

Sri Aurobindo's Savitri
BOOK -1 Canto 1
The Symbol Dawn

By-Dr, Sanjukta Roy
Dept . Of English
Durga Mahavidhlaya
Raipur

MCQ's

1. Who is the author of *Life Divine*?
Ans. Sri Aurobindo
2. When was Sri Aurobindo born?
Ans. 15th August 1872
3. When was Sri Aurobindo died?
Ans. 5th December 1950 puducherry
4. Total how many Cantos did the first book of *Savitri* has
Ans. Five Cantos
5. Total how many Book *Savitri* the epic is divided?
Ans. Twelve Books
6. Who is the Father of Savitri
Ans. Aswapathy –Lord of Life.
7. Manmohan Ghosh was the elder brother of-
Ans. Sri Aurobindo
8. Who among the following poets was influenced Kabir and rendered some of his verses into English?
Ans. Sri Aurobindo
9. What was the name of Satayavan's Father
Ans. Dyumatsen
10. From which story the epic Savitri is taken
Ans. Mahabharata (Aranyak Parva ch. 248)
11. What does the first canto the Symbol Dawn indicates
Ans. The new beginning after the night of nescience (ignorance disappears)
12. Who was Sri Aurobindo?
 - a. A yogi
 - b. A poet
 - c. A Nationalist
 - d. All of the above.

Ans. d All of the above.

13. Where did Sri Aurobindo study for Indian Civil Service?

- a. Queens College
- b. University of London
- c. Kings College
- d. None of the above.

Ans. c. Kings College

14. What was the middle name of Sri Aurobindo?

- a. Williams
- b. Acroyd
- c. Joseph
- d. Rajnarayan

Ans. B

15. In which year did Sri Aurobindo joined Congress National party?

- a. 1905
- b. 1908
- c. 1907
- d. 1906

Ans. a. 1905

16. What was the name of the two publications started by Sri Aurobindo when he came out of the jail?

- a. Karmayogin and Dharma
- b. Karma and Dharma
- c. Life and Dharma
- d. Chakra and Mukti

Ans. a. Karmayogin and Dharma

17. Where Sri Aurobindo did practiced yoga and studied the cult of Spirituality?

- a. Calcutta
- b. Puducherry
- c. Delhi
- d. Madras

Ans.b. Puducherry

18. What was the name of the institute setup by his followers in the year 1926?

- a. Santiniketan
- b. Sri Aurobindo Ashram
- c. Gandhi Ashram
- d. Ghosh Ashram

Ans. b. Sri Aurobindo Ashram

19. At what age Sri Aurobindo went to England for higher studies.

- a. 5
- b. 6
- c. 7
- d. 8

Ans. b. 6

20. On which day Sri Aurobindo returned to India

- a. 6th Feb. 1893
- b. 5th Dec. 1863
- c. 4th Feb. 1873
- d. 7th Dec 1893

Ans. a. 6th February 1893.

21. Which date was celebrated the Sidhi divas of Sri Aurobindo

- a. Nov. 24
- b. Dec. 5th
- c. Jan. 16th
- d. Aug. 15th

Ans. a. Nov 24th

22. What is the meaning of Sidhi divas

- a. The day of victory-the descent of Sri Krishna
- b. On that day India got Independence
- c. Sri Aurobindo returned to India

d. Savitri's publication day

Ans. a The day of victory-the descent of Sri Krishna

23. What was the name of his wife

- a. Mrinalini Devi
- b. Swanlata Devi
- c. Krishna Devi
- d. None of the above

Ans. Mrinalini Devi

24. What is the full name of Sri MAA(Who help Sri Aurobindo in his Divine Quest)

Ans. Mirra Alfassa.

25. What was the final day of The Mother to arrive in Puducherry

Ans. The Mother first visited puducherry in 1914.

Savitri: Book I Canto I- The Symbol Dawn

General Introduction

Sri Aurobindo Life and Works-

Sri Aurobindo was a man of versatile genius and achievements. He was a rishi, the profounder of Integral Yoga, the Prophet of the Life Divine, the fiery revolutionary and nationalist, the illustrious scholar and the interpreter of the Vedas, the matchless teacher, the poet, dramatist, critic and prose writer of par excellence. Many of his contemporaries saw in him the promise of the superman. K.R.S. Iyenger, quoted "all of a piece; or rather, it is the same diamond the immortal diamond- with different facets turned to our gaze at different times".

Birth and parentage: Sri Aurobindo was born in Calcutta on August 15, 1872. His father, Krishnanand Ghosh was a famous physician. He was an anglicized Indian who wanted to keep his children away from the Indian ways of life. His mother Swaranlata Devi was the daughter of rishi Rajnarayan Bose, who was a renewed name in Indian Renaissance of the nineteenth century. She loved the new composite culture of India. Krishnanand Ghosh sent Sri Aurobindo along with his brothers, Manmohan and Benoy Bhushan, to Loretto convent school at Darjeeling and later he moved to England for his further studies.

Sri Aurobindo's famous works- his main literary works are *The Life Divine*, which deals with theoretical aspects of *Integral yoga*; *Synsthesis of Yoga*, which deals with practical guidance about Integral Yoga; and *Savitri: A Legend and a Symbol*, an epic poem.

Sri Aurobindo's *Savitri* is a magnum opus, appeared in a single volume edition along with the poet's letters on *Savitri*, posthumously in 1954. Its part I , consisting of first three books, was published in a single volume in 1950; part II, comprising books 4 to 8 and part III including books 9 to 12 were published as second volume in 1951. In its present form *Savitri: A Legend and Symbol* is in three parts, divided into 12 books consisting of 49 Cantos. It runs into total of about 24000 lines. It took about fifty years for its completion. It was revised and reshaped several times in the light of Sri Aurobindo's spiritual realizations through the successive years.

Savitri Book I Canto I 'The Symbol Dawn'

In the first three Books of *Savitri*, the protagonist the Divine deity is born in the 'Symbol Night' which turns into 'Symbol Dawn'. 'Symbol Dawn' figures the very beginning of the universe from the night of nescience to the awakening of the dawn of the spirit. The Symbol Dawn unfolds the evolutionary movements that all human beings fall into this labyrinth of life-earth, love, doom, death which represents the central figure of Mother Nature. The main essence is love that represents the purity of the Divine, which also sacrifices its perfection in order that the creation should be saved from the prison of in conscience. Love, therefore, is the immortal element in mortal. It is also the divine glow which manifests itself in human life to change the human nature.

"It was the hour before the Gods awake", it is still night the night of nescience – a limitless, inert, black nothingness, which envelopes the earth. It was the time before even the gods were awake, a time even before Time was born. The situation begins to change soon. The gods first awake to the calls of the yet un- crystallized self of the universe. They begin to function in response to the unformulated need of the cosmos to the expressed call of creation and to the prayers and aspiration of the human soul.

It is only the omniscient and omnipotent transcendent who permeates the mindless, lightless universe of darkness and helps it to recover its forgotten and submerged nativity. He also seeks for the absent light: "Then something in the inscrutable darkness stirred;/ A nameless movement and un thought Idea".

As a result of this striving in the depths of nescience, the material universe comes into existence. The countless galaxies, the numberless stars, the earth, the sun, the moon, and the very Space and Time come into being. The cosmos is also awakened to her own subconscious mind, to the distant memory of something within her that wished to be but knew not how to manifest. A new hope stirs in 'the Night forlorn indifference'. A transfiguring touch is felt everywhere. "All can be done if the God –touch is there". The

veil of darkness is removed from the face of the face of the unknown, the inexpressible entity. The darkness failed and slipped like a falling clock. The light pierces into the heart of the night- the night of in conscience. The divine grace descends in the person of Savitri. Savitri's birth suggests the continuity of the work begun by the earliest Dawn and the- ascent of the God from the Absolute.

(Question and Answers 2-3 lines)

Q1. What is the significance of 'Symbol –Dawn' in Sri Aurobindo's Savitri?

Ans. Savitri in the first Canto itself, in sublime and cosmic sweeps, covers the whole gamut of evolution beginning from the minus hour of creation to the advent of the human person, and of the Symbol-Dawn as epitomized in the birth of Savitri upon earth.

Q2. Sri Aurobindo's Savitri is a glorification of eternal love explains?

Ans. Savitri is a glorification of love. Love that conquers Death, Love alone can lead to the greater realizations into an integral and total transformation of limited human life into the fullness and splendor of the life divine.

(Answer the following questions in 75 words)

Q1. Discuss the stages of Consciousness of Sri Aurobindo?

Ans. There are four such stages as planes of Consciousness the Higher Mind, the illumined Mind, the Intuitive mind, the Overmind.

1. The Higher Mind-Evolutionary process takes place in the upward march beyond the normal mind in its ascent to the higher grade of the spirit. It is a luminous thought. Unlike the normal mind the higher mind does not depend for its knowledge on limited sources, such as sense, experience, inferences doubts and reason. The Higher Mind is free in its thoughts and has eliminated the ignorance of darkness completely.
2. The Illumined Mind- Deep and total silence or complete quietude is the prerequisite condition for the higher mind to enter into the Illumined mind. Here the light from above comes not in drops but in a stream. Sri Aurobindo calls it a 'luminous invasion', 'luminous sweep'.
3. Intuitive Mind- reveals the epiphany (true) nature of knowledge. True knowledge depends not on long procrastinations, or ponderous volume of reflections. It is a spark flashing out all of a sudden out of silence.

4. Overmind - The Overmind opens the seeker to cosmic consciousness. yet, the individual consciousness is not lost. There is no break in its continuity. The bottom remains linked to the top. The Overmind is the source of all religions as well as of all true arts, particularly music and Mantric poetry. On the intermediary planes the vibrations are generally broken up, whereas in the Overmind they are vast self-sustained self-luminous. They come with a sort of halo of eternity.

Q2. To what extent Savitri is Divine?

Ans. In her soul she was Divine only body is human. Savitri was both human and Divine and part divine and part human. Whether she was full consciousness of her destiny we cannot say so when she fears she for the whole human or mankind her love was also a 'universe' all mankind. After all she was the incarnation of Divine Mother. Whatever, she did for whole of mankind and her husband Satayavan. Her own personal calamity was there. Her own husband was going to die but was universalize. Man is basically a spiritual being. But he is often engaged in pursuits of external things which only multiply his desires and necessities of life but fail to give real satisfaction. The inner man raises his demands. The only solution lies in turning inward. This will help in realizing the true self and meaning of life. Sri Aurobindo is the greatest Indian nationalist, scholar, Hindu mystic, philosopher, a visionary, a yogi, and a guru of divine nature. So universal is his genius, so many faceted his personality, so varied his life and career that mind and speech are overwhelmed and fall silent when confronted by a Supramental prodigy like him. Savitri enabled him to realize the Supramental plain on this earth. This was possible only because of the inward passage he made through the different levels of consciousness, his involution and evolution process and so on.

A consciousness lit by a Truth above
Was felt; it saw the light but not the Truth
It caught the idea and built from it a world;
It made as image there and called it God (Savitri 2.4.367-70)

Aurobindo is talking about the destiny of mankind and the death of Satayavan is the destiny of mankind. Savitri has the direct realization between Man and God she takes up the same subject that brings out all the necessary conditions for the realization of this dream of man. It affirms the necessity of the birth of a new power, the power of Divine Grace or love, which alone can save man from the reign of Ignorance which is Death.

(Answer the following question in 150 words)

Q1. Savitri: The Symbol Dawn as yoga of Sri Aurobindo? Explain?

Ans. Life is the one instrument to find the Divine. Divine is the one power to achieve the definite goal of life. Savitri, the poem, the word of Sri Aurobindo is the cosmic answer to his cosmic consciousness. And Savitri the person is the Godhead-evolution into the world which needs inward growth. Savitri is the Divine goddess a response to the human aspiration. Savitri, an incarnation of the divine mother, descends on the earth as a result of eighteen long years of penance which king Aswapathy observed to invoke the Divine mother in order to get a son. But the pleased mother gave him a daughter as a bonus, as she would be her own human form. Hence, when Savitri was born, she was a dazzling beauty draped in divine radiance.

The epic opens with the arch symbol the Symbol Dawn- the oneness of time and eternity, of the individual and the Absolute. If Aswapathy symbolizes the aspiring soul of man as manifested life on the earth, the "Symbol Dawn" stands for the awakened new consciousness of man. Savitri symbolizes the transcendence of man to the Supramental levels of Consciousness with the help of the mother introducing a new race of Divine human on this earth. (This accounts for her insistence on returning to the earth together with Satyavan alive in human form). In the first three Books of Savitri, the protagonist invades the bewildering darkness of Night and the Twilight state of uncertainty, through her prolonged tryst with Death, and emerges into clear light of the day.

In the first three Books of Savitri, the protagonist, the Divine deity is born in the 'Symbol Night' which turns into 'Symbol Dawn'. "It is the time Gods awake". It figures the very beginning of the universe from the night of nescience to the awakening of the dawn of the spirit. In sublime and cosmic sweeps the blank verse narrative covers the whole periods of evolution and brings a total change in the human form. It focuses the reader's attention on the fundamental problems of man, placing Savitri in human situations. The protagonist, herself finds the situation difficult, as she is a simple through an extraordinary girl, but later she works her way up to victory and has a sudden change of transformation. She becomes a human- divine heroine who is brought face to face to confront the reality of the world. That all human beings fall into this labyrinth of life- earth, love, doom, death-which represents the central figure of Mother Nature. It contains within the life's process the upward drive and the downward drag of the evolutionary movements which the cosmos unfolds.

Love represents the purity of the Divine, which also sacrifices its perfection in order that the creation should be saved from the prison of inconscience. Love, therefore, is the immortal element in mortals. It is also the divine glow which manifests itself in human life to change the human nature. And the last is the doom which has the deepest power to grow but is the outcome of ignorance in the mankind. Doom tries to perpetuate the rule of ignorance in mankind. In her avatic 'incarnated' nature of the Mother, she is self- determined.