so veiled that he was almost invisible. Then, at my contact, the veil seemed to be rent and, without his awakening, there was a sort of radiation spreading out.... I can still see my vision.

(See the addendum following this conversation for a transcription of Mother’s vision as she noted it down for publication in Theon’s Cosmic Review in 1906.)¹⁶

¹⁶ In this talk to Satprem, the Mother does not link this vision specifically to *Savitri*. But a few months later, when she was working with Huta on the “*Meditations on Savitri*” paintings for Book One, Canto One, she evoked this experience in connection with the lines

“The darkness failed and slipped like a falling cloak
From the reclining body of a god.”

Book One, Canto One, lines 96-97, p. 3

That is the reason why we have included this narrative in this collection.

* * *

ADDENDUM

(Extract from the ‘Cosmic Review’ of 1906)

A VISION

(of Mother’s)

From sleep, I now emerge awakened.

I slept upon the westward waters and now I plunge into the ocean to fathom its depths. Its surface is the green of beryl, silvered by moonbeams. Below, the water is the blue of sapphire and already faintly luminous.

Reclining on the waves’ silken folds, I descend; rocked from one undulating wave to another in a gentle rhythm, I am borne straight towards the west. The deeper I go, the more luminous the water becomes, great silvery currents coursing through it.

Cradled from wave to wave, for a long while I descend deeper, ever deeper.

All at once, as I gaze above me, I glimpse something roseate; I draw nearer and discern what appears to be a shrub, as large as a tree, held fast to a blue reef. The denizens of the waters glide to and fro, myriad and diverse. Now I find myself standing upon fine, shining sand. I gaze about me in wonder. There are mountains and valleys, fantastic forests, strange flowers that could as well be animals, and fish that might be flowers — no separation, no gap is there between stationary beings and mobile. Colors everywhere, brilliant and shimmering, or subdued, but always harmonious and refined. I walk

upon the golden sands and contemplate all this beauty bathed in a soft, pale blue radiance, tiny, luminous spheres of red, green and gold circulating through it.

How marvelous are the depths of the sea! Everywhere the presence of the One in whom all harmonies reside is felt!

Ever westward I advance, without weariness or hesitation. Spectacle succeeds spectacle in incredible variety; here upon a rock of lapis lazuli stretch fine and delicate seaweed like long blond or violet tresses; here great, rose-hued fortress walls, all streaked with silver; here flowers seem chiseled from enormous diamonds; here goblets, as beautiful as if carved by the most gifted sculptor, are filled with what appear to be droplets of emerald, alternately vibrant with light and shadow.

Presently I find myself between two rock walls of sapphire blue, upon a path flecked with silver; and the water becomes ever purer and more luminous.

A sudden turn in the path and I come to a grotto which seems fashioned of crystal, scintillating in prismatic radiance.

Standing there between two iridescent pillars is a very tall figure; his face, framed in short blond curls, is that of a very young man; his eyes are sea-green; he is clad in a pale blue tunic, and like wings upon his shoulders are great, snow-white fins. Beholding me, he steps aside against a pillar to let me pass. Scarcely have I crossed the threshold when an exquisite melody strikes my ears. The waters are all iridescent here, the ground aglow with glossy pearls; the portico and the vault, hung gracefully with stalactites, are opaline; delectable perfumes hover everywhere; galleries, niches and alcoves open out on all sides; but directly ahead of me I perceive a great light and towards it I turn my steps. There are great rays of gold, silver,

sapphire, emerald and ruby, radiating outward in all directions, born from a center too distant for me to discern; to this center I feel drawn by a powerful attraction.

Now I see that these rays emanate from a recumbent oval of white light encircled by a superb rainbow, and I sense that the one whom the light hides from my view is plunged into a profound repose. For long I remain at the outer edge of the rainbow, trying to pierce through the light and see the one who is sleeping encircled by such splendor. Unable to discern anything, I enter the rainbow, and thence into the white and shining oval. Here I see a marvelous being: stretched on what seems to be a mass of white eiderdown, his supple body, of incomparable beauty, is garbed in a long, white robe. His head rests on his folded arm, but of that I can see only his long hair, the hue of ripened wheat, flowing over his shoulders. A great and gentle emotion sweeps through me at this magnificent spectacle, and a deep reverence as well.

Has the sleeper sensed my presence? For now he awakens and rises in all his grace and beauty. He turns towards me and his eyes meet mine, mauve and luminous eyes with a gentle, an infinitely tender expression. Wordlessly he bids me a sublime welcome and my whole being joyously responds. Taking my hand, he leads me to the couch he has just left. I stretch out on this downy whiteness, and his harmonious visage bends over me; a sweet current of force enters wholly into me, invigorating, revitalizing each cell.

Then, wreathed by the splendid colors of the rainbow, enveloped by lulling melodies and exquisite perfumes, beneath his gaze so powerful, so tender, I drift into a beatific repose. And during my sleep I learn many beautiful and useful things.

Of all these marvelous things, understood without the noise of words, I mention only one.

Wherever there is beauty, wherever there is radiance, wherever there is progress towards perfection, whether in the Heaven of the heights or of the depths, there, assuredly, is found the form and similitude of man — man, the supreme terrestrial evolver.

* * *

September 23, 1961

“*Savitri* is the most important thing...”

(Satprem speaks about the book on Sri Aurobindo he is working on:)

I have the right to 150 pages! The publisher is giving me 150 pages in his collection.... Terrible.... But in this ‘Sri Aurobindo,’ you understand, I would like to make his whole poetic aspect stand out, that poetry which is like the Veda, like a revelation, so a bit of space is required: it can’t be squeezed into a few lines, or reduced to a skeleton.

This analogy between the ancient form of spiritual revelations and *Savitri*, this blossoming into poetry of his prophetic revelation is ... what could be called the most exceptional part of his work. And what is remarkable (I saw him do it) is that he changed *Savitri*: he went along changing it as his experience changed.

It is clearly the continuing expression of his experience.

There were whole sections he redid completely, which were like descriptions of what I had told him of my own experiences. Nolini said this. When I recently reread *Savitri*, some phrases were very familiar and I said to Nolini, ‘How odd, these are almost my very words!’ And he replied, ‘But this has been changed, it was written differently; it has BECOME like this.’ As the thing became more and more concrete for him, he changed it. The breath of revelatory prophecy is extraordinary! It has an extraordinary POWER!

What struck me is that he never wanted to write anything else. To write those articles for the *Bulletin*¹⁷ was really a heavy sacrifice for him. He had said he would complete certain parts of *The Synthesis of Yoga*¹⁸, but when he was asked to do so, he replied, ‘No, I don’t want to go down to that mental level’! *Savitri* comes from somewhere else altogether. And I think that *Savitri* is the most important thing to speak about.

* * *

January 24, 1962

Hostile Forces Truth and Falsehood

“... what the white gods have missed” (1)

¹⁷ Mother had asked Sri Aurobindo to write something for the Ashram ‘*Bulletin*.’ It was later published as *The Supramental Manifestation upon Earth*.

¹⁸ The third section, ‘The Yoga of Self-Perfection,’ which was never completed.

(In connection with the conversation of January 21st on antidivine forces — see below)

I read a passage in Savitri which seems to link up exactly with what you were saying....

Ah, read it to me!

I'd rather you read it yourself, because my English.... I found it really striking — these four lines here....

(Mother reads:)

Not only is there hope for godheads pure;
The violent and darkened deities
Leaped down from the one breast in rage to find
What the white gods had missed: they too are safe;
A Mother's eyes are on them and her arms
Stretched out in love desire her rebel sons.¹⁹

Yes, that's it.

‘What the white gods had missed....’

I didn't remember it. But that's it exactly.

* * *

¹⁹ *Savitri* Book Ten, Canto 2, line 232, p. 613

January 21, 1962

Actually, people have always taken themselves for victims hounded by adverse forces — the courageous fight back, the rest lament. But increasingly there has been a very concrete vision of the role the adverse forces play in the creation, of their almost absolute necessity as goads to make the creation progress and become its Origin again. And there was such a clear vision that one should accomplish one's own transformation — that's what we must pray for, what we must work out — rather than demand the conversion or abolition of the adverse forces.

And this is all from the terrestrial, not the individual standpoint (for the individual standpoint, it's quite clear): I am speaking from the terrestrial standpoint.

And there was the sudden vision of all the error, all the incomprehension, all the ignorance, all the darkness and — even worse — all the ill will in the earth's consciousness, which felt responsible for the prolongation of those adverse forces and beings and offered them up in a great ... it was more than an aspiration, it was a sort of holocaust, so that the adverse forces might disappear, might no longer have any reason to exist, no longer need to be there to point out all that has to change.

The adverse forces were necessitated by all these negations of the divine life. And this movement of earth consciousness towards the Supreme, the offering of all these things with such extraordinary intensity, was a kind of reparation so that those adverse forces might disappear.

The experience was very intense. It crystallized around a small nucleus of experiences too personal to mention (because I wasn't the

only one involved), which translated into this: ‘Take all my wrongdoings, take them all, accept them, obliterate them, and may those forces disappear.’

That’s essentially what this aphorism says, seen from the other end. So long as a single human consciousness carries the possibility of feeling, acting, thinking or being in opposition to the great divine Becoming, it is impossible to blame anyone else for it; it is impossible to blame the adverse forces, which are kept in the creation as a means of making you see and feel how far you still have to go.

(silence)

It was like a memory, an eternally present memory of that consciousness of supreme Love emanated by the Lord onto earth — INTO earth — to draw it back again to Him. And truly it was the descent of the very essence of the divine nature into the most total divine negation, and thus the abandonment of the divine condition to take on terrestrial darkness, so as to bring Earth back to the divine state. And unless That, that supreme Love, becomes all-powerfully conscious here on Earth, the return can never be definitive.

‘Since this world is progressive,’ I was wondering, ‘since it is increasingly becoming the Divine, won’t there always be this deeply painful sense of the nondivine, of the state that, compared with the one to come, is not divine? Won’t there always be what we call ‘adverse forces,’ in other words, things that don’t harmoniously follow the movement?’ Then came the answer, the vision of That: ‘No, the moment of this very Possibility is drawing near, the moment for the manifestation of the essence of perfect Love, which can transform this unconsciousness, this ignorance and this ill will that goes with it into a luminous and joyous progression, wholly progressive, wholly comprehensive, thirsting for perfection.’

It was very concrete.

And it corresponds to a state where you are so PERFECTLY identified with all that is, that you concretely become all that is antidivine — and so you can offer it up. It can be offered up and really transformed through this offering.

This sort of will in people for purity, for Good (which in ordinary mentality is expressed by a need to be virtuous) is actually the GREAT OBSTACLE to true self-giving. It's the root of Falsehood, the very source of hypocrisy: the refusal to take up one's share of the burden of difficulties.

Do not try to be virtuous. See to what extent you are united, ONE with all that is antidivine. Take up your share of the burden; accept to be impure and false yourself, and in so doing you will be able to take up the Shadow and offer it. And insofar as you are able to take it and offer it, things will change. Don't try to be among the pure. Accept to be with those who are in darkness and, in total love, offer it all.

(silence)

From the moment this was seen and DONE, the full power came back — the great creative Power.

(silence)

Most likely the experience could take place only because the time had come for all this to be offered up.

* * *

January 27, 1962

Truth and Falsehood The Story of Creation

“... what the white gods have missed” (2)

I'd like to ask you a question about those lines from Savitri I showed you the other day. I don't know if you remember — the passage about the 'white gods.'

What did you want to ask? What was it that ‘the white gods had missed’? But Sri Aurobindo has written it all down in full, right here in the *Aphorisms*. He has mentioned everything, taken up one thing after another: ‘Without this, there would not have been that; without this, there would not have been that ...’ and so on.^{20 21}

²⁰ Sri Aurobindo's Aphorisms: 88 – This world was built by Death that he might live. Wilt thou abolish death? Then life too will perish. Thou canst not abolish death, but thou mayst transform it into a greater living. 89 – This world was built by Cruelty that she might love. Wilt thou abolish cruelty? Then love too will perish. Thou canst not abolish cruelty, but thou mayst transfigure it into its opposite, into a fierce Love and Delightfulness. 90 – This world was built by Ignorance and Error that they might know. Wilt thou abolish ignorance and error? Then knowledge too will perish. Thou canst not abolish ignorance and error, but thou mayst transmute them into the utter and effulgent reason. 91 – If Life alone were and not death, there could be no immortality; if love were alone and not cruelty, joy would be only a tepid and ephemeral rapture; if reason were alone and not ignorance, our highest attainment would not exceed a limited rationality and worldly wisdom. 92 – Death transformed becomes Life that is Immortality; Cruelty trans. figured becomes Love that is intolerable ecstasy; Ignorance transmuted becomes Light that leaps beyond wisdom and knowledge.

²¹ See also the talk of May 15, 1963 – S.

But I also remember reading *The Tradition*, before I met Sri Aurobindo (it was like a novel, a serialized romance of the world's creation, but it was very evocative; Theon called it *The Tradition*). That was where I first learned of the universal Mother's first four emanations, when the Lord delegated his creative power to the Mother. And it was identical to the ancient Indian tradition, but told like a nursery story; anyone could understand — it was an image, like a movie, and very vivid.

So She made her first four emanations. The first was Consciousness and Light (arising from Sachchidananda); the second was Ananda and Love; the third was Life; and Truth was the fourth. Then, so the story goes, conscious of their infinite power, instead of keeping their connection with the supreme Mother and, through Her, with the Supreme, instead of receiving indications for action from Him and doing things in proper order, they were conscious of their own power and each one took off independently to do as he pleased — they had power and they used it. They forgot their Origin. And because of this initial oblivion, Consciousness became unconsciousness, and Light became darkness; Ananda became suffering, Love became hate; Life became Death; and Truth became Falsehood. And they were instantly thrown headlong into what became Matter. According to Theon, the world as we know it is the result of that. And that was the Supreme himself in his first manifestation.

But the story is easy to understand, and quite evocative. On the surface, for intellectuals, it's very childish; but once you have the experience you understand it very well — I understood and felt the thing immediately.

And once the world has become like that, has become the vital world in all its darkness, and they, from this vital world, have created Matter, the supreme Mother sees (*laughing*) the result of her first four emanations and She turns towards the Supreme in a great entreaty: ‘Now that this world is in such a dreadful state, it has to be saved! We can’t just leave it this way, can we? It has to be saved, the divine consciousness must be given back to it. What to do?’ And the Supreme says, ‘Thrust yourself into a new emanation, an emanation of the ESSENCE of Love, down into the most material Matter.’ That meant plunging into the earth (the earth had become a symbol and a representation of the whole drama). ‘Plunge into Matter.’ So She plunged into Matter, and that became the primordial source of the Divine within material substance. And from there (as is so well described in *Savitri*), She begins to act as a leaven in Matter, raising it up from within.

And as She plunged into the earth, a second series of emanations was sent forth — the gods — to inhabit the intermediary zones between Sachchidananda and the earth. And these gods (*laughing*) ... well, great care was taken to make them perfect, so they wouldn’t give any trouble! But they are a bit ... a bit too perfect, aren’t they? Yes, a bit too perfect: they never make mistakes, they always do exactly as they’re told.... In short, rather lacking in initiative. They do have some, but....

In fact, they were not *surrendered* in the way a psychic being can be, because they had no psychic in them. The psychic being is the result of that descent. Only human beings have it. And that’s what makes humanity so superior to the gods. Theon insisted greatly on this: throughout his story, humans are far superior to gods and should

not obey them — they should only be in contact with the Supreme in his aspect of perfect Love.

I don't know how to put it.... To me, those gods always seemed ... (not those described in the Puranas, they're different ... well, not so very different!) but the way Theon presented them, they seemed just like a bunch of marshmallows! It's not that they had no power — they had a lot of power, but they lacked that psychic flame.

...

But these things are not to be taken as concrete truths — they are simply splendid images. Through them I really did come in contact, very concretely, with the truth of what caused the world's distortion, much better than with all the Hindu stories, far more easily.

Buddhism and all similar lines of thought took the shortest path: 'The desire to exist is what has caused all the trouble.' If the Lord had refrained from having this desire, there would have been no world! It's childish, very childish, really a much too human way of looking at the problem.

To see it from the angle of delight of being is qualitatively far superior, but then there's still the problem of why it all became the way it is. The usual reply is: because all things were possible, and this is ONE possibility. But it's not a very satisfying feeling: 'Yes, all right, that's just the way it is, it's a fact.' People used to ask Theon too, 'Why did it happen like this? Why ...?' 'Wait till you get to the other side, then you will know. And meanwhile do what's necessary to get there — that's the most urgent thing.'

But there is one advantage: without those beings, without the world's distortion, many things would be lacking. Those beings potentially embodied certain absolutely unique elements — understandably so, since they were the first wave. And precisely

because they still WERE the Supreme to such a great extent, each one felt he was the Supreme, and that was that. Only it wasn't quite sufficient, for the simple reason that they were already divided into four, and one single division is enough to make everything go wrong. It's readily understandable: it's not something essentially evil, but a question of wrong FUNCTIONING; it's not the substance, not the essence. The essence isn't evil, but the functioning is faulty.

But if you understand....

The words are so childish that if you tell this story to intelligent people, they look at you with pity — but it gives such a concrete grasp of the problem! It helped me a lot.

* * *

February 3, 1962

Savitri has come to kick out all the rules

I make a habit of doing everything against the rules, otherwise there would be no point in my being here; the rules could just go on and on!

. . .

The divine Grace saved me from that whole hodgepodge of rules about how this happens and how that can't happen and how that must happen and how.... Oh, good Lord!... I saw things very simply, without a single rule in my brain, and so I did them just as simply, with no rules in my head — it worked very, very well, I didn't run into any trouble. Things worked out quite naturally and simply. And

if I was told, ‘That can’t be’ — ‘Well, sorry,’ I would say, ‘but it’s already done.’

That ‘can’t be’.... Sometimes it can!

(silence)

Besides, if you remember the beginning of *Savitri* (I read it only recently, I hadn’t known it), in the second canto, speaking of Savitri, he says she has come (he puts it poetically, of course!) to (*laughing*) kick out all the rules — all the taboos, the rules, the fixed laws, all the closed doors, all the impossibilities — to undo it all.

I went one better; I didn’t even know the rules so I didn’t need to fight them! All I had to do was ignore them, so they didn’t exist — that was even better.

* * *

February 17, 1962

“Are there not still a million fights to wage?”

A line from *Savitri* constantly haunts or assails me — it’s when the Lord proposes that she come live a blissful life above, and she replies, ‘No, there are still too many battles to wage on earth.’²²

²² I climb not to thy everlasting Day ...
In me the spirit of immortal love
Stretches its arms out to embrace mankind.
Too far thy heavens for me from suffering men.
Imperfect is the joy not shared by all.
O to spread forth, O to encircle and seize
More hearts till love in us has filled thy world!

That went deep into me, and it returns each time difficulties arise,
as if to say, ‘Don’t complain.’

And there are plenty! ...

* * *

June 27, 1962

“The Mighty Mother shall take birth in time...”

**“The present incarnation of the Mahashakti — as
described in *Savitri*”**

You know, mon petit, I said one day that in the history of earth, wherever there was a possibility for the Consciousness to manifest, I was there²³; this is a fact. It’s like the story of *Savitri*: always there, always there, always there, in this one, that one — at certain times there were four emanations simultaneously! At the time of the Italian and French Renaissance. And again at the time of Christ, then too....

O life, the life beneath the wheeling stars!
For victory in the tournament with death,
For bending of the fierce and difficult bow,
For flashing of the splendid sword of God!
O thou who soundst the trumpet in the lists,
Part not the handle from the untried steel,
Take not the warrior with his blow unstruck.
Are there not still a million fights to wage?

(*Savitri*, Book Eleven, lines 530, 564-577, p. 685-87)

²³ “Since the beginning of the earth, wherever and whenever there was the possibility of manifesting a ray of the Consciousness, I was there.” March 14, 1952.

Oh, you know, I have remembered so many, many things! It would take volumes to tell it all. And then, more often than not (not always, but more often than not), what took part in this or that life was a particular yogic formation of the vital being — in other words something immortal. [*Each of these formations had an independent, immortal existence – Satprem.*] And when I came this time, as soon as I took up the yoga, they came back again from all sides, they were waiting. Some were simply waiting, others were working (they led their own independent lives) and they all gathered together again. That's how I got those memories. One after the other, those vital beings came — a deluge! I had barely enough time to assimilate one, to see, situate and integrate it, and another would come. They are quite independent, of course, they do their own work, but they are very centralized all the same. And there are all kinds — all kinds, anything you can imagine! Some of them have even been in men: they are not exclusively feminine.

At first, I used to think they were fantasies.

Before I met Sri Aurobindo they would come and come and come to me, night after night and sometimes during the day — a mass of things! Afterwards I told Sri Aurobindo about it, and he explained to me that it was quite natural. And indeed, it is quite natural: with the present incarnation of the Mahashakti (as he described it in *Savitri*), whatever is more or less bound up with Her wants to take part, that's quite natural. And it's particularly true for the vital: there has always been a preoccupation with organizing, centralizing, developing and unifying the vital forces, and controlling them. So there's a considerable number of vital beings, each with its own particular ability, who have played their role in history and now return.

June 30, 1962

“The Mighty Mother shall take birth in time...”

(Mother refers to a passage from the preceding conversation (of June 27) in which she said that her present incarnation on earth didn't have a merely terrestrial effect but an effect on all the other worlds as well — and particularly on the gods.)

None of those beings, those gods and deities of various pantheons, have the same rapport with the Supreme that man has; for man has a psychic being, in other words, the Supreme's presence within him. These gods are emanations — independent emanations — created for a special purpose and a particular action which they fulfill SPONTANEOUSLY; they do it not with a sense of constant surrender to the Divine but simply because that's what they are, and why they are, and all they know is what they are. They don't have the conscious link with the Supreme that man has — man carries the Supreme within himself.

That makes a considerable difference.

But with this present incarnation of the Mahashakti.... She is the Supreme's first manifestation, creation's first stride, and it was She who first gave form to all those beings. Now, since her incarnation in the physical world, and through the position She has taken here in relation to the Supreme by incarnating in a human body, all the other

worlds have been influenced, and influenced in an extremely interesting way.²⁴

* * *

September 18, 1962

Translating

Mother announces her intention to start translating *Savitri*

I don't have far to go on my translation of *The Synthesis of Yoga* (it's going very quickly), and I have found what I'll do next.... It will be something like those notebooks [*Prayers and Meditations*]. I am going to take the whole section of *Savitri* (to start with, I'll see later) from 'The Debate of Love and Death' to the point where the Supreme Lord makes his prophecy about the earth's future; it's long — several pages long. This is for my own satisfaction.

²⁴ Some days later, Satprem again brought up the above passage, asking whether the Mother hadn't been active on earth since the beginning of time and not merely "with this present incarnation of the Mahashakti." She replied: "It was always through EMANATIONS, while now it's as Sri Aurobindo writes in *Savitri* — the Supreme tells Savitri that a day will come when the earth is ready and "*The Mighty Mother shall take birth ...*" [*Savitri* Book Eleven, line 1216, p. 705] But Savitri was already on earth — she was an emanation."

So they were all emanations?

They were all emanations, right from the beginning. So we have to say: 'With the PRESENT incarnation.'

I am going to translate it line by line (not word by word — line by line), leaving a space between each line; and when I've finished I will try to recapture it in French (*gesture of pulling down from above*).

I am not doing it to show it to people or to have anyone read it, but to remain in *Savitri's* atmosphere, for I love that atmosphere. It will give me an hour of concentration, and I'll see if by chance.... I have no gift for poetry, but I'll see if it comes! (It surely won't come from a mentality developed in this present existence — there's no poetic gift!) So it's interesting, I'll see if anything comes. I am going to give it a try.

I know that light. I am immediately plunged into it each time I read *Savitri*. It is a very, very beautiful light.

So I am going to see.

First of all, I'll concentrate on it just as Sri Aurobindo said it in English, using French words. Then I'll see if something comes WITHOUT changing anything — that is, if the same inspiration he had comes in French. It will be an interesting thing to do. If I can do one, two, three lines a day, that's all I need; I will spend one hour every day like that.

I don't have anything in mind. All I know is that being in that light above gives me great joy. For it is a supramental light — a supramental light of aesthetic beauty, and very, very harmonious.

So now I don't mind finishing *The Synthesis*. I was a little bothered because I have no other books by Sri Aurobindo to translate that can help me in my sadhana: there was only *The Synthesis*. As I said, it always came right on time, just when it was needed for a particular experience.

When this new translation is finished (because I know *Savitri*, I know what it is), I know that when it's finished ... either I'll be there or else things will take a very long time²⁵.

All his other books that could help me are already translated. And with *Savitri*, the idea isn't to make a translation, but to SEE. To try something. To give me the daily experience of that contact.

I had some magnificent experiences when I read it the first time (two years ago, I believe). Wonderful, wonderful experiences! And since then, each time I read those lines, the same thing happens — not the same experience, but I come in contact with the same realm.

It will be an interesting thing to do.

* * *

ADDENDUM

*(These are the last lines of Savitri Mother translated.
They were found in her notebook under the date July 1, 1970.)*

But how shall I seek rest in endless peace
Who house the mighty Mother's violent force,
Her vision turned to read the enigmaed world,
Her will tempered in the blaze of Wisdom's sun
And the flaming silence of her heart of love?
The world is a spiritual paradox
Invented by a need in the Unseen,
A poor translation to the creature's sense

²⁵ See in the Addendum the last lines of *Savitri* that Mother translated.

Of That which for ever exceeds idea and speech,
A symbol of what can never be symbolised,
A language mispronounced, misspelt, yet true²⁶.

Book Ten, Canto 4, lines 244-54, p.647-48

(Mother's translation)

1.7.1970

Mais comment puis-je chercher le repos dans une paix sans
fin

Moi qui abrite la force violente de la formidable Mère,
Sa vision attentive à lire le monde énigmatique,
Sa volonté trempée par le brasier du soleil de la Sagesse
Et le silence flamboyant de son coeur d'amour?

Le monde est un paradoxe spirituel Inventé par un besoin
dans l'Invisible,

Une pauvre traduction pour les sens des créatures
De Cela qui à jamais dépasse l'idée et la parole,
Un symbole de ce qui ne peut jamais être symbolisé,
Un langage mal prononcé, mal épelé, pourtant vrai.

* * *

²⁶ Here are the three following lines, which Mother never translated –
Satprem:

Its powers have come from the eternal heights
And plunged into the unconscious dim Abyss
And risen from it to do their marvelous work.

October 30, 1962

Translating *Savitri*

My translation [of *The Synthesis of Yoga*] will be finished soon — I'll miss it.

But aren't you going to start on Savitri?

It suddenly seemed terribly ambitious to me.... (*Laughing*) My stock of words isn't so great!

(*silence*)

* * *

November 23, 1962

Truth and Falsehood

“ . . . the dark half of truth . . . ”

(Satprem reads a passage from his manuscript in which he says in particular:

‘We cannot take one step up without taking one step down.’)

That's what I am experiencing in my body now — exactly what you say: each step forward forces you to make ... not a step backward, but a step into the Shadow. And on the physical level it's terrible.

(*silence*)

But your book shouldn't give the impression that it's always that way — that the Light can't be established on earth until all the Shadow is transformed. In fact, the very work of transformation is to change all this shadow into its aspect of light²⁷.

Not to reject it: to transform it.

* * *

December 25, 1962

Quotation used by Satprem

“Thou shalt bear all things, that all things may change.”²⁸

What have you brought? Your book? Do you have your book?

A bit of it, yes.

All right, begin with that.

(After the reading:)

There's just one thing ... I don't know ... it's when you say Sri Aurobindo 'succumbed' on December 5, 1950. He didn't 'succumb.' It's not that he couldn't have done otherwise. It's not the difficulty of the work that made him leave; it's something else. You can't mention

²⁷ Mother is alluding to the passage in *Savitri* where Sri Aurobindo speaks of “the dark half of Truth.” – Satprem (“*The eye that looks at the dark half of truth* . . . “Book Two, Canto 6, line 697, p.192. – S.)

²⁸ *Savitri*, Book Eleven, line 1031, p. 699

this in your book, of course, it's impossible to talk about for the moment, but I would like you to use another word. What was your sentence again?

I said: 'Sri Aurobindo succumbed to this work on December 5, 1950.'

He didn't succumb.

We have to use another word, not 'succumb.' It was truly his CHOICE — he chose to do the work in another way, a way he felt would bring much more rapid results. But this explanation is nobody's business, for the moment. So we can't say that he succumbed. 'Succumbed' gives the idea that it was against his will, that it just happened, that it was an accident — it CANNOT be 'succumbed.'

Yes, I understand.

You could simply say that he did the work up to that moment... that's all, giving no reason.

We could simply say: 'Sri Aurobindo left this life on December 5, 1950.'

Read the beginning of the passage again.

'The seeker of transformation must thus face all the difficulties, even death, not to vanquish but to change them — one cannot change things without taking them upon oneself. 'Thou shalt

bear all things,’ says Savitri, ‘that all things may change.’ Sri Aurobindo succumbed to this work ...’

Can’t you just put ‘that’s why,’ without giving any explanation?... That’s why Sri Aurobindo left his body. That’s much more powerful. You said ‘even death,’ so just put: ‘That’s why Sri Aurobindo left his body.’

* * *

December 28, 1962

Quotation used by Satprem

“All earth shall be the Spirit’s manifest home.”

(Satprem reads Mother one last passage from his manuscript:)

Evolution does not move higher and higher, into an ever more heavenly heaven, but deeper and deeper; and each cycle or evolutionary round comes to completion a little further down, a little nearer the Center where the Supreme High and Low, heaven and earth, will finally join. Thus for the two poles to actually meet, the pioneer must cleanse the mental, vital, and material middle ground. When the junction is made, not merely mentally and vitally but materially, Spirit will emerge in Matter, in a total supramental being and supramental body, and ...

All earth shall be the Spirit’s manifest home.²⁹

²⁹ *Savitri*, Book Eleven, line 1311, p. 707.

This cleansing of the middle ground is the whole story of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother ... 'I had been dredging, dredging, dredging the mire of the subconscious.... The supramental light was coming down before November, [1934.] but afterwards all the mud arose and it stopped.'³⁰ Once again Sri Aurobindo verified, not individually this time but collectively, that if one pulls down too strong a light, the violated darkness below is made to moan. It is noteworthy that each time Sri Aurobindo and the Mother had some new experience marking a progress in the transformation, this progress automatically materialized in the consciousness of the disciples, without their even knowing anything about it, as a period of increased difficulties, sometimes even revolts or illnesses, as though everything were grating and grinding. But then, one begins to understand the mechanism. If a pygmy were abruptly subjected to the simple mental light of a cultivated man, we would probably see the poor fellow traumatized and driven mad by the subterranean revolutions within him. There is still too much jungle beneath the surface. The world is still full of jungle, that's the crux of the matter in a word; our mental colonization is a minuscule crust plastered over a barely dry quaternary.... And the battle seems endless; one 'digs and digs,' said the Rishis, and the deeper one digs, the more the bottom seems to recede: 'I have been digging, digging.... Many autumns have I been toiling night and day, the dawns aging me. Age is diminishing the glory of our bodies.' Thus, thousands of years ago, lamented Lopamudra, wife of Rishi Agastya, who was also seeking transformation.... But Agastya doesn't lose heart, and his reply is magnificently characteristic of the conquerors the Rishis were: 'Not

³⁰ Dilip K. Roy, *Sri Aurobindo Came to Me*, p. 73.

in vain is the labor which the gods protect. Let us relish all the contesting forces, let us conquer indeed even here, let us run this battle race of a hundred leadings.’ (Rig-Veda 1.179)

(For a long time, Mother remains pensive)

Well, we have another year of ‘digging’ ahead of us. Happy New Year.

* * *

January 30, 1963

The Mother starts translating *Savitri*

I have finished my translation [of the *Synthesis*]. When you have finished your book and we have prepared the next *Bulletin* and we have a nice quiet moment, we’ll go over it again. And then I’ve begun *Savitri* — ah! ... As you know, I prepare some illustrations with H., and for her illustrations she has chosen some passages from *Savitri* (the choice isn’t hers, it’s A.’s and P.’s and made intelligently), so she gives me these passages one by one, neatly typed (which is easier for my eyes). It’s from the Book I, Canto IV.

And then, as I expected, the experience is rather interesting.... I had noticed, while reading *Savitri*, that there was a sort of absolute understanding, that is to say, it can’t mean this or that or this — it means THAT. It comes with an imperative. And that’s what led me to think, ‘When I translate it, it will come in the same way.’ And it did. I take the text line by line and make a resolve (not personal) to translate it line by line, without the slightest regard for the literary

point of view, but rendering what he meant in the clearest possible way.

The way it comes is both exclusive and positive — it's really interesting. There's none of the mind's ceaseless wavering, 'Is this better? Is that better? Should it be like this? Should it be like that?' No — it is LIKE THIS (*Mother brings down her hand in a gesture of imperative descent*). And then in certain cases (without anything to do with the literary angle or even the sound of the word — neither sound nor anything, but meaning), Sri Aurobindo himself suggests a word. It's as if he were telling me, 'Isn't this better French, tell me?' (!)

I am simply the recording machine.

It goes with fantastic speed, meaning that in ten minutes I translate ten lines. On the whole, only three or four times are there a couple of alternative possibilities, which I jot down immediately. Once, here (*Mother shows a passage with erasures in her manuscript*), the correction came, absolute. 'No,' he said, 'not that — THIS.' So I erased what I had written.

Here, read the English first.

Above the world the world-creators stand,

In the phenomenon see its mystic source.

These heed not the deceiving outward play,

They turn not to the moment's busy tramp,

But listen with the still patience of the Unborn

For the slow footsteps of far Destiny

Approaching through huge distances of Time,

Unmarked by the eye that sees effect and cause,

Unheard mid the clamour of the human plane.

Attentive to an unseen Truth they seize
A sound as of invisible augur wings....

Book One, Canto 4, lines 294-304, p.54

I didn't reread my translation, I am doing it now for the first time.

*(Mother reads aloud her translation up to: 'They turn not to the
moment's busy tramp')*

Here, there was some hesitation between *de l'instant* [the instant's] and *du moment* [the moment's]. Then he showed me (I can't explain how it takes place), he showed me both words, *moment* and *instant*, and he showed me how, compared to *moment*, *instant* is mechanical; he said, 'It's the mechanism of time; *moment* is full and contains the event.' Things of that sort, inexpressible (I put it into words but it loses all its value). Inexpressible, but fantastic! There was some hesitation between *instant* and *moment*, I don't know why. Then he showed me *instant*: *instant* was dry, mechanical, empty, whereas *moment* contained all that takes place at every instant. So I wrote *moment*.

(Mother reads the end of her translation)

It isn't thought out, it just comes. It's probably not poetry, not even free verse, but it does contain something.

So I made a resolve (because it's neither to be published nor to be shown, but it's a marvelous delight): I will simply keep it the way I keep the *Agenda*. I have a feeling that, later, perhaps (how can I put it?) ... when people can be less mental in their activity, it will put them in touch with that light [of *Savitri*] — you know, immediately I

enter something purely white and silent, light and alive: a sort of beatitude.

This other passage is what I translated the first time:

In Matter shall be lit the spirit's glow,
In body and body kindled the sacred birth;
Night shall awake to the anthem of the stars,
The days become a happy pilgrim march,
Our will a force of the Eternal's power,
And thought the rays of a spiritual sun.
A few shall see what none yet understands;
God shall grow up while the wise men talk and sleep;
For man shall not know the coming till its hour
And belief shall be not till the work is done.

Book One, Canto 4, lines 332-341, page 55

Here there were a few more erasures. It will probably go on improving. But what a wonder, this passage, what beauty!

*(Mother reads aloud her translation up to: 'God shall grow up
while the wise men talk and sleep')*

Splendid!

(Mother reads her translation of the last two lines.)

Oh, I love this: 'God shall grow up while the wise men talk and sleep.'

So, I'll continue.

I may even keep the manuscript in pencil: the temptation to correct is very bad. Very bad because it's the surface understanding that wants to correct — literary taste, poetical sense and all those things that are down there (*gesture down below*). You know, it's as if (I don't mean the words themselves), as if the CONTENT of the words were projected on a perfectly blank and still screen (*Mother points to her forehead*), as if the words were projected on it.

The trouble is writing, the materialization between the vision and the writing; the Force has to drive the hand and the pencil, and there is a slight ... there's still a very slight resistance. Otherwise, if I could write automatically, oh, how nice it would be!

There may be (I can't say, it's all imagination because I don't know), there may come a few ... somewhat weird things. But there is an insistence on the need to keep to each line as though it stood all alone in the universe. No mixing up the line order, no, no, no! For when he wrote it, he SAW it that way — I knew nothing about that, I didn't even know how he wrote it (he dictated it, I believe, for the most part), but that's what he tells me now. Everything comes to a stop, everything, and then, oh, how we enjoy ourselves! I enjoy myself! It's more enjoyable than anything. I even told him yesterday, 'But why write? What's the use?' Then he filled me with a sort of delight. Naturally, someone in the ordinary consciousness may say, 'It's very selfish,' but ... And then it's like a vision of the future (not too near, not extremely near — not extremely far either) a future when this sort of white thing — white and still — would spread out, and then, with the help of this work, a larger number of minds may come to understand. But that's secondary; I do the translation simply for the joy of it, that's all. A satisfaction that may be called selfish,

but when he is told, 'It's selfish,' he replies that there is no one more selfish than the Lord, because all He does is for Himself!

There.

So I will go on. If there are corrections, they can only come through the same process, because at this point to correct anyhow would spoil it all. There is also the mixing (for the logical mind) of future and present tenses — but that too is deliberate. It all seems to come in another way. And well, I can't say, I haven't read any French for ages, I have no knowledge of modern literature — to me everything is in the rhythm of the sound. I don't know what rhythm they use now, nor have I read what Sri Aurobindo wrote in *The Future Poetry*. They tell me that *Savitri's* verse follows a certain rule he explained on the number of stresses in each line (and for this you should pronounce in the pure English way, which somewhat puts me off), and perhaps some rule of this kind will emerge in French? We can't say. I don't know. Unless languages grow more fluid as the body and mind grow more plastic? Possible. Language too, maybe: instead of creating a new language, there may be transitional languages, as, for instance (not a particularly fortunate departure, but still...), the way American is emerging from English. Maybe a new language will emerge in a similar way?

In my case it was from the age of twenty to thirty that I was concerned with French (before twenty I was more involved in vision: painting; and sound: music), but as regards language, literature, language sounds (written or spoken), it was approximately from twenty to thirty. The *Prayers and Meditations* were written spontaneously with that rhythm. If I stayed in an ordinary consciousness I would get the knack of that rhythm — but now it doesn't work that way, it won't do!

Yesterday, after my translation, I was surprised at that sense ... a sense of absolute: 'THAT'S HOW IT IS.' Then I tried to enter into the literary mind and wondered, 'What would be its various suggestions?' And suddenly, I saw somehow (somehow, somewhere there) a host of suggestions for every line! ... Ohh! 'No doubt,' I thought, 'it IS an absolute!' The words came like that, without any room for discussion or anything. To give you an example: when he says 'the clamour of the human plane,' *clameur* exists in French, it's a very nice word — he didn't want it, he said 'No,' without any discussion. It wasn't an answer to a discussion, he just said, 'Not *clameur*: *vacarme*.' [Mother's translation is: *Le vacarme du plan humain*.] It isn't as though he was weighing one word against another, it wasn't a matter of words but the THOUGHT of the word, the SENSE of the word: 'No, not *clameur*, it's *vacarme*.'

Interesting, isn't it?

But I would like us to revise the translation in the same way, because I am sure he will be here — he is always here when I translate. Then I will go back into that state, while you will do the work! (*Laughing*) You will write. And then, unless your vocabulary is very extensive (mine used to be extensive, but now it has become quite limited), we'll need a decent dictionary.... But I am afraid none will have anything to offer.

I even find they should be avoided.

They're bad. Somewhere they make me angry. It makes a very dark atmosphere, it clouds the atmosphere.

Unfortunately, I have lost the habit of French, the words I use to express myself are quite limited and the right word doesn't come —

something looks up in the word store and doesn't find the word. I can sense it as if elusively, I feel there is a word, but all sorts of substitutes come forward that are worthless.

Now the sensation is altogether, altogether new. It's not the customary movement of words pouring in and so on: you search and suddenly you catch hold of something — it's no longer that way at all: as though it were the ONLY thing that remained in the world. All the rest — mere noise.

There, mon petit.

* * *

February 15, 1963

He and She Truth and Falsehood

(Regarding a passage in 'Savitri' in which Sri Aurobindo describes the universe as a play between He and She. 'This whole wide world is only he and she,' He, the Supreme in love with her, her servitor; She, the creative Force.)

As one too great for him he worships her;
He adores her as his regent of desire,
He yields to her as the mover of his will,
He burns the incense of his nights and days
Offering his life, a splendour of sacrifice....

Book I, Canto IV, lines 594-98, p.62

In a thousand ways he serves her royal needs;
He makes the hours pivot around her will,
Makes all reflect her whims; all is their play:
This whole wide world is only he and she.

Book I, Canto IV, lines 615-18, p.63

What a marvelous work!

He goes into a completely different region, so much above thought! It's constant vision, it isn't something thought out — with thought everything becomes flat, hollow, empty, empty, just like a leaf; while this is full, the full content is there, alive.

It's an explanation of why the world is as it is. At the start he says, *He worships her* (here again, there are no words in French: *Il lui rend un culte*, but that makes a whole sentence). *He worships her* as something far greater than Himself. And then you are almost a spectator of the Supreme projecting Himself to take on this creative aspect (necessarily, otherwise it couldn't be done!), the Witness watching His own work of creation and falling in love with this power of manifestation — you see it all. And ... oh, He wants to give Her her fullest chance and see, watch all that is going to happen, all that can happen with this divine Power thrust free into the world. And Sri Aurobindo expresses it as though he had absolutely fallen in love with Her: whatever She wants, whatever She does, whatever She thinks, whatever She wills, all of it — it's all wonderful! All is wonderful. It's so lovely!

And, I must say, I was observing this because, originally, the first time I heard of it, this conception shocked me, in the sense that ... (I don't know, it wasn't an idea, it was a feeling), as though it meant lending reality to something which in my consciousness, for a very

long time (at least ... millennia perhaps, I don't know), had been the Falsehood to be conquered. The Falsehood that must cease to exist. It's the aspect of Truth that must manifest itself, it's not all that: doing anything whatsoever just for the fun of it, simply because you have the full power.... You have the power to do everything, so you do everything, and knowing that there is a Truth behind, you don't give a damn about consequences. That was something ... something which, as far back as I can remember, I have fought against. I have known it, but it seems to me it was such a long, long time ago and I rejected it so strongly, saying, 'No, no!' and implored the Lord so intensely that things may be otherwise, beseeched Him that his all-powerful Truth, his all-powerful Purity and his all-powerful Beauty may manifest and put an end to all that mess. And at first I was shocked when Sri Aurobindo told me that; previously, in this life, it hadn't even crossed my mind. In that sense Theon's explanation had been much more (what should I say?) useful to me from the standpoint of action: the origin of disorder being the separation of the primal Powers — but that's not it! HE is there, blissfully worshipping all this confusion!

And naturally this time around, when I started translating it came back. At first there was a shudder (*Mother makes a gesture of stiffening*). Then I told myself, 'Haven't you got beyond that!' And I let myself flow into the thing. Then I had a series of nights with Sri Aurobindo ... so marvelous! You understand, I see him constantly and I go into that subtle physical world where he has his abode; the contact is almost permanent (at any rate, that's how I spend all my nights: he shows me the work, everything), but still, after this translation of *Savitri* he seemed to be smiling at me and telling me, 'At last you have understood!' (*Mother laughs*) I said, 'It isn't that I

didn't understand, it's that I didn't want it!' I didn't want, I don't WANT things to be like that any more, for thousands of years I have wanted things to be otherwise!

The night before last, he had put on a sari of mine. He told me (*laughing*), 'Why not? Don't you find it suits me!' I answered, 'It suits you beautifully!' A sari of brown georgette, lustrous bronze, with big golden braid! It was a very beautiful sari (I used to have it, it was one of my saris), and he was wearing it. Then he asked me to do his hair. I remember seeing that the nape of his neck and his hair had become almost luminous — his hair was never quite white, there was an auburn shimmer to it, it was almost golden, and it stayed that way, very fine, not at all like the hair people have here. His hair was almost like mine. So while I was doing his hair, I saw the luminous nape of his neck, and his hair, so luminous! And he said to me, 'Why shouldn't I wear a sari!'

That opened up a whole new horizon.... We're always so closed, you know.

Of course, it [*this vision or conception*] isn't allowed into action, because when you start accepting everything and loving everything and seeing Glory everywhere — why change!? This is why the Force that had been in me for so long for the world to progress further made me reject precisely all that legitimized things as they are by putting you into contact with the inner joy of living — as he puts it, His Joy is there, everywhere, so nobody wants to leave the world....

In short, I was able to see the situation from above, a little higher than the creative Force — from the other side.

* * *

February 19, 1963

(The Mother speaks of her translation of 'Savitri')

I do it exclusively for the joy of being in a world ... a world of overmental expression (I don't say supramental, I say overmental), a luminous, marvelous expression through which you can catch the Truth.

And it teaches me English without books! Now, whenever I have to write a letter, all the words come by themselves: the CONTENT of the word (just as I told you for *moment* and *instant*), now it works the same way with all words! Yesterday I wrote something in English for a doctor here (*Mother looks for a paper*): *The world progresses so rapidly that we must be ready at any moment to over pass what we knew in order to know better*. And you know, I never think: it just comes, either the sound or the written word (it depends on the case: now I'll see the written words, now I'll hear the sound). For instance, the word *advance* came first, and with it came *quick*, *quickly*, repeatedly ['the world advances so quickly']. Then came *progress*, and *quickly* was out of the picture; and suddenly *rapidly* came forward. So I understood how it worked, how it works for all words! I understood: *progress* (the idea or inner meaning of progress) calls for *rapidly*; and *advance* calls for *quickly*. Putting it like this sounds like splitting hairs, but when I saw it, it was positively irrefutable! The word was alive, its content was alive, and along with it was its friend, the word that went with it; and the word that wasn't its friend was not to be seen, it wasn't in the mood! Oh, it was so funny! For that alone it is worth the trouble.

I have made some experiments with French too. I wrote something: *Pour chacun, le plus important est de savoir si on*

appartient au passe qui se perpetue, au present qui s'épuise, à l'avenir qui veut naître. ['The most important point for everyone is to know whether he belongs to the past perpetuating itself, to the present exhausting itself, or to the future trying to be born.'] I gave it to Z — he didn't understand. So I told him, 'It doesn't mean 'our' past, 'our' present or 'our' future....' I wrote this when I was in that state [the experience Mother told at the beginning of this conversation], and it was in connection with a very sweet old lady who has just left her body. This is what I said to her. Everybody had been expecting her departure for more than a month or two, but I said, 'You will see, she is going to last; she will last for at least another month or two.' Because she knows how to live within, outside her body, and the body lives on out of habit, without jerks and jolts. That was her condition, and it could last a very long time. They had announced she would leave within two days, but I said, 'It's not true.' I know her well, in the sense that she had come out of her body and there was a link with me. And I said to her, 'What do you care!' (though she wasn't at all worried, she was staying peacefully with me), 'The whole point is to know whether one belongs to the past perpetuating itself, to the present exhausting itself, or to the future trying to be born.' Sometimes what WE call the past is right here, it's the future trying to be born; sometimes what WE call the present is something in advance, something that came ahead of time; but sometimes also it's something that came late, that is still part of all that is to disappear — I saw it all: people, things, circumstances, everything through that perception, the vibration that would go on transforming itself, the vibration that would exhaust itself and disappear, the vibration that, though manifested for a long time, would be entitled to continue, to persist — that changes all notions!

It was so interesting! So I wrote it down as it was — without any explanations (you don't feel much like explaining in such a case, the thing is so self-evident!). Poor Z, he stared at me — all at sea! So I told him, 'Don't try to understand. I am not speaking of the past, present and future as we know them, it's something else.' (*Mother laughs*)

But it's amusing because I had never paid much attention to that [the questions of language], the experience is novel, almost the discovery of the truth behind expression. Before, my concern was to be as clear, exact and precise as possible; to say exactly what I meant and put each word in its proper place. But that's not it! Each word has its own life! Some are drawn together by affinity, others repel each other ... it's very funny!

* * *

March 6, 1963

Miracles

The eternal Road

“All's miracle here and can by miracle change.”

(Mother takes up some of Sri Aurobindo's aphorisms)

84 — The supernatural is that the nature of which we have not attained or do not yet know, or the means of which we have not yet conquered. The common taste for miracles is the sign that man's ascent is not yet finished.

85 — *It is rationality and prudence to distrust the supernatural; but to believe in it is also a sort of wisdom.*

86 — *Great saints have performed miracles; greater saints have railed at them; the greatest have both railed at them and performed them.*

87 — *Open thy eyes and see what the world really is and what God; have done with vain and pleasant imaginations.*

Do you have any questions?

First, one may ask: What is a miracle? Because Sri Aurobindo often says that ‘there is no such thing as a miracle,’ but at the same time, in ‘Savitri,’ for example, he says, ‘All’s miracle here and can by miracle change.’³¹

It depends which way you look at it: from this side or from the other side.

People only call miracles things they can’t explain clearly, in mental terms. From that point of view, innumerable things that happen can be said to be ‘miracles,’ because you can’t explain the why or the how.

What would a real miracle be, then?

I don’t see what a real miracle can be, because what’s a miracle, ultimately?

³¹ *Savitri*, Book One, Canto 5, I. 410, p. 85.

A real miracle ... It's only the mind that has the notion of miracle, because following its own logic, the mind decides that given this and that condition, this or that circumstance can or cannot be. But these are merely the mind's limitations. Because from the Lord's point of view, how could there be a miracle? All is but Himself objectifying Himself.

Here we come to the great problem of the road we travel, the eternal Road Sri Aurobindo refers to in *Savitri*. It is easy to imagine, of course, that what was first objectified had an inclination to objectification. The first point to accept, a logical point considering the principle of evolution, is that the objectification is progressive, it is not complete for all eternity.... (*silence*) It's very hard to express, because we cannot free ourselves from our habit of seeing it as a finite quantity unfolding indefinitely and of thinking that only with a finite quantity can there be a beginning. We always have an idea (at least in our way of speaking) of a 'moment' (*laughing*) when the Lord decides to objectify Himself. And put that way, the explanation is easy: He objectifies Himself gradually, progressively, with, as a result, a progressive evolution. But that's just a manner of speaking. Because there is no beginning, no end, yet there is a progression. The sense of sequence, the sense of evolution and progress comes only with the Manifestation. And only when we speak of the earth can we explain things truthfully and rationally, because the earth had a beginning — not in its soul, but in its material reality.

A material universe probably has a beginning, too.

(*silence*)

So looking at it that way, for a given universe, a miracle would mean the sudden appearance of something from another universe. And for the earth (which brings the problem down to a manageable size), a

miracle means the sudden appearance of something that doesn't belong to the earth — and this entry of a principle that doesn't belong to the earth as a finite world causes a radical and instant change.

But then again, as the saying goes, the ENTIRE whole is found in principle at the very core of each part; so even this miracle isn't possible.

We might say that the sense of miracle can only belong to a finite world, a finite consciousness, a finite conception. It is the abrupt, unexpected entry — or appearance or intervention or penetration — of something that did not exist in this physical world. So it follows that any manifestation of a will or consciousness belonging to a realm more infinite and eternal than the earth is necessarily a miracle on the earth. But if you go beyond the finite world or the understanding proper to the finite world, then miracle does not exist. The Lord can play at miracles if He enjoys it, but there's no such thing as a miracle — He plays all possible games.

You can begin to understand Him only when you FEEL it that way, that He plays all possible games — and 'possible' not according to human conception but according to His own conception!

Then there is no room for the miracle, except for a pretend miracle.

(silence)

If what belongs to the supramental world materialized abruptly, rather than through a slow evolution ... that would be something which man, as a mental being, even if his mentality, his mental domain, were brought to perfection, could call a miracle, for it is the intervention in his conscious life of something he doesn't consciously carry within him. The taste for miracles, which is very strong (much stronger in children or in hearts that have remained childlike than in

highly mentalized beings), is basically the faith that the aspiration for the Marvelous will come true, that things beyond all that we may expect of normal life will come true.

In fact, for education, people should always encourage both tendencies side by side: the thirst for the Marvelous, the seemingly unrealizable, for something that fills you with a sense of divinity, while at the same time encouraging, in the perception of the world as it is, an exact, correct and sincere observation, the abolition of all imaginings, a constant control, and a most practical and meticulous feeling for exactness in details. Both tendencies should go side by side. Generally, people kill one with the idea that it's necessary in order to develop the other — which is totally erroneous.

The two can coexist, and as knowledge grows, a moment comes when you understand that they are two aspects of the same thing, namely, a clear vision, a superior discernment. But instead of the vision and discernment being limited and narrow, they become absolutely sincere, correct, exact — AND immense, embracing an entire field that's not yet part of the concrete Manifestation.

This is very important from an educational point of view.

To see the world as it is, accurately, starkly, in the most practical and down-to-earth way, and to see the world as it can be, with the highest and freest vision, filled with hope and aspiration and a marvelous certainty — these are the two poles of discernment. All the most splendid, marvelous, powerful, expressive and total things we are able to imagine are nothing compared to what they can be; and at the same time, our minute observation of the smallest detail can never be sufficiently exact. Both things must go together. When you know this (*gesture below*) and you know That (*gesture above*), you are able to make the two meet.

This is the best possible use of the need for miracles. The need for miracles is a gesture of ignorance: ‘Oh, I wish it were that way!’ It’s a gesture of ignorance and impotence. On the other hand, those who tell you, ‘You live in a world of miracles,’ know only the lower end of things (and quite imperfectly at that), and they are impervious to anything else.

We should turn this need for miracles into a conscious aspiration to something — something that already is, that exists, and that will be manifested WITH THE HELP of all those aspirations: all those aspirations are necessary, or rather, looking at it in a truer way, they are an accompaniment — a pleasant accompaniment — to the eternal unfolding.

Basically, people with a very strict logic tell you, ‘Why pray? Why aspire, why ask? The Lord does what He wills and will always do what He wills.’ It’s perfectly obvious, it goes without saying, but this fervor, ‘Lord, manifest Yourself!’ gives His manifestation a more intense vibration.

Otherwise He would never have made the world as it is — there is a special power, a special joy, a special vibration in the world’s intensity of aspiration to become again what it is.

And that is why — partly, fragmentarily why — there is evolution.

An eternally perfect universe, eternally manifesting eternal perfection, would lack the joy of progress. This I feel very intensely. Very intensely. We see no farther than the tip of our nose, not even one second of Infinity, and that second doesn’t contain all that we’d like to experience and know, so we complain, ‘Oh, no! This world is no good.’ But if we come out of our second into the Whole,

immediately we feel so intensely all that the need for progress has brought to the Manifestation.

...

Why didn't Sri Aurobindo or you make more use of miracles as a means to overcome the resistances of the outer human consciousness? Why this self-effacement towards the outside, this sort of nonintervention, as it were, or unobtrusiveness?

In Sri Aurobindo's case, I only know what he told me several times: what people call 'miracles' are just interventions in the physical or vital worlds. And those interventions are always mixed with ignorant or arbitrary movements.

But the number of miracles Sri Aurobindo performed in the Mind is incalculable. Of course, only if you had a very honest, sincere and pure vision could you see them — I saw them. Others too saw them. But he refused (this I know), he refused to perform any vital or material miracle, because of the admixture.

My own experience is like this: in the world's present state, a direct miracle (vital or material, that is) must necessarily involve a number of fallacious elements which we cannot accept — those miracles are necessarily fallacious miracles. And we cannot accept that. At least I always refused to do so. I've seen what people call miracles. I saw many with Madame Theon, for instance, but it allowed a host of things to exist that to me are inadmissible.

I don't know if that's the true reason, I am not sure if the reason isn't just that we were not supposed to do miracles.

...

But what people call ‘miracles’ nowadays are almost always performed by beings of the vital world, or by men in relation with such beings, so there’s a mixture — it accepts the reality of certain things, the truth of certain things that aren’t true. And it works on that basis. So it’s unacceptable.

* * *

March 13, 1963

Translating – making a start on Book Ten

(Mother opens ‘Savitri.’ She intended to translate ‘The Debate of Love and Death.’ The book opens ‘by chance’ on the last lines of Death’s defeat, which Mother reads aloud:)

And [Death] 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.

Book Ten, Canto 4, lines 959-61, p.667

No matter where you open, no matter where you read, it’s wonderful!
Immediately it’s wonderful — strange, these three lines, aren’t they....

Abandoning hope to make man’s soul his prey
And force to be mortal the immortal spirit.
Wonderful.

These people could very easily lure me: for a long time they have been asking me to read them the whole of *Savitri* — quite a work! But this [*translation*] work is irresistible.

So, in fact (the trouble is, my notebook won't be thick enough!), in fact I would like to translate all of the 'Debate' [*of Love and Death*], it's so wonderful.

(*Mother leafs through the book*)

When she says ... I don't remember the words, she says: "*My God is love*"³². Oh, that's....

(*Mother goes back to the beginning of Book Ten, Canto 4*)

Here:

The Dream Twilight of the Earthly Real

Look at this:

Or in bodies motionless like statues, fixed
In tranced cessations of their sleepless thought
Sat sleeping souls, and this too was a dream.

Book Ten, Canto 4, lines 66-68, p.642-43

They are the ones who want to attain Nirvana.... '*And this too was a dream*'!

(*Mother looks further*)

It begins here:

³² "*My God is love and sweetly suffers all.*" (Book Nine, Canto 2, line 351, p. 591)

Once more arose the great destroying Voice:
Across the fruitless labour of the worlds
His huge denial's all-defeating might
Pursued the ignorant march of dolorous Time.

Book Ten, Canto 4, lines 83-86, p.643

Here is where I should begin.

Book Ten is long: 'The Book of the Double Twilight.'... Of course, if I start reading ...

You'll end up at the beginning!

I would do the whole book!

(Mother leafs back)

'The Gospel of Death and Vanity of the Ideal'

This is invaluable to answer all, all, all the arguments people use.

(Mother leafs further)

Ah, here we are! 'The Debate of Love and Death.'

That's where it begins.

It's Canto III.

There's a passage underlined here.

If it's underlined, it's not by me! ... No, that's the place where I stopped when I was reading: I used to mark in red the place where I stopped.

He says ... (Death to Savitri, in a supremely ironic tone):

... Art thou indeed so strong, O heart, O Soul, so free?...

Book Ten, Canto 3, line 536, p. 636

It's wonderful!

So we would have to start at the beginning of the '*Book of the Double Twilight*,'

Book Ten. Let's see how it goes....

(*Mother reads*)

All still was darkness dread and desolate;
There was no change nor any hope of change.
In this black dream which was a house of Void,
A walk to Nowhere in a land of Nought,
Ever they drifted without aim or goal....

Book Ten, Canto 1, lines 1-5, p.599

My God, how wonderful! It's wonderful.

(*Mother turns the pages*)

And Book Twelve [*'The Return to the Earth'*].... I don't know.

(*Mother reads the concluding lines of 'Savitri':*)

Night, splendid with the moon dreaming in heaven
In silver peace, possessed her luminous reign.
She brooded through her stillness on a thought
Deep-guarded by her mystic folds of light,
And in her bosom nursed a greater dawn.

Book Twelve, lines 342-46 p.724

It heralds the Supermind.

But I had a feeling he hadn't completed his revision. When I read this, I felt it wasn't the end, just as when I read the last chapter of the 'Yoga of Self-Perfection,'³³ I felt it was unfinished. He left it unfinished. And he said so. He said, 'No, I will not go down to this mental level any more.'

But in *Savitri's* case ... (I didn't look after it, you know), he had around him Purani, that Chinmayi, and ... (what's his name?) Nirod — they all swarmed around him. So I didn't look after *Savitri*. I read *Savitri* two years ago, I had never read it before. And I am so glad! Because I read it at the time I could understand it — and I realized that none of those people had understood ONE BIT of it. Both things at the same time.

(silence)

Let's see, open a page at random, I want to see if you find something interesting — concentrate a moment and open the book, I'll read it to you.

Just put your finger.... Do you want a blade? (*Mother gives Satprem a letter opener*)

(*Satprem concentrates and opens the book*)

Oh!

In the passion of its solitary dream
It lay [the heart of the King] like a closed soundless oratory
Where sleeps a consecrated argent floor
Lit by a single and untrembling ray

³³ The last chapter of the *Synthesis of Yoga*: "Towards the Supramental Time Vision."

And an invisible Presence kneels in prayer.

Pretty lovely! Oh, it's good.... Let me go back a little:

In the luminous stillness of its mute appeal
It looked up to the heights it could not see;
It yearned from the longing depths it could not leave.
In the centre of its vast and fateful trance
Half way between his free and fallen selves,
Interceding twixt God's day and the mortal night,
Accepting worship as its single law,
Accepting bliss as the sole cause of things,
Refusing the austere joy which none can share,
Refusing the calm that lives for calm alone,
To her it turned for whom it willed to be.

Book Three, Canto 3, p.332

In the passion of its solitary dream
It lay like a closed soundless oratory
Where sleeps a consecrated argent floor
Lit by a single and untrembling ray
And an invisible Presence kneels in prayer.
On some deep breast of liberating peace
All else was satisfied with quietude;
This only knew there was a truth beyond.
All other parts were dumb in centred sleep
Consenting to the slow deliberate Power
Which tolerates the world's error and its grief,
Consenting to the cosmic long delay,

Timelessly waiting through the patient years
Her coming they had asked for earth and men;
This was the fiery point that called her now.
Extinction could not quench that lonely fire;
Its seeing filled the blank of mind and will;
Thought dead, its changeless force abode and grew.

Book Three, Canto 3, p.332

I can't see clearly any more.... But I know what this is about: it's when the King³⁴ makes his last *surrender* to the universal Mother — he annuls himself before the universal Mother, and She gives him the mission he must fulfill.

Its seeing filled the blank of mind and will;
Thought dead, its changeless force abode and grew.
Armed with the intuition of a bliss
To which some moved tranquillity was the key,
It persevered through life's huge emptiness
Amid the blank denials of the world.
It sent its voiceless prayer to the Unknown;
It listened for the footsteps of its hopes
Returning through the void immensities,
It waited for the fiat of the Word
That comes through the still self from the Supreme.

Book Three, Canto 3, p.332-33

³⁴ In *Savitri*, the King represents the human aspiration to discover the Earth's secret beyond all already explored spiritual knowledge. — Satprem

Well, this is certainly a beautiful choice! That's it, there's no doubt.

When he wakes up from that state, he has a vision of the universal Mother, and receives his mission.

This is very good, a very good indication.

It's captivating, *Savitri*!

I believe it's his Message — all the rest is preparation, while *Savitri* is the Message. Unfortunately, there were two morons here who fancied correcting him — while he was alive! (A. especially, he's a poet.) Hence all those *Letters on Poetry* Sri Aurobindo wrote. I've always refused to read them — I find it outrageous. He was forced to explain a whole 'poetic technique' — the very idea! It's just the contrary: it comes down from above, and AFTERWARDS you explain. Like a punch in sawdust: Inspiration comes down, and afterwards you explain why it's all arranged as it is — but that just doesn't interest me!

(*silence*)

So you came (you see, it's the answer) to manifest (it's very good, I like this answer very much), to manifest *the bliss above*. You understand? He goes beyond all past attempts to unite with the Supreme, because none of them satisfies him — he aspires for something more. So when everything is annulled, he enters a Nothingness, then comes out of it with the capacity to unite with the new Bliss.

That's it, it's good!

* * *

March 23, 1963

Translating – Book Ten

*(Mother first reads from her translation of ‘Savitri’ a few excerpts
about death.*

We give here the original English.)

A grey defeat pregnant with victory.
A whip to lash us towards our deathless state.
The unconscious world is the spirit’s self-made room ...

Self-made.

Eternal Night shadow of eternal Day.
Night is not our beginning nor our end;
She is the dark Mother in whose womb we have hid
Safe from too swift a waking to world-pain....

Oh, this is....

By Light we live and to the Light we go.
Here in this seat of Darkness mute and lone,
In the heart of everlasting Nothingness
Light conquered now even by that feeble beam....

Book Ten, Canto 1, lines 67-78, p.600-01

It’s marvelous.

Yes, it must be a joy to work on ‘Savitri.’

Oh, mon petit! ... It makes you live in a marvelous atmosphere.

* * *

April 20, 1963

As for me, I am debating with Death.

It's exactly the universal state of mind: a state of disbelief, oh, terrible! If we didn't know that something will come to replace it, it would be terrible.

This *Savitri* is wonderful, he foresaw everything, saw everything, everything, absolutely everything, there isn't one point he left unexplored!

* * *

May 11, 1963³⁵

“For ever love, O beautiful slave of God.”

Mahalakshmi is the Divine Mother's aspect of love, the perfection of manifested love, which must come before this supreme Love (which is beyond the Manifestation and the Nonmanifestation) can be expressed — the supreme Love referred to in *Savitri* when the Supreme sends Savitri to the earth:

For ever love, O beautiful slave of God!

³⁵ See also talk of January 12, 1961. – S.

It's to prepare the earth to receive the Supreme's manifestation, the manifestation of His Victory.

* * *

May 11, 1963

*(Mother suddenly points to a piece of paper on the table beside her,
on which the figure 8 is written)*

Did you notice this figure?... There's a line in *Savitri* (I can't quote exactly): 'Wherever Nature is, He (the Supreme) too is there, for, in truth, He and She are one.'³⁶ I was asked to find an illustration for this line,³⁷ and I found the 8.

The drawing starts here (*Mother draws the first half of the 8*): it's the Supreme leaning forward. Then, Nature in its base, Nature in sleep (*the base of the 8*). And here (*the top of the 8*), I put two little drawings (as if to symbolize an eye, a nose and a mouth) to evoke the summit of consciousness. So the Supreme is leaning forward like this and Nature rises like this (*Mother draws the second half of the 8*). All this (*the top of the 8*) is golden, then it becomes prismatic (*the middle of the 8*), and deep blue here (*the base of the 8*), in the most material

³⁶ As long as Nature lasts, he too is there;

For this is sure that he and she are one.

(Book One, Canto Four, lines 947-48, p. 72)

³⁷ Mother helps a disciple, a painter, to illustrate some passages from *Savitri*.

– Satprem

part of the creation, and the blue becomes lighter and lighter (*going upward again*), and finally golden. Perpetually.

Eight is the symbol of infinity for mathematicians (∞).

Exactly. It's very interesting.

* * *

May 15, 1963

Truth and Falsehood Death

88-This world was built by Death that he might live. Wilt thou abolish death? Then life too will perish. Thou canst not abolish death, but thou mayst transform it into a greater living.

89-This world was built by Cruelty that she might love. Wilt thou abolish cruelty? Then love too will perish. Thou canst not abolish cruelty, but thou mayst transfigure it into its opposite, into a fierce Love and Delightfulness.

90-This world was built by Ignorance and Error that they might know. Wilt thou abolish ignorance and error?

Then knowledge too will perish. Thou canst not abolish ignorance and error, but thou mayst transmute them into the utter and effulgent exceeding of reason.

91-If life alone were and not death, there could be no immortality; if love were alone and not cruelty, joy would be only a tepid and ephemeral rapture; if reason were alone and not ignorance, our highest attainment would not exceed a limited rationality and worldly wisdom.

92-Death transformed becomes Life that is Immortality; Cruelty transfigured becomes Love that is intolerable ecstasy; Ignorance transmuted becomes Light that leaps beyond wisdom and knowledge.

(Sri Aurobindo, *Thoughts and Aphorisms*)

It's the same idea, that opposition and opposites stimulate progress. Because to say that without Cruelty, Love would be tepid ... The principle of Love, as it is beyond the Manifest and the Nonmanifest, has nothing to do with either tepidness or cruelty. But Sri Aurobindo's idea, it seems, is that opposites are the most effective and rapid way to knead Matter so that it may intensify its manifestation.

As an experience, it's absolutely certain: when you come in touch with eternal Love, supreme Love, the first, immediate ... (what should I say?) perception or sensation (it's not an understanding, it is much more concrete) is that even the most enlightened, kneaded, prepared material consciousness is INCAPABLE of manifesting That! The first impression is that sort of incapacity. Then comes the experience of something manifesting a type of ... not exactly 'cruelty,' because it's not cruelty as we conceive it; but in the totality of circumstances, there is a vibration which is felt as a certain intensity of refusal of

love as it is manifested here — that's exactly the thing: something in the material world refuses the manifestation of love as it exists at present (I don't refer to the ordinary world but to the consciousness at its present highest). It's an experience, I am speaking of something that has taken place. Then the part of the consciousness that has been touched by that opposition calls out directly to Love's origin WITH AN INTENSITY IT COULD NOT HAVE HAD WITHOUT THE EXPERIENCE OF THE REFUSAL. Limits are broken, a flood descends which could NOT manifest before, and something is expressed which was not expressed before.

That happened not very long ago.³⁸

Seeing that, there is obviously a similar experience in connection with what is called life and death. It's a sort of 'overhanging' (it comes to me in English, that's why I have difficulty) of that constant presence of Death or possibility of death. As he says in *Savitri*, we have a constant companion all the way from the cradle to the grave³⁹, we are constantly shadowed by the threat or presence of Death. Well, this gives the cells an intensity in their call for a Power of Eternity which would not be there without that constant threat. Then we understand — we begin to understand very concretely — that all those things are only goads to make the Manifestation progress and grow more intense, more perfect. If the goads are crude, it is because the Manifestation is very crude. As it grows more and more perfect and apt to manifest something ETERNALLY PROGRESSIVE, those very crude methods will give way to more refined ones, and the world will progress without the need for such brutal oppositions. It is only

³⁸ See also the talk of January 27, 1962 – S.

³⁹ *His hope a star above a cradle and grave.* (Book One, Canto 5, line 162, p. – S.

because the world is in infancy and the human consciousness in its very early infancy.

It's a very concrete experience.

So, when the earth no longer needs to die in order to progress, there will be no more death. When the earth no longer needs to suffer in order to progress, there will be no more suffering. And when the earth no longer needs to hate in order to love, there will be no more hatred.

(silence)

It is the quickest and most effective method of pulling the creation out of its inertia and leading it on to its blossoming.

(long silence)

* * *

May 18, 1963

(Mother asks for a box of paints to demonstrate practically the gradation of colors of the levels of consciousness, from the most material Nature to the Supreme. The point is to illustrate the symbol of Infinity, the figure 8, which Mother explained in the conversation of May 11: the infinite play of the Supreme reaching down to Nature and Nature rising toward the Supreme.⁴⁰ Mother speaks in English in the presence of a

⁴⁰ Satprem's note is mistaken here. The painting in question is no. 6 of Book 1 Canto 5, illustrating the lines:

A Will, a hope immense now siezed his heart,
And to discern the superhuman's form
He raised his eyes to unseen spiritual heights,
Aspiring to bring down a greater world.

disciple, who is a painter, so that he may convey her explanations to H., the disciple who is preparing illustrations for 'Savitri.')

Of course, all these things are lights, so you can't reproduce them. But still, it must be a violet that is not dull and not dark (*Mother starts from the most material Nature*)⁴¹. What she has put is too red, but if it's too blue, it won't be good either — you understand the difficulty? Then after violet there is blue, which must be truly blue, not too light, but it must be a bright blue. Not too light because there are three consecutive blues: there is the blue of the Mind, and then comes the Higher Mind, which is paler, and then the Illumined Mind, which is the color of the flag [*Mother's flag*], a silver blue, but naturally paler than that. And after this comes yellow, a yellow that is the yellow of the Intuitive Mind; it must not be golden, it must be the color of cadmium. Then after this yellow, which is pale, we have the Overmind with all the colors — they must all be bright colors, not dark: blue, red, green, violet, purple, yellow, all of them, all the colors. And after that, we then have all the golds of the Supermind, with its three layers. And then, after that, there is one layer of golden white — it is white, but a golden white. After this golden white, there is silver white — silver white: how can I explain that? (H. has sent me some ridiculous pictures of a sun shining on water — it has nothing to do with that.) If you put silver, silver gray (*Mother shows a silver box nearby shining brilliantly in the sun*), silver gray together with white ... that is, it is white, but if you put the four whites together you see the difference. There is a white white, then there is a white

⁴¹ Again Satprem's note is mistaken – see below – S.

with a touch of pink, then a silvery white and a golden white. It makes four worlds.

I have explained this [to H.] as I am explaining it to you, but H. has not seen it so she can't understand. I want to show her on paper. It is twelve different things [*or twelve worlds*], one after another.⁴²

* * *

July 10, 1963

(*Mother reads out a passage from 'Savitri':*)

There's something here....

A slow reversal's movement then took place:
A gas belched out from some invisible Fire,
Of its dense rings were formed these million stars;
Upon earth's new-born soil God's tread was heard.

Book Two, Canto I, lines 214-17, p.101

It's magnificent ... magnificent.

In French it would be poor.

⁴² Satprem says "*Mother seems to have forgotten the red of the vital, which comes between material Nature's violet and the Mind's blue. Thus we have twelve worlds: violet, red, blue (the Mind's three blues), yellow, then the Overmind's prismatic colors, which makes five lower worlds, then finally the three golds of the Supermind and the four whites of the supreme creative Joy or Ananda.*" However in the finished painting the lowest, most material, level is deep indigo, followed by the red of the physical. In this description, the Mother is starting from the next level, the violet of the vital, followed by the blues of the Mind. – S.

I don't seek to translate poetically, I only try to render the meaning. I read the English sentence until I SEE the meaning clearly, and once I see it, I put it into French, but very awkwardly — I don't claim to be a poet! Only, the meaning is correct.

This translation will not serve any purpose — it serves a purpose only for me. But I don't even have the time, I can hardly spare half an hour a day for this work — I hope I can offer myself half an hour a day!

* * *

September 25, 1963

(Mother first reads her notation of a recent experience)

It came in English. (I want to put it in the *Bulletin* to fill a gap!) We should put it in French, too.

Love is ... (no need to say that it's the condensation of an experience — an experience I leave unsaid). Love is not sexual intercourse. Love is not vital attraction and interchange. Love is not the heart's hunger for affection. Love is a mighty vibration coming straight from the One. And only the very pure and very strong are capable of receiving and manifesting it.

Then an explanation on what I mean by 'pure,' *the very pure and very strong*:

To be pure is to be open only to the Supreme's influence, and to no other.

Far more difficult than what people consider purity to be! Which is something quite artificial and false.

The last sentence I wrote in French, too (the two came together):

*Être pur, c'est être ouvert seulement à l'influence du Suprême
et à nulle autre.*

It's simple and definite.

Now we should translate the rest into French . . .

It's from *Savitri*, in 'The Debate of Love and Death,' when Death tells Savitri, 'What you call love is the hunger of your heart.'⁴³

I have a whole stack of notes! (Mother shows her successive drafts of the translation)

The thing is new to me. That's what I told you the other day: first an experience, but an experience ... something that takes HOLD of the entire being, the entire body, everything, everything, like this (*grasping gesture*) and keeps you in its hold. And it works. It works everywhere in the cells: absolutely everywhere, in the consciousness, in the sensation, in the cells. Then it settles, as if passing through a very fine sieve, and it falls back to the other side — as words. But not always arranged in sentences (it's very odd): two words here, three words there (*Mother seems to show patches of color here and there*). Then I keep very still, I don't stir — above all I don't think, don't stir

⁴³ Love cannot live by heavenly food alone,

Only on sap of earth can it survive.

For thy passion was a sensual want refined,

A hunger of the body and the heart;

Book Ten, Canto 2, lines 146-49, p. 611.

Savitri answers him:

My love is not a hunger of the heart,

My love is not a craving of the flesh;

It came to me from God, to God returns.

Book Ten, Canto 2, lines 206-08, p. 612

- S.

— silence. Then, little by little, the words start a dance, and when they form a reasonably coherent sentence, I write it down. But generally it isn't final. If I wait a little longer (even while doing something else), after a time it comes: a sentence that has a far more logical and striking existence. And if I wait still longer, it becomes more precise, until finally it comes with a feeling, 'Now this is it.' That's what happened with the English note: 'Now this is it.' Good, so I write it down.

I never had that before. Everything had to fall silent (I mean even the most active and material outer mind), I had to get into the habit, when my experience comes, of not stirring — not stirring, nothing stirring, everything like this (*gesture in suspense*), waiting.

Even visually, it almost looks like a fine rain of white light, and after a time, that fine rain seems to make the words grow, as if it were watering the words! And the words come. Then they start a sort of dance, a quadrille, and when the quadrille has taken a clear shape, then the sentence becomes clear.

Very amusing.

It's already the third time that's happened — brand new.

So when I note it all down, the result is all sorts of papers! (*Mother shows the stack of drafts*)

And now, with that new process, the papers will go on multiplying! Because it comes the way I told you [*in successive bits*]. But it has an advantage: the mind stays absolutely silent — the mind need not do anything, it's as if someone came to look for the words in a storehouse and made all the arrangements. And that someone is impersonal: an impersonal consciousness. Almost 'the consciousness of what wants to be expressed,' the consciousness of a revelation or an instruction, or the consciousness of a will, but not of a person. That

someone collects the words and puts them together, then there is a dance ... like a dance of electrons!

(silence)

* * *

September 28, 1963

Truth and Falsehood Death

Do you remember Savitri's debate with Death [*'The Debate of Love and Death'*]? ... According to it, Sri Aurobindo seems to be saying that Disorder arose when Life entered Matter.

(Mother leafs through her thick translation notebook⁴⁴)

Although God made the world for his delight,
An ignorant Power took charge and seemed his Will

In other words, that Power assumed the appearance of God's Will.

And Death's deep falsity has mastered Life.
All grew a play of Chance simulating Fate.

Book Ten, Canto 3, lines 309-12 p.629

And before, Sri Aurobindo writes:

⁴⁴ We are giving here directly the original English of those passages and not Mother's translation into French.

O Death, this is the mystery of thy reign.

He seems to imply it's only on earth:

In earth's anomalous and tragic field
Carried in its aimless journey by the sun
Mid the forced marches of the great dumb stars,
A darkness occupied the fields of God,

(Mother repeats)

A darkness occupied the fields of God,
And Matter's world was governed by thy shape.
The shape of Death.
Thy mask has covered the Eternal's face,

It's marvellous!

The Bliss that made the world has fallen asleep.
Abandoned in the Vast she slumbered on:
An evil transmutation overtook
Her members till she knew herself no more.

Book Ten, Canto 3, lines 242-52, p.627-28

And so on, a whole passage. And he seems to imply that it's when Life entered inert Matter that an ignorant Power ... what I read at the beginning:

An ignorant Power took charge and seemed his Will
And Death's deep falsity has mastered Life.

Consequently, according to this, Death would exist only on the earth.

(silence)

That's where I am in my translation. *(Mother closes her notebook)*

What are your conclusions?

I'll have to go to the end to understand what he wants to demonstrate.

You see, I was always under the impression that the earth was a symbolic representation of the universe in order to concentrate the Work on one point so that it could be done more consciously and deliberately. And I was always under the impression that Sri Aurobindo too thought that way. But here ... I had read *Savitri* without noticing this. But now that I read it and I am so immersed in that problem ... In other words, it's as if it were THE question given me to resolve.

I noticed it while reading.

(long silence)

It would seem to legitimize or justify those who want to escape entirely from the earth's atmosphere. The idea would be that the earth is a special experiment of the Supreme in His universe; and those who are not too keen on that experiment (!) prefer to get out of it (to say things somewhat offhandedly).

The difference is this: In one case, the purpose of the earth is a concentration of the Work (which means it can be done more rapidly, consciously and perfectly here), and so there is a serious reason to stay on and do it. In the other case, it's just one experiment amidst thousands or millions of others; and if that experiment doesn't particularly appeal to you, to want to get out of it is legitimate.

I don't see how it would be possible for one point of the Supreme not to be the whole Supreme. If there is a difficulty here, it's a difficulty for the WHOLE, isn't it?

Not necessarily.

Why should there be something apart from the rest?

It all depends, in fact, (*laughing*) on what He is driving at!

We can very well conceive that He may be carrying on some very different experiments. And so you could go from one experiment to another, you see.

It would be as Buddha said: it's attachment or desire that keeps you here, otherwise there's no reason for you to stay here.

(Satprem protests wordlessly)

Everything is possible to me, you know, absolutely everything, even the seemingly most contradictory things — really, I am totally unable to raise a mental or logical or reasonable objection either to this or to that. But the question ... (*Mother leaves her sentence unfinished*). That is to say, the Lord's Will is very clear to Him, and (*laughing*) the whole thing is to unite with that Will and know it.

It had always seemed to me that way [*the earth as a symbolic point of concentration*], but I am so convinced that Sri Aurobindo saw things more truly and totally than anyone did that, naturally, when he says something, you tend to consider the problem!

I don't know, I haven't reached the end of *Savitri* yet. Because I notice (rereading it after the space of a few months, barely two years) that it's altogether something else than the first time I read it. Altogether something else: there is in it infinitely more than what I

had experienced; my experience was limited, and now it's far more complete (maybe if I reread it in a year or two, it would be still more complete, I don't know), but there are plenty of things that I hadn't seen the first time.

Perhaps that passage I've just read is only one aspect? ... I will see when I reach the end.

What he announces, and what I am sure of, is that the Victory will be won on the earth and that the earth will become a progressive being (eternally progressive) in the Lord — that's understood. But it doesn't preclude the other possibility. The future of the earth he has announced clearly, and it's understood that such is the future of the earth; only, if that possibility [of death as an exclusively earthly phenomenon] is what we could term 'historically' correct, it would sort of legitimize the attitude of those who get away from it. How is it that Buddha, who undeniably was an Avatar, laid so much stress on Deliverance as the conclusion of things? He who stayed behind only to help others ... to get away faster. Then that means he saw only one side of the problem? ...

Oh, yes!

But if there is a whole universe, thousands of universes with altogether different modes, and if to be here is merely a matter of CHOICE ... then the choice is free, of course — there are those who like conquest and victory, and those others who like doing nothing.

But Buddha represented only one stage of consciousness. AT THAT TIME it was good to follow that path, therefore ...

We can conceive it was a particular necessity within the whole, of course. But these are all conceptions, it's still something mental — I recently had in my hands a quotation from Sri Aurobindo in which he said that there is 'no problem the human mind cannot solve if it wants to.' (*Laughing*) There is no problem that the mind cannot solve if it applies itself to it! But I don't care, I have no need of mental logic — no need. And it would have no effect on my action — that's not what I want, not at all! It's only because there is that increasingly acute contradiction between the Truth and what is. It's becoming painfully acute. You know, that suffering, that general misery is becoming almost unbearable.

There was a time when I looked at all that with a smile — a long time. For years and years it was a smile, the way you smile at a childish question. Now, I don't know why it has come ... it has been THRUST on me like a sort of acute anguish — which certainly is necessary to get out of the problem.

To get out, I mean, to cure, to change — not to flee. I don't like flight.

That was my major objection to the Buddhists: all that you are advised to do is merely to give you an opportunity to flee — that's not pretty.

But change, yes.

(*silence*)

There are some lines [in *Savitri*] that all of a sudden are so magnificent! They come with such power, but once written down, that's not it any more.

For example, you SEE that image of the mask of Death covering the Supreme's face.

It's marvelous. So intense. And then that ignorant Power that took charge of the earth and made it ... that 'seemed,' SEEMED the Supreme's Will. It's so pregnant with meaning.

* * *

October 16, 1963

The Truth that slays, the Truth that saves

(Mother first reads two lines from 'The Debate of Love and Death' in 'Savitri.'

She would like to put them as epigraph to the conversation of September 7, 1963, the dialogue with a materialist.)

Listen to this:

O Death, thou speakest Truth but Truth that slays,
I answer to thee with the Truth that saves.

Book Ten, Canto 3, lines 18-19, p.621

It's beautiful!

So the materialist ... '*O Death, thou speakest Truth....*' What can he reply? It's the Truth!

* * *

November 27, 1963

He and She

I remember having asked, ‘But the earth, the human earth, is it really still so tamasic that it needs tragic events of the sort to awaken its consciousness?...’ And I was answered, ‘Still far more tamasic than you think.’

The intelligences that have emerged into a higher light are like stars scattered over a perfectly dark sky — perfectly dark.

But this ‘trigger’ you mention, Kennedy’s death, will it precipitate things in the sense of a ‘shake-up’?

Yes. Its effect is like an electrical discharge that shakes up the tamas, shakes up inertia.

It’s like in *Savitri*, when he speaks of the ‘consciousness that fell asleep in the dust’ ... the divine Consciousness that fell asleep in the dust of its creation (I am embroidering). The divine Consciousness, the eternal Mother, that is, fell asleep in the dust of her creation; somebody wakes her up, and She realises (this isn’t from Sri Aurobindo!), She realises (*laughing*) that it’s the supreme Lord who shook her! So She does everything, all sorts of extraordinary things, anything to stop Him from going away! (*Mother takes up ‘Savitri’*)

She reposes motionless in its dust of sleep.⁴⁵

Book Two, Canto 6, line 274 p.180

⁴⁵ This is the transcription given in the *Agenda*. The line actually reads:

She refuses motionless in the dust to sleep. – S.

Then:

For him she leaped forth from the unseen Vasts
To move here in a stark unconscious world.

And then:

In beauty she treasures the sunlight of his smile.
Ashamed of her rich cosmic poverty....

Splendid!

And woos his large-eyed wandering thoughts to dwell
In figures of her million-impulsed Force.
Only to attract her veiled companion
And keep him close to her breast in her world-cloak
Lest from her arms he turn to his formless peace,
Is her heart's business and her clinging care.

Book Two, Canto 6, lines 300-13, p.181

* * *

December 7, 1963

“Glorification of Sin in the vital world”

You see, there are different ways for the Lord to be present, it's very interesting (the difference isn't for Him, it's for us!), and it depends precisely on the amount of habitual reflex movements that take place almost outside our observation (generally completely outside it) And

this question preoccupied me very, very much: the ways of feeling the Lord's Presence — the different ways. There is a way in which you feel it as something vague, but of which you are sure — you are always sure but the sensation is vague and a bit blurred — and at other times it is an acute Presence ... (*Mother touches her face*), very precise, in all that you do, all that you feel, all that you are. There is an entire range. And then if we follow the movement (*gesture in stages, moving away*), there are those who are so far away, so far, that they don't feel anything at all.

This experience made me write something yesterday (but it has lasted several days), it came as the outcome of the work done, and yesterday I wrote it both in English and in French:

'There is no other sin, no other vice than to be far from Thee.'

Then, the entire world, the universe, appeared to me in that light, and at every point (which takes up no space), at every point of the universe and throughout the universe, it's that way. Not that there are far and near places in the universe, that's not what I mean (it's beyond space), but there is a whole hierarchy of nearness, up to something that doesn't feel and doesn't know — it's not that it is outside, because nothing can be outside the Lord, but it is as if the extreme limit: so far away, so far, so far — absolutely black — that He seems not to reach there.

It was a very total vision. And such an acute experience that it seemed to be the only true thing. It didn't take up any space, yet there was that sensation of nearness and farness. And there was a kind of Focus, or a Center, I can't say (but it was everywhere), which was the climax of Thee — purely Thee. And it had a quality of its own.

Then it began to move farther and farther away, which produced a kind of mixture with something ... that was nothing — that didn't exist — but that altered the vibration, the intensity, which made it move farther and farther away to ... Darkness — unconscious Darkness.

And something kept coming again and again to me: there is no other sin ... (because this followed a few lines I read in *Savitri* on the glorification of sin in the vital world,⁴⁶ the words came to me because of that) ... there is no other sin, no other vice than to be far from Thee.

It seemed to explain everything.

It wasn't I who wrote it! There's no 'I' in it: it comes just like that.

The *far from Thee* is so, so intense in its vibration, it has a concrete meaning.

And that's the only thing: all the rest, all moral notions, everything, everything, even the notion of Ignorance ... it all becomes mental chatter. But this, this experience, is marvelous. *Far from Thee...*

* * *

⁴⁶ All powers of Life towards their godhead tend
In the wideness and the daring of that air,
Each builds its temple and expands its cult,
And Sin too there is a divinity.

Affirming the beauty and splendour of her law
She claims life as her natural domain,
Assumes the world's throne or dons the papal robe:

Book Two, Canto 6, lines 441-47, p.185

- S.

December 31, 1963

Truth and Falsehood

“Falsehood is the sorrow of the Lord” (1)

(Mother prepares her organ, for the New Year’s music she will play tomorrow)

...

I intended to play ‘The Horror of the World of Falsehood’ tomorrow, and to end with ‘The Glory of Light’ ... if it comes.

But this is a little relaxation ... musical relaxation.

What did the music evoke in you?... I don’t want you to say ‘good’ or ‘bad,’ but did it suggest anything?

My eyes fell on this sentence of Sri Aurobindo [on the calendar]

Ah, exactly! That’s it. That’s it! Every day, I look at it. In the evening the date and the quotation are changed — I don’t know what tomorrow’s text will be, we have to change the calendar and start ‘January.’ Would you like us to do it? Bring the calendar here.

All this will go now!

We have December here. *(Mother reads:)*

All earth shall be the Spirit’s manifest home⁴⁷

...

(Mother sets the calendar to January 1, 1964, and reads Sri Aurobindo’s quotation)

⁴⁷ Book Eleven, line 1311, p. 707

All can be done if the God-touch is there⁴⁸

There: All can be done. All.

I like this calendar a lot because of its quotations. I change it every evening.

Tomorrow, I see here ... (*Mother looks at her notebook*) four, five, six, seven, eight people, and two over there, which makes ten — tomorrow morning between 10 and 11 am... (*Laughing*) '*All can be done if the God-touch is there*'!

So I'll see you next year.

Did I give you everything? Did I give you the second calendar [*with a photograph of Mother, printed in Calcutta*]?

(*On the second calendar, the photograph shows Mother engaged in her translation work*)

It's the last part of the *Synthesis*.⁴⁹

...

I am going as fast as I can, I am the one most concerned! But you can't hurry, it's not possible. Not possible.

In fact, in *Savitri*, Sri Aurobindo went through all the worlds, and it so happens that I am following that without knowing it (because I never remember — thank God, I really thank heaven! — I asked the Lord to take away my mental memory and He took it away entirely,

⁴⁸ Book One, Canto 1, line 78, p. 3

⁴⁹ In fact, the passage Mother is seen translating in the photograph is from *Savitri*:

Our will [shall become] a force of the Eternal's power
And thought the rays of a spiritual sun.

Book One, Canto 4, lines 336-37, p. 55 – Satprem

so I am not weighed down), but I follow that description in *Savitri* without mentally knowing the sequence of the worlds, and these last few days ... I was in that Muddle of Falsehood (I told you last time), it was really painful, and I was tracking it down to the most tenuous vibrations, those that go back to the origin, to the moment when Truth could turn into Falsehood — how it all happened. And it is so tenuous, almost imperceptible, that deformation, the original Deformation, that you tend to lose heart and you think, ‘It’s still really quite easy to topple over ... the slightest thing and you can still topple over into Falsehood, into Deformation.’ And yesterday, I had in my hands a passage from *Savitri* that was brought to me — it’s a marvel, but ... it’s so sad, so miserable, oh, I could have cried (I don’t easily cry).

The world grew full of menacing Energies,
And wherever turned for help or hope his eyes,
In field and house, in street and camp and mart,
He met the prowl and stealthy come and go
Of armed disquieting bodied Influences.
A march of goddess figures dark and nude
Alarmed the air with grandiose unease;
Appalling footsteps drew invisibly near,
Shapes that were threats invaded the dream-light,
And ominous beings passed him on the road
Whose very gaze was a calamity:
A charm and sweetness sudden and formidable,
Faces that raised alluring lips and eyes
Approached him armed with beauty like a snare,
But hid a fatal meaning in each line

And could in a moment dangerously change.

But he alone discerned that screened attack.

Book Two, Canto 7, lines 126-142, p. 205

It makes you wonder.... It's like something gluey surrounding you, touching you all over; you can't go forward, you can't do anything without encountering those black and gluey fingers of Falsehood. It was a very painful impression.

And last night, there was the Answer, as it were. This morning, when I got up, I didn't remember clearly, but in the middle of the night I knew it very well. (It's not going from sleep to the waking consciousness: it is coming out of one state to enter another one, and when I came out of that state to enter the so-called normal one, I remembered very well.) I was as if made to live the WAY of turning that Falsehood into Truth, and it was so joyful!... So joyful. In the sense that it's a vibration similar to joy that is capable of dissolving and overcoming the vibration of Falsehood. That was very important: it isn't effort, it isn't righteousness, or scruple or rigidity, none of that, none of that has any effect on that sadness (it is a sadness) of Falsehood — it's something so sad, so helpless, so miserable ... so miserable. And only a vibration of Joy can change it.

It was a vibration that flowed like silvery water — it rippled and flowed like silvery water.

Which means that austerity, asceticism, even an intense and stern aspiration, all sternness, all that: no action. No action — Falsehood stays put in the background.... But it cannot resist the sparkling of joy. It's interesting.

(silence)

And in his text, Sri Aurobindo says that the Lord joins the contraries, the opposites, puts them together so they fight each other, and that this will and action give Him a sardonic smile (I am commenting).

A tract he reached unbuilt and owned by none:
There all could enter but none stay for long.

It was a no man's land of evil air,
A crowded neighbourhood without one home,
A borderland between the world and hell.

There unreality was Nature's Lord:
It was a space where nothing could be true,
For nothing was what it had claimed to be:
A high appearance wrapped a spacious void.
Yet nothing would confess its own presence
Even to itself in the ambiguous heart:
A vast deception was the law of things;
Only by that deception they could live.

An unsubstantial Nihil guaranteed
The falsehood of the forms this Nature took
And made them seem awhile to be and live.
A borrowed magic drew them from the Void;
They took a shape and stuff that was not theirs
And showed a colour that they could not keep,
Mirrors to a fantasm of reality.

Each rainbow brilliance was a splendid lie;
A beauty unreal graced a glamour face.
Nothing could be relied on to remain:
Joy nurtured tears and good an evil proved,
But never out of evil one plucked good:

Love ended early in hate, delight killed with pain,
Truth into falsity grew and death ruled life.
A Power that laughed at the mischief of the world,
An irony that joined the world's contraries
And flung them into each other's arms to strive,
Put a sardonic rictus on God's face.

Book Two, Canto 7, lines 152-82, p. 206-07

I was asked for an illustration for H.; I saw the image, the Lord's face with a sardonic smile. And then, after last night's experience, this morning suddenly that expression of the face changed, and I saw the image of the true, the true sorrow of Compassion — I don't know how to explain it.... The sardonic smile changed: from sardonic it grew bitter, from bitter it grew sorrowful, from sorrowful it grew full of an extraordinary compassion....

(silence)

So we could say that Falsehood is the sorrow of the Lord. And that His Joy is the cure for all Falsehood.

Sorrow had to be expressed so as to be erased from the creation.

And sorrow is Falsehood — the Lord's sorrow, sorrow in its essence, is Falsehood.

So to live in Falsehood is to hurt the Lord.

It opens up horizons....

And His Joy is the cure for everything.

That's the problem seen from the other angle.

So, if we love the Lord, we cannot give Him cause for sorrow, and necessarily we emerge from Falsehood and enter Joy.

That's what I saw last night. It was all silvery. All silvery, silvery....

There was even the vision of how the vibrations were in the cells: vibrations that were silvery, sparkling, rippling, but very regular, and precise ... (how can I put it?). It was the contradiction of Falsehood in the cells; like little flashes of silvery light.

But that [*Falsehood*] is the great obstacle, the extreme difficulty. It's something gluey which entered the creation and sticks to everything, and which has become a material habit too, because it's not only Mind that has Falsehood in it: there's Falsehood in Life, in Life itself. In the completely inanimate, I don't know.... Maybe it came with Life? (According to *Savitri*, the origin of Falsehood lies in Life.) But it's as though Unconsciousness, in order to go towards Consciousness, to return to Consciousness, had taken the path of Falsehood and Death instead of the path of Truth.

And Falsehood is this: the sorrow of the Lord.

I was asked for a message for next year, and things of that sort kept coming to me, so I didn't say anything. They wouldn't even understand, it's incomprehensible if you don't have the experience. And if you say just like that, almost dogmatically, 'Falsehood is the sorrow of the Lord,' it doesn't mean anything.

Or if you say it in a literary way, it's no longer true.

And if you said, 'Falsehood is the Lord's way of being unhappy' (!) (*Mother laughs*), people would think you're not being serious.

* * *

January 8, 1964

Truth and Falsehood

“Falsehood is the sorrow of the Lord” (2)

(Mother shows a sketch she has just drawn to illustrate the passage in ‘Savitri’, in which Sri Aurobindo speaks of the ‘sardonic rictus on God’s face.’⁵⁰)

I wanted to see this ‘sardonic laugh’ of the Lord! So I looked, and instead of a sardonic laugh, I saw a face ... with such a deep sorrow — so deep, so grave — and full of such compassion.... It’s after that that I said (you remember, it was over there,⁵¹ I was seeing that): ‘Falsehood is the sorrow of the Lord.’ It was naturally based on the experience that everything is the Lord — there is nothing that cannot be the Lord. So what is this ‘sardonic’ smile? ... I was looking at that, and then I saw this face.

So, as I am supposed to do sketches for H.’s paintings, I did the sketch: *Falsehood is the sorrow of the Lord.*

(Mother shows the sketch representing the Lord’s sorrowful face.)

(Long silence)

Sri Aurobindo had the feeling or the sensation that what was farthest from the Lord (I always base myself now on that experience, which is very concrete in its sensation, of the ‘nearness’ or ‘farness’ — it isn’t a farness in feelings, not that, it’s like a material fact; yet it isn’t located in space), well, Sri Aurobindo, for his part, felt that the

⁵⁰ Book Two, Canto 7, line 182, p. 207

⁵¹ In the music room, on December 31, 1963. — Satprem

farthest was cruelty. That's what he felt farthest from; that vibration seemed to him the farthest from that of the Lord.

And yet, it sounds bizarre but in cruelty one can still feel, distorted, the vibration of Love; far behind or deep within that vibration of cruelty, there is still, distorted, the vibration of Love. And Falsehood — the real Falsehood that doesn't arise from fear or anything of the sort, that has no reason behind it — real Falsehood, the negation of Truth (the WILLED negation of Truth), is, to me, something completely black and inert. That's the feeling it gives me. It is black, blacker than the blackest coal, and inert — inert, without any response.

When I read that description in *Savitri*,⁵² I felt a sorrow which I thought I had been unable to feel for a long time — a long time. I thought I was (how shall I put it?) cured of that possibility. And last time, when I saw that, I saw it was still there; and while I was looking, I saw this same sorrow in the Lord, in His face, His expression.

The deliberate negation of all that is divine — of all that we call divine.

The Divine, for us, is always the perfection not yet manifested, all the marvels not yet manifested, and which must keep on growing, of course.

The far end of the Manifestation (assuming that there was a progressive descent ... there may have been one, I don't know — there have been so many perceptions of what happened, sometimes contradictory, always incomplete and humanised), but if you consider the aspect of evolution, you tend to consider a far end from

⁵² “A tract he reached unbuilt and owned by none....” Book Two, Canto 7, p.206 (See conversation of December 31, 1963.) – Satprem

which you proceed to another far end (it's obviously childish, but anyway ...), or an extreme way of being that grows towards the opposite Extreme Way of Being; well, what seems to me the blackest and most inert, the total negation of 'that' to which we aspire, is what constitutes Falsehood.

In other words, this is perhaps what I call Falsehood; because falsehood in the human way is always mixed with all kinds of things — but Falsehood proper is this. It is the assertion that the Divine does not exist, Life does not exist, Light does not exist, Love does not exist, Progress does not exist — Light, Life, Love do not exist.⁵³ A negative nothingness, a dark nothingness. And it may be this that clung to evolution and made Darkness, which denied Light, Death, which denied Life, and Hatred, Cruelty and all that, which denied Love — but this is already diluted, it's already in a diluted state, there has already been a mixture.

Oh, if we wanted to make poetry (it's no longer a philosophical or spiritual way of seeing, but a pictorial way), we could imagine a Lord who is a totality of all the possible and impossible possibilities, in quest of a Purity and Perfection that can never be reached and are ever progressive ... and the Lord would get rid of all in the Manifestation that weighs down His unfolding — He would begin with the nastiest. You see it?... Total Night, total Unconsciousness, total Hatred (no, hatred still implies that Love exists), the incapacity to feel. Nothingness.

⁵³ Mother is not referring to an intellectual and human negation, but to a material fact that one finds at the very roots of life, in the most material consciousness, and which shows itself as an abyss of black and stifling basalt. It is intimately linked with death. It is the very secret of death. — Satprem

We're on the way. I still have a little bit of it [*that total Unconsciousness*] left.

Ah, let's get to work.

* * *

February 22, 1964

Translation – given as a message

(The day after Mother's eighty-sixth birthday.

*Mother first reads the translation of the message she gave on the
21st:)*

It was translated in an interesting way.... I read it, then I concentrated (A. was sitting here, not moving or saying anything), so first I said a word or two to him to 'establish the atmosphere.' Then I remained quiet, and it simply came — it isn't exactly a translation:

Sa volonté solitaire affronta la loi du monde.

Pour arrêter la roue fatale, cette Splendeur se leva ...

Her single will opposed the cosmic rule.

To stay the wheels of Doom this greatness rose.

Savitri, Book One, Canto 2, lines 315-16, p. 19

* * *

February 22, 1964

“A wine of lightning in the cells”

I had a strange night last night.

The whole day yesterday, I had an impression — not a vague impression: a very precise sensation — of the Pressure of something that was trying to manifest. But it was so material that it was almost like a physical pressure. And then a kind of Force that not only resisted, but revolted, trying to make a muddle of everything — to create unpleasant circumstances, trouble people, all sorts of perfectly unpleasant little nothings. I was watching all that.

And in the evening the resistance and revolt took a concrete form, as it were. Then, in response, there was in all the cells of the body a call, a desperate call for the Truth, as if all the cells were crying out, ‘Ah, no! We’ve had enough of this Falsehood, enough, enough, enough! — the Truth, the Truth, the Truth....’ It put my body in a very deep trance. And it had the impression of a very, very intense struggle.

I was looking, and everywhere there were ... as if the world were made of huge engines with enormous pistons that were falling — you know, like in engine rooms: they were rising and falling, rising and falling.... It was like that everywhere. And it was pounding Matter — it was frightful. To such a degree that the body felt pounded.

It was a compression — a mechanical compression — and at the same time (both things at the same time), such an intensity of aspiration! There is in these cells an extraordinary intensity: ‘The Truth, the Truth, the Truth...’ Then, in the middle of all this, I went into a state of very deep trance, a sort of samadhi, from which I

emerged five hours later — it lasted from 10 at night to 3 in the morning — five hours later, beatific, and conscious that I had been conscious all the time, but of something inexpressible. And what a light! A light, a light ... a fantastic light.

But this morning, the body is a bit ... (what's the word?) *giddy*.

Dizzy?

Not exactly dizzy ... the sensation of a sort of lack of consistency. Yes, like when one is giddy — a giddiness, rather. Because it was such a pounding!

...

I have never seen such an intensity in the cells, in the consciousness of the cells ... you know, an almost desperate intensity: 'We've had enough, enough of this Falsehood! — the Truth, the Truth, the Truth....' And then that Light ... bah-bah! ... They were conscious of the light. Conscious of a dazzling light.

Look, it's the kind of giddiness one has when one has drunk a bit too much — that's it, the giddiness caused by alcohol.

But I didn't have the sense of a definitive thing: I had the sense of a beginning! It's only a beginning!

Which means that the gap between what they are used to receiving through infiltration and a radical descent is a tremendous one.

Several times in his letters, Sri Aurobindo wrote that if the higher Light were to descend abruptly, or if divine Love were to descend abruptly, without preparation ... *the matter would be shattered*. It appears to be quite true!

(*silence*)

Even now (*Mother touches her hands and fingers*), one feels ... not the pounding, but the aspiration in all the cells....

(*Mother goes into contemplation*)

Yes, that's what it is, a sort of inebriation.

*Somewhere in 'Savitri,' Sri Aurobindo says, 'This wine of lightning in the cells....'*⁵⁴

Oh! Do you know where it is? ...

(*Satprem looks for the passage in vain*)

* * *

March 18, 1964

Translation method

(*Mother takes up the translation of a letter from English to French.*)

To translate I go to the place where things are crystallized and formulated. Nowadays my translations are not exactly an amalgamation, but they are under the influence of both languages: my English is a little French and my French is a little English — it's a mixture of the two. And I see that from the standpoint of expression, it's rather beneficial, for a certain subtlety comes from it.

I don't 'translate' at all, I never try to translate: I simply go back to the 'place' where it came from, and instead of receiving this way

⁵⁴ And came back quivering with a nameless Force

Drunk with a wine of lightning in their cells.

Book Four, Canto 4, lines 236-27, p. 383

(gesture above the head, like scales tipping to the right for French) I receive that way (the scales tip to the left for English), and I see that it doesn't make much difference: the origin is a sort of amalgamation of the two languages. Perhaps it could give birth to a somewhat more supple form in both languages: a little more precise in English, a little more supple in French.

I don't find our present language satisfactory. But I don't find the other thing [Franglais] satisfactory either — it hasn't been found yet.

It's being worked out.

Each time, something in me grates a little.

It's on the way.

But it's my method for *Savitri*, too, it's a long time since I stopped translating: I follow the thought up to a point, and then, instead of thinking this way (same gesture of tipping to the right), I think that way (to the left), that's all. So it's not pure English, not pure French either.

Personally I would like it to be neither English nor French, to be something else! But for the moment, what words are to be used? ... I clearly feel that to me, both in English and French (and maybe in other languages if I knew any), words have another meaning, a slightly unusual and far more PRECISE meaning than they do in languages as we know them — far more precise. Because, to me, a word means exactly a certain experience, and I clearly see that people understand quite differently; so I feel their understanding as

something hazy and imprecise. Every word corresponds to an experience, to a particular vibration.

I don't say I have reached the satisfactory expression — it's taking shape.

And the method is always the same: I never translate — never, never — I go up above, to the place where one thinks beyond words, where one experiences the idea or the thought of a thing, or the movement or the feeling (whatever), and when it's in a particular language, it goes like this (*same gesture as before*), while in another language, it goes like that: it's as if something up above tipped over. I don't translate on the same level at all, I never translate on the level of languages. And sometimes, I notice that for me the quality of the words is very different from what it is for others, very different.

I have given up all hope of making myself understood.

* * *

September 26, 1964

(Towards the end of the conversation, an 'urgent' letter from a disciple is brought to Mother. Mother laughs and, without reading the letter, scribbles her answer:)

She already wrote to me the other day, she's upset because I can't read anymore! (I used to read *Savitri* aloud and she wanted to record me.) I told her, 'I can't read anymore, it's not possible.' So she wrote to me that I must 'make use of my Grace' in order to cure my eyes!

I didn't answer her. But just now, as I finished speaking to you, it came — my answer. It came, that is, He told me, 'Write this to her.' So I wrote this:

There is no I to take a decision, there is only the Lord's Will that decides everything. And if He decides that my eyes will recover the reading capacity, I will recover.⁵⁵

That's that, finished, no more problem!

Now she must be upside-down because I haven't yet answered!

* * *

November 14, 1964

“And earth grow unexpectedly divine”

I always say, ‘We will see,’ because ... in reality, I am not worried, not worried at all, I am very sure — very sure. I have such an absolute certitude that the Wisdom that acts in the world is infinitely superior to all that we can imagine. We are like ignorant and stupid children in front of ‘something’ that acts with a CERTITUDE, and so luminous, so luminous. With a superharmony that turns into harmony the things that seem to us the most discordant.

⁵⁵ Again Satprem is mistaken: Huta has the original of this letter, dated 28.8.65

Dear little child Huta

Before receiving your second letter of this morning this answer had come:

“There is no ‘I’ to take decisions; there is only the Lord's Will that decides everything. If the Lord decides that these eyes will recover the power of reading, then it will be possible for them to read Savitri.”

Just now I received your nice note and prayer.

This is just the right thing.

In Truth and Love

The Mother

The work of recording the Mother's reading of the Meditations on Savitri passages was started by Huta in September 1964 and completed in December 1967 – S.

So when I see the anxious human thoughts trying to know (*Mother smiles*) — ‘Don’t worry, we will see.’ And when I say, ‘We will see,’ I have the joy of a certitude that what we will see will be a thousand times more beautiful than anything we can imagine.

I read a line in ‘Savitri’ that struck me very much, because I saw a connection with what you said the other day about the coexistence of Falsehood and Truth: ‘And earth shall grow unexpectedly divine.’”⁵⁶

That’s right! That’s right ... *unexpectedly divine*.

And even the most sceptical will be compelled to see that something is changing, that it’s not the same thing anymore.

* * *

May 8, 1965

“And never lose the white spiritual touch”

⁵⁶ When darkness deepens strangling the earth’s breast
And man’s corporeal mind is the only lamp,
As a thief’s in the night shall be the covert tread
Of one who steps unseen into his house.
A Voice ill-heard shall speak, the soul obey,
A power into mind’s inner chamber steal,
A charm and sweetness open life’s closed doors
And beauty conquer the resisting world
The truth-light capture Nature by surprise,
A stealth of God compel the heart to bliss
And earth grow unexpectedly divine.”

Book One, Canto 4, lines 321-33, p.55

(Every time Mother receives Satprem, she translates one line from 'Savitri' that has been copied for her in large characters. Today's line is from the debate between Death and Savitri's heart:)

And never lose the white spiritual touch

(Mother repeats)

And never lose the white spiritual touch⁵⁷

Sans jamais perdre le blanc contact de l'Esprit

(silence)

* * *

May 8, 1965

Yesterday, I read with H. Savitri's series of experiences when she begins with self-annulment: *Annul thyself so that God alone exists* (I no longer remember, but that's the idea)⁵⁸. It begins with self-annulment, then she has the experience of BEING the All, that is, of being the Supreme (the Supreme in herself) and the entire Manifestation and all things. There are three passages⁵⁹. It's

⁵⁷ It can drink up the sea of All-Delight

And never lose the white spiritual touch

Book Ten, Canto 3, lines 533-34, p. 655

⁵⁸ Annul thyself that only God may be.

Book Seven, Canto 6, line 220 p.538

⁵⁹ Perhaps here the Mother is referring to the three Meditation on Savitri passages of Book Seven, Canto Seven? – S.

absolutely ... an absolutely wonderful description. It's extraordinarily beautiful.⁶⁰

It's a chapter that doesn't have a title.

(Mother vainly looks for the passage in 'Savitri')

First she meets her soul: a house of flames. She enters the house of flames and unites with her soul⁶¹. It's after that. After, there is Nirvana⁶². She goes into Nirvana — and becomes just a violet line in

⁶⁰ Out of the infinitudes all came to her,
Into the infinitudes sentient she spread,
Infinity was her own natural home.
Nowhere she dwelt, her spirit was everywhere,
The distant constellations wheeled round her;
Earth saw her born, all worlds were her colonies,
The greater worlds of life and mind were hers;
All Nature reproduced her in its lines,
Its movements were large copies of her own.
She was the single self of all these selves,
She was in them and they were all in her. Book

Seven, Canto 7, lines 210-20 p. 557

This is not the footnote given in the *Agenda*. Since the Mother specifically mentions that Huta was reading to her, we have given instead the passage which Huta actually read – S.

⁶¹ “*The Finding of the Soul*” Book Seven, Canto 5

⁶² “Nirvana and the Discovery of the All-Negating Absolute” Book Seven, Canto 6

Nothingness.⁶³ Then finds herself back in her body — that’s where it begins. A chapter without a title⁶⁴.

I’ll find it some other time.

(Mother puts aside the book)

It has been a revolution in the atmosphere, that’s why I am telling you about it. Because all the experiences described [in *Savitri*] are precisely the experiences I have. So then, suddenly, in the body ... I was over there in the music room, and H. was reading to me; then when she had finished reading, all of a sudden the body sat up straight in an aspiration and a prayer of such intensity! It was a dreadful anguish, you know: ‘See, the whole experience is here [*in Mother*], complete, total, perfect, and because this thing [*the body*] has lived too long, it no longer has the power of expression.’ And it said, ‘But why, Lord? Why, why do You take away from me the power of expression because this has lived too long?’ It was a sort of revolution in the body’s consciousness.

Things have been much better since, much better. There has been a decisive change.

* * *

⁶³ Unutterably effaced, no one and null,
A vanishing vestige like a violet trace,
A faint record merely of a self now past,
She was a point in the unknowable.

Book Seven, Canto 6, lines 607-10, p. 549

⁶⁴ Book Seven, Canto 7 (This was unnamed in the 1954 edition which the Mother was reading; the title “*The Discovery of the Cosmic Spirit and the Cosmic Consciousness*” was found later, amongst Sri Aurobindo’s manuscripts) – S.

May 11, 1965

(After having translated 'the' line from 'Savitri':)

One a day, that would be 365, and the way we are going, how many would it be?

104 a year.

It doesn't matter, we're living in eternity.

Previously, I used to translate three or four lines every day; sometimes less, sometimes more, and it used to go very fast. But now, mon petit, *(laughing)* I have no time left for anything! It's traditional or agreed upon that I 'must' take something in the afternoon to make a break between morning and evening — I never have the time! Those who are supposed to leave at 4 o'clock leave at 4:45.

You would need a police force near you ...

Yes.

... someone with authority, pitiless, who would say, 'Time is up, out you go!'

Yes, a police force.

And above all I shouldn't be asked, because if they come and tell me, 'Oh, so-and-so wants to see you; oh, so-and-so has sent a letter ... ,' I can't very well answer, 'Ah, no! Now I am resting'! It's a bit ... It's not a pleasant feeling and the rest wouldn't be very restful. But it has reached the point (there are four secretaries, as you know) where one chap said, *I'll shoot him* — one of the four secretaries,

because he didn't pass on the letters. So you understand (*laughing*), your police force would be in danger!

We can only smile, it's the best remedy — laugh and smile. We must learn to laugh, more and more.

* * *

June 12, 1965

“Then will I give thee all thy soul desires”

(Mother takes up the translation of ‘Savitri’: The Debate of Love and Death.)

(Mother reads the text)

Aha! What a joker!

... Then will I give thee all thy soul desires

He's a joker.

All the brief joys earth keeps for mortal hearts

But I don't want them! — He is a real joker.

And what happens to him?

... My will once wrought remains unchanged through Time

Oho, that's what you think!

And Satyavan can never again be thine.

Book Ten, Canto 3, lines 554-559, p.636

Not true, old chap!

(Mother translates)

Alors je te donnerai tout ce que ton âme désire ...

[Then will I give thee all thy soul desires]

The soul doesn't desire anything! It's easy to say, 'I will give thee all thy soul desires,' the soul desires nothing. So he doesn't commit himself to much!

He's a joker — he made him quite a joker.

* * *

June 14, 1965

Love

“And Satyavan can never again be thine.”

(Mother takes up the translation of ‘Savitri,’ from The Debate of Love and Death.

Then she stops in the middle of a line:)

I can't hear anything just now, I am in ... Well, the feeling is absolutely of being inside a blanket of fog ... (*Mother ‘looks’*) a very pale pearl-gray fog. And a fog for both sound and sight.

As if things were far, far away, far away from me: things, people, noises, images, everything, far, far away ... (*Mother takes up 'Savitri' again*):

My will once wrought remains unchanged through Time
And Satyavan can never again be thine.

He made him a bit stupid, because even if Satyavan doesn't come back in this body, what prevents him from taking another!

He's bragging!

And Savitri (or 'the Voice') afterwards tells him, you remember, 'Ah, we'll keep you all the same, we still need you for a while.' When he has been beaten hollow, when he is finished, she tells him, 'We'll still keep you because we still need you,'⁶⁵ don't you remember?

A nice gift.... Oh, it is true that in many cases it's indispensable. I remember having read a story, at the time when I used to receive ... I think it was *Le Matin*, the newspaper *Le Matin*. There were novels in it and I used to read the novels to see the state of mind of people. And there was an extraordinary novel in which the main character was a woman who was immortal (she had been condemned to immortality by God knows which deity), and she tried her best to die, without success! It was stupid, the whole thing was stupid, but the

⁶⁵ I have given thee thy awful shape of dread
And thy sharp sword of terror and grief and pain
To force the soul of man to struggle for light ...
Thou art his spur to greatness in his works,
The whip to his yearning for eternal bliss,
His poignant need of immortality.
Live, Death, awhile, be still my instrument.

standpoint was reversed: she was compelled to be immortal and ... she said, ‘Oh! When will I be allowed to die?’, with the ordinary idea that death is the end, that everything is over and one rests. And she had been told, ‘You will be able to die only when you meet true love....’ Everything was topsy-turvy. But when I read that, it set me thinking a lot — sometimes it’s the most stupid things that set you thinking the most. And to complete the story ... you see, she had been someone, then someone else, a priestess in Egypt, anyway all kinds of things, and finally (I don’t remember), it was in modern times: she met a young married couple; the husband was a remarkable man, intelligent (I think he was an inventor); his wife, whom he loved passionately, was a stupid and wicked fool who spoilt all his work, who ruined his whole life ... and he went on loving her. And that’s what (*laughing*) they gave as example of perfect love!

I read that maybe more than fifty years ago, and I still remember it! Because it set me thinking for a long time. I read that and I said to myself, ‘Here’s how people understand things!’

It was, oh, certainly more than fifty years ago, because I had already come upon the ‘Cosmic,’ Theon’s teaching and the inner divine Presence, and I knew that the new creation would be a creation of immortality — I immediately felt it was true (that it was a way of expressing something true). So then, when I read that, I thought, ‘Here’s how people make everything topsy-turvy! Head and feet upside down.’ And I pondered for a long, long time over the problem: ‘How to bring this to the true position?’ And I set to work.... Already at the time, I used to practice adopting that standpoint, looking at things from that standpoint, understanding how that standpoint could exist. And those two things made me ponder: the will to die, and what that man considered to be ‘perfect love’ — two idiotic things.

But I discovered what was true in it; that's what was interesting: I tried and tried to find, and suddenly I felt that aspiration towards the immutable, immutable peace. Well, it was upside down: only immutable peace can give you eternal existence. There, it was all upside down, the idea was to cease existence in order to find immutable peace. But it's immutable peace one is after and that's what compels the cessation of existence, in order to allow the transformation to take place.

And love, which is unconditioned: it doesn't depend on whether you are loved or not, whether you are intelligent or not, whether you are wicked or not — that goes without saying. But it was put in a ridiculous way. But it goes without saying, love is unconditioned, otherwise it isn't love, it's what I call bargaining: 'I give you my affection so you give me yours; I am nice to you so you are nice to me'! That's how people understand it, but it's stupid, it's meaningless. That's something I understood when I was quite small, I used to say, 'No! You may wish others to be nice to you if you are nice to them, but that has nothing to do with love, no, nothing, absolutely nothing.' The very essence of love is unconditioned.

* * *

July 7, 1965

“Daughters and sons”

(Mother takes up 'Savitri': The Debate of Love and Death)

Is he going on? What does he offer Savitri?

‘Daughters,’ ‘sons’!

Oh, he is base (*laughing*), base with vulgarity. (*Mother reads:*)

Daughters of thy own shape in heart and mind

Fair hero sons and sweetness undisturbed ...

Book Ten, Canto Three, lines 572-573, p. 637

See that joy! Oh! ... How vulgar that being is! Can there really be people who are tempted by this?

I think Sri Aurobindo deliberately made this Death very vulgar to discourage all the illusionists and Nirvanists.

But even when I was quite small, five years old, it seemed to me *commonplace*, while if I had been told, ‘Let there be no more cruelty in the world,’ ah, there is something I would have found worthwhile. ‘Let there be no more injustice, let there be no more suffering because of people’s wickedness,’ there is something one can dedicate oneself to. But producing daughters and sons ... I have never felt physically very maternal. There are millions and millions who do that, so do it again? — No, truly that’s not what one is born for.

* * *

July 21, 1965

Sri Aurobindo – “Later”

(*About ‘Savitri’ and the Debate of Love and Death:*)

He said he wanted to redo all this passage, but he never did it. And when he was asked (I don't know if it was Nirod or Purani who asked him), he said, 'No, later.'

And he knew very well that there was no 'later.' At the time he already knew it.

'No, later.'

I don't know....

* * *

July 24, 1965

Death

This material mind LOVES ('loves,' that's a way of speaking), loves catastrophes and attracts them, and even creates them, because it needs the shock of emotion to awaken its unconsciousness. All that is unconscious, all that is tamasic needs violent emotions to shake itself awake. And that need creates a sort of morbid attraction to or imagination of those things — all the time it keeps imagining all possible catastrophes or opening the door to the bad suggestions of nasty little entities that in fact take pleasure in creating the possibility of catastrophes.

...

(Mother takes up the translation of 'Savitri,' the Debate of Love and Death:)

And from the universal standpoint, it is this inertia, this unconsciousness that made the existence of death necessary — the 'existence' of death!!

August 7, 1965

“The miracle for which our life was made”

*(In the “Addendum”, two quotations from Savitri used by Satprem
in an article)*

Sri Aurobindo opens a door in this world stifled by its material or heavenly excesses. He tells us, first, that there is something to be discovered and that we are rich, richer than we may ever think with our heads — we are like beggars sitting on a gold mine. But we must get down into the mine. And he tells us that we have the power, if only we are pure enough to seize it. The power over Death and over Life and over Matter, for the Spirit is in us and it is here below that It wants to conquer:

Heaven’s touch fulfills but cancels not our earth⁶⁶.

And he tells us that just because we have invented a few rockets and cultivated a few cerebral pyramids, that does not mean we have done with being men. A still greater adventure awaits us, divine and superhuman, if only we have the courage to get under way.

And he gives us the means to do so.

For ‘what Sri Aurobindo represents in the world’s history is not a teaching, not even a revelation: it is an action.’⁶⁷ Sri Aurobindo is

⁶⁶ *Savitri*, Book Twelve, line 163, p. 719

⁶⁷ The Mother

not a thinker or a sage, not a mystic or a dreamer. He is a force of the future that takes hold of the present and leads us towards,

The miracle for which our life was made.⁶⁸

OM
Satprem
Pondicherry,
August 11, 1965

* * *

September 8, 1965

The Victory of Love

(Mother reads a few lines from 'Savitri' which she prepares to translate into French.

It is Savitri's heart that speaks:)

The great stars burn with my unceasing fire
And life and death are both its fuel made.
Life only was my blind attempt to love:
Earth saw my struggle, heaven my victory.

Book Ten, Canto 3, lines 628-31. p.638

⁶⁸ *Savitri*, Book Two, Canto 12, line 56, p. 278

She says, Life and death are the fuel, then, In my blind attempt LIFE ONLY was my attempt to love⁶⁹. Because my attempt to love was blind, I limited it to life — but I won the victory in death.

It's very interesting. (*Mother repeats:*)

Earth saw my struggle, heaven my victory.

Yet, earth should see the victory? The victory should be on earth, shouldn't it?

Yes, but she couldn't win the victory on earth because she lacked heaven — she couldn't win the victory in life because she lacked death and she had to conquer death in order to conquer life.

That's the idea. Unless we conquer Death, the victory isn't won. Death must be vanquished, there must be no more death.

That's very clear.

(*silence*)

According to what he says here, it is the principle of Love that is transformed into flame and finally into light. It isn't the principle of Light that is transformed into flame when it materializes: it's the flame that is transformed into light.

The great stars give light because they burn; they burn because they are under the effect of Love.

Love would be the original Principle?

⁶⁹ Mother later stressed again, "It's not *Life* was only, but *Life only*."

That seems to be what he is saying.

I didn't remember this passage. But I told you, my experience⁷⁰ is that the last thing as one rises — the last thing beyond light, beyond consciousness, beyond ... — the last thing one reaches is love. 'One,' this 'one' is ... it's the 'I' — I don't know. According to the experience, it's the last thing to manifest now in its purity, and it is the one that has the transforming power.

That's what he appears to be saying here: the victory of Love seems to be the final victory.

(silence)

He said, *Savitri, a Legend and a Symbol*; it's he who made it a symbol. It's the story of the encounter of Savitri, the principle of Love, with Death; and it's over Death that she won the victory, not in life. She could not win the victory in life without winning the victory over Death.

I didn't know it was put so clearly here. I had read it, but only once.

It's very interesting.

How many times, how many times have I seen that he had written down my experiences.... Because for years and years I didn't read Sri Aurobindo's books; it was only before coming here that I had read *The Life Divine*, *The Synthesis of Yoga*, and another one, too. For instance, *Essays on the Gita* I had never read, *Savitri* I had never read, I read it very recently (that is to say, some ten years ago, in 1954 or '55). The book *Sri Aurobindo on Himself and on the Mother* I had never read, and when I read it, I realised what he wrote to people about me — I had no idea, he had never told me anything about it! ...

⁷⁰ The experience of the "great pulsations" of divine Love (in April, 1962)

You see, there are lots of things that I had said while speaking to people — that I had said just like that, because they came (*gesture from above*) and I would say them — and I realised he had written them. So, naturally, I appeared to be simply repeating what he had written — but I had never read it! And now, it's the same thing: I had read this passage from *Savitri*, but hadn't noticed it — because I hadn't had the experience. But now that I have had the experience, I see that he tells it.

It's quite interesting.

Maybe we'll have to reread *Savitri*...

In fact, if we wanted to be really good, we would try to translate the whole of *Savitri*, wouldn't we? What we are doing now with the end [*Book Ten*], we would do with all the rest. There is a part I tried to translate all alone, but it would be fun to do it together. We could try. Not for publication! Because there is immediately a debasing: everything that is published is debased, otherwise people don't understand. We would do it for ourselves.

But it's very interesting.

Just the other day I noted something down on the subject (*Mother looks for a note, then reads it*):

'Very rare and exceptional are the human beings who can understand and feel divine Love, because divine Love is free of attachment and of the need to please the object loved.'

That was a discovery.

That's why people don't understand; for them, love is so much like this (*Mother intertwines the fingers of her two hands*) that they cannot even feel or believe that they love if there isn't an attachment like this (*same gesture*). And necessarily, the consequence of

attachment is the will, the desire, the need to please the object of one's love.

If you take away the attachment and the need to please, people scratch their heads and wonder if they love. And it's only when you take away those two things that divine Love begins!

This, mon petit, we'll talk about again, it's a revelation.

That's why they don't understand and that's why they can't feel it.

* * *

October 13, 1965

“Annul thyself that only God may be”

You know, when I say, ‘The Lord is smiling,’ it means something; it's not that I see a face smiling, but it's a ... a sunny vibration ... You know, the sun is dull and drab and cold and almost black in comparison. And then with ‘that’ gone ... (*alternating gesture*) with that here, with that gone. Which means that those who will come and manifest, who will exist when everything is changed, they will lack the sense of wonder at the opposition.

You know, you can only be filled with wonder! (How can I put it?...) A sort of laughter — of sunny laughter — which is full of an intensity of love and ... Yes, this must be the Ananda, the true Ananda.

(*Same alternating gesture*) Like this, like that, like this, like that

...

So I told you just now that ‘everything grates’: that’s the state the world is in WITHOUT the consciousness of this Presence. Even when people find that things are fine and they are happy, that anyway circumstances are supposedly favorable, and that everything is fine and they are in good health and, humanly, everything sorts itself out — it grates dreadfully in comparison with the other state.

...

There is a line in *Savitri* which freely translated is:

Annule-toi pour que seul le Divin soit.⁷¹

A very free translation, but the idea is there. And that’s the state in which ‘that’ can exist. And it is evident that the body doesn’t dissolve (*Mother touches her own body*), it’s here, isn’t it? You can see it!

(*silence*)

And it is the only — the only — infallible way to establish harmony in the body [*this Smile of the Presence*]. All the rest, all the precautions, all the remedies, all that seems so futile, so futile ... and so inadequate. The only way — for everything, everything.

* * *

November 6, 1965

Translating – Sri Aurobindo’s Light⁷²

⁷¹ *Annul thyself that only God may be.* (Book Seven, Canto 6, line 220, p. 538)

⁷² Cf. talk of 19.01.1966 – S.

(Then Mother takes up the translation of ‘Savitri’ and stops abruptly, as if she were following something with her eyes:)

... As big as this, a sun, a sun scintillating with Sri Aurobindo’s light, when I write, between me and the notebook, and it moves about with the pen! It’s this big (*a big orange*), it’s Sri Aurobindo’s light, blue, that special blue, silver blue, scintillating, and it moves about every time I write in this notebook! (*Laughing*) That’s why I have difficulty seeing: it moves about with the pen!

* * *

November 30, 1965

“And waited for death to change their spirit’s scene”

(Mother takes up the translation of ‘Savitri’):

Imagining meanings in life’s heavy drift,
They trusted in the uncertain environment
And waited for death to change their spirit’s scene.

Book Ten, Canto 4, lines 27-29, p. 641

Yes, those are the people who are hoping to go to a beatific heaven.

The entire West is convinced, of course, that the earth has to be taken as it is and that it’s a preparation for a life in another world, which according to your ‘faults’ or ‘qualities’ will be a heaven or a hell. But anyway, doing away with hell, all those who have goodwill will go to a beatific heaven.

It’s a weird invention, isn’t it!

Anyway ...

But there is an accumulation, an extraordinary compactness of knowledge in this whole *Savitri*, at every turn. There is nothing that's void of knowledge. It's truly interesting.

* * *

December 4, 1965

“A savage din of labour and a tramp ...”

(Mother was quite unwell the day before, and still looks very tired.)

Yesterday was a very difficult day. And I am not quite all right yet.

I can't hear, can't see, I am in an awful state.

(Satprem persuades Mother not to work – long meditation)

I can remain like this indefinitely.

Once I am in it, it's fine, it's comfortable. But anyway, we can do our translation.... The difficulty is that I can't see and can't hear — I am not there!

Because as for me, I have no reason to get out of it [*the meditation*]. This way I feel the world is fine at last! When I get out of it, the grating starts. When I am there, the world and everything is quite fine!

(Mother takes up her first lines of 'Savitri')

A savage din of labour and a tramp
Of armoured life and the monotonous hum
Of thoughts and acts that ever were the same

Book Ten, Canto 4, lines 30-32, p.641

There you are! That's it.

* * *

December 28, 1965

**The first poetry I was able to appreciate in my life
was Savitri**

*(Mother shows a box of candy-pink writing paper she has just
received.)*

Pretty paper ... to write poetry on!

Will you write?

Me! I am no poet!

The first poetry I was able to appreciate in my life was *Savitri*. Previously, I was closed. To me it was always words: hollow, hollow, hollow, just words — words for words' sake. So as a sound it's pretty, but ... I prefer music. Music is better!

This translation of *Savitri* gives me a whole lot of fun, it's great fun for me.

Much more fun than having to 'tell things' ... that are unnecessary.

* * *

January 19, 1966

Translating – Sri Aurobindo’s Light (2)

(Mother copies out in her thick white notebook a few lines from her translation of ‘Savitri.’)

... Near my pen, there is a small disk of Sri Aurobindo’s light, which sparkles and sparkles.... I see it more than my handwriting. It’s no bigger than this (*two inches*) and it shines, it shines brightly — blue light, of the silvery blue that was Sri Aurobindo’s blue. It shines and shines, and it moves along with my fingers⁷³.

And when I speak, when I say things that ‘come,’ there are two disks (I don’t know why). Not one, but two, and they are bigger (*about four inches*), one above the other. When I tell of an experience, for instance, or answer a question, there are two of them, slightly bigger.

And when I concentrate on someone while calling the Lord, then, generally, near the shoulder (*gesture between the person’s head and shoulder*), there is a great golden light, like that, which sparkles and sparkles, shines and shines, very brightly, all the while. And when the light goes, the concentration goes.

But just now, it was amusing, it was quite small like this, moving along with my pen. Now it’s finished, gone! (*Mother laughs*)

* * *

⁷³ Mother had already made a similar remark last year. See Agenda VI, conversation of November 6, 1965, p. 287.

January 22, 1966

This morning I lived for two hours in a sort of blissful state in which there was, oh, such a clear awareness that all forms of life, in all the worlds and at all times, are the expression of a choice: you choose to be that way.

It's very hard to put it into words.... The sort of compulsion in which we think we have to live and to which we think we are subjected had com-plete-ly vanished, and there was a perfectly spontaneous and natural perception that life on earth, life in the other worlds, and all the types of life on earth, and all the types of life in the other worlds, are simply a question of choice: you chose to be that way, and you constantly choose to be this way or that, or choose that this or that is going to happen; and you also choose to think you are subjected to a Fate or a Necessity or a Law that compels you — everything is a question of choice. And there was a sense of lightness, of freedom (*same dancing gesture*), and then one of those smiles at everything. And at the same time, it gives you a tremendous power. All sense of compulsion, of necessity (and even more of fate) had com-plete-ly vanished. All the illnesses, all the events, all the dramas, all of it — vanished. And this concrete and so stark a reality of physical life — completely gone.

At the same time, I saw the whole picture of human knowledge (because when those states are present, all human realizations, all human knowledge come like a panorama in front of the new state and are put back in their proper place — when an experience comes, it's always, always as though retrospective), and I saw all the theories, all the beliefs, all the philosophical ideas, how they were connected to the new state.... Oh, it was such fun!

But those who got hold of this experience for some reason or other without having all the philosophical and mental preparation I had (the ‘saints,’ or at any rate all the people who led a spiritual life) had instead a very acute impression of the unreality of life and the illusion of life. But that’s only a narrow way of looking at it. That’s not it — that’s not it, EVERYTHING is a choice! Everything, everything. The Lord’s choice, but IN US; not there (*gesture above*): here. And we are unaware of it, it’s deep down in ourselves. But when we are aware of it, we can choose — we can choose our choice, that’s wonderful!

(The Mother takes up her translation of ‘Savitri’:)

Each in its hour eternal claimed went by
Ideals, systems, sciences, poems, crafts
Tireless there perished and again recurred,
Sought restlessly by some creative Power.
But all were dreams crossing an empty vast.

Book Ten, Canto Four, lines 57-61, p.642

All this is the same thing! It’s amusing.

He certainly had similar experiences [*to Mother’s*] when he wrote those lines.

* * *

January 26, 1966

“... and this too was a dream.”

(The Mother takes up her translation of ‘Savitri’:)

Ascetic voices called of lonely seers
On mountain summits or on river banks
Or from the desolate heart of forest glades
Seeking heaven's rest or the spirit's worldless peace,
Or in bodies motionless like statues, fixed
In tranced cessations of their sleepless thought
Sat sleeping souls, and this too was a dream.

Book Ten, Canto 4, lines 62-68, p. 642-43

(Laughing) He's terrible! He has a knack for demolishing everything.

But it's wonderfully true. It immediately puts you in the atmosphere of the relativity of all those human conceptions.

The trouble is that the outer being finds it hard to forget its habit of regarding material things as true, real, concrete: 'This is concrete, you touch it, see it, feel it....'

It's beginning to come.

I tell you, every night it's like that, something is demolished through the comical or the ridiculous. It's very interesting. Oh, when it comes to morality, there are some marvelous things, marvelous! But ... *(Mother puts a finger on her lips)* that's for later.

* * *

February 11, 1966

"All things the past has made and slain were there"

(Mother carries on with her translation of 'Savitri':

*the vision of the plane where all the formations of the human mind
are found.)*

All things the past has made and slain were there⁷⁴

Quite interestingly, I am following all these experiences of *Savitri*. The experience of those different joys, I was surprised to have it a few days ago; I said to myself, ‘Strange, why am I made to see the joy in all those things: the joy of destroying, the joy of creating, the joy of laboring and conquering, and all of it?’ I was very surprised, and then ...

Just last night, I must have been going about for some time among all human constructions, but those of a higher quality, not the ordinary constructions (those Sri Aurobindo refers to here: the philosophical, religious, spiritual constructions ...). And they were symbolized by huge buildings — huge — that were so high ... as if men were as tall as the edge of this stool, quite tiny, in comparison with those huge things — huge, huge. I was going about, and each person came (I saw now one come, now another), each person came saying, ‘Mine is the true path.’ So I would go with him to an open door through which an immense landscape could be seen, and just when we came to the door, it would close!

⁷⁴ As if lost remnants of forgotten light,
Before her mind there fled with trailing wings
Dimmed revelations and delivering words
Emptied of their mission and their strength to save
The messages of the evangelist gods,
Voices of prophets, scripts of vanishing creeds.

Book Ten, Canto 4, line 69 ff. p.642

It was really very interesting. With all sorts of diverse details, each one with his own habits. I have forgotten the details now, but when I came out of that place last night, in the middle of the night, I was quite amused, I said to myself, 'It's quite amusing!' You know, when they spoke you could see through a door vast expanses before you, in full light, it was superb; then I would go with that person towards the door and ... the door was closed. It was really interesting.

And so large, so large, so high — we were very small.

There was no end to them.... And there were people, always new people: now men, now women, now young people, now old people, and from every possible country. It lasted a very long time.

I remember that I said to one of them, 'Yes, all this is very fine, but it isn't true food, it leaves you famished.' Then there was one who was ... I don't know which country he was from: he wore a dark robe, he had black hair, a somewhat round face (he may have been a Chinese, I can't say, I don't remember). He said to me, 'Oh, not with me! Taste this and see.' And he gave me something to eat — it was absolutely first-rate, oh, it was excellent! So I looked at him, and I said, 'Oh, you are clever ... show me, show me your path.' He told me, 'I have no path.'

Anyway, details ... If I noted all that down in the middle of the night, it would be very amusing. It was really amusing. And it corresponds to what we've just read in *Savitri*.

Yes, he was comfortably seated in front of a pillar (a pillar whose end couldn't be seen; it rose so high that its end couldn't be seen), and he said to me, 'Oh, I have no path.' (*Mother laughs*) But what he gave to eat was very good! I remember I crunched it, I bit into it, and it had a marvelous taste.

Who could it be?... I don't know. They must have been known people.

And it was rather strange: I was always a bit taller than all of them, and when I moved about, I did so with much greater speed than they, and I would reach the doors, just about to go through ... when they would come along and the door would close!

Very amusing. I could write volumes with all that!

But last night I didn't understand, I wondered, 'Why do I go strolling in such places?' Now I understand!

* * *

February 19, 1966

“The ignorant march of dolorous Time”

*(Mother goes on to ‘Savitri,’ the beginning of the new dialogue
between Savitri and Death:)*

Once more arose the great destroying Voice:
Across the fruitless labour of the worlds
His huge denial's all-defeating might
Pursued the ignorant march of dolorous Time.

Book Ten, Canto 4, lines 83-86, p. 643

The ignorant march of dolorous Time.... That's quite it, we're poor devils.

That's exactly the state of mind I have been in for two days, but more particularly this morning.... Oh, as an experience it's very interesting.

The spontaneous activity of Matter is defeatist [*‘the all-defeating might’*]. It has to *surrender*, it has to annul itself so that a creative power — truly creative and victorious — can manifest. That’s quite interesting.

Theon used to say that this defeatist state (the result of which is death), this destructive power, was born with the Vital’s infusion into Matter. The rock, the stone, that is, the most exclusively material, isn’t defeatist. The beginning of destruction came with the beginning of the entry of the vital force: with water — water, air, all that moves. All that begins to move brings along the power of destruction.

And in human matter, this destructive power is associated with movement.

(*silence*)

In other words, on earth (let’s limit ourselves to the earth), it’s only with Life that Death came in.

(*silence*)

And certainly, the first manifestations of Life were water and air, the wind, weren’t they?

Fire ... But fire, there’s no fire without air — fire is the symbol of the supreme Power.

(*long silence Mother scribbles a few words*)

Here’s the answer:

Truth does not depend on any external form and shall manifest in spite of all bad will or opposition.

I’ve written this in answer to this gentleman [*Death*]. It came with a power: ‘Ah, you shall see.’

But I’d like to know what Savitri says. What does Savitri say?...

There’s no time left, we’ll see that next time.

What does she say to him? I think she always says the same thing:
the omnipotence of Love.

There you feel the Force. Otherwise it wouldn't be worth living
— it really isn't worth it, it's no fun.

* * *

February 26, 1966

**“I am after the process that will lead to the power to
undo what was done.”**

(After the translation of ‘Savitri’ — the dialogue with Death)

Behold the figures of this symbol realm....

Here thou canst trace the outcome Nature gives

To the sin of being and the error in things

And the desire that compels to live

And man's incurable malady of hope.

Book Ten, Canto 4, lines 87-93, p. 643

But she will answer you!... I'd like to know what she will answer
him.

(silence)

If we follow to its end the idea with which Sri Aurobindo wrote this,
Death would be the principle that created Falsehood in the world....
It's obviously either Falsehood that created Death, or Death that
created Falsehood.

It's rather Falsehood that created Death!

Logically, yes.

According to the story (if it can be called a story) that Theon told, it was Falsehood that created Death. But according to what we've just read, Death would be what created Falsehood.... Obviously it must be neither this way nor that! It must be something else, which we should find.

(silence)

Theon's idea (which also fits with the teaching here in India in which they say it was the sense of separation that created the whole Disorder — Death, Falsehood and all the rest), Theon's idea was that those first four Emanations, that is, Consciousness, Love, Life, and Truth (Love was the last, I think, but I no longer remember what he said), those four individual emanated Beings, according to him, in full consciousness of their power and existence, cut themselves off from their Origin. In other words, they wanted to depend only on themselves, they didn't even feel the need to keep the connection with their Origin (I am putting it very materially). So then, that cut is what instantly caused Consciousness to become Unconsciousness, Love to become Suffering (it wasn't Love — it was actually Ananda which became Suffering), Life to become Death and Truth to become Falsehood. And they hurled themselves into the creation like that. Then, there was a second creation, which was the creation of the gods, to mend the mischief caused by those four (the story is told in almost a childlike way in order not to be abstract, in order to become concrete). The gods are the second emanation and they came to mend. In India and everywhere, they were given various names and functions, and they are found in the Overmind region, that is to say, above the physical quaternary, the material quaternary. And the function of those gods is to mend the damage wrought by the others.

And the region in which the others (the first Emanations) concentrated is the vital region.

All this can be translated philosophically, intellectually and so on. It is told as a story so that the most physical intellectuality may understand. But in principle, it's the separation from the Origin that created the whole Disorder. And, as far as I know, in India too the Upanishads say the same thing; Sri Aurobindo, at any rate, says that Disorder came with the sense of Separation. So those are different ways of saying the same thing. In one case, seen in a certain way, it's a willed separation; in the other case, it's an inevitable consequence — inevitable consequence of ... of what? I don't know.

Because, according to theogonies, the gods have remained in contact with their Origin and they feel themselves to be the representation of the Origin, as in the Indian theogony in which they say that Shiva is the representative of the Supreme — Brahma, the creator, Vishnu, the preserver, Shiva, the transformer — and all three are conscious representatives of the Supreme, but partial ones.

It's perfectly obvious that those are only manners of speaking. There are indeed entities, they do exist, but ... it's only a way of telling the story; in one way or another, it's the same thing. Metaphysics is also one way of telling the story. And one isn't truer than the other.

(silence)

But to me, the problem is to find ... You know, I am after the process that will lead to the power to undo what was done.

When people asked Theon, 'How did things come to happen that way?' (he used to say that the first Emanation and the next three separated themselves), 'Why did they separate themselves?', he would reply very simply (*laughing*), 'Why is the world as it is, in this

state of disorder? Why is it like that?... That's not the interesting point: the interesting point is to make it what it must be.' But after all those years, there is something in me that would like to have the power or the key: the process. And is it not necessary to feel or live or see (but 'see,' I mean, see actively) how it went this way (*Mother bends her wrist in one direction*) in order to be able to go that way (*she bends it in the opposite direction*)? That's the question.

(silence)

What's interesting is that now that this mind of the cells has been organised, it appears to be going with dizzying speed through the process of human mental development all over again, in order to reach ... the key, precisely. There is of course the sense that the state we are in is a false unreality, but there is a sort of need or aspiration to find, not a mental or moral 'why,' nothing of the sort, but a HOW — how it got twisted this way (*Mother bends her wrist in one direction*), in order to straighten it out (*gesture in the opposite direction*).

The pure sensation has the experience of the two vibrations [*the false and the true, the twisted and the straight vibrations*], but the transition from one to the other is still a mystery. It's a mystery, because it cannot be explained: neither when it goes this way (*gesture to the false direction*) nor when it goes that way (*gesture to the true direction*).

So there is something that says like Theon, 'Learn to BE that way [*on the true side*] and stay that way.' But there is an impression that the 'stay that way' must depend on knowing why one is that way or how one is that way?

I don't know if I make myself understood! ...

March 26, 1966

“ . . . when the hour of the Divine draws near ”

I have tried many things, a great many, I have looked a great deal, and I see only one that's absolute — only one that's absolute and can bring the absolute result, it's this (*gesture turned Upward*): the complete annulment of all that, leaving it all, 'To You, Lord — You, You, to You.' And it isn't a being with a form, that's not it; it isn't a formless force, it's ... It has nothing to do with thought, only with this: the contact. And the contact, an unmistakable contact, which nothing can imitate — nothing, nothing at all has the power to imitate it. And for every difficulty, every time, whatever it is, simply this: 'Everything to You, Lord. Everything for You, to You. You alone can do it, You, You alone, You alone. You alone are the Truth; You alone are the Power.' And those words are nothing, they are only the very clumsy expression of something ... a stupendous Power.

It's only the incapacity, the clumsiness, the lack of faith we mix into it that takes away His power. The minute we are truly pure, that is, under His influence alone, there are no limits, no limits — nothing, nothing, there is nothing, no law of Nature that can resist, nothing, nothing.

Only, the whole thing is that the time must have come, there must be only That left — all the rest spoils, whatever it is, even the highest, purest, noblest, most beautiful and marvelous things: all that spoils. Only That.

(Mother opens 'Savitri':)

There! Don't you think it's marvelous!

But when the hour of the Divine draws near⁷⁵

But when the hour of the Divine draws near ...

* * *

April 6, 1966

(Mother copies out a few lines from 'Savitri' which she has just translated, and her hand scratches out a word.)

Constantly, the whole time, thoroughly amusing little things happen. It was a small hand — a tiny hand — that took my hand for fun and wrote. Just for fun! So I have to be on my guard all the time!... It was someone who was laughing and laughing and laughing! It's so living — so living, so teeming with things — and we don't see anything. But I see. Previously I didn't see, but now I see it all (*Mother laughs*). Oh, there would be so many things to tell if we had time, very funny things.

* * *

⁷⁵ But when the hour of the Divine draws near,
The Mighty Mother shall take birth in Time
And God be born into the human clay ...

Book Eleven, lines 1215-17, p. 705

April 16, 1966

(Mother translates a line of ‘Savitri’ without hesitation, then comments:)

You read here [*in the physical book*], then you keep still, open a door, and it comes.

It’s amusing, I’ve just done that as if I had been made to do it. Usually it’s always blank and still here (*gesture to the forehead*), and that’s what it gets inscribed on; but just now it wasn’t like that: I read, it came here, then I made a movement backwards: a door opened, and then it was clearly written!

* * *

April 27, 1966

“Peopling with brilliant Gods the formless Void”

We have some time for *Savitri* ... unless you have something to ask?

(Satprem has some questions about The Sannyasin – the book he is writing. Then Mother reads two lines from Savitri, the Debate of Love and Death.)

Ah, it’s still this gentleman

I had this whole experience a few days ago. It was so amusing!

In vain his heart lifts up its yearning prayer,
Peopling with brilliant Gods the formless Void

Book Ten, Canto 4, lines 107-08, p. 644

Why? Were you in the formless Void?

I saw that, it was so amusing! I saw it all. Oh, it was an extraordinary experience. All of a sudden I was outside and, I can't say 'above' (but it was above), but outside the whole human creation, outside everything, everything man has created in all the worlds, even in the most ethereal worlds. And seen from there, it was ... I saw that play of all the possible conceptions men have had of God and of the way to approach God (what they call 'God'), and also of the invisible worlds and the gods, all that: one thing came upon another, one upon another, it all went by (as it's written in *Savitri*), one thing upon another went by (*gesture as if on a screen*), one upon another ... with its artificiality, its inadequacy to express the Truth. And with such precision! A precision so accurate that you felt in anguish, because the impression was of being in a world of nothing but imagination, of imaginative creation, but in nothing real, there wasn't a feeling of ... of touching the Thing. To such a point that it became ... yes, a terrible anguish: 'But then, what? What? What's truly TRUE and outside all that we can conceive?'

And it came. It was like this: (*gesture of self-abandon*) the total, complete self-annulment, annulment of that which can know, of that which tries to know — even '*surrender*' *isn't an* adequate word: a sort of annulment. And suddenly it ended with a slight movement as a child could have who doesn't know anything, doesn't try to know anything, doesn't understand anything, doesn't try to understand — but who abandons himself. A slight movement of such simplicity, such ingenuousness, such extraordinary sweetness (words can't express it): nothing, just this (*gesture of self-abandon*), and

instantaneously, THE Certitude (not expressed, lived), the lived Certitude.

I wasn't able to keep it very long. But 'it' is wonderful.

But the anguish had reached its peak: the sense of the futility of human efforts to understand — to embrace and understand — what isn't human, what's beyond. And I am talking about humanity in its supreme realizations, of course, when man feels himself to be a god.... That was still down below.

The experience lasted, oh, I don't know, perhaps a few minutes, but it was ... something.

Only, with a certainty that as soon as you come back, as soon as you just try to speak one word (or even if you don't speak), as soon as you try to formulate in one way or another: finished.

Yet there OBSTINATELY remains a certitude that the creation is NOT a transitory way to recapture the true Consciousness: it's something that has its own reality and that will have its own existence IN THE TRUTH.

That's the next step.

That's why that realization [*the Void*] isn't the goal, that's exactly why. A conviction that it isn't the goal. It's an absolute necessity, but not the goal. The goal is something ... the capacity to keep That here.

When will that come? I don't know.

But when it comes, everything will be changed.

Until then, let's prepare ourselves.

There is only one thing I have noted (that I am forced to note): there is a power of action on others which infinitely exceeds what it was before. Oh, it makes waves everywhere, everywhere, even in

those people who were the most settled in their lives and basically fairly satisfied, as much as one can be — even those are touched.

We'll see, we'll see.

Anyhow, things are moving along.

* * *

April 30, 1966

The worshippers of Nothingness

(Mother takes up 'Savitri')

Then disappointed to the Void he turns
And in its happy nothingness asks release

Book Ten, Canto 4, lines 109-10, p. 644

That's the Nihilists: Shankaracharya and so on, the worshipers of Nothingness.

The worshippers of Nothingness ... I don't know, the farther I go, the more I have a sense of a ... very, very sweet, very full Nothingness, but still a Nothingness. It's absolutely void, yet it's full, and very sweet, but there's nothing.

You are playing on words.

No, no!

Ultimately, this taste for Nothingness is the most harmonious way to put an end to the ego. It's the ego coming to an end. It's, yes, the most harmonious way, the higher way to put an end to the ego. It's the ego coming to an end. It is tired of being. Instead of feeling killed and crushed (*Mother makes a gesture of self-abandon*), phew!... A 'phew' of relief: 'Enough, enough of this battle to exist.' We could say: Falsehood, tired of being, gives up.

Instead of a disappearance through crushing and trampling (*same gesture of self-abandon*): cease to be.

It's the divine way to annul the ego.

The ego is no longer necessary, it has finished its job, the consciousness is ready; then ... (*same gesture*) phew! 'I am tired of being, I no longer want to be.'

* * *

May 7, 1966

Death

Let's see *Savitri* (*Mother takes her notebook*). *Savitri* is full of wonders, oh, how true!

What is it about?

It's still Death speaking.

Oh, he's going on — 'he' is going on: I don't want it to be a 'she'! (*Mother laughs*) In French it's a mistake (*laughing*): it's a 'he.'⁷⁶

⁷⁶ The French word for death, la mort, is feminine.

May 14, 1966

“ . . . sciences omnipotent in vain ”

Ah, let's take up *Savitri*.

*(Mother reads a few lines in which Death derides
all human beliefs, concepts, philosophies, inventions....)*

And sciences omnipotent in vain
By which men learn of what the suns are made,
Transform all forms to serve their outward needs,
Ride through the sky and sail beneath the sea,
But learn not what they are or why they came....

Book Ten, Canto 4, lines 135-39 p. 644-45

It's really charming!

I like this:

Ride through the sky and sail beneath the sea,
But learn not what they are or why they came

He's a monument of pessimism.

But it's true, that's the trouble, it's true! Only, something is missing: what she is going to say. Or does she say nothing?

Certainly, she is going to answer.

But she doesn't shut him up.... It's difficult.

*But that's because it's 'He'!*⁷⁷

The other day I had an extraordinary experience, in which all the pessimistic arguments, all the negations and denials came from all sides, represented by everybody. And then, those who believed in the presence of a God or something — something more powerful than they and ruling the world — were in a fury, a dreadful revolt: 'But I want none of him! But he spoils all our life, he ...' It was a dreadful revolt, from every side, a truckload of abuse for the Divine with such force of asuric reaction from every side. So I sat there (*as if Mother sat in the middle of the mêlée*), watching: 'What can be done?...' You know, it was impossible to answer, impossible, there wasn't one argument, not one idea, not one theory, not one belief, nothing, nothing whatsoever that could answer it. For the space of a second, the impression was: it's hopeless. Then, all of a sudden ... all of a sudden ... It's indescribable (*gesture of absolute abandon*). There was that violence of revolt against things as they are, and, mixed with it, there was: 'Let this world disappear, let nothing remain, let it not exist!' All that, which at bottom is a revolt, all that nihilist revolt: let nothing remain, let everything cease to exist. It reached a height of tension, and just at the height of tension, when you felt there was no solution, suddenly ... *surrender*. But something stronger than *surrender* — it wasn't abdication, it wasn't self-giving, it wasn't acceptance, it was ... something much more radical, and at the same time much sweeter. I can't say what it was. It had the joy and flavor of giving, but with such a sense of plenitude! ... Like a dazzling flash,

⁷⁷ Satprem means that Death is a mask of "Him," of the Supreme.

you know, suddenly like that: the very essence of *surrender*, the True Thing.

It was ... it was so powerful and marvelous, such sublime joy that the body started quivering for a second. Afterwards it was gone.

And after that, after that experience, all of it, all the revolt, all the negation, all of it was as if swept away.

If one could keep that, that experience, keep it constantly — it's there, it's always there; it's there, of course, but I have to stop in order to feel it. I have to stop — stop speaking, moving, acting — in order to feel it in its plenitude. But if it were here, ACTIVE ... it would be All-Powerfulness. It means becoming 'That' instantaneously.

There were two days recently (since I saw you last time), two days ... especially Thursday, the day the peacock⁷⁸ was there.... The peacock crowed victory the whole day (I saw it in the evening, it came and saw me on the terrace, it was so sweet!).... Two very, very difficult days. After that, a sort of solidly established feeling that nothing is impossible — nothing is impossible (*Mother points to Matter*). What thought has long known, what the heart has long known, what the whole inner being has long known, now the body too knows: nothing, nothing whatever is impossible, everything is possible. Here inside, here inside, in this (*Mother strikes her body*), everything is possible.

All the impossibilities created by material life have disappeared.

One must have the strength — the strength to carry it in oneself always.

* * *

⁷⁸ A disciple's peacock had escaped and spent the whole day in the tree above the Samadhi and on the Ashram's terraces. (The peacock is the symbol of victory.)

May 25, 1966

“And earth grow unexpectedly divine”

(Mother goes into contemplation, then opens ‘Savitri’):

And earth [shall] grow unexpectedly divine

Book One, Canto 4, line 331, p. 55

It’s a consolation....

(silence)

You’ll see, there comes a point when you can tolerate yourself and life only if you take the attitude that the Lord is everything. See, that Lord, how many things He possesses: He plays with all that — He plays, He plays at ... changing the positions. And then, when you see it, that whole, you feel the limitless marvel, and that whatever the object of the most marvelous aspiration, it’s all quite possible and will even be surpassed. Then you are consoled. Otherwise, this existence ... is inconsolable. But that way, it becomes charming. One day, I will tell you.

When you have the sense of the unreality of life — the unreality of life — compared with a reality that’s certainly found beyond, but at the same time WITHIN life, then ... ah, yes, THAT is true at last — THAT is true at last and deserves to be true. That is the realization of all possible splendors, all possible marvels, all, yes, all possible felicities, all possible beauties — that, yes, otherwise ...

Do you understand?

That’s the point I have reached.

So then, I feel as if I still have one foot here, one foot there, which isn't a very pleasant situation because ... because you would like there to remain nothing but That.

The present way of being is a past that really should no longer exist. While the other way, ah, at last! At last!... That's why there is a world.

And everything remains just as concrete and just as real — it doesn't become misty. It's just as concrete, just as real, but ... it becomes divine, because ... because it IS the Divine. It's the Divine playing.

There, mon petit.

* * *

June 2, 1966

“A few shall see what none yet understands”

Have you heard of dolphins' speech?... Haven't you seen those articles?... They have discovered that dolphins speak an articulate speech, but with a much more extensive range than ours: it rises much higher and goes much lower. And it's far more varied. And they frequently talk (it seems it can be recorded), they talk but people don't understand what they say. And then, they were given our speech to listen to — they imitate it and make fun of it! They laugh! (*Mother looks very amused*)

I saw some photos, they look nice, but the photos aren't enough. They have, as porpoises do, rows of small teeth (it seems they aren't ferocious at all, they never fly into a fury). They talk and talk!

And they know how to listen. And then, they imitate and laugh, as if they found us extremely ridiculous.

It's amusing.

It seems they have made kinds of large swimming pools somewhere in North America in which they are kept, and that they appear quite happy. So they are doing studies on them: there's an American scientist looking after all that, and someone told him (I read this yesterday), 'You say they may be as intelligent as we are, but if they were they would have tried to make themselves understood and to understand us.' The other fellow replied (*Mother laughs*) that perhaps it was wisdom, because they would have discovered that we are very silly!

It's amusing.

I have also heard that other scientists have discovered 'immediate transmission,' which doesn't follow the slow curve of wave transmissions or even of more ethereal transmissions, through what they call (I think) a sort of 'pendulum' or counterweight, so that what is done here is automatically reproduced there; if it goes down here, it goes up there, and if it goes down there, it goes up here, automatically. It's imitation (because they can't understand what it is), but it's intuitive communication, of course. It seems they have an instrument to measure it — it's fantastic!

They'll end up having everything except the key.

Yes, that's right! Yes, but it's good to have everything, because as soon as the key is there, the whole thing will be done.

Maybe it's the necessary preparation for the new creation. So only the key, as you said, will be missing. Then comes the key: pfft! now the whole thing is done.

But at any rate, it seems (I had already been told this), it seems it has somewhat deflated their mental arrogance ... (*laughing*) they no longer think they are the superior beings of the creation!

Ah, let's work on Savitri a little ... (Mother reads the first line):

A few shall see what none yet understands

Book One, Canto 4, line 338, p. 55

There, you see!

* * *

June 25, 1966

Sunil's Savitri music.

(The Mother takes up the translation of 'Savitri')

It's always the sound that guides me....

Do you know that Sunil has done some music for *Savitri*, and he is going to play it for me in early July. I don't think he wants to have an audience, it's quite private, because it must be played only in 1968 — in February '68 — and he will show me just a small piece to see if it's all right. But I thought you would be interested. I'll leave my windows wide open.

I like what he does very much.

Oh, not just once but very often, while listening to his music, a door is immediately opened onto the region of universal harmony, where you hear the origin of sounds, and with an extraordinary emotion and intensity, something that pulls you out of yourself (*gesture of abrupt wrenching*). It's the first time I've had this while listening to music — I myself have it when I am all alone. But I never had it while listening to music, it's always something much closer to the earth. Here, it's something very high, but very universal, and with a tremendous power: a creative power. Well, his music opens the door.

Now, some people have heard his music, and in Russia, France and the U.S.A. as well, they have asked for permission to copy it and spread it around. And the strange thing is that those people don't know one another, but they have all had the same impression: tomorrow's music. So to those who have asked I've answered, 'Have some patience, in two years we'll give you a musical monument.' It's much better to begin with a major work, because it immediately gives the position, otherwise you might think it's passing little inspirations — not that: something that strikes you on the head and makes you bow before it.

I read out the lines (in English, naturally), and with that he does the music. And the words are probably mixed in with the music, as he always does. But then, my reading is simply the clearest possible pronunciation, with the full understanding of what's being said, and WITHOUT A SINGLE INTONATION. I think I have succeeded, because at a week's interval (I don't read every day), the timbre of the voice is always the same.

* * *

August 19, 1966

Savitri is the epic of the victory over death

(Mother resumes her translation of the debate with Death.)

Think not to plant on earth the living Truth

That's just what I am doing, Sir.

(turning to Satprem with a smile)

Do you think he hears me?

Think not to plant on earth the living Truth

Or make of Matter's world the home of God;

Truth comes not there but only the thought of Truth,

God is not there but only the name of God.

Book Ten, Canto 4, lines 187-90, p. 646

(Mother remains pensive)

Basically, according to Sri Aurobindo, materialistic thought is the gospel of death. No?

It's very interesting.

(silence)

That's basically the point. We say *Savitri* is an 'epic'; so *Savitri* is the epic of the victory over death.

(silence)

Very interesting. Because once again, all these last few days I have lived almost minute after minute all those things [*we've just read*], but on a large scale: not on a personal but on a terrestrial scale.

This last line, this argument, it was so concrete: 'No, it's not God, it's only his name' — that was yesterday or the day before, not earlier. And then ... (*Mother recalls her experience*) ... Strangely, the victories over these arguments have the same character of bursts as did those bursts of Love I lived up above — the same character — and they shatter the resistance. And the something that bursts forth is Love — true Love.

It's very interesting.

And from everywhere, but everywhere, the opposition, the resistance is rising up; and the more it rises up, the more imperative That is.

But at such times one feels how precarious the equilibrium of material life is.... Oh, it's very, very interesting. When I am able to say all this, it will be worthwhile.

* * *

November 19, 1966

*(Mother takes up the translation of a passage from 'Savitri.'
Curiously enough, this very morning, before going to see Mother,
Satprem looked at this passage and thought of two possible ways to
translate a particular word.)*

When darkness deepens strangling the earth's breast
And man's corporeal mind is the only lamp,
As a thief's in the night shall be the covert tread

Of one who steps unseen into his house.

Book One, Canto 4, lines 321-24, p. 55

Yet another example: *Quelqu'un entrera INAPERÇU dans sa maison* ['One who steps UNSEEN into his house']. It came on the 'screen' this morning (so much comes that it's impossible to remember, but it's so interesting), and when *inaperçu* [unseen] came, I told you, 'Yes, that's better.'⁷⁹

It's strange. It's almost ... (if there were time to remember precisely), it's almost like a memory in advance.

Strange.

A few lines below, Mother hesitates between two translations:

And earth [shall] grow unexpectedly divine.

It's again the quality of the vibration: *sans s'y attendre* ['without expecting it'] is fuller — it's fuller, more golden. The other, *d'une façon inattendue* ['in an unexpected way'] is a bit cold and dry.

'Et sans s'y attendre, la Terre deviendra divine ...'

* * *

November 23, 1966

"His solitary joy needs not thy love."

⁷⁹ Satprem thought of *en cachette* for 'unseen' (literally, 'on the sly' or 'stealthily').

After reading an excerpt from the debate with Death:

If God there is he cares not for the world;
All things he sees with calm indifferent gaze,
He has doomed all hearts to sorrow and desire,
He has bound all life with his implacable laws;
He answers not the ignorant voice of prayer.
Eternal while the ages toil beneath,
Unmoved, untouched by aught that he has made,
He sees as minute details mid the stars
The animals's agony and the fate of man:
Immeasurably wise, he exceeds thy thought;
His solitary joy needs not thy love.

Book Ten, Canto 4, lines 196-207, p. 646

Yes, but we need his joy.

All this was said to me this morning. Absolutely the same thing (with different words, but the very same thing), and not 'said': lived, as if I were shown the thing so as to feel it. And I said, 'Why? Why this test? What's the use?' It was my body that said, 'What's the use?' Then it stopped.

I said, 'Why? What does it all mean?' I didn't contradict, didn't argue, just this 'What's the use?' (*Mother gestures as if to sweep away a speck of dust*)

You know, what the consciousness of this body is made to live is a sort of intensive discipline, at a gallop — every minute counts.

But it copes well, I can't deny it.⁸⁰

We'll see how it stands the shock (that's quite the point!).

So this other Gentleman [*Death*] would say, 'See! See there, the kind of pity people have for you!' But I answer, 'I don't need pity.... (*laughing*) That's not what I want: I want the victory.'

It's interesting.

* * *

November 26, 1966

"This gentleman" – (Death)

(Mother looks very tired. This morning she did not eat anything nor did she receive anyone.)

...

It's been a long time since these attacks last came. I told you several times that I was able to resist the attack, but this time, this morning, it was formidable. Formidable. It was exactly like this Gentleman [*Death*] trying to uproot everything. So I resisted and resisted, then suddenly ... it could no longer walk, I had to lie down and stay still. And also not eat — I didn't feel like eating. I can eat only when everything is fine.

As soon as there is stillness and contemplation, it's fine.

(silence)

⁸⁰ It must be recalled that the next day is Darshan and therefore Mother is overburdened with visitors and letters.

No, there is an insistence (the same insistence as this Gentleman's, at any rate) on the impossibility of the thing, and it gives such obvious proof.... Naturally, the inside doesn't budge, it smiles — it doesn't budge — but the body ... that gives it terrible tension. Because it's very conscious of its infirmity (it can't boast of being transformed), very conscious that it's millions of miles away from transformation. So ... so it doesn't take much to convince it. What's more difficult is to give it the certitude that things will be different. It doesn't even understand very well how they can be different. Then there come all other beliefs, all other so-called revelations, the heavens and so on. The whole of Christianity and Islam have very easily solved the problem: 'Oh, no, things here will never be fine, but over there they can be perfect.' That goes without saying. Then there is the whole of Nirvanism and Buddhism: 'The world is an error that must disappear.' So it all comes in waves, and the body feels very ... you understand, it would like to have a certitude of its possibility. That doesn't often happen to it. But the attack was too strong; it was from everything and everywhere at the same time, so strong: 'This Matter CANNOT be transformed.' So it fought and fought and fought, and suddenly it was obliged to lie down. But as soon as it lies down and abandons itself completely, there is Peace, and such a strong Peace — so strong, so powerful. Then it's fine.

It came with hosts of suggestions (they aren't suggestions: they are formations), adverse formations of disorganization; like, for instance the one C. [*one of Mother's attendants, who has just fallen ill*] received. I was warned two days beforehand and tried my best: I couldn't — I couldn't, he gave way. So now it's dragging on and on (the doctor himself says there's no reason for it to last so long), it's dragging on because he gave way. So all that must be slowly won

back. And it comes to everyone, to every circumstance — not to me, never to me because it has no effect on me: if the suggestion comes, I say, ‘So what! I don’t care.’ So it doesn’t try, it’s useless. But it comes to everyone, to disorganize everything and everyone, one after another. This morning, it was everybody at the same time, a complete disorganization of everything. I resisted and resisted and resisted, then suddenly something ... (*Mother makes a gesture*). So the body said, ‘All right.’

If I stay still, it’s over. I skipped a meal. The doctor is unhappy, but (*laughing*) it makes ME happy! Meals are work (a lot of work).

It’s the first time this year it has happened to me. Previously, it used to happen fairly often, but it’s the first time this year. It shows that, all the same, things are improving.... Oh, but it was terrible, people can’t imagine what it is! It takes hold of everyone and everybody, every circumstance and everything, and it gives shape to disintegration — quite like this Gentleman (I think he’s the one!), quite like him. But it doesn’t have the poetic form [of *Savitri*], of course, it’s not a poet: it has all the meanness of life. And it insists on that a great deal. These last few days it insisted on it a great deal. I said to myself, ‘See, all that is written and said is always in a realm of beauty and harmony and greatness, and, anyway, the problem is put with dignity; but as soon as it becomes quite practical and material, it’s so petty, so mean, so narrow, so ugly! ...’ That’s the proof. When you get out of it, it’s all right, you can face all problems, but when you come down here, it’s so ugly, so petty, so miserable.... We are such slaves to our needs, oh! ... For one hour, two hours, you hold on, and after ... And it’s true, physical life is ugly — not everywhere, but anyway ... I always think of plants and flowers: that’s really lovely, it’s free from that; but human life is so sordid,

with such crude and imperious needs — it's so sordid.... It's only when you begin to live in a slightly superior vision that you become free from that; in all the Scriptures, very few people accept the sordidness of life. And of course, that's what this Gentleman insists on. I said, 'Very well.' This body's answer is very simple: 'We certainly aren't anxious that life should continue as it is.' It doesn't find it very pretty. But we conceive of a life — a life as objective as our material life — which wouldn't have all these sordid needs, which would be more harmonious and spontaneous. That's what we want. But he says it's impossible — we have been 'told' it's not only possible but certain. So there's the battle.

Then comes the great argument: 'Yes, yes, one day it will be, but when?... For the time being you are still swamped in all this and you plainly see it can't change. It will go on and on. In millennia, yes, it will be.' That's the ultimate argument. He no longer denies the possibility, he says, 'All right, because you have caught hold of something, you're hoping to realize it now, but that's childishness.'

So the body itself says, 'But of course, I certainly accept that, I perfectly understand! That's not what I want; I don't want this thing or that: I simply want what the Lord wants, nothing else — what He has decided will be. When He says it's over, it will be over; if He says it is to go on, it will go on.' But then, as this Gentleman can't have his way like this, it comes from every side: this or that individual, this or that thing, that circumstance, all of it, all of it is going to be disorganized. Then I start working [*to thwart the attack*].

Today it was really very clever — very clever. He is very clever.

He is a big joker.

There.

* * *

November 30, 1966

(Mother takes up the translation of 'Savitri':)

It's still this Gentleman....

Immortal bliss lives not in human air ⁸¹

(Laughing) Unfortunately the fact is easy enough to note! Immortal bliss lives not in human air. But she could answer him, 'That's because of you, so you don't need to boast about it!'

* * *

February 21, 1967

(Message for Mother's eighty-ninth birthday)

When darkness deepens strangling the earth's breast
And man's corporeal mind is the only lamp,
As a thief's in the night shall be the covert tread
Of one who steps unseen into his house.
A voice ill-heard shall speak, the soul obey,
A power into mind's inner chamber steal,
A charm and sweetness open life's closed doors
And beauty conquer the resisting world,

⁸¹ Book Ten, Canto 4, line 210, p. 646

The truth-light capture Nature by surprise,
A stealth of God compel the heart to bliss
And earth grow unexpectedly divine.

Sri Aurobindo

Savitri, Book One, Canto 4, lines 321-31, p. 55

* * *

April 3, 1967

“The wise men talk and sleep”⁸²

Just the state of consciousness when I act spontaneously (the ‘I’ is a habit of speech, it’s to avoid having to make long sentences), when I act spontaneously, without objectifying myself, is generally unbearable enough: the reactions in others are difficult. I always have to ... [*restrain myself*]. It does happen, but generally I am obliged to be careful, especially when I have to speak.

And there is a very amusing observation; it’s exactly what Sri Aurobindo wrote in *Savitri*: ‘The wise men talk and sleep....’ God grows up while the wise men talk and sleep.⁸³ And that’s how it is: wholly unconscious of what goes on. I don’t say it (I am saying it to

⁸² See also talks of May 3, 1967 and May 3, 1969

⁸³ A few shall see what none yet understands.

God shall grow up while the wise men talk and sleep;
For man shall not know the coming till its hour
And belief shall be not till the work is done.

Book One, Canto 4, lines 338-41, p. 55

you), but they are wholly unconscious. I constantly feel I am using a candle snuffer (!) so as not to be ... really unbearable.

When this luminous Power comes, it's so compact — so compact that it gives the impression of being much heavier than Matter. It's veiled, veiled, completely veiled, otherwise ... *unbearable*.

* * *

May 3, 1967

“... while the wise men talk and sleep”⁸⁴

It's everywhere, everywhere like that (*gesture of pressure on the earth*).

So, naturally, the ‘wise men’ Sri Aurobindo speaks of ask, ‘What does 4.5.67 mean? What's going to happen on 4.5.67? Why...’ It comes from every side into the atmosphere. So yesterday I said to someone, someone with great faith and some authority over a large number of people (they ask him all these stupid questions; he didn't tell me but said it mentally, so that I received it mentally), when I saw him in the afternoon I said to him, ‘So, you have been asked all these questions; well, here is what you are going to answer them very gravely (!):

4 means Manifestation

5 means Power

6 means New Creation

7 means Realization.

⁸⁴ See also talks of April 3, 1967 and May 3, 1969

Now, let them do whatever they like with that!

It's to keep them quiet.

And indeed, he told me this morning (I replied, 'You need not tell me, I know!'), he said to me, 'Oh, as for me, I'd rather wait and see.' I answered, 'That's the true attitude, it's better to wait and see.'

With this 4.5.67, there are quite amusing things. Some people have the attitude of 'righter of wrongs' (there are people like that) and take their own example of a wrong they have suffered which must be righted; and they say, 'This will be the Mother's symbol.' Another would like cameras to be sensitive enough to photograph the 'presence' invisible to the human eye. That also comes, they are things that come in the atmosphere [of Mother]. Another (several others, it seems) thinks that on that day the Indian new year will begin. Others ... everyone thus imagines something, and it comes into the atmosphere. It's amusing.

And I always think of that passage in *Savitri* in which he says, 'God shall grow up ...' Grow up in Matter, of course (and you SEE the Divinity grow up in Matter, and Matter being made more and more capable of manifesting the Divinity), and he says, '... while the wise men talk and sleep.'⁸⁵ It's exactly that. And it's charming.

(silence)

Sri Aurobindo once told me that one of the first results would be that governments would come under the supramental influence (not that WE would govern! But that governments would be influenced). And these last few days I have seen three ministers and five members of parliament! And I have received an offering from the prime minister

⁸⁵ *Savitri*, Book One, Canto 4, line 339, p. 55

[Indira Gandhi]. So it's going well! It's quite amusing.... Some come from Delhi just for a day, only to see me and go back. So one hopes — one hopes — that they will grow a bit wiser (!)

* * *

June 7, 1967

God

Someone asks me, 'And whatever is God?' It's about a text from Sri Aurobindo. Here it is:

'Love leads us from the suffering of division into the bliss of perfect union, but without losing that joy of the act of union which is the soul's greatest discovery and for which the life of the cosmos is a long preparation. Therefore to approach God by love is to prepare oneself for the greatest possible spiritual fulfillment.'

(The Synthesis of Yoga, XXI.III, p. 523)

It's about the last sentence; someone has asked me, 'What is God?' So I've replied (taking the word 'God'):

'It is the name man has given to all that exceeds and dominates him, all that he cannot know but is subject to.'

Instead of saying 'to all that exceeds him,' we could say, 'to THAT WHICH exceeds him,' because from the intellectual standpoint, 'all that' is debatable. I mean there is a 'something' — an indefinable and inexplicable something — and man has always felt dominated by that something. It is beyond all possible understanding

and dominates him. And then, religions gave it a name; man has called it ‘God’; the French call it *Dieu*, the English, *God*, in another language it’s called differently, but anyway it’s the same.

I am intentionally not giving any definition. Because my lifelong feeling has been that it’s a mere word, and a word behind which people put a lot of very undesirable things.... It’s that idea of a god who claims to be ‘the one and only,’ as they say: ‘God is the one and only.’ But they feel it and say it in the way Anatole France put it (I think it was in *The Revolt of Angels*): that God who wants to be the one and only and ALL ALONE. That was what had made me a complete atheist, if I may say so, when I was a child; I refused to accept a being, WHOEVER HE WAS, who proclaimed himself to be the one and only and almighty. Even if he were indeed the one and only and almighty (*laughing*), he should have no right to proclaim it! That’s how it was in my mind. I could make an hour-long speech on this, to show how in every religion they tackled the problem.

At any rate, I have given what I find is the most objective definition. And as in the other day’s ‘What is the Divine?’⁸⁶, I have tried to give a feeling of the Thing; here I wanted to fight against the use of the word which, to me, is hollow, but dangerously so.

I remember a very powerful line in ‘Savitri’ which says it all wonderfully in a few words. He says, ‘The bodiless Namelessness that saw God BORN....’⁸⁷

⁸⁶ See also talk of May 24, 1967 – S.

⁸⁷ The bodiless Namelessness that saw God born
And tries to gain from mortal’s mind and soul
A deathless body and a divine name.

Book One, Canto 3, line 672, p. 40

(silence)

* * *

January 6, 1968

Talk to Mona Sarkar

I wanted to show you something, then I forgot. Maybe you've seen it? It's something I am supposed to have said to M. years ago, many years ago, about *Savitri*; he noted it down in French, and quite recently (that is, perhaps three or four weeks ago), he showed me what he had noted.... And as it happens, he showed it not only to me but to others (!). They've translated it into English and now they want me to read it aloud so they can play it at the Playground. I wanted to revise the French with you, but they want it in English. The English isn't too good, but that doesn't matter.... They are all enthusiastic and happy — as for me, I don't like it, because the form of it is so personal...

Have you seen the French text?

Yes, I have.

So?

He certainly caught something of your vibration, that can be felt. But I don't know how it would come out once you repeat it?... If you could say something anew on 'Savitri'?

Ah! ... But, you know, I am no longer the same person! I no longer say the same things — it's impossible. Impossible. I have been

looking at it; in fact this whole story has come back now as if to illustrate the huge difference — huge, but colossal difference in the state of consciousness. For me now, that [*notation about Savitri*] is such a personal vision of things.

* * *

January 17, 1968

Talk to Mona Sarkar

(Regarding an old conversation of Mother's on Savitri, noted down from memory by a young disciple.)

They're so happy, so enthusiastic! Everyone comes and says, 'Oh, how fine it is!' I thought, 'How much must one err for people to find it fine! When one no longer errs, they no longer like it.' There you are.

And they want to publish it.

* * *

Soon afterwards, regarding a passage from the same text on 'Savitri':

Sri Aurobindo used to write at night, and in the night I would have the experience; in the morning he would read it to me and I would recognize my experience — I hadn't said anything to him, he hadn't said anything to me. Interesting ...

But one always seems to be boasting, that's the trouble. No, in reality, one can SAY a thing like this, but writing and publishing it is quite another matter.

* * *

May 4, 1968

Sri Aurobindo's handwriting

The day before yesterday, at 5 in the morning, I read a letter from T.F. which I hadn't had the time to read. I was all alone, concentrated, and two sentences came in answer to her letter, which I wanted to write down. I started writing, and I found myself writing with a tiny handwriting! I tried to make it bigger — impossible. Then I drew within, I looked, and I saw it was Sri Aurobindo who was writing! So naturally, I let him write.

It's not his handwriting, but not mine either! It's a sort of combination of both.... I had the same experience years ago, very soon after that 'illness,' when I began translating *Savitri* here⁸⁸. One day, while writing, it was he who wrote; it was his handwriting, that is, nearly illegible! So (*laughing*) I said, 'No, I don't want it!' (Because it was illegible — if it had been clearer than mine, I'd have been happy!) And I stopped.

* * *

⁸⁸ See talk of December 31, 1963

July 3, 1968

And your translation of 'Savitri'?

But I have work to do. I no longer have time. I no longer have time to do anything.

It's a pity.

That is to say, now F. has taken it into her head to translate *Savitri* with me (all she does is look in the dictionary when I need a word), right from the start, and I've reached the second page! It'll take ten or fifteen years!

But I find it very interesting, because I only have to be still, and Sri Aurobindo dictates to me. So there remains one or two little corrections in the French, and that's that. He tells me the word: for this word, this word. Like that. It's very interesting. Only, I do five or six lines every time.... But now I do it better than I used to.

* * *

April 5, 1969

*(The Mother records her translation of a few excerpts from
'Savitri,' which are to be set to music.)*

The master of existence lurks in us
And plays at hide and seek with his own Force;
In Nature's instrument loiters secret God.
The immanent lives in man as in his house;

He has made the universe his pastime's field,
A vast gymnasium of his works of might.

He is the explorer and the mariner
Of a secret inner ocean without bourne:
He is the adventurer and cosmologist
Of a magic earth's obscure geography.

Or passing through a gate of pillar-rocks ...
He leaves the last lands, crosses the ultimate seas,
He turns to eternal things his symbol quest;
Life changes for him its time-constructed scenes,
Its images veiling infinity.

Savitri, Book One, Canto 4, lines 736-41, p. 66
824-27, p. 69
873, 884-887, p. 70

* * *

April 12, 1969

*(Mother first reads a few fragments [of her translation?] from
'Savitri' which are to be set to music.)*

In Matter shall be lit the spirit's glow ...
A few shall see what none yet understands;
God shall grow up while the wise men talk and sleep;
For man shall not know the coming till its hour
And belief shall be not till the work is done.

Savitri, Book One, Canto 4, lines 332-36, p. 55

This transfiguration is earth's due to heaven:
A mutual debt binds man to the Supreme:
His nature we must put on as he put ours;
We are sons of God and must be even as he:
His human portion, we must grow divine.
Our life is a paradox with God for key.

Lines 776-81, p. 67

But none learns whither through the unknown he sails
Or what secret mission the great Mother gave.
In the hidden strength of her omnipotent Will,
Driven by her breath across life's tossing deep,
Through the thunder's roar and through the windless hush,
Through fog and mist where nothing more is seen,
He carries her sealed orders in his breast.

Lines 921-27, p. 71-72

A power is on him from her occult force
That ties him to his own creation's fate,
And never can the mighty traveller rest
And never can the mystic voyage cease,
Till the nescient dusk is lifted from man's soul
And the morns of God have overtaken his night.

Lines 941-46, p. 72

This constant will she covered with her sport,
To evoke a person in the impersonal Void,

With the Truth-Light strike earth's massive roots of trance,
Wake a dumb self in the inconscient depths
And raise a lost power from its python sleep
That the eyes of the Timeless might look out from Time
And the world manifest the unveiled Divine.

For this he left his white infinity
And laid on the Spirit the burden of the flesh,
That Godhead's seed might flower in mindless Space.

Lines 957-66, p. 72-73

* * *

April 16, 1969

“When life had stopped its beats, death broke not in ...”

One day, I received someone here (it was R., in fact), and the body asked this Consciousness, like that, it asked, ‘How, how to make sure there is no mixture of all the lower movements with this light?’ Then (I was sitting here), there came down a sort of column wide like this (gesture of about five feet), here (gesture in front of Mother), like a column of light. But it came down IN THE ROOM, mon petit! It wasn’t ‘elsewhere’ — it was here. To such a point that I saw it with my own eyes. A light ... indefinable, dazzling, but ... I don’t know, so tranquil! I can’t say, I don’t know how to explain ... so steady, so tranquil. Dazzling. And without any vibrations. And its color ... indefinable, in the sense that it was neither white nor golden nor ... It

was ... as if EVERYTHING were there. It can't be described. Wonderful.

Then this Consciousness took my consciousness and went like this (gesture in a circle starting from Mother on her left, going through the column of light, then returning to Mother on her right) I felt it [the column of light, when Mother's consciousness went through it]. I felt it, but I didn't see anything [i.e., no shadow]. I didn't see anything, I only saw a slight movement, but ... It was like a slight movement, but it was the same light⁸⁹. Then it went through the column, and came back [into Mother]. And then it took R's consciousness (same gesture in a circle starting from R., taking her consciousness through the column, and coming back to R.), it went through, and there was an outline [while crossing through the column of light], an outline, and in the place of the head, it was blue, it had become blue [i.e., a shadow in the light]. That was R.'s effect: an outline. Then it said something to me (wordlessly, but it was instantly translated into words, in English):

‘When you stand in the light of the Supreme Consciousness you must not make a shadow.’

And with that experience, it was so real and intense! ... It said, ‘That's the condition — the condition.’ Then, half an hour later, it said it to me in French; it was translated into French.

I gave the text to the person. It can't be published as it is, because it requires a whole explanation (and I think it's better not to publish

⁸⁹ The “slight movement” is Mother's consciousness going through the column of light, which means that Mother's consciousness had the same color or the same light as the column's.

it, I don't know). It requires a whole explanation. Or else, we could put:

‘To be able to receive the new consciousness without deforming it ...

Then the text:

‘... One must be able to stand in the light of the Supreme Consciousness without casting a shadow.’

Words ... if one hasn't had the experience, words are ... They don't have what the experience gave — that power. It was so intense, you know! Since then, the body has been constantly ‘thinking’ of that: ‘Don't cast a shadow, don't cast a shadow’ And the transformation of the body's consciousness is taking place at a tremendous speed.

But my eyes were open, I wasn't in trance, I was talking with R. I saw it like that: it took my consciousness ... (same gesture in a circle).

Did it envelop you or ...?

No: it [*the column of light*] was in front of me, like that, between me and R. In front of me, like a layer. Between me and the window. And then, my consciousness was as if seized and taken through it (*same gesture*). I looked and didn't see anything [*i.e. any shadow or trace*], but I felt. I felt: there was a slight quiver [*while going through*]. Then, to give a demonstration, it took R.'s consciousness inside the column, and there was an outline of the head: the outline was seen, just an outline; overall it had become somewhat gray, but not dark at all. And at the place of the head, it was more blue; it was blue, opaque: the head, the shape of a head, like that — an outline. So I wholly

understood what it meant: ‘When you stand in the light of the Supreme Consciousness, you must not make a shadow.’

It was an experience given TO THE BODY – I tell you, my eyes were open. I felt the consciousness ... (*same gesture in a circle*). It can’t be described, can’t be expressed.

Since then, the body has been full of an intensity of vibration, of aspiration, of ... And a tremendous will to get rid of all possible falsehood, all of it.

(*silence*)

It remained for a long time. It remained for at least a quarter of an hour — a long time. And I felt like doing this (*Mother rubs her eyes as if in disbelief*). It’s the first time the physical body has had an experience of that sort, with the eyes wide open. I saw it come down, come down like that, settle down and stay there. And all the cells seemed to be thirsting and thirsting for that — it was wonderful! Inexpressible.

No shadow, that is, no ego.

Yes, it’s precisely that. It means no ego.

(*silence*)

And I understood. I understood to what extent it was a grace — truly a wonderful grace — to have taken away my mind and vital. Naturally, it could be done only because the psychic was in full possession of the body, otherwise ... (*Mother laughs, showing that otherwise she would have disconnected from her body*). Which means the process isn’t to be recommended: it was quite radical. But it was wonderful. And I found something in *Savitri* ... something in

the fifth Canto (I translated it yesterday and kept it to show you)
Here:

(Mother takes a roll of sheets and reads:)

This knowledge first he had of time-born men,
Admitted through a curtain of bright mind
That hangs between our thought and absolute sight,
He found the occult cave, the mystic door
Near to the well of vision in the soul,
And entered where the Wings of Glory brood
In the sunlit space where all is for ever known.

Savitri, Book One, Canto 5, lines 1-7, p. 74

(then Satprem reads out Mother's translation)

Not too great, the translation!

Oh, but it is, Mother.

That's the best I found, but it's not too great.

(silence, Mother looks at another sheet)

And at one place he says:

He shore the cord of mind that ties the earth-heart
And cast away the yoke of Matter's law.
The body's rules bound not the spirit's powers

You see, he says the heartbeats stop ...

(Mother looks for the passage, which Satprem reads out:)

When life had stopped its beats, death broke not in

That's it! And he says that the mind also stops.

(Satprem reads)

He dared to live when breath and thought were still.

That's it.

Thus could he step into that magic place

Which few can even glimpse with hurried glance

Book One, Canto 5, lines 10-17, p. 74

When I read it, I didn't know he had spoken of that experience of the abolition of the mind — he did speak of it, and he says the heartbeats have stopped, but that one isn't dead. That's it.

I don't know, when I read it, I suddenly felt he was describing the transition from ordinary life to a supramental life.

I don't know why, but I very strongly said to myself that I absolutely had to show you this.

(Satprem reads out the translation)

I don't know if the translation is very great, but it's the best I could do. (I am slowly translating the whole of *Savitri* — it'll take ten years!) You remember, we had translated a good deal of it, but it was the end of *Savitri*; this is the beginning.

* * *

May 3, 1969

“While the wise men talk and sleep”

Mon petit, we don’t know anything! Day after day after day, I am increasingly convinced that WE KNOW NOTHING. We think we know, we think ... and we know nothing. We are in the presence of hidden wonders that elude us completely because we’re idiots. There.

But with this Consciousness, there is the why of everything: everyone’s reaction, why he acts in that way, and ... And since it’s been there, not once have I seen in this Consciousness a reproach—not once did it reproach anyone. It has explained everything in such a way that it becomes so luminous, so understanding as to make you wonder, ‘Why should one reproach anyone? ...’ Oh, for it, moral notions are something ... something ultra-stupid. But I told it (I am still telling it) that they were necessary in the course of evolution to refine matter and open the way to certain forces: if people had been from the beginning wholly satisfied with themselves, they would never have progressed. But now, it’s time to see-time to see.

The vast majority of humanity is unconscious (what I call unconscious, that is, without contact with the Consciousness, not CONSCIOUSLY in contact with Consciousness), the vast majority; but for one who is capable of being above circumstances with a clear and precise vision of the why and the how ... it’s wonderful.

There.

It’s what Sri Aurobindo wrote in *Savitri*: God grows up on earth — God grows — but man ... (*laughing*), the wise man talks and sleeps

... and no one will notice it till the work is over⁹⁰. That's how it is.
And he knew it.

* * *

July 26, 1969

*(Mother wants to revise with Satprem a few passages of her
translation of 'Savitri.')*

But now I've come to notice that they cut these quotations, they leave out two lines in the middle — suddenly I'll say to myself, 'But it doesn't hang together!' I'll ask, and F. tells me, 'Yes, they left out one line, two lines' So what's to be done?

It's absurd.

Here, all this is ready.

I don't need to see it again: it's for you to see it. It's my translation.

What should I do?

(Laughing) See if my translation is good!

But Mother, listen ... why?

No, because some things might be put in a better way.

⁹⁰ God shall grow up while the wise men talk and sleep;
For man shall not know the coming till its hour
And belief shall be not till the work is done.

Book One, Canto 4, lines 339-41, p. 55

Yes, but I'm wary. You know, I have learned that what's thought to be 'better' according to literary knowledge isn't necessarily better from the standpoint of the true force.

I quite agree with that.

Listen, basically what you should do is to see (you can see it right away) if you find something you think isn't too good. I've done it 'like that'; I can't say I am attached to my translation, not at all, but if you could suggest something to me ...

(Satprem starts reading out a passage).

As you said, the French might be a bit awkward, but it may be the only way to translate precisely. Sometimes I did it purposely.

Admitted through a curtain of bright mind
That hangs between our thought and absolute sight,
He found the occult cave, the mystic door
Near to the well of vision in the soul
And entered where the Wings of Glory brood
In the sunlit space where all is for ever known.

Book One, Canto 5, lines 2-7, p. 74

'Brood'? ...

It's the image of a hen brooding on its eggs! 'The Wings of Glory' brood on things so they may be realized.

There in a hidden chamber closed and mute
Are kept the record graphs of the cosmic scribe,

And there the tables of the sacred Law
The symbol powers of number and of form,
And the secret code of the history of the world
And Nature's correspondence with the soul
Are written in the mystic heart of life.

Book One, Canto 5, lines 20-22, 27-30, p. 74

In the glow of the Spirit's room of memories
He could recover the luminous marginal notes
Dotting with light the crabbed ambiguous scroll ...

Book One, Canto 5, lines 31-33, p. 75

(Mother laughs) 'The crabbed ambiguous scroll'! ...

Is that all?

He saw the unshaped thought in soulless forms,
Knew Matter pregnant with spiritual sense,
Mind dare the study of the Unknowable,
Life its gestation of the Golden Child.

Book One, Canto 5, lines 71-74, p. 76

A Will, a hope immense now seized his heart,
And to discern the superhuman's form
He raised his eyes to unseen spiritual heights,
Aspiring to bring down a greater world.

Book One, Canto 5, lines 85-88, p. 76

(silence)

Yesterday, I read another part of *Savitri* which tells how the king is transformed⁹¹ — those are ALL the experiences my body is now going through! I knew nothing about it (I don't remember that at all), and I seemed to be reading all the experiences my body is now going through It's interesting.

There's EVERYTHING in this *Savitri*!

And to be able to describe those experiences like that, he must have had them.

* * *

August 2, 1969

I am reading *Savitri*, the second Book, I think, the transformation of the King, his experience⁹². I had read it very long ago, I didn't remember at all, not at all; these days I have been reading it again ... and it's like a detailed description of the experience my body is now having! Ex-traor-di-nar-y. When I read it again, I was flabbergasted.

It's absolutely as if my body were trying to copy that! And I didn't remember at all, not in the least which would mean that Sri Aurobindo had SEEN the thing — did he see it, or did he experience it? I don't know ... And that's what he regards as the supramentalization of the physical being. Do you remember that in *Savitri*?

I'll read it again.

⁹¹ *The World-Soul*, Book Two, Canto 14.

⁹² Book Two, Canto 14, "*The World-Soul*." — Satprem

June 6, 1970

(Satprem reads out to Mother a letter he has received from E, a disciple who tried hard to intrude into the conversations between Mother and Satprem, notably under the pretext of translating Savitri into French. Maneuvering was beginning to make itself felt.)

It would alter the whole character of our meetings, don't you think?...

I wasn't keen on it. *(Mother looks relieved)* I think it's better she doesn't come.

...

(Then Mother takes up the reading of Savitri: the end of the Debate of Love and Death.)

Is it a speech by this gentleman?

Yes [laughing], yes, it's the end.

The end of his speech?

One of us should write.... If it's more convenient for me to write, I'll write.

It's always better to have your handwriting! But if it tires you, it's quite easy for me to note it down.

“Tires,” oh no! It’s just that it [*Mothers handwriting*] is no longer good. It’s no longer as it should be — but it doesn’t tire me. So we’ll put:

(*Mother writes her French translation of the following verses:*)

If thou art Spirit and Nature is thy robe,
Cast off thy garb and be thy naked self
Immutable in its undying truth,
Alone for ever in the mute Alone.
Turn then to God, for him leave all behind;
Forgetting Love, forgetting Satyavan,
Annul thyself in his immobile peace.
O soul, drown in his still beatitude.
For thou must die to thyself ...

That’s for sure! Thou must die to thyself to reach ... *à la suprématie divine* [divine supremacy]?...

“To reach the divine heights”?

No, we must put “God” in Death’s mouth.

For thou must die to thyself to reach God’s height:
I, Death, am ...

Happiness?

I, Death, am the gate of immortality.

Book Ten, Canto 4, lines 224-33, p. 647

He's *clever*!

Every time you read it again, it's new.

But that's a very interesting phenomenon. Every time I read *Savitri*, I feel as if I am reading it for the first time, really. It's not that I understand differently, it's that it's completely new: I never read it before! It's odd. It's at least the fourth time I read it.

And truly there's everything in it. All the things I've discovered lately were there. And I hadn't seen it. It's odd.

The first time I read it was a revelation; it hung together perfectly well from beginning to end, and I felt I had understood (I did understand something). The second time I read it, I said to myself, "But this isn't the same thing as what I read!..." It hung together, it made up a whole – and I understood something else. Then, recently when I read, at every passage I said to myself, "How new this is! And how the things I have found since are there!" Today again, that's how it is, as if I read it for the first time! And it puts me into contact with the things I have just discovered.

It's a miraculous book! (*Mother laughs*)

We'll continue in the same way.

* * *

June 20, 1970

(*Mother takes up her translation of Savitri: Savitri's answer to Death.*)

But Savitri answered to the sophist God:

"Once more wilt thou call Light to blind Truth's eyes,

Make knowledge a catch of the snare of Ignorance
And the Word a dart to slay my living Soul?

[Mais Savitri répondit au dieu sophiste:
‘Une fois encore appelleras-tu la Lumière pour aveugler les
yeux de la Vérité,
Pour enfermer la connaissance dans les mailles de
l’Ignorance
Et faire du Verbe une flèche pour tuer mon âme vivante?]

One can’t slay the soul!

Offer, O king, thy boons to tired spirits ...

[Offre, Ô Roi, tes bienfaits à des esprits fatigués...]

(Mother smiles)

And hearts that could not bear the wounds of Time,
Let those who were tied to body and to mind,
Tear off those bonds and flee into white calm
Crying for a refuge from the play of God,
Surely thy boons are great since thou art He!”

Book Ten, Canto 4, lines 234-43, p. 647

[Et aux coeurs qui ne peuvent supporter les blessures du
Temps;
Que ceux qui étaient liés au corps et au mental,
Arrachent ces liens et fuient dans le calme blanc

Implorant un refuge hors du jeu de Dieu;
Sûrement tes bienfaits sont grands puisque tu es Lui!']

* * *

July 1, 1970

**“the last lines of the Debate of Love and Death
Mother was to translate”**

Do we have time for some *Savitri*?

Yes, Mother. In the last verses, Savitri said:

Let those who were tied to body and to mind,
Tear off those bonds and flee into white calm...

[Que ceux qui étaient liés au corps et au mental
Arrachent ces liens et fuient dans le calme blanc...]

Is it Savitri who says that?

*Yes, Death told her one must leave one's body in order to find
God's height....*

(Mother translates the sequel)

But how shall I seek rest in endless peace
Who house the mighty Mother's violent force,
Her vision turned to read the enigmaed world,

Her will tempered in the blaze of Wisdom's sun
And the flaming silence of her heart of love?
The world is a spiritual paradox
Invented by a need in the Unseen,
A poor translation to the creatures sense
Of That which for ever exceeds idea and speech,
A symbol of what can never be symbolised,
A language mispronounced, misspelt, yet true....

Book Ten, Canto 4, lines 244-54, p. 647-648

[Mais comment puis-je chercher le repos dans une paix sans
fin

Moi qui abrite la force violente de la formidable Mère,
Sa vision attentive à lire le monde énigmatique,
Sa volonté trempée par le brasier du soleil de la Sagesse
Et le silence flamboyant de son coeur d'amour?
Le monde est un paradoxe spirituel
Inventé par un besoin dans l'Invisible,
Une pauvre traduction pour les sens des créatures
De Cela qui à jamais dépasse l'idée et la parole,
Un symbole de ce qui ne peut jamais être symbolisé,
Un langage mal prononcé, mal épelé, pourtant vrai...]

Is there more?

Yes, there is more.

*(Those were the last lines of the Debate of Love and Death Mother
was to translate)*

July 29, 1970

**Message – “*All things shall change in God’s
transfiguring hour.*”**

Do you have something to answer this letter?

(after a silence)

There’s this sentence of Sri Aurobindo we should send him, you know it: “*In the hour of God all is possible...*” I don’t remember. Just yesterday evening I translated it.... “Nothing is impossible in the Hour of God....” One single sentence. It’s the only thing I’d like to tell him. (*Satprem looks for the reference in vain*)

Mother, we can simply send him the sentence as from you.

“Me,” it’s worthless. It was short: “Nothing is impossible when the Hour of God has come ...” or “At the Hour of God ...”⁹³ My memory ... I remember a whole lot of impressions I have, but I don’t remember words and sentences.

And then, I see too many people and do too many things.

It’s the only thing I want to tell him.... Because I have just had a fantastic vision ... A vision without form ... of (how can I express it?) the cradle of a future ... not a very distant future. A future ... I don’t know.

⁹³ The exact quotation is: “*All things shall change in God’s transfiguring hour.*” *Savitri*, Book Three, Canto 4, line 259, p. 341

But it refuses to be told.

Just this: it's a pro-di-gious mass (*gesture*) hanging over the earth.

* * *

August 1, 1970

Message – “*Even the body shall remember God.*”

(Mother gives Satprem the message for August 15:)

“Even the body shall remember God.”

Savitri, Book Eleven, I.1293, p. 707

* * *

August 5, 1970

(Mother takes up the translation of a few extracts from Savitri.)

The great World-Mother by her sacrifice
Has made her soul the body of our state ...

[La grande Mère du monde par son sacrifice
A fait de son âme le corps de notre condition ...]

Book Two, Canto 1, lines 167-68, p. 99

That's interesting, I hadn't noticed: “*has made her SOUL...*”

The divine intention suddenly shall be seen,

The end vindicate intuitions sure technique.

[L'intention divine soudain sera vue
La fin justifiera la sûre technique de l'intuition.]

Book Two, Canto 1, lines 196-97, p. 100

It's interesting....

* * *

October 7, 1970

*(Satprem starts to read his new book
to the Mother – S)*

*It's entitled "On the Way to Superhumanity – Essay of
Experimental Evolution." For the introduction, I start with a
quotation from Sri Aurobindo. That quotation is:*

"Or we may find when all the rest has failed
Hid in ourselves the key of perfect change."⁹⁴

Where did he write this?

In "Savitri," Mother.

Oh, interesting.

* * *

⁹⁴ *Savitri*, Book Two, Canto 10, lines 652-53, p. 256

October 14, 1970

(Mother takes up a few extracts from Savitri that are to be set to music.)

A little point [shall] reveal the infinitudes.

Book Two, Canto 1, line 205. p. 100

It's interesting.

...

(Mother looks at Satprem, smiling)

What time is it?

Eleven, Mother.

Don't you have a practical little work to do?

No, Mother ... except if you want to go on with the translation of "Savitri".... But what about you, Mother, you don't say anything?

Me, I have nothing to say.

(silence)

* * *

October 24, 1970

*(Mother translates a few fragments from Savitri which were chosen
for her.)*

A miracle of the Absolute was born,
Infinity put on a finite soul,
All ocean lived within a wandering drop,
A time-made body housed the Illimitable.
To live this Mystery out our souls came here.

Book Two, Canto 1, lines 234-38, p. 101

[Un miracle de l’Absolu était né
L’infini avait revêtu une âme finie
Tout l’océan vivait dans une goutte errante
Un corps fait par le temps abritait l’Illimité.
Afin de vivre ce mystère nos âmes vinrent ici-bas.]

.....

A figure sole on Nature’s giant stair,
He mounted towards an indiscernible end
On the bare summit of created things.

Book Two, Canto 1, lines 254-56, p. 102

[Une forme solitaire sur les marches géantes de la Nature
Montait vers une fin indiscernable
Sur le sommet nu des choses créées.]

That's really good. It's a pity it was cut into small bits!

* * *

October 28, 1970

(Mother tries to read with difficulty a few lines from Savitri written in large characters. These passages are meant to be set to music.)

At times I read very clearly, and at other times ...
There walled apart by its own innerness
In a mystical barrage of dynamic light
He saw a lone immense high-curved world-pile
Erect like a mountain chariot of the Gods
Motionless under an inscrutable sky.

Book Two, Canto 1, lines 103-07, p. 98

Once in the vigil of a deathless gaze
These grades had marked her giant downward plunge,
The wide and prone leap of a godheads fall.
Our life is a holocaust of the Supreme.
The great World-Mother by her sacrifice
Has made her soul the body of our state....

Book Two, Canto 1, lines 163-68, p. 99

The body of our state ...

Of our human state.

(Mother repeats) “She has made her soul the body of our state....”

(silence)

So I had better try and read it out.

No, Mother, you'll tire your eyes.

I don't see clearly.

Yes, Mother, there's no need to try.

If you aren't tired sitting ...

* * *

October 31, 1970

*(Mother tries to read with difficulty a few lines from Savitri
specially written for her in large characters.)*

It's a curious phenomenon: it's F. who writes this, and she doesn't understand well: for her it's just words – and I can't read!

* * *

November 21, 1970

*(Mother translates a few extracts from Savitri, listens to half of the
tenth chapter of Super-manhood and remains absorbed most of the
time.)*

It goes on inside.

* * *

November 28, 1970

(Then Mother translates a few passages from Savitri, including this one:)

It lends beauty to the terror of the gulfs
And fascinating eyes to perilous Gods,
Invests with grace the demon and the snake.

Book Two, Canto 2, lines 120-22, p. 106

[Il prête de la beauté à la terreur des gouffres
Et des yeux fascinants aux dieux périlleux,
Revêt de grâce le démon et le serpent.]

It's charming!

That's exactly the nature of the vital, what Theon called the
“nervous world.”

* * *

December 2, 1970

(Then Mother translates a few fragments of Savitri:)

This mire must harbour the orchid and the rose,
From her blind unwilling substance must emerge
A beauty that belongs to happier spheres.

Book Two, Canto 2, lines 163-65, p. 107

[Cette boue doit abriter l'orchidée et la rose,

De sa substance aveugle et récalcitrante doit émerger
Une beauté qui appartient à des sphères plus lumineuses.]

* * *

October 6, 1971

(Concerning the next 'Bulletin.')

Is it interesting?

*But of course, Mother! But you know, as a matter of fact, I see
the Bulletin from A to Z, every comma. It's no one else.*

That's good. Have you finished 'The Synthesis'?

No, Mother, it will take another year or two.

Oh, as much as that!

No, pardon me! They calculated it will last until 1975.

'75!... (Mother laughs.)

What shall we take up next?

What have we published?

*'The Human Cycle,' 'Human Unity,' a few chapters of 'The
Life Divine.' ...*

Well, we should finish the book.

Finish it!... (laughter)

It's a lot of work.

Yes, enough for 30 years of the 'Bulletin'!

(Mother laughs)

Yes, it's best to take *The Life Divine*.

Or 'Savitri'? Your translation of 'Savitri'?

Oh, that!... It would take a poet to do that.... You're speaking of my translation?

Yes, Mother.

It's worthless.

No, it's not, Mother! Maybe a few things need adjusting, but....

No, no, it's worth it.

But I've done very little of it.

Well, you would have to 'complete' it! (laughter)

Did I do the end?

A little at the beginning and then the end.

I don't see anymore.... So I should go back to it then.... The Life Divine will take how many years?

I don't know, thirty years maybe [at the rate of a chapter per 'Bulletin'].

What! (*laughter*) Thirty!... Then it will go on until the year 2000.

Yes.

(*Laughing*) Then we have plenty of time!

* * *

April 8, 1972

Message – “*He comes unseen into our darker parts ...*”

(Mother then listens to several texts from Sri Aurobindo for the message of April 24. Sujata suggests the following passage from Savitri, which Mother immediately accepts:)

He comes unseen into our darker parts
And, curtained by the darkness, does his work,
A subtle and all-knowing guest and guide,
Till they too feel the need and will to change.
All here must learn to obey a higher law,
Our body's cells must hold the Immortal's flame.

Savitri, Book One, Canto 3, lines 463-68, p. 35

That's excellent.