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THE THEME OF LOVE AND DEATH IN AUROBINDO'S EPIC 'SAVITRI'

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Abstract

The versatile poetic genius of Sri Aurobindo has found its perfect expression in the famous epic 'Savitri' .It is the highest poetic achievement of Sri Aurobindo. He was a great spiritual person and spirituality is the foundation of Indian culture. Sri Aurobindo has presented the theme of love through the character of Savitri. Savitri has been shown the symbol of ideal weeded love. She carries within herself the power of Divine love .All true humans have this Divine element in it .Love is that embodiment of the external in Time which carries with it the stamp of immortality .Sri Aurobindo presents the victory of love over death. The debate between Savitri and the Lord of Death is unique in itself. The colloquy between Savitri , love , Divine incarnate and Death is among the most inspired utterances of world's poetry. Its main theme is conquest of love over Death which has been the dream of man from the dawn of his existence. Savitri fulfils this dream by defeating the lord of death Yama.

Keywords - 1. Love

4. Death

7. Yama

2. Immortality

5. Divine

8. Battle

3. Dawn

6. Matter

'A legend and a symbl' is the subtitle which was given by Sri Aurobindo to this great epic 'Savitri'. The stroy of this epic has been taken by him from the story of the 'Mahabharat' The main story of Satyavan and Savitri becomes the subject matter of 22 cantos and of over 10,000 lines. For Sri Aurobindo, this was not an ordinry story. Sri Aurobindo has presented the beautiful description of conquest of love over death. The character of Savitri is full of love for everyone; Sri Aurobindo, himself points out in a letter about it, "I used Savitri as a means of ascension. I begain

with it on a certain mental level; each time I could reach a higher level I re-wrote it from that level." In fact, he has turned a local legend into a tremendous phychological fact full of significance for human evolution.

Love and death are the main topics ,on which the whole epic of Savitri is based. The poet has tried to establish here that in this world nothing is impossible Generally, It is quite impossible to get victory over death but he assent that true and divine love can conquer death Sri Aurobindo says death is a shadow of love. Accord ing to him love and death seem to possess two opposite principles ,one presents the divine eternity and immortality , the other insists on the eternity of the nescience of mortality .In 'Savitri' this subject of love and death has been treated in a very philosophical manner, it reaches its highest height.

In this epic 'Savitri' love divine comes as the embodiment of Supreme grace to make man free from the darkness of ignorance of death. This theme is among the most inspired utterances of world's poetry. From the dawn of his awakening it has been the dream of man to conquer death, and attaintment of immortality. Savitri takes up the same subject and brings out all the necessary conditions to make this dream of man a healthy . It affirms the necessity of the birth of a new power, the power of the divine grace of love which alone can save man from the reign of ignorance which is Death.

The poetic portarit of Savitri has been so beautifully developed in the epic that she becomes the embodiment of love incarnate. In canto one of book one, we find Savitri, the main character of the poem When the earth was full of beautiful seasons and weathers, Savitri, the divine child was born. She was born as a "mediatrix" briding the gulf between man's and God's. Her birth was not an ordinary birth.. She came on earth as "

A spirit of its celesetial source.aware.

Transiating heaven ijto a human shape

Descended into earth's imperfect mauld

And wept not fallen to mortality,.

But looked on all with large and tranguil eyes.,

Savitri had the protection of higher powers. As she grew up the link between her soul and body become strong and she spread a new atmosphere around her attracting everyone. She was just like a strange bird, in this world who lives content on its own tree of fruited bought secluded from all others or flies to its own divine heights alone. Thus ,Savitri grew up just like "an image of the

coming God." As she was gowing towards_adolescence_, she was much eager to know about this human world. She was filled with the light of mind and a power of will by which she had to work in her life; From her childhood ,she was full of love and sympathy for all; Unity and the conjugal neness of Sacvitri and Satyavan are the unity of the cosmic forces of love and truth.

Her soul was the world's centre and all wide space was at her feet. Savitri's eyes in the form of world- mother were two stars that watched the whole universe. she has the third invisible eye by which she could look on the whole universe. She became the embodiment of the world soul., It seemed that the cosmic thought was inharmony with omni present soul of Savitri; Savitri was an incarnation of eternity looking into the eyes of death. As Savitri was growing she like a magnet attracted divine powers in that atmosphere,. She had the knowledge of a thinker and a seer, She was eager to make man aware about the presence of God. But very few people could understand her divinity.

Everybody loved her and liked to be with her. It was only because of the loving nature of Savitri ,Sri Aurobindo describes the greatness of Savitri:-

"She walked in their front towards a greater light,

Their leader and queen over their hearts and souls.

One close to their became, yet divine and far,

 \mathbf{x} \mathbf{x} \mathbf{x} \mathbf{x} \mathbf{x} \mathbf{x} \mathbf{x} \mathbf{x}

Or bound by the senses and longing heart,

Adoring with a turbid human love,"

Man comes together not

Suddenly or by chance, but because of past affinity-

"To live, to love are signs of infinite things,

Love is a glory from eternity's spheres."

Love is like a bud in the human being. It opens slowly .In the purest from of love all strives to enforce the unity of it.Such pure love is rare in this world.

Savitri was full of such pure love,

The meeting of Satyavan and Savitri was

the symbol of pure love. These two

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The lovers met upon their different paths,.

Traveller across the limit less of time."

All the incidents related to the meeting of Savitri with Satyavan bring us to book V which is called the book of love.In this book we

find the meeting of Satyavan and Savitri, their recognition of each as the soul mate of the other and their symbolic marriage;Sri Aurobindo has presented in this book the purity and tenderness of love, an ideal of human love that exalts the spirit without denying the body, the sheer rapturous quality of fulfilled love-these three cantas have no equal in world literature, 'Savitri' is really a glorious poem of love.

Satyavan and Savitri got married and Savitri inspite of beinga pirncess started to lead a very simple life. The days were passing as usual. On the fated day, Savitri got up early, finished her prayer before the figure of Durga, the world mother; By seeking the permission from Satyavan's mother, she also went to forest with her husband. Satyavan was very happy because Savitri was going with him for the first time. He called various birds and beasts by name, Savitri listened deeply every word because "the voice that soon would cease." Savitri was thinking only a bout death and her heart was moaning at every step.

Savitri was watching Satyaan and knew that "his life was now in seconds, not in hours" But Satyavan knew nothing about his fate and after some time he felt. "the violent and hungry hounds of pain" inhis body. "Satyavan felt that his strength had gone from his body and he called out to Savitri He felt pain in his head and heart. Then entire forest scene became tense, the birds stopped chiping, the winds ceased to blow. Savitri felt neither grief nor fear but a great calm descended on her. The colour of Satyavan 's body changed and he cried, 'Savitri', Savitri' O Savitri,"

Now ,Savitri was alone in the forest and she was not weeping .She remembered her inner journey ,A higher power descended She remembered her inner journey A higher power descended into Savitri and she felt a change in herself. She was covered with "immortal wings" of the pwoer. She found herself in the presence of the God of Death. The two women and the God of death were standing opposite to each other. They looked at each other .The God of Death looked at the body of Satyavan which was strongly clasped by Savitri and he cried.

"Unclasp

Thy passionate influence and relax, O slave,

Of Nature, changing tool of changeless law,

Who vainly writh'st rebellion to my yoke,

Thy elemental grasp weep and forget

, Entomb thy passion in its liing grave,

Leave now the once loved spirit's abondoned robe.

Pass lonely back to thy vain life on earth."

But Savitri did not move She prepared herself for action by gathering all her inner strength The earth and luminous Satyavan arose from the body on the ground. He stood between Savitri and death. The three powers were standing in silence. Now Savitri's spirit sepearated itself from the physical body and now she was not a human Savitri. Her mind arose from the ocean and she followed Satyavan and death. She was travelling in a new world. They all were standing onthe edge of night, It was dreadful and hungry night., Savitrti's spirit was shining like a torch fire. Death looked at "Savitri and said that man is bound by igrnornce, So Death advised Savitri to return to earth. She replied to Death that she was equal in spirit to his spirit. She was immortal in her morality . She again demanded Satyavan from him and said that she had so much strength that she could face the fate and the stone eyes of law.

Death said to Savitri, "There is nothing permanent on this earth. Your immortality is also your dream. Only Death is eternal and sure and I, Death, am He; there is no other God "Here every thing is created by me and after some time return to me. There is no Satyavan and no Savitri. Your soul is also mine. Death, again said," You should understand it very well that your desire of getting love and your will was imparmanent and would never be fulfilled. "But Savitri remained firm on her desire. He says that there is no real love in this world. It comes in the human being like a passion and dream. The God of Death further says to Savitri not to call Satyavan back for earth. So forget Satyavan and go back to earth.

Savitri says to Yama," You are saying true about human beings,but my is not a craving of the flesh, "She says to Yama that no one can separate her from Satyavan and they know each other since the world began. She says,

"It came to me from God, to God return

Even in all that life and man have marred,

A whisper of divinity still is heard,

A breath is felt from the eternal spheres."

Hearing these words of Savitri, Yama says that the immortality which is asked by you will be just like a punishment for imperfect man of this wrold. Everything depends on matters and "these children of Matter into Matter die. So, accept whatever is in your luck and pass your life as is given to you, Savitri says to Yama that you have "women the ignorant mind into a screen " She says that you are speaking about the truth. But the divinity is covered with the face of matter and it is only Matter in which life breathes Mind also works in conscious life., She says to him that he is looking towards an imperfect world. But man will not remain imperfect always and "on a small fragile seed a great tree lurks."

The most important point of these themes is the dialogue between Savitri and Yama. In this philosophical discussion, Savitri wins the battle of words; and the lord of death is compelled to grand Savitri boons one by one. This dialogue and debate show the strength of truth and penance of which Savitri is the embodiment. Thus the theme of death and immortal love have been well treated in 'Savitri',

This dialogue is the most suitable method of the exposition of the theme of conquest of death through truth and love.

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