



SRI AUROBINDO SOCIETY
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NEWSLETTER

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Death in the forest

Something had come there conscious, vast and dire.



Botanical Name: Gomphrena Globosa

Common Name: Globe Amarnath

Spiritual Significance: Integral Immortality

*Near her she felt a silent shade immense
Chilling the noon with darkness for its back.
An awful hush had fallen upon the place:
There was no cry of birds, no voice of beasts.*

- ***Savitri, Sri Aurobindo***

Guiding Light of the Month

Open the doors that are closed, make the sealed fountains spring forth, that the floods of Thy eloquence and Thy beauty may overspread the world. Let there be amplitude and majesty, nobility and grace, charm and grandeur, variety and strength: for it is the will of the Lord to manifest.

The Mother, 'Prayers and Meditations' July 19, 1914

From the Editor's Desk

This month's Newsletter moves on with Savitri's journey. In the past few issues we saw Savitri's inner journey, culminating in her discovery and identification with the Psychic Being. In this issue, we find the yearlong agony of the knowledge of Satyavan's fate moving towards its expression before Savitri. We may recall here Narad's prophesy, made exactly a year past before Savitri, Ashwapathy and the Queen Mother:

*"In one brief year when this bright hour flies back
And perches careless on a branch of Time,
This sovereign glory ends heaven lent to earth,
This splendour vanishes from the mortal's sky:
Heaven's greatness came, but was too great to stay.
Twelve swift-winged months are given to him and her;
This day returning Satyavan must die."*

"This day" had arrived and knocked on Savitri's door. In a brief 5-paged canto, 'Death in the Forest', Sri Aurobindo brings us through the culmination of Savitri's year-long ordeal. "This day returning", Satyavan dies. In that one brief year, Savitri herself has progressed in her consciousness. We saw her inner greatness come up to the surface and doing its work of transformation. She now was a changed being, illumined by the knowledge of her innermost world, enriched largely by her identification with the Divine portion in her, the Psychic as well as her alignment with the higher worlds of Light above her. Even so, she suffered in her heart the pang of Satyavan's impending death. Sri Aurobindo paints a graphic representation of the last earthly moments Satyavan and Savitri spend together. It is as intense as the agony and pang suffered by her. One sees the brave soul, Savitri, fronting it all, alone, unknown to others. What strength must be hers! When she sought the

permission of Satyavan's mother to walk into the forest with Satyavan for the last time before he would be slain by dire fate,

*"She spoke but with guarded lips and tranquil face
Lest some stray word or some betraying look
Should let pass into the mother's unknowing breast,
Slaying all happiness and need to live,
A dire foreknowledge of the grief to come.
Only the needed utterance passage found:
All else she pressed back into her anguished heart
And forced upon her speech an outward peace."*

One often faces in day to day life situations such as these, though usually of a far lesser magnitude, where one is besieged by the urge to be transparent opposed with the need to be opaque. However, Savitri appears clear in this 'conflict'. She is probably convinced of a greater good. She seemed to be buying time. So too did she watch over Satyavan, watching over his every move with an intensity, all concealed within her. Not once did she let loose the weight of what she was carrying within her. Not once did Satyavan suspect what was amiss in her heavy heart within.

Another poignant passage in this canto was when Satyavan wielded his axe for the third time and he fell, himself stricken by the axe of Death. The moment she dreaded comes before her, but now, Savitri showed her true self of power:

*All grief and fear were dead within her now
And a great calm had fallen. The wish to lessen
His suffering, the impulse that opposes pain
Were the one mortal feeling left. It passed:
Griefless and strong she waited like the gods.*

And we see another side of Savitri from hence; an epitome of still, godly strength she sat. The real task for which she came was about to begin; she was poised, and ready.

Savitri, a journey of Love and Light

*A terror and an anguish filled the world,
As if annihilation's mystery
Had taken a sensible form. A cosmic mind
Looked out on all from formidable eyes
Contemning all with its unbearable gaze
And with immortal lips and a vast brow
It saw in its immense destroying thought
All things and beings as a pitiful dream,
Rejecting with calm disdain Nature's delight,
The wordless meaning of its deep regard
Voicing the unreality of things
And life that would be for ever but never was
And its brief and vain recurrence without cease,
As if from a Silence without form or name
The Shadow of a remote uncaring god
Doomed to his Nought the illusory universe,
Cancelling its show of idea and act in Time
And its imitation of eternity.*

(Savitri)

She knew that visible Death was standing there

*On the great day when the issue is to be joined, the dawn finds Savitri awake earlier than Satyavan,
recapitulating the events of the year just about to end:*

*The whole year in a swift and eddying race
Of memories swept through her and fled away
Into the irrecoverable past.*

This is clearly an earlier draft of the poem, not fully brought in tune with the new inspiration. The opening canto itself, after describing 'The Symbol Dawn, refers to Savitri awaking among the forest tribes and hastening "to join the brilliant Summoner's chant", and the second canto states that "twelve passionate months led in a day of fate"; thus Book VIII almost harks back to Book I, mentions the same details though from a rather lesser height of poetic inspiration, before continuing the story. In the present version we have the bare bones of the Mahabharata story transformed into the flesh and blood of a spacious narrative poem like Urvashi and Love and Death of Sri Aurobindo's Baroda period; what is lacking in Book VIII is the epic amplitude, the luminous extravagant richness, the cosmic overtones and the more or less consistent overhead inspiration behind the rest of the poem.

After a moment of silent prayer before the image of the Goddess Durga, Savitri approaches 'the pale queen mother', asks her permission to accompany her son, Satyavan, to the forest. During her year's life with Satyavan, Savitri hasn't once explored the silences of the great forest with him, and might she not this day go with him and satisfy her longing? The queen-mother readily consents, and so "the doomed husband and the woman" go out with linked hands "into that solemn world". Satyavan shows her,

*... all the forest's riches, flowers
Innumerable of every odour and hue
And soft thick clinging creepers red and green
And strange rich-plumaged birds,...*

As he points out the things he has loved, his dumb forest play-fellows and companions of many a livelong day, she listens deeply, but inly she has other thoughts, love despairing, anguish attentive at every step, thinking that this might prove to be Satyavan's last spoken word:

*Her life was now in seconds, not in hours,
And every moment she economised
Like a pale merchant leaned above his store,
The miser of his poor remaining gold.*

Now Satyavan wields his axe, felling branches, and singing, "high snatches of a sage's chant/That pealed of conquered death and demon slain"; these and his interspersed words of endearment are manna to Savitri who seizes them "like a pantheress.../And carried them into her cavern heart." But this day Satyavan quickly tires, he wields the axe with diminishing force, and soon "the great Woodsman hewed at him and his labour ceased"; Satyavan sways a little and cries out to Savitri:

*Such agony rends me as the tree must feel
When it is sundered and must lose its life.*

*Awhile let me lay my head upon thy lap
And guard me with thy hands from evil fate:
Perhaps because thou touchest, death may pass.*

They sit beneath a kingly trunk, and Satyavan stretches himself with his head on her lap:

All grief and fear were dead within her now
And a great calm had fallen.

As she intently observes his face, "his sweet familiar hue" changes into "a tarnished greyness", his eyes grow dim, and after one last poignant clinging cry, his eyes close, his head falls limp in the very act of a despairing final kiss. And already she smells the presence there of something "vast and dire",

*...a silent shade immense
Chilling the noon with darkness for its back.
An awful hush had fallen upon the place:
There was no cry of birds, no voice of beasts.*

*A terror and an anguish filled the world,
As if annihilation's mystery
Had taken a sensible form...
She knew that visible Death was standing there
And Satyavan had passed from her embrace.*

(An excerpt from "Sri Aurobindo's Savitri – A study of the cosmic epic", Dr. Premanandakumar, Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust, Puducherry)

October - November Sunday Activities at the Centre - A glimpse

October 28th- Savitri Circle, Book Three Canto Two- The Adoration of the Divine Mother

Earlier, through our deep voyage into the unknowable

We meditated on the following lines

From “At the head she stands of birth and toil and fate”.....to “ His base was gathered in one pointing spire.”

These lines are really meditative.

I remember Dr Mangesh Nadkarni using these lines as invocation to the Divine Mother before his wonderful talks. In the words of Dr Prema Nandakumar, the prayer in these lines are the same as Devi Mahatmyam. For the new generation alien to traditional chanting, these passages are revelatory. The following lines taken from Completed Works of Sri Aurobindo. She, the Divine Mother, stands at the head of Time, She is the luminous heart of the Unknowable. All Nature calls to her alone. She is the Way and She is the Goal. Her rapture fills the limbs of Aswapathy; all his seekings are fulfilled in Her. He realises, however, that his single freedom cannot satisfy him. He asks for Her light and bliss for all earth and men. He is aware that his own strength is inadequate for this purpose and he surrenders all of himself to Her so that Her vast Power can act and fill the finite with the Infinite, bring Her healing touch of Love, Truth and Joy into the suffering world. He gives his freed soul to her and her alone. Standing above She controls the cycles of birth, labour and fate and also alone can alter the mighty foundations of inexorable TIME. Being the Silent power in depths and also luminous core and force She effectuates the joy, adventure and the light on the life on earth. We are yet to get the full Might of Her on the earth. Nature Herself being the Divine Mother’s another form dumbly calls to her to break the seals that keep the soul of man in obscurity. One day all here shall be the home of her felicity. All the present contraries are really preparing in their clash the advent of her harmony. Our knowledge climbs up to her, our passion gropes towards her; what is pain now shall be transmuted by her clasp into ecstasy and in that miraculous rapture we shall dwell. When our life becomes one with her it gets transformed into her superlife and gets established in her; then is it fulfilled and then it discovers the still vasts of bliss above and the wondrous clasp of the Divine everywhere on earth here below. This Knowledge flashes to Aswapathy and the rapture of the immortal invades his being. His senses are overcome by bliss and lie amazed. His spirit is seized by the conquering flame of the Divine Mother. Once he has seen her, his heart acknowledges her alone as its sovereign. Only the devouring hunger of the boundless bliss remains; all his previous aims merge in her and then find themselves in her. His whole foundation gathers into a single high pointing cone.

November 4th- Read a few passages from All India Magazine-July 2018 issue- All Life is Yoga by Sri Aurobindo

Prayer and relations with the Divine

Our prayer becomes a more meaningful one when the essence of this passage assimilated in our being. Though our prayers start with asking the Divine for some material things, over the time it takes a much higher step where we enjoy the prayer with motiveless devotion. Then the devotion paves the path to relation with the Divine as our Father, Mother, Friend or Guru.

The following sloka gives the gist of this passage.

Tvameva Mata: You are my Mother, the Supreme One Without a Second, Who nourishes me with Divine Love and graces my life with Self-Respect (the perception of my self as the Soul-Self, and not just as a body, mind, intellect, or ego).

Cha Pita Tvameva: And you are my Father, the Supreme Being Who protects me by raising my consciousness and transforming my mind into a receptacle of the divine; Who instills in me the sterling qualities of Divine Consciousness.

Tvameva Bandu cha Sakha Tvameva: You are my True Relative with Whom I am eternally related as Atman (Soul-self) with Paramatman (the Supreme Self), and You are my Best Friend, my Eternal Companion and Dearest Confidant Who will never leave me.

Tvameva Vidya: You are the Divine Wisdom, the Essence of everything I know, everything I am learning, and everything I do not know but seek to understand and realize (actualize).

Dravinam Tvameva: You are the Highest Wealth (Laxmi) and the Bestower of all the best things in this life and the next. You are the Source of everything good and the Bestower of all Resources we require for our physical sustenance and spiritual enlightenment. You are the Wealth of Wisdom and the Gift of Liberation (Moksha).

Tvameva Sarvam Mama Deva Deva: You are All-in-All; You are Everything to me, You are the core of my being, the Heart of my heart, the Source of my Self, the Soul of my soul, the Ultimate Reality devoid of duality and partiality; Indivisible, Immutable, Immaculate, the Ultimate Knower and the Absolute Perfect Incomparable Supreme Being.

OM TAT SAT

Renunciation

Sri Aurobindo gives a very clear picture of What is real renunciation. He gives a very beautiful analogy of how we are stuck in a web of “I ness” and “myness” like a spider which hates to be transplanted in another web though it gives a fresh view points and formations! He says that if our seeking for Divine works and divine delight is sincere, we should cut asunder the snare of mind and the senses, any intellectual thought system and even the religious dogmas. With lot of Self Will with Sri Aurobindo and The Mother’s grace, we should be able climb a few steps in this ladder of freedom which renunciation gives.

November 11th and 18th, Read passages from **The Human Cycle** by Sri Aurobindo

The Necessity of the Spiritual Transformation

Thanks to Mr Jared for introducing us to this eye opening truth about ourselves. The first 4 passages we read shows how we are struck with automated mechanism of running our life. Right now the individual and social life is run by two complementary powers. First the inherent will in us takes over the functions of physical and vital beings fulfilling its needs to persistence, growth, expansion and enjoyment etc..... The partner of this instinctive will is the will of mind in man to give constant orientation and personal identity. Now the “Buddhi” that is the intellect power in the will of mind should seek the answer to what is our business on this earth. Is it only enjoying and suffering and dying? Or can it find a better purpose finding the seed of divinity concealed behind the coating of our lower nature? Sri Aurobindo says that when this secret seed of divinity is discovered and delivered, luminous above the mind, the wide ground upon which a divine life of human being can be with security founded! Right now the idea of superman is abnormal or supernormal to our present nature. The human mind in us very much at ease and happy with mechanical cycle of this life and is not ready to be pulled out to receive a more perfect life and become half god. Abnormality in nature is not to be deplored since it paves way for immense vista of self-development like from animal to man and man to superman. Though it seems like a arduous labour of growth, splendid crown of victory is at the end! Reading these passages is like chanting mantras to elevate ourselves to a higher level to reach the goal, what Sri Aurobindo and The Mother has prescribed for the present human kind.

- Jayalakshmi

PROGRAMME FOR THE MONTH OF DECEMBER 2018

DATE	TIME	DETAILS
2 Dec 2018 Sunday	8 AM	Monthly Morning Walk*
	6 PM	AIM Magazine Reading and Discussion
5 Dec 2018 Wednesday	7 PM	Darshan Day Programme
9 Dec 2018 Sunday	6 PM	Thematic Study Circle Part I: The Human Cycle
16 Dec 2018 Sunday	6 PM	Thematic Study Circle Part II The Human Cycle
	4 PM	Youth Programme: Savitri LEGO movie
23 Dec 2018	7 PM	Savitri Circle
30 Dec 2018 Sunday	7 PM	Discussion and readings: 50 th anniversary of the coming of the surhomme consciousness on 1 Jan 1969

** Please see below for details.*

DECEMBER 2018 MORNING WALK – NO. 400

- Date:** Sunday, 2nd December 2018
- Time:** 8:00 A.M. sharp for warm up exercise.
- Walk Venue:** Coney Island
- Meeting Point:** Car Park in Punggol Point Road. From here we shall walk to Coney Island
- Contact No:** Mr S.Ramanathan (9138 5130)

Directions to the meeting point

- A) MRT/ Bus: Reach Punggol MRT, Take Bus 84, Get down @ Punggol Road End Stop
- B) CAR: Via TPE, take Exit 9 to Punggol Road/Punggol FlyOver and Follow Punggol Road to Punggol Point Road

Hosts:

Mr. Ritesh Thacker & Family,
07-637, Block 259C, Compassvale Road, Singapore 543259

Host's Residence is less than 200 metres from Sengkang MRT

RSVP 90120151 (Ritesh), 85116426 (Upali).

Note: All are encouraged to attend the Walk. Those, however, who are not able to join the Walk, the hosts would be very happy that they directly come and join in the brunch by 10:15 AM. Prayers and meditation will commence sharp at 10.30 A.M. All are requested to be punctual.

PREVIEW OF FORTHCOMING SUNDAY MORNING WALKS

<i>WALK NO</i>	<i>DATE</i>	<i>PLACE</i>	<i>HOST</i>
401	06/01/19	Macritchie Reservoir	Mr Ramachandran and Ms Jayanthi
402	03/02/19	Bishan Park	Mr C Krishnamurthy & Family
403	03/03/19	Pasir Ris Park	Mr Anand K Venkat & Family

Along the Way... November Walk Review (walk no 399)

Some information about the park...

Chestnut Nature Park is the Singapore's largest nature park. Found along the western edge of the Central Catchment Nature Reserve, Chestnut Nature Park is Made Up of Two Parts Chestnut Nature Park consists of Chestnut Nature Park (North) and Chestnut Nature Park (South). The southern portion of the Park opened in April 2016 while the north section of the Park opened in February 2017.

The north section of the Park is approximately four times the size of the south section of the park. It starts off with a paved road before becoming a meandering walk along an almost-cobbled-stone pavement, and then a dirt track. The Northern Trail is an enjoyable trail to explore.

The Southern Trail is the "Rocky Trail". A characteristic of the Southern Trail is the rocky granite boulders that dot the trail. The rocky terrain is contrasted by sections of the trail that lead across fields of lalang the height of a man. It was amazing to see such a forest kind of park just behind the Petir Road lined with so many highrise buildings.

Since regular members could come on time, with warming up exercise lead by our dear Anju, we started the walk. I really feel blessed to be part of our Sri Aurobindo Society. I not only get to spend some spiritual time at the Center on Sunday evenings but also the first Sunday of the month walk with our society members in these gardens is truly beautiful; that leaves me feeling very peaceful and at one with

the splendours of nature. Thanks to Mr Ramanathan for taking time and effort to spot these gems of Nature and lead us in the trails.

I get to walk along with different groups depending on my pace. This time my walk with Jayanthi Ramanathan was really enlightening. Every other step she picked up some beautiful flowers and gave me the spiritual significance Mother gave for it. I was amazed at her 'परिपूर्ण' (Plenary) bhakti for Sri Aurobindo and The Mother. We found a lot of Nagalinga or Shiva **Linga** trees. In Hindi, it is also called Shiv Kamal or Kailaspati., or Nagalingam in Tamil. In English, it is known as Cannonball tree. The flower name in English is Couroupita guianensis whose spiritual significance Mother gave was Prosperity - Remains only with him who offers it to the divine. I felt the park can be renamed as Cannonball Park instead of Chestnut Park after seeing so many cannonball trees.



Kaurav Pandav Flower -- Passiflora incarnata

Another very rare flower we found was Kaurav Pandav Flower. Spiritual significance given by Mother for this flower - Silence, The ideal condition for progress, Rich, profound, multiple.

Mother Nature just stole our hearts with her beauty in different types of trees, foliage and flowers. We also had to focus on the pebbled path way and slippery path filled with littered leaves. On the lighter note, Singapore government levies no fine for these trees which litters so heavily.

After the walking Tapasya in the Chestnut forest Park, we arrived at our hosts' - Mr Kiran Sule and family – home. It was a very divine delight being with such dedicated sadhaks of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. Mr Kiran gave a summary of certain cantos in Savitri on how Aswapathy's tapas brought Divine Mother Savitri to descend on the Earth. We were amazed at his memorising many cantos of Savitri and it flowed like Ganga from his lips. Then meditation and wishing the members celebrating birthdays and wedding anniversary this month followed.

We were wonderstruck by the array of dishes spread on the dining table by the youngsters of the family while Preeti and her cousin were giving finishing touches to the celebratory dishes they cooked! We thoroughly enjoyed the meal in the company of friends.

Our sincere and loving gratitude to Mr Kiran Sule and his family for this joyful experience.

-Jayalakshmi

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Membership Renewal for 2019 & Subscription to AIM

For 2019, Annual Members need to pay SGD 60 as their membership subscription to the Society. Those subscribing to the All India Magazine will need to pay an additional SGD 30 for the magazine. Please send a cheque payable to "Sri Aurobindo Society" and post it to the Treasurer, Anand Patel at the following address:

Anand Patel
Treasurer – Sri Aurobindo Society
Block 3, Tanah Merah Kechil Road,
02-05, The Tanah Merah,
Singapore 466664

You may also physically pay it to him in cash or by passing a cheque to a committee member and letting Anand Patel know, during our activities.

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