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## Savitri: A Summary of Sri Aurobindo's Epic Poem

Because of the importance of Sri Aurobindo's epic poem *Savitri* among his works, and because of the numerous references the Mother makes to it especially in *Mother's Agenda*, ("Everything is in *Savitri*", she says), we thought readers would find it helpful to have a summary of the poem. Dr Tyberg who prepared what follows several years ago, was the founder of the East-West Cultural Center in Los Angeles and its guiding light for years until her death in 1980. She is the author of several articles and two books on Sanskrit, *First Lessons in Sanskrit* and *Language of the Gods*]

### *The Drama of Integral Self-Realisation—The Spiritual Message of Savitri*

Sri Aurobindo's *Savitri* is an epic poem of high spiritual challenge in the Yoga or Divine Union or Goal of Self-Realisation it presents. Its spiritual conception is so all-embracing, so integral that it gives birth to a power which transforms life on earth to a life of divine activity rather than leading to an escape from life. The epic is a mantric expression of this great Seer-sage's inner findings and conquests, leading to his vision of an age of truth-consciousness and immortality. It portrays in living drama the daring climb within of a king-soul through progressive states of consciousness to Nirvanic heights and beyond to summits never reached before. The poet reveals how at meditation's peaks at one with God, where many cease their search, he becomes aware of a Presence, God's Consciousness, Power and Bliss, which he calls the Divine Mother. He relates how this Creatrix of boundless Love and Wisdom-Splendor comes down to transform Darkness into Light, the Unreal into the Real, and Death into Immortality.

The famous Mahabharata (from the Pativrata Mahatmya Parva in chapters 291-297 of the Aranyaka Parva) legend of "Savitri and Satyavan", the story of "Love Conquers Death" is made the basic symbol of this mystic scripture of "Divine Life on Earth". The legend tells of the noble and virtuous King Aswapati performing all kinds of austerities in order that God might be pleased and grant him a child to uphold his kingdom. After 18 years the goddess Savitri, wife of the Divine Creator, issues forth from the sacrificial flames and promises the king a radiantly spiritual daughter to spring from her own being.

The child is born and is named Savitri. She grows up "like unto the Goddess of Beauty" herself in embodied form and is blessed with godlike qualities. When she reaches maturity, kings and princes, overwhelmed by her divine character, dare not ask her hand. So her father sends her forth to seek her own lord. Her heart finds Satyavan, the faithful son of Raja Dyumatsena, a blind and exiled king who lives in a forest hermitage.

When Savitri comes to declare her love to her father, she finds him in a conversation with Narada, the great heavenly sage. When Narada hears Savitri's words, he warns that Satyavan, though endowed with all high qualities and honor constant as the Pole Star, is destined to die in a year. The parents try to persuade their daughter to choose another, but in vain. Narada advises the father, however, to allow Savitri to marry Satyavan. So the princess is married and lives a simple, quiet life in the forest. She pleases all with her tender service, self-denial, evenness of temper, her skill and gentle speech and her love for Satyavan.

But night and day Narada's prophetic words are present in her mind, but she speaks of them to no one. When the appointed day for Satyavan's death approaches, Savitri fasts and prays, and on the fated day she begs permission to follow her husband into the forest in order to see the blossoming woods through which he passes daily. Never having petitioned anything previous

to this day, she is granted her request and soon comes to where he stops to cut wood for the home fire.

After a few strokes, Satyavan falls smitten with pain and Savitri, stricken with grief, sits and holds his head in her lap. Suddenly she beholds Yama the God of Death, standing before her with noose in hand. She rises and asks why he had come himself instead of sending one of his emissaries as was his custom. Yama tells her that this prince is endowed with such a sea of virtue and accomplishment and beauty that he is too worthy to be borne away by anyone but the God of Death himself. Then Yama takes the soul of Satyavan and proceeds southward. Savitri, undaunted, follows him. Time and again Yama turns to stop her, but with wise and appealing words, she moves him to grant one boon after another, save the life within his hand. Still she continues to follow him, right into his dark cave, until finally her devotion and unparalleled love and wisdom move Yama to return the soul of Satyavan. Savitri hastens to the woods where her lord's body lay and woos the soul back into consciousness, and together they return to their home, and all the boons promised by Yama are fulfilled.

Adapting this legend as a symbol for a great living spiritual experience, Sri Aurobindo changes King Aswapathy's sacrificial asceticism into the Tapasya, or conscious spiritualization, of an aspiring soul of humanity. Savitri is not only the incarnation of a goddess, but Divine Grace born in answer to Aswapathy's longing for help in bringing some living form of God on earth to relieve it of its burden of inconscience. The marriage of Savitri and Satyavan is the divine linking of their lives for the raising of the world and man to God and the bringing of God to earth to transform it into an abode of Divine Delight.

Sri Aurobindo first gives a panoramic vision of the character and might events of the momentous day of Divine Conquest (book 1, canto 1). Dramatically he opens the epic with a description of the dawn of the day destined for Satyavan's death and makes it the symbol of the dawn of the spiritual tomorrow which is to usher in an age of Truth-Consciousness and immortality. How this wondrous dawn appears to humans with "time-born eyes" and how it affects Savitri awaiting her mighty struggle with Death is compared. Telling verses give the key to the source of Savitri's power to rise above her lone grief and the thoughts oppressing her mind. Her godlike character and sensitive nature are set forth and reveal the source of her power and will in the battle of Death.

As the significant day of death arrives (canto 2), Savitri is pictured preparing within, struggling with the burdens of her karmic past, seeking the aid of her will born of Self to help her disown the trials and legacy of past selves which were "a block on the immortal road". As she reviews her past, we hear the radiant prologue to this day, her twelve months' life in the secluded beauty of the woodlands where there was "deep room for thoughts of God".

Striking verses tell of how, when faced with the death of Satyavan, her heart stood "in the way of the driving wheels" of the "engines of the universe", how she kindled her divine strength, how pain assailed her divinest elements, and how the truth of her divinity "broke in a triumph of fire" and empowered her to smite "Death's dumb absolute" and "burst the bounds of consciousness and Time".

After this survey of the mighty moments of the epic, the poet takes up the sequence of events (canto 3) in accordance with the original legend, commencing with a description of the spiritual steps taken by Aswapathy for his soul's release. We learn how through inner concentration and a steady will he kept his consciousness in his supernature and is helped in turning "his frail mud-engine to heaven-use". To free himself from ego and its finiteness, from mind's limits and "the lines of safety reason draws" are his task. What a conscious sleep brings once one is no more drugged by Matter, what powers develop are part of the spiritual romance related.

Then we are told how “these wide-poised upliftings” whose peace the “restless nether members tire of” are made to endure, how the spirit’s power gradually transforms the darker parts of man’s being, even the body’s cells, and makes them feel the need and will to change in order that “this immense creation’s purpose may not fail”. What he must check crowding through mind’s gates under “forged signatures of the gods”, what the silences of his being reveal, and what priceless riches he finds in the deep subconscious as his being becomes transfigured are all here described.

The secret knowledge (canto 4) follows, giving out the grandiose meaning of our lives, the story of the climb of the god-spark through the kingdom of the earth to Godhead, how the Spirit-guardians of the Silence of the Truth work in the vicissitudes of our lives, what the true sources of our beings are, who the cosmic managers are, and how the secret God within makes himself felt in our lives. But still unexplained problems make Aswapathy plunge into “unplumbed infinitudes” in order to find the key to what could join Spirit and Matter, join “what is now parted, opposed and twain” and fulfill the Oneness that was the stamp of Being. So Aswapathy moves (canto 5) into the freedom and greatness of his Spirit, dares “to live when breath and thought were still” and steps into the magic place where all is elf-known, where the riddle of the world grew plain and “lost its catch obscure”. In magnificent poetry we follow him as he rises, leaving earth-nature’s summits below his feet. We are made to feel the ecstasy, might and sweetness of God’s mystic power, as he is drawn from his loneliness into God’s embrace.

As he climbs, his eye uncovers a series of graded kingdoms twixt life’s poles through whose “organ scale of consciousness” soul’s move. Up this stairway of worlds he starts and enters into another space and time. With Aswapathy, we travel (book 2, canto 1) and become acquainted with the nature of these spheres and their godheads. Here Sri Aurobindo unveils occult cosmogony in grandiose and vibrant detail in a clarity of language that only direct experience can utter. To read of these inner states of ourselves, also the pattern of the universe to be seen within, below, without, above, is to understand ourselves more fully.

Aswapathy crosses out of this gross material world into a subtle material existence where the patterns of our forms are found: then into planes of pure life-force, where in the lower regions, “an unhappy corner of eternity”, the little cravings of earth’s beings and a motley mass of lower vital creatures abound; while in its higher regions live the higher emotions, desires, and aspirations, where unattained ideas are beings and kings. Then lower into the dangerous nether regions of nescience with its brood of hate and selfishness along with this explorer we go to find the causes of the failure of the desire-worlds to fulfill themselves. There we see the twists of Nature. Further below into Hell we penetrate with this warrior-adventurer who keeps “a prayer upon his lips” and the great “Name” to protect him from its terrors and demoniacal creatures. What scenes of horror and yet grim majesty are portrayed! Even to the hidden heart of Night, the absolute denial of Truth and Being, this spirit-soul dives, where the “hypocrite blooms”, a “spiritless hollow”, a home of the dark Powers, “a studio of creative Death” and a dire place to torture. Passing through the suffering of its blackest pit, while “treasuring between his hands his flickering soul”, Aswapathy discovers that the highest secrets are locked in these abysmal depths.

Then up into the paradises of the Gods of Life and Hope we are made to feel the sweetness and joys of this state. But this too he quickly leaves, journeying on to find something higher, that which makes all One; for to remain within the limits of Desire’s satisfactions delays the discoveries of that Immortal One who gives all one could desire and more. The kingdoms and godheads of the little Mind show him their ceaseless analytical workings, and we are introduced to the three dwarfs of mind: habit, desire, and reason. Then into the more luminous planes of Greater Mind, where few are guests, he enters and finds there a plane which God uses as a



bridge to send his forms of Truth to man. Inspiring are the lines outlining what could be ours if we opened the gates leading to this shining corridor of Mind.

Next Aswapathy ascends to the blissful heavens of the Ideal, the home of the source of our spiritual longings where from we hear “the flutings of the Infinite” which rouse the soul from its depths. From this beautiful realm where mind’s radiant flower-children dwell, he enters into the Silence where the Self of Mind, the witness-Lord of Nature has his secret base. Aswapathy watches the motive-thoughts of this Thinker, but this firmament of abstract thought he observes is a Finder only, but not a Knower or a Lover.

Seeking for an escape from these limits, the king-soul goes through a brilliant opening carried by a mysterious sound into the Soul of the World. Here the poet describes the universal harmonies, sympathies, and wisdom of this Cosmic Consciousness, home of souls in spiritual sleep between lives on earth. We learn how souls plan there in this “fashioning chamber of the Worlds” the adventures of their new lives. The watching eye of this spiritual traveller sees there his own soul, and now soul-conscious, becomes aware of the “Two-in-One”, the Cosmic Father-Mother absorbed in deep creative joy, and learns of their works and powers. In awe, he fall before this unveiled Goddess, knowing he is nearing the heart of things. Now our hero-soul steps into a realm of boundless silence “where all are different and all are one”. The plenitudes of Wisdom found there are spread before us.

Next (book 3) on creation’s heights this tireless seeker arrives where only a formless Form of Self is left. There appears the Godhead of the whole with “his feet firm-based on Life’s stupendous wings.” the utter aloneness, stillness, and inscrutability of This God with diamond gaze rejecting from itself world and soul is powerfully set forth. Still, this “Consciousness of unheard bliss” did not satisfy him. He sought in this absolute silence “the Absolute Power”, for he knew that a huge extinction is not the crown of the Self’s mission or the Self’s power, or the meaning of this great mysterious world. Verses of challenge ring forth to the soul who mightly seeks the end of his being in Nirvana.

Passages pregnant with deep meaning then flow forth from the poet as he narrates the drawing near of the Divine Presence behind the Godhead, that luminous heart which Aswapathy has been yearning for with the passion of his soul. Here was the Glory of God, the Divine Mother of all. Soul-stirring is his prayer to the Mighty Mother after having torn up “desire from its bleeding roots and offered to the gods the vacant place.” The poet depicts the transformation that comes over Aswapathy as his heart meets the Divine Mother and describes the vision that comes to him of the New Creation to dawn on earth, bringing with it a harmony of all contraries. Splendid and prophetic passages! Suddenly the Divine Mother rises in him and speaks in his hearts’ chambers, warning him not to awake too soon the immeasurable descent, and revealing her miraculous powers. But Aswapathy, who has now beheld this wondrous Mother, pleads with a heart grown vibrant with love for all: “Incarnate the white passion of thy Force” (book 4). The beauteous Immortal’s consent and her promise to come down to earth is one of the lofty mantric passages of the epic. So to change Nature’s doom Savitri is born. Exquisite poetry recounts her childhood, the gradual growth of the Flame within her, the call to her divine quest and the meeting of the two young lovers (book 9).

Then we hear Narada (book 6), the heavenly sage, not only announcing to Aswapathy, Savitri’s father, the fated death of Satyavan, but giving out with singular force the laws and ways of Karma, fate, pain, and the mystery of why great souls suffer. Like the despondency of Arjuna in the *Bhagavad Gita*, the ordeal of the foreknowledge of Satyavan’s death and heart’s grief are shown to be the beginning of Savitri’s yoga (book 7), her union with God. With the poet we watch he struggles with forces of indifference and inertia, and with the senses, desire and the restless brain, against truth mixed with poison, and against weakness of heart. The strong charge of her soul in response to her command—“Speak to my depths, O great and deathless

Voice, for I am here to do thy will”—is the spiritual charge for every soul seeking to serve the Divine and conquer Darkness.

Next we are given a picture of what Savitri sees when she looks into herself and seeks her soul. Closing the door to the God within are serpents of temptations of all kinds, limitations luring to the easier paths of the all-negating absolute, to escape from the battle with life and to Nirvana. How she answers these and pushes them away is told. On seeking the occult Fire within, three Soul-Forces appear: the Mother of Divine Pity, the Mother of Might, and the Mother of her Secret Soul. Each relates her various forms and work in the world. Finally the poet chants Savitri’s finding of her Secret Deity.

But soon the portentous yet promising day of Satyavan’s death (book 8) arrives, and it is portrayed in verses of poetic pathos. At the moment of death (book 9), Savitri enters the mystic lotus in her head, “a thousand-petalled home of power and light”, and rises to meet the dreadful God, the limitless denial of all being. The two oppose each other, Woman and Universal God of Death. The poem shows Satyavan moving with Death into the silence beyond and Savitri casting off her sheaths and entering into the trance of her soul in order to stay with Satyavan. At the brink of the shadow world, Death peals forth his abysmal cry ordering her to go back. But silent, she dares enter into the Eternal Night with them. Death warns her to go no further and depicts his home of dark immensity and the helplessness of all in his power. After his ruthless speech, Savitri answers what to her is a black lie of Night and declares her spirit’s power can resist him and then demands and challenges Death to give what Satyavan desired in his life for his parents. Death smilingly yields, but demands she return to earth lest she be destroyed. But Savitri boldly states her powers, which, like fire, can destroy him. Death in mocking verses cries out that he is the Originator and Destroyer of all. Savitri then meets scorn with scorn and in dynamic poetry proclaims the wondrous might of her God’s will and Love. Death refutes all her statements, claiming his Power can deny them all, make all things vain. Savitri’s soul continues to wrestle with Death and to ridicule his words of Reason. Death challenges her to seek to know, for knowledge kills love. Quickly comes her response that Nature of Love gives birth to knowledge. Drifting along with them as they move into the Land of Nought (book 10), we hear the debate continue, hear them pit all the contraries of life against each other, and we hear from Savitri the very reason of Death’s existence. Death peals forth a long proclamation of how he cancels all life’s golden truths. To his dangerous music this warrior-maiden gives a picture what her God of Love has done and will yet accomplish, and dares Death to produce a greater God to captivate her soul. Death sneeringly interprets her words as hallucinations of the mind and gives an oration on the deceptions of mind and raises Unconsciousness as the pinnacle of all. Savitri answers in Death’s own words, calling him the dark-browed sophist of the universe making divinity with his dance of death. She sings forth in glorious poetry the occult miracle of God’s wonders from a tiny seed; and then again in lines of majestic power speaks of her assured triumph, of her love as stronger than his bonds of death.

The Dark King still trying to discourage her, ironically speaks of her fantasy of Truth, says that Truth is hard as stone. Back and forth sparkle the words of the debate. Death uses subtle reason and arms himself with all man’s faltering searches, his limiting spiritual goals, and exaggerated and imperfect understanding of Truth to prove the futility of God’s power, but Savitri, delivered of twilight thoughts, with a heart of Truth, answers his lures. Here Savitri chants lyrics of Nature’s miracles, of the wonders of the Infinite and of the limitless powers of a soul integrally surrendered to god.

Death, suspecting her to be the Mother of the Gods embodied, challenges her to show a body of living Truth, for has matter ever been able to hold Truth? Savitri tells Death who he really is and warns him he will cease to be when he touches the embodied Truth Supreme, and then reveals her being all one with God. Death, still unconvinced, makes his last stand in support of

his blind force and dares Savitri to reveal the Power of the Divine, for many have Truth, but who has the Power to radiate it? Then is given a picture of Savitri as she becomes transformed into a divine being with all her chakras or lotuses of Power scintillating. The most powerful speech of all follows, and Savitri exhibits her living Power of Truth and proves that death is needed no more. Death is shown gradually vanishing and finally defeated, eaten by light.

In the silences of the beyond (book 11), Savitri and Satyavan were alone. Into the avenues of the Spirit they roam happily. But even there voices rise enticing them to come to a blissful home away from the battles of life, but Savitri again meets the test of strength. With sun-words she replies that she was born on earth to dare the impossible, that imperfect is the joy not shared by all. Then God, knowing Savitri now to be absolutely at one with his diamond Heart, rings forth the final joyous paean of the divine transformation that shall be on earth and sends Savitri as his Power and Satyavan as his Soul back to earth to change this earthly life into a life divine. Savitri falls to earth like a star (book 12) and Satyavan invisibly drawn, soars past her. They reunite on earth and the epic closes unveiling the age-long secret deep-guarded in the stillness—the promise of a greater dawn.

### **UNIT-3            Wings of Fire**

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Dr. Kalam examines his early life, effort, hardship, fortitude, luck and chance that eventually led him to lead Indian space research, nuclear and missile programs. Kalam started his career, after graduating from Aerospace engineering at MIT (Chennai), India, at Hindustan Aeronautics Limited and was assigned to build a hovercraft prototype. Later he moved to ISRO and helped establish the Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre and pioneered the first space launch-vehicle program. During the 1990s and early 2000, Kalam moved to the DRDO to lead the Indian nuclear weapons program, with particular successes in thermonuclear weapons development culminating in the operation Smiling Buddha and an ICBM Agni (missile). Kalam died on 27 July 2015, during a speech at Indian Institute of Management in Shillong, Meghalaya.

#### **Introduction**

Kalam was born in 1931, the son of a little-educated boat owner in Rameswaram, Tamil Nadu. His father was also the imam of the small mosque in Rameswaram. He had an unparalleled career as a defence scientist, culminating the highest civilian award of India, Bharat Ratna. As a chief of the country's defence research and development programmer, Kalam demonstrated a great potential for dynamics and innovations that existed in seemingly moribund research establishment. This is the story of Kalam's own rise from obscurity and his personal and professional struggles, as well as the story of AGNI, TRISHUL and NAG missiles that have become household names in India and that have raised the nation to the level of a missile power of international reckoning. Since independence, India has sought in various ways, to self-realization, and to adulation and success.

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The book begins with the childhood of Kalam's life. In the beginning, he introduces us to his family and tries to familiarize us with his birthplace Rameswaram. In the childhood, he was a great admirer of his father, Jainulabdeen. He was a man of great wisdom and kindness, and Pakshi Lakshmana Sastry, a close friend of his father and the head priest of the Rameswaram Temple. He had an ideal helpmate in his mother, Ashiamma. He was also influenced by his close friend, Ahmed Jallaluddin; he was about 15 years older than Kalam. With his friend, he talked about spiritual matters. This shows that he believed in spirituality and also believed in God or Khudah. He always went to Lord Shiva's temple with his friends.

The later part of the opening chapters, he introduces his cousin Samsuddin, his school teachers and all the people who were felt any difference amongst them. Here he expresses one event, which happened in his school days, "Rameswaram Sastry, a new teacher of his school he could not stomach a Hindu Priest's son sitting with a Muslim boy. In accordance with our social ranking as the new teacher saw it, I was asked to go and sit on the back bench. I felt very sad, and so did my parents about the incident. Lakshmana Sastry summoned the teacher, and in our presence, told the teacher that he should not spread the poison of social inequality and communal intolerance in the minds of innocent children".

He completed his school education in the Rameswaram Elementary School and Schwartz High School, Rameswaram. In 1950, he joined St. Joseph's College Trichi, to study for the B.Sc degree course when he realized that physics was not his subject. Then, at last, he applied in Madras Institute of Technology, [MIT]. He or his family could not afford to spend that much of money for the course at MIT. Zohara, his sister stood with him. When he had in a specific branch of aeronautical engineering, the goal was very clear in his mind at that time. And he tried to communicate with different kinds of people. At MIT, their teachers shaped his thoughts, Prof. Sponder, Prof. Kal Pandalai and Prof. Narasingalu Rao. Each of them had carried distinct personalities. Last year MIT was a year of transition and had a great impact on his later life. From MIT, he went out to Hindustan Aeronautics Limited, [HAL], at Bangalore as a trainer. There he worked on engine overhauling as part of a team. He had trained in radial engine-cum-drum operations. After the completion of engineering, he had applied for the Air Force and Directorate of Technical Development and Production –DTP and PC (Air) of the Ministry of Defence. But he was not selected in Air Force because he failed to pass the physical fitness standards. Later, he was appointed in DTP and PC (Air) as senior scientific Assistant on basic salary only of Rs. 250 per month, in 1950. He had to create opportunities on his own. At the stage, he covered 32 eventful years of his life when he was just on the threshold of his career after graduation.

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The story tells us about Kalam's rise from a humble lower-middle class family & his narrative of India's efforts in rocketry & space technology. Segregated into four sections, the book gradually reaches for the stars - Orientation, Creation, Propitiation & Contemplation. As a tribute to his mother and father, the book is dedicated to his parents.

The first segment relates to the early life of Avul Pakir Jainulabdeen Kalam. His recollections of the early days are very suggestive of good old Magudi set up. He remembers his parents, relatives and teachers his most influential characters in the book. Adding color to the section are pictures of that time. This segment covers all his early learning and travels. The next segment is related to Kalam's further education and work experience and his involvement with projects of military defense and space, primarily the SLV3. This part has many scientific details and is an introduction to defense and space research organizations. Kalam is an 'aam aadmi' at heart, this is shown in the book in many of his narratives through his interaction with even the insignificant people in the hierarchy like Dr Brahm prakash, Prof Satish Dhawan and Prof Vikram Sarabhai.

The third segment covers the years from 80-91 when Kalam is posted from ISRO to military defense labs. Filled with many pictures, this section too keeps us entertained. And to imagine he worked mostly in government institutions where bureaucracy and red tapes are the order of the day.



We have all heard of SLV3, PSLV, Akaash, Naga, Agni, Trishul in the news and these technological achievements marks the success of what is now, one of the strongest and determined aeronautical and space organization of India.

The last segment is connected with the later years where Kalam is bestowed upon with series of awards, his thought and his visions for a proud India. It is almost impossible not to be inspired by the life of Mr.Kalam. This segment along with the conclusion also mentions of Kalams dream for the year 2020.

The book itself is written in simple English and it seems as if the author is speaking out to the reader directly. One must read this for the following reasons - India's greatest scientist Abdul Kalam's story, military and defense research, missile technology, India's vital space programs and general knowledge. Throughout the book there are morals that are for the grooming purposes for everyone, even for the administrators. Abdul Kalam tells us how the finest of people can be brought out. Abdul Kalam is referred to as 'spiritual scientist', his visions and contributions to his country.

As a young man, Abdul Kalam was inquisitive and keen to learn more and more about science. Kalam's mentors persuaded him to ponder onto the great opportunity into space science and by achieving this India will become self-sufficient in aeronautical and rocket science. He was the first one with a vision that India has great potential in its space and satellite development of launch vehicles. SLV's provide as the foundation for a range of state-of-the-art missile technology in India's military.

From an American viewpoint, 'when everyone is shouting bloody murder and weapon proliferation, Abdul Kalam's memories of France's taking away of support and fake accusations of German help serve as a alarming reminder that embargoing a country simply cannot work if the country's public is strong enough to control their own destiny. It's worrying that there is little debate on the ethics of an impoverished country developing nuclear weapons and deploying delivery systems. . . .But that's almost totally lost in the argument of self-reliance, a determination to never again surrender to foreign rule. '

Abdul Kalam, an optimist, made helped India become self sufficient in its space and rocket technology. The book also inspires the youth of India living nationally and internationally that they appreciate the one marvel achieved by their nations hero, Abdul Kalam and strive themselves to become strong in every area of their profession and make India prosper for eternity.

Abdul Kalam, the man with many names. He is most trusted man in India according to survey, He is also known as 'the missile man' of India. Abdul Kalam will be cherished long after he is gone, the man whom India loves.

The book is a journey into Abdul Kalams life; the book however does not cover his presidency days that were published before he became the president of India. Abdul Kalam stayed in 'Ramesh Varam' which is famous for its 'Shiv' temple. The famous temple was few kilometers journey from Abdul Kalam's home, a Muslim dominated area.

Abdul Kalam use to sell newspapers to help his brother, was good friend of the priest of the temple and his father was respectable man whom people used to turn for advice. Abdul Kalam writes about his school days, his brother in law's influence on him and his teachers in the initial

chapters. He also writes about his financial challenges he faced during the time he was into education.

The later chapters are some of Vikram Sarabhai's immense contribution in establishment of space research center and opening up new feet's for coming scientists. Abdul kalam's efforts in association with other scientist would make ordinary Indian understand the zeal , the effort of human soul in making India , a well respected country in space science.

As a mentor of Abdul Kalam, Vikram Sarabhai had expert management skills and team building skills with which he groomed Abdul Kalam into becoming a scientist to remember for years to come.

In one of his meeting with Vikram Sarabhai at 3 a.m, Abdul Kalam worked hours at stretch with his colleague for presentation to defense minister and he forgets an important personal event to attend to, this shows Kalams determination for his work and his country to succeed.

ISRO, prithvi, agni, nag, trishul are some of the achievements which every Indian is proud of. It was a moment to cherish when India made its first journey to the moon and along with this journey to success was Abdul Kalams belief that nothing can stop India from reaching the stars and he certainly proved himself as one of the stars.

Considering that this book comes from a scientist, this book does have little scientific narration. SLV, Geo satellite, composite material, mechanical engineering and such things. The journey itself always has technical errors especially when it's scientific in nature. Abdul Kalam, like the man himself forced his will to victory over failures, fears and disappointments.

At the core, the book is about the great Indian dream. A wish that all the founding fathers of a country have, a wish fulfilled by Abdul Kalam.

A country which is divided by religion and caste. A country which has a corrupt political system and where money rules, Abdul Kalam still made millions of citizens of India a proud nation.

## **UNIT-4                  Evam Indrajit**

*Evam Indrajit* is a 1963 three-act play by Indian dramatist and theater director Badal Sircar, first translated in 1975. Known for his anti-establishment plays written during the Naxalite movement in 1970s, his plays were often performed in the public arena and challenged conventions of Indian theater. His plays were heavily inspired by traditions of folk theater, while developing an identity of its own rooted in contemporary politics. Many of his plays lack a plot or concrete characterization, and the actors often chose their roles from performance to performance and even exchange them in the middle of the play. Audience participation is usually encouraged. *Evam Indrajit* is an abstract, absurdist play with a central theme of the monotony of a mechanical existence. It explores the writing process and the search for inspiration and something exciting to motivate creation. It was Sircar's first drama after a string of comedies, and remains one of his most enduring works, especially outside of his native India.

The story of *Evam Indrajit* focuses on a writer, who narrates the story without ever being given a firm identity of his own. He struggles with writer's block, striving to write his play but falling short and unaware of the root causes. He has never experienced life in its most primal way, instead being focused on his own experience as a writer. As such, he doesn't have the material to write about, and instead focuses on the audience of the play. He attempts to write about them, but is frustrated there as well. He frequently becomes enraged and tears up his manuscripts. He finally finds inspiration in a woman named Manasi.

Like the writer, Manasi is not a character with her own characterization, but a representation. She represents the Indian counterpart of Carl Jung's concept of Anima. This refers to an entity that serves as a pointer to the collective consciousness. Both the main characters and their concept of identity is frequently questioned, especially the writer Indrajit. He changes his preferred name multiple times in the play, and frequently expresses discontent with his identity. His persona splits between three names, Amal, Kamal, and Vimal.

He feels compelled to write, even at the cost of neglecting important bodily functions that he needs to live. He is obsessed with seeking a purpose in life. The play focuses on his life, his love and obsession with Manasi, and his growing revolutionary leanings against society. However, soon the ruling class and their attempt to impose order on his life begin to crush his spirit. His three personalities, Amal, Kamal, and Vimal each play different roles in society and are played for laughter as they struggle against society. Indrajit, in his persona as the writer, continues to resist, but eventually he becomes convinced that there is no escape from society's clutches.

As the play reaches its final act, Indrajit attempts to seek meaning in exploring the world. He travels to London, but finds the world just as unsatisfying as the life he left behind. He soon finds himself contemplating suicide but decides he is incapable of this as well. The play ends without bringing his story to any sort of conclusion, as Indrajit comes to the realization that the past and present are two ends of a single rope. The play is ultimately about the futility of life and the roles we all play in society.

Badal Sircar is considered one of the most prominent and influential modern Indian playwrights, having written more than fifty plays in a career that spanned fifty years. Born Sudhindra Sarkar in Calcutta, he received a degree in comparative literature from the Jadavpur University. However, it was while he was working as a town planner around the world that he entered theater. He is considered the founder of what is known as Third Theater, an experimental form of theater that involves direct communication with the audience and emphasizes expressionist acting along with realism. His first play, *Bara Trishna*, was performed in 1951 with him in the initial cast. He wrote *Evam Indrajit* a little over a decade later, and it was performed by the Shatabdi theater group, which he founded. As the years passed, he became one of the leading figures in street theater in Bengal, and his angry, anti-establishment plays became the voice of a generation. He criticized the government, the caste system, and overall problems in societies. His later plays, including an adaptation of the Howard Fast novel *Spartacus*, moved into traditional arena theater. He is one of India's most decorated playwrights, winning the 1971 Jawaharlal Nehru Fellowship in 1971, the Indian government's Padma Shri award in 1972, and a 1997 lifetime achievement award by India's National Academy for Music, Dance, and Drama. In 2009, two years before his death, Bada;

Sircar's life was celebrated in a five-day festival by India's most prominent theater directors. Several of India's most prominent film directors today have cited Sircar as their most significant inspiration.

**SUMMARY-** The first act of the play begins with a writer, who is seen to be frustrated without any content to write his story. His mother comes onto the stage, asking him to eat dinner, unable to understand the depth of his struggle. He is inspired by Manasi and decides to write about four people among the audience. They are Amal Kumar Bose, Vimal Kumar Ghosh, Kamal Kumar Sen, and Nirmal Kumar. The name of the fourth person is not acceptable to the writer who asks him to reveal his real name. After a little persuasion he states his name to be Indrajit and when inquired about him, hiding his identity, he states he is afraid. He says he is scared to bring unrest by breaking the norm. Earlier that was not the case, but the loss of childhood and coming of age changed his priorities from happiness to peace. As the narration goes he is revealed to be a common man, born, schooling, work, every aspect of his life reoccurs in the same place. A scene is depicted where the same conversation is repeated, but only Indrajit realizes. Indrajit talks to the writer and reveals his anguish towards the norms of the society and his desperate dreams to go away from this world. But the thought of his mother binds him, relationships and emotions stops him. The narration then moves to the writer, who is a constant part of his plot and he wishes to write about the life's of these character with a heroine Manasi. Then he asks Indrajit about his love interest in Manasi. He tries to correct the name in the beginning, but then accepts it to be Manasi. Indrajit starts to talk about his relation with Manasi, with whom he could talk and find meaning in those talks. Their relation is like every other relation. At a point they talk about the rules that stop women and give freedom to men. Indrajit's rebel character asks her to disobey the rules and when she refuses, he questions people's nature of worshipping the rules. His anger towards the rules gives a context to the Biblical reference to the forbidden Fruit of Knowledge, that reveals the absurdity behind these rules to him. The next scene shows the original four characters in waiting to go for an interview. They were asked to be there at eleven, while the interviewer came one hour late. A few minutes later they are joined by the writer, who had two interviews that clashed. He tells them his problems, after his marriage and his urgency to get a job because he married against his father's wishes and has also bought a flat. Every scene breaks off with Indrajit's mother asking him to eat, which shows the connection of the writer to his character.

The second act of the play occurs after a break of seven years. The characters Amal, Vimal and Kamal have settled down to the middle class life, with a job and family. All of them have a life where they perform the same task in the office, filing papers, stamping files and organizing files. They do not have a break from this routine. Here again this steady and futile lifestyle suffocates Indrajit who wants something outside all these customs. He is searching for something outside the real world. Also he has not married yet because Manasi wants more time and later he decides to go abroad. Realizing his search is in vain, exhausted him and he decides to accept his fate and walks away from his dreams once again.

The third act of the play clearly reveals Indrajit's vision through a letter the writer receives. Indrajit writes about the life that goes in circles wherever he is and the worst part is that he knows about the world that goes round and round. At certain point in his life he pulls at the rope of hope to find a meaning to life but ends with a rope that is bitten off. He is then presented on stage with an idealistic approach to life. He cannot make any sense to things he has achieved in life and have thoughts of dying unable to find faith in life. When Manasi asks the writer about his story, he says he is at a point where the writer cannot continue, neither can he kill him nor can he put Indrajit into a plot that matters. The writer is again stuck, like he was at the beginning without a story. Indrajit comes to the stage and tells the writer that he married



Manasi, but the writer does not agree. But it is true in his concept of life, because life has taught him, that there is not just one Manasi but many. It has made Indrajit one among Amal, Vimal and Kamal, just an ordinary man. He does meet his old friend Manasi, and tells her how there is no escape from this life of sorrow. Finally he accepts the shackles of the society and names himself 'Nirmal Kumar Rey' - an ordinary man with ordinary ambitions and an ordinary life. Recall that this is the exact name the writer does not accept at the beginning of the play.

Towards the end, we see Indrajit and Manasi (his childhood friend and cousin) at their designated spot - near a tree in an empty plot of land. Indrajit is now mature, but the nagging question of "why" still bothers him. He wants to know why we do the things we do, the way we do them. He wonders aloud at the pointlessness of walking a path with no beginning, no end, and most importantly no meaning. It is then the Myth of Sisyphus is invoked in the storyline, with the writer explaining to Indrajit the pointlessness of Sisyphus's condition. It is here that both - Indrajit and the reader - finally have a solution to the problem of life. The solution is to accept the pointlessness and the absurdity of life, and yet carry on with it. When there is a path, you have to tread on it. That itself is the meaning of life as per the writer.

## **UNIT-5 CRY THE PEACOCK**

Anita Desai (nee Mazumbar) is a critically lauded 20th-century writer, and her novels on the experiences and inner lives of Indian men and women are known for their compassion, eloquence, and lucid prose. Having come of age when India achieved independence in 1947, Desai weaves politics and gender issues into her works.

Desai was born in Mussoorie, India, and spent her childhood in Delhi. Her parents had met in Germany when her father was studying there, and they moved back to his home of India in the 1920s. Desai grew up speaking German, Bengali, Hindi, and Urdu; she only learned English when she went to a mission school. She then attended school at Queen Mary's School in Delhi and received a B.A. in English literature from Miranda House at the University of Delhi.

In 1958, Anita married Ashwin Desai, a business executive, and they had four children (Kiran Desai, one of her daughters, won the Man Booker Prize in 2006).

Desai published her first short story when she was only twenty years old. Her first novel was *Cry, the Peacock* (1963). Her other novels include: *Voices in the City* (1965), *Bye-Bye, Blackbird* (1971), *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* (1975), *Fire on the Mountain* (1977), *Clear Light of Day* (1980), *In Custody* (1984), *Baumgartner's Bombay* (1988), and *The Zigzag Way* (2004). In addition to novels, she has written books for children, numerous short stories that have been collected into anthologies, and essays.

Desai has received many awards, including the Royal Society of Literature Winifred Holtby Prize (1978), the Sahitya Akademi of India Award (1979), the Guardian Award for Children's Fiction (1982), the National Academy of Letters Award, and three nominations for the Booker Prize. She has taught at Cambridge, Oxford, Smith, Mount Holyoke, and MIT; she is also a member of the Royal Society of Literature and the American Academy of Arts and Letters.

Desai and her family currently live in the United States.

**Summary-** In her first novel, *Cry the Peacock* (1963), Anita Desai portrays the psychic tumult of a young and sensitive married girl Maya who is haunted by a childhood prophecy of a fatal disaster. She is the daughter of a rich advocate in Lucknow. Being alone in the family, her

mother being dead and brother having gone to America to carve his own independent destiny, she gets the most of her father's affection and attention and in her moments of affliction exclaims to herself: "No one, no one else, loves me as my father does". The excessive love Maya gets from her father makes her have a lop-sided view of life. She feels the world to be a toy made especially for her, painted in her favorite colors and set moving according to her tunes.

Having lived a carefree life under the indulgent attentions of her loving father, Maya desires to have similar attentions from her husband Gautama, a father surrogate. When Gautama, a busy, prosperous lawyer, too much engrossed in his own vocational affairs, fails to meet her demands, she feels neglected and miserable. Seeing her morbidity, her husband warns her of her turning neurotic and blames her father for spoiling her.

Although the reason for Maya's neurosis is, however, not her father fixation though it aids to hasten her tragedy, but persistent obsession of the prediction by the albino astrologer of death either for her or her husband within four years of their marriage. The terrifying words of the prediction, like the drumbeats of the mad demon of Kathakali ballets, ring in her ears and unnerve her. She knows that she is haunted by "a black and evil shadow"- her fate and the time has come: And four years it was now. It was now to be either Gautama or she.

The loving attention of her father makes Maya oblivious of the deadly shadow; but as her husband Gautama fails to satisfy her intense longing for love and life, she is left to the solitude and silence of the house which prey upon her. She muses over her husband's lack of love for her and once, in a fit of intense despair and agony, tells him straight to his face: "Oh, you know nothing of me and of how can I love. How I want to love. How it is important to me. But you, you've never loved. And you don't love me. . . ." Temperamentally there is no compatibility between Maya and Gautama. Maya has romantic love for the beautiful, the colorful and the sensuous; Gautama is not romantic and has no use for flowers. Maya is creature of instincts or a wayward and high stung child. As symbolized by her name she stands for the world of sensations. Gautama's name on the other hand, symbolizes asceticism, detachment from life. He is realistic and rational. He has philosophical detachment towards life as preached in the Bhagwad Gita. Such irreconcilably different temperaments are bound to have marital disharmony.

Had Gautama shown an understanding towards and been attentive to Maya, he would have saved her from the haunting fears of "shadows and drums and drums and shadows." The gap of communication between them leaves her lonely to brood over the morbid thoughts of the albino astrologer's prophecy. Her attempts to divert herself by visits to her friend Leila and Pom or Mrs. Lal's party or the restaurant and the cabaret, prove powerless to dispel the creeping terror. The visit of Gautama's mother and sister Nila brings a brief respite to her and she enjoys her busy life in their company. But once they are gone, she finds the house empty and herself alone with her horrors and nightmares.

Maya is so much possessed by the vision of albino astrologer that she recalls his talk about the myth surrounding the peacock's cry. Listening to the cries of peacock in the rainy season, she realizes that she should never sleep in peace. She is caught in the net of inescapable. Being intensely in love with life she turns hysteric over the creeping fear of death, "Am I gone insane?

Father! Brother! Husband! Who is my savior? I am in a need of one. I am dying, and I am in love with living. I am in Love and I am dying. God let me sleep, forget rest. But no, I'll never sleep again. There is no rest anymore- only death and waiting."

Maya suffers from headaches and experiences rages of rebellion and terror. As she moves towards insanity, she sees the visions of rats, snakes, lizards and iguanas creeping over her, slipping their club-like tongues in and out. Her dark house appears to her like her tomb and she contemplates in it over the horror of all that is to come. Then suddenly, during her interval of sanity, an idea hopefully dawns in her mind that since the albino had predicted death to either of them, it may be Gautama and not she whose life is threatened. She thus transfers her death wish to Gautama and thinks that as he is detached and indifferent to life, it will not matter for him if he misses life. In her perversity she is even haunted by the word 'murder'. Gautama remains so much lost in his work that Maya finds him even oblivious of the dust storm that has raged earlier in the afternoon. When she asks him to accompany her to the roof of the house to enjoy cool air, he accompanies her, lost in his own thoughts. Passing out of the room, Maya catches sight of bronze Shiva dancing and prays to the Lord of Dance to protect them. Climbing the stairs she finds her cat suddenly speeding past them in a state of great alarm. They walk towards the terraced end, Maya looking enraptured at the pale hushed glow of the rising moon. As Gautama move in front of her, hiding the moon from her view, she in a fit of frenzy pushes him over the parapet to "pass through an immensity of air, down to the very bottom". It remains in the end for Gautama's mother and sister to take away completely insane Maya from the scene of tragedy of the house of her father.

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