

# The Powers Within

V. Uma "Time and space in Sri Aurobindo's Savitri" Thesis. Department of English , St. Thomas College, Trichur, University of Calicut, 2004

## Chapter III

# The Powers Within

The general characteristic of the Indian philosophical systems, that which constitutes their real profundity, is the paramount importance attached to the concept of Consciousness. The term "Consciousness" in general, denotes a state of perception or awareness of something within oneself, extending from animal or physical sensations on the one end, through mental perceptions, to entirely ecstatic experiences on the other end. The Vedas and the Upanishads declare intuitively: *Pragyanam Brahman* that is 'Consciousness is Brahman'. The Mandukya Upanishad, in particular, depicts the whole range of human consciousness, beginning with the waking state (*jagrat*) and culminating in the Supreme absolute state of superconsciousness (*turiya*) where all objective relations, perceptions of duality, Time and Space disappear.

Sri Aurobindo's notions of Time and Space are intrinsically rooted in the concept of Consciousness, which he has elaborated in The Life Divine, The Synthesis of Yoga etc. Pure Consciousness for Sri Aurobindo is an infinite, self-aware existence, namely, *Sat* full of *ananda* 'bliss', it is an illimitable, vast, transcendental state *Chit*, full of *shakti* or infinite Force. "The Transcendent, the Supracosmic is absolute and free in itself beyond Time and Space and beyond the conceptual

opposites of finite and infinite" (LD 39). Sri Aurobindo looks at the whole universe from the vantage point of the highest consciousness which he designates as *Sachidananda*. All terms are contained in the Eternal. In the poet's words:

The timeless Infinite holds in itself, in its eternal truth of being, beyond this manifestation, all that it manifests in Time. Its time consciousness too is itself infinite and maintains in itself at once in a vision of totalities and of particularities, of mobile succession or moment sight and of total stabilising vision or abiding whole sight what appears to us as the past of things, their present and their future. (SY 853)

In profound, poetical expressions Sri Aurobindo presents a vivid picture of Pure Consciousness. It is "Infinite, eternal, unthinkable, alone"; it is the "One by whom all live, who lives by none". It is a Vastness "free from sense of Space,/ An Everlastingness cut off from Time [. . .]". At the peak of meditative calm, the poet realizes intuitively that Pure Consciousness "dwelt aloof in its bare infinite,/ One and unique, unutterably sole" and that it "knew itself by its own timeless self" (Savitri 3.1. pp. 308-09).

The true aim and goal of all life on earth, which is to return to "the light of the Timeless and its spaceless home,/ In the joy of the Eternal sole and one"

(2.5. pp. 153-54), is through an evolution of consciousness. The journey may be long, but its end is certain. "Till That is reached our journeying cannot cease" (2.10. p. 238).

Sri Aurobindo states that man has to surmount three conditions of consciousness before he can move on to the highest levels. "The first condition of our consciousness, that in which we now move, is this mind of ignorance that has arisen out of the inconscience and nescience of material Nature [. . .]" (SY 855). In the epic this is how he describes it: "Something pent up in dead insentient depths,/ Denied conscious existence, lost to joy,/ Turned as if one asleep since dateless time" (Savitri 2.3. p. 129). In this state of *avidya* 'ignorance' matter appears to obey classical notions of absolute Time and Space, for inconscience is only a metaphor for Newtonian inertia as far as human consciousness is concerned. Man has no inkling about other interior worlds or subtle mind spaces. He experiences Time as something fleeting, hastening everything to its inevitable end. "His day is a moment in perpetual Time;/ He is the prey of the minutes and the hours" (3.4. p. 336). As long as Divine Grace in the form of Consciousness - Force does not intervene we continue to wallow in interminable inconscience, being:

Ourselves incapable to build our fate  
 Only as actors speak and strut our parts  
 Until the piece is done and we pass off

Into a brighter Time and subtler Space. (2.5. p. 163)

"The second condition of consciousness," observes Sri Aurobindo, "is potential only to the human being and gained by an inner enlightening and transformation of the mind of ignorance [. . .]" (SY 855). In this state the mind suffers from self-forgetful knowledge and it turns inward in search of the true source of knowledge. Man's soul is then an "island in the sea of the Unknown"; his consciousness is "a torch lit to be quenched," because he embodies "the eternal Spirit" (Savitri 1.5. p. 78). In the course of his mundane existence, a time may come when the mind of man may feel motivated, even determined, to exert a strong will in order to cut through the bondage of ignorance, pain and death. "At last the soul turns to eternal things, / In every shrine it cries for the clasp of God" (10.3. p. 631). At this stage some parts in him seek to grow towards the light of the home of Pure Consciousness, where it stays involved in the Superconscient, and thereby attain a "finer consciousness with happier lines" (2.2. p. 104). The evolving soul endeavours to feel a sense of oneness with all souls and to "live in the consciousness of universal mind with the personal mentality only as a projection, a marking board or a communicating switch on the surface" (SY 856). This marks a clear stage in the odyssey of the soul. The inward flight has begun and body consciousness is considerably surmounted. Commenting on the nature and condition of this plane of consciousness, the poet observes:

Our consciousness is cosmic and immense,  
 But only when we break through Matter's wall  
 In that spiritual vastness can we stand  
 Where we can live the masters of our world  
 And mind is only a means and body a tool.

(Savitri 7.6. pp. 542-43)

About the third stage of consciousness Sri Aurobindo remarks that it is "of the mind of knowledge in which all things and all truths are perceived and experienced as already present and known and immediately available by merely turning the inner light upon it [. . .]". This mind of knowledge is essentially "a power of potential omnipotence, but in its actual working on the level of mind it is limited in its range and province" (SY 856). The soul has to go beyond the mind, beyond thought and reason, before it can experience an integral view of Absolute Time and Space. Sri Aurobindo signifies these ascending levels of consciousness as Higher Mind, Illumined Mind, Intuitive Mind and Overmind. Each plane is characterised by its own perception of Time and Space. The seer-poet echoes the wisdom of the Upanishads in this matter in the following passage:

The human mind developing into supermind has to pass through all these stages and in its ascent and expansion it may

experience many changes and various dispositions of the powers  
and possibilities of its time consciousness and time knowledge.

(SY 856-57)

The Higher Mind, which is immediately above the normal mental level, is essentially a luminous thought mind which is exposed to "the lustre of Infinity". The poet adds: "There man can visit but there he cannot live" (Savitri 10.4. p. 659). Obviously, the Higher Mind is not totally free from the realm of thought, which is in Time and Space. At this level of consciousness man has a theoretical or perceptual cognition of the concepts of Time and Space, but he has no direct experience of the same.

The Illumined Mind is a mind no longer of higher thought, but of spiritual light. It works primarily by means of vision, which is outside the domain of Time and Space. To quote from the epic :

A burning head of vision leads the mind,  
Thought trails behind it its long comet tail ;  
The heart glows, an illuminate and seer,  
And sense is kindled into identity. (10.4 p. 660)

The Illumined Mind marks the first range of the mind which is above the confines of Time and Space.

The Intuitive Mind is the first plane in which there is a real opening to the full possibility of realization, for it is through it that the evolving soul can advance further - to the Overmind and then to the Supermind. Its chief function is to lead the consciousness through a sort of transitional stage. In a brilliant passage, packed with sparkling poetic gems, the poet delineates the functioning of the Intuitive Mind:

Intuition's lightnings range in a bright pack  
 Hunting all hidden truths out of their lairs,  
 Its fiery edge of seeing absolute  
 Cleaves into locked unknown retreats of self,  
 Rummages the sky-recesses of the brain,  
 Lights up the occult chambers of the heart [ . . . ].

(Savitri 10.4. p. 660)

The illuminating power of the Intuitive Mind functions like a flash of lightning breaking through the clouds of ignorance, and reveals the true self that dwells behind the manifested world. Thought is transmuted into "revelation's sun-bright eyes"; then: "The Word, a mighty and inspiring Voice, / Enters Truth's inmost cabin of privacy / And tears away the veil from God and life" (10.4. p. 660).

The next step of the ascent of consciousness takes us to the Overmind, which, metaphorically speaking, is a sort of delegation from the Supermind that supports



our terrestrial plane. It is a power of cosmic consciousness. However, the Overmind functions as "Time's buffer state bordering Eternity," fencing "eternity from the toil of Time," for that level of consciousness is too "vast for the experience of man's soul". On attaining the Overmind consciousness, "Thought crowds in masses seized by one regard; / All Time is one body, Space a single look [. . .]" (10.4. pp. 660-61).

Supermind is the name given by Sri Aurobindo to denote the transcendent plane of Truth - Consciousness, which is the true source of all manifestations. In contrast to the mind at the lowest end of the ladder of consciousness, the Supermind forms the penultimate rung, serving as the intermediate link between *Sachidananda* and the phenomenal universe. It ever dwells in Truth, and in the perfect knowledge of the Infinite and the Eternal. It is a logical necessity for the transition from the Timeless, Spaceless "One" to the "Many" which is in Time and Space. The poet affirms that the Supermind is a plane of consciousness that is :

Above the stretch and blaze of cosmic Sight,  
 Above the silence of the wordless Thought,  
 Formless creator of immortal forms,  
 Nameless, investitured with the name divine,  
 Transcending Time's hours, transcending Timelessness [. . .].

(Savitri 10.4. p. 661)

He further adds in the same passage that "In the realms of the immortal Supermind," a "cosmic vision, a spiritual sense / Feels all the Infinite lodged in finite form," and "There the perfection born from eternity / Calls to it the perfection born in Time," and, on reaching that elevated plane of consciousness in "the truth of a moment, in the moment's soul / Can sip the honey - wine of Eternity" (10.4. pp. 661-62).

Each of the levels of the mind discussed in the above paragraphs embodies a finer, subtler quality of consciousness in ascending grades, in which the individual or psychological Time - Space consciousness is superseded by the cosmic dimensions of the Absolute. In the opinion of Umar: "Supermind is not something unknown to the ancient sages. The Rishis of the Veda called it the *satyam rtam brhat*, the Truth the Right the Vast. The seers of the Upanishads called it Vijnana" (56). What is of significance is the fact that there is such authenticity in Sri Aurobindo's recordings that we are led to believe that he must have actually experienced all these levels of perception.

In Savitri, Sri Aurobindo illustrates how Time and Space can be transcended, following the opening of the psychic being. The author categorically affirms: "The true and direct knowledge or vision of past, present and future begins with the opening of the psychical consciousness and the psychical faculties" (SY 861). In the epic the poet indicates that in moments "when the inner lamps are lit," our souls can experience "calm immensities of spirit space" in solitude, for a "wider

consciousness opens then its doors" (Savitri 1.4. pp. 47-48).

The universal energy or cosmic force is flowing all around us and into us all the time, sustaining everything and every being. The poet asserts:

The Spirit's greatness is our timeless source

And it shall be our crown in endless Time.

A vast Unknown is round us and within;

All things are wrapped in the dynamic One [. . .]. (2.2. p. 110)

What is needed is to make a psychic contact with this divine *Shakti* 'power', and the science of *Tantra* deals with the means of accomplishing this feat. Savitri bears ample testimony to the fact that Sri Aurobindo's concept of transcending Time and Space through a heightening and widening of consciousness, is essentially based on the effect of the rousing of *Kundalini*, which constitutes the focal theme of *Tantrasastra*.

*Tantrasastra*, or more specifically *Tantrik Srividya Upasana*, is a prevalent mode of worship centred on the *Shakti* as the Divine Mother. The entire universe, in all its manifestation from the most subtle down to the grossest, is regarded reverentially as the transmutation of *Shakti*: in the gross, macrocosmic aspect as *Brahmanda* 'the phenomenal world of Time and Space', and in the subtle, microcosmic aspect as the six *chakras* 'wheels of energy' in the human body. There

are several authoritative texts and commentaries which expound the enigmatic secrets of *Tantrasastra*. Pandit, an ardent *sadhak* of Integral Yoga, observes that the functions and the potentialities of the *chakras* have been acknowledged in various traditions both in the East and the West. They were known to many Christian mystics and to the Sufis. They find a mention in the Egyptian tradition and Theosophist literature too (Studies in the Tantras and the Veda 99).

Integral yoga incorporates the essentials of *Tantrasastra*, particularly the supreme status accorded to the Divine Mother. Sri Aurobindo asserts that our universe is not a casual or meaningless creation. It is, on the contrary, a willed purposive manifestation of the Supreme *Shakti* or Pure Consciousness. In his words:

An almighty occultist erects in Space  
 This seeming outward world which tricks the sense ;  
 He weaves his hidden threads of consciousness,  
 He builds bodies for his shapeless energy [ . . . ].

(Savitri 1.5. p. 84)

The above passage brings to mind the *Sri Chakra*, which is the most significant *yantra* or symbol, according to the Vedic texts: "Sri Chakra is a master plan of manifestation drawn by the divine Draughtsman on the board of the Infinite, a

transcript of the Transcendent, a symbol image of the supernal verities" (qtd. in Pandit, Studies 93).

*Kundalini* is the name for a living symbol of the latent divine power in the human system lying dormant and curled up like a snake in the region of the spine. Hence the name *Kundalini* (meaning 'coiled up') or the Serpent Power. The signification of the word 'serpent' is purely figurative or symbolic. "It could very well be translated in scientific terminology as 'potential power' " ("What are Tantra Philosophy and Kundalini Yoga?" 21). Just as a coiled up or wound spring is a source of potential energy, which can be transformed into kinetic energy, *Kundalini* indicates the presence of a reservoir of tremendous untapped power within man.

Sri Aurobindo's concept of *Kundalini* is that it is an all-pervasive force that accompanies the growth and the perfect evolution of the new consciousness, that of the Superman. He dwells upon it in The Integral Yoga:

This force is the Yoga - Shakti. It is here coiled up and asleep in all the centres of our inner being (Chakras) and is at the base what is called in the Tantras the Kundalini Shakti. But it is also above us, above our head as the Divine Force - not there coiled up, involved, asleep, but awake, silent, potent, extended and wide; it is there waiting for manifestation and to this Force we have to open ourselves - to the power of the Mother. (221)

Accordingly, one who succeeds in rousing *Kundalini* and realizing the true nature of the Divine Mother, transcends the phenomenal world of Time and Space.

Man is a multiple personality, in the view of Tantra. There are distinct planes or layers of consciousness in an individual which interpenetrate, co-ordinate and blend to constitute a harmonious unit of the entire being. Each of these planes is governed by a number of conscious centres or sources of dynamic power which function as focal points for the Pure Consciousness to operate. These centres are picturesquely portrayed as *chakras* signifying wheels of power, or *padmas* or lotuses found in our subtle body, arranged in an ascending series along the spine. In Sri Aurobindo's Yoga, they signify different levels of consciousness, or the degree of our mental purity and spiritual elevation, which lead us to a greater awareness of Time and Space.

Savitri is strewn with picturesque descriptions of the centres of consciousness. The *Muladhara* is the seat or basic receptacle of the presiding energy. Sri Aurobindo observes that this *chakra* "governs the physical down to the subconscious" (IY 32). In the epic it is alluded to as "the deep place" where the Serpent sleeps; it is a "firm ground" or *muladhara* for "Heaven's descending might" (7.5. p. 530). The abdominal centre, the *Swadhishtana*, which is just below the navel, governs the lower vital. It is the "narrow nether centre" (530). Both these lower *chakras* are regions of darkness. Man's vision of Reality at this level of

perceive the possibility of the co-existence of the temporal-spatial aspects of Reality along with the Timeless, Spaceless, Pure Consciousness. So we may say that the *Anahata* functions as the "link of the finite with the Infinite, / The bridge between the appearance and the Truth [. . .]" (Savitri 5.3. p. 408).

The throat centre, *Visuddha*, is a region of light. When the *Kundalini* rests here, the darkness of ignorance is removed from the heart of the devotee, there is an upsurge of the light of the higher Consciousness, and he tends to evolve into it. Sri Aurobindo refers to it as "the lotus of the throat / Where speech must rise and the expressing mind / And the heart's impulse run towards word and act" (7.5. p. 529). Manifestly, this is the visionary stance of the seers, who uttered the *vak*, the *mantra* or the 'all-revealing word' which was received from the higher realms of Pure Consciousness, as an emanation of *Sabda Brahman*.

The *Ajna chakra*, situated in the middle of the eye brows (*bhrumadhye*), is one of the two important centres for concentration in Integral Yoga, the other one being the *Anahata*. It "governs the dynamic mind, will, vision, mental formation [. . .]" (IY 32). It is the synergic centre of command, "the castle of the lotus twixt the brows" (7.5. p. 529), the station from which the Divine Mother controls all the three times. While the two physical eyes symbolise the cognizance of the physical world of ordinary Time and Space, the third eye, located at the *Ajna*, represents the expansion of vision in the human consciousness. Sri Aurobindo presents before

us a graphic description of the location and function of the *Ajna*. It is the centre of the brow:

Where the mind's Lord in his control - room sits ;  
 There throned on concentration's native seat  
 He opens that third mysterious eye in man,  
 The Unseen's eye that looks at the unseen [ . . . ].

(Savitri 10.4. p. 665)

Evidently, at this level of consciousness, there is a tremendous upsurge of visionary perception and an intuitive seeing of all times and all spaces. The Brahmakumaris endorse Sri Aurobindo's opinion when they remark: "It symbolises the stage when one has deeply realised the world with its past, present and future aspects [ . . . ]" ("What are Tantra Philosophy and Kundalini Yoga?" 24). In Sri Aurobindo's *Yoga*, the *Ajna* is the highest centre of consciousness within the human body or "mortal Space" (Savitri 3.4. p. 343). It is from here that man begins to break free of the bondage of human existence and transcend the temporal - spatial tiers of mundane creation. Pandit explains: "This centre is the channel of communication between the Higher Consciousness and the inner mind as also the outer mind" (Studies 103). On reaching this plane, the *sadhak* becomes one with the Supreme Soul, the witness of the universe. This is how the epic poet depicts him: "A Seer within who knows the ordered plan / Concealed behind our momentary



steps, / Inspires our ascent to viewless heights [. . .]" (Savitri 2.1. p. 101).

The *Sahasrara* or the thousand - petalled lotus is the highest *chakra*. Sri Aurobindo pictures it variously as "the country of the lotus of the head" (7.5. p. 529), as "the mystic lotus" in the head, a "thousand - petalled home of power and light" (9.1. p. 573), and so on. In fact, this centre is not located within the human body; it is above the head and the brain, functioning as a centre linking all the higher realms of the mind from the Higher Mind to the Overmind, and the still higher altitudes of consciousness to the ordinary mental apparatus. Commenting on its function, the author writes that it "commands the higher thinking mind, houses the still higher illumined mind and at the highest opens to the intuition [. . .]" (IY 32). The *Sahasrara* symbolises a superconscious state. To cite the poet's words, it is "a consciousness mind cannot touch, / Its speech cannot utter nor its thought reveal. / It has no home on earth, no centre in man," yet it is "the origin of all truth here" (Savitri 11.1. p. 705). It is at this peak of perception that the individual consciousness expands into cosmic consciousness. Until the final opening and realization are experienced, the *Sahasrara* functions as the connecting link between the macrocosm and the microcosm. But when the *chakra* opens, "it acts like a lid opened between the Higher Consciousness and the ordinary mind" (Pandit, Studies 103).

The *Tantrik* concept of the various levels of consciousness, represented by

the *chakras* of the subtle body, symbolises the Indian awareness of the multilayered and multifaceted nature of Reality. The *chakras* are potential sources of subtle forces and inner powers, or windows opening out into cosmic sight. The poet affirms, that there do exist "slumbering in a sealed and secret cave / The powers that sleep unused in man within" (*Savitri* 1.3. p. 26). Pandit explains that the *chakras* "act as switchboards, as it were, to enter into relation with corresponding fields of Consciousness in the manifestation around" (*Lamps of Light* 33). However, these focal centres of latent powers of liberation are found only in human beings and not in lower organisms. That is why the Vedas and the Upanishads extol human birth, whose ultimate goal is liberation through evolution.

Following *Tantra Sastra*, Sri Aurobindo speaks of three *granthis* or knots, which may be construed as so many terminals marking off different levels of consciousness. Accordingly, the Serpent Power holds together the entire spread of consciousness from the invisible abysses of the subconscious to the zenith of the superconscious beyond sight. The three *granthis* are truly so many strongholds or citadels of power regulating the flow of the cosmic energy in the human apparatus. But for them, the system would collapse under the mighty "influx of the Unknown" (*CP* 133), for the rousing of the *Kundalini* is not an unmixed blessing. Sri Aurobindo presents before us a picturesque passage in sublime verse to this effect:

In the flower of the head, in the flower of Matter's base,

In each divine stronghold and Nature - knot  
 It held together the mystic stream which joins  
 The viewless summits with the unseen depths,  
 The string of forts that make the frail defence  
 Safeguarding us against the enormous world,  
 Our lines of self-expression in its Vast. (Savitri 7.5. p. 528)

In Sri Aurobindo's Yoga, the highest possible level of consciousness attained so far is the Supermind, which is the ultimate source of all knowledge. There is no mention of this in the several treatises on the subject. Pandit acknowledges the unique contribution of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother in this regard:

It is only Sri Aurobindo and the Mother who have devoted their present life to this object and succeeded in their *tapasya* to receive and embody the Supramental Truth for establishment in the Earth-consciousness. And we have it on their authority that the Centre which receives the Supramental Consciousness is above the head, *above the thousand petalled - Lotus*. (Studies 110-11)

A man's spiritual consciousness is awakened when his *Kundalini* is aroused. Savitri contains several passages, which depict such an expansion of perception.

In one passage, Sri Aurobindo briefly indicates how a heightening of Consciousness can lead man to the Absolute:

In this soar from consciousness to consciousness  
 Each lifted tops to That from which it came,  
 Origin of all that it had ever been  
 And home of all that it could still become. (Savitri 1.5. p. 89)

With each such leap of consciousness his perception of Time and Space increases. Such a heightening of time-awareness is ratified by the renowned Theosophist Arundale:

Indeed does kundalini break down barriers, not merely of consciousness in terms of matter but no less in time. The ridges between present and past, and present and future, become transcended, at all events within limits, and the Eternal becomes the Real rather than the modes of time. (73)

Integral Yoga is predominantly based on the psychological methods of meditation and concentration. The Mother rightly described Savitri as a meditation, as a quest of the Infinite, the Eternal ("On Savitri" 45). The epic poet, therefore, advocates the negation of the ego, the rejection of the lower, impure impulses, and an intense aspiration to ascend to higher planes of perception as prerequisites.

And finally, what is needed is an openness to the Divine Force, or rather a total, sincere surrender to the Divine Grace.

There are two distinctive features about his Yoga which Sri Aurobindo sets forth in the following passage :

In our yoga there is no willed opening of the chakras, they open of themselves by the descent of the Force. In the Tantric discipline they open from down upwards, the Muladhar first; in our yoga, they open from up downward. But the ascent of the force from the Muladhar does take place. (IY 32)

Clearly, in Sri Aurobindo's view, the awakening of the human consciousness is a spontaneous process. The more evolved centres or the readier ones open first revealing their respective planes of consciousness to the *sadhak*. It is like buds blossoming in favourable conditions: "Our hidden centres of celestial force / Open like flowers to a heavenly atmosphere [ . . . ]" (Savitri 2.12. p. 278).

Time plays a significant role in the rousing of the Serpent Power. In Integral Yoga, *Kala* or Time is the fourth aid, the other three being *Sastra* 'scripture', *utsaha* 'aspiration' and *Guru* 'preceptor'. We have no control over Time, and have to keep on persevering, reposing unflinching faith in the Divine Grace. Sri Aurobindo declares vehemently that "nothing happens in the cosmic play / But at its time [ . . . ]"

(Savitri 5.1. p. 389).

To withstand the downward pull of our subconscious nature, and to elevate our consciousness more and more in order to attain newer and subtler dimensions of existence, it requires a strength and a tenacity that far surpasses our fragile nature. It is here that the role of the Divine Grace assumes paramount importance. With conviction Sri Aurobindo declares that She is a patient "trustee of slow eternal Time," who absolves "from hour to hour her secret charge" (1.4. p. 60). "She seats the greatness of the Soul in Time / To uplift from light to light, from power to power, / Till on a heavenly peak it stands, a king" (7.5. p. 527). Thus, the poet affirms: "Only the Eternal's strength in us can dare / To attempt the immense adventure of that climb / And the sacrifice of all we cherish here" (Savitri 2.12. p. 280). There is much similarity between Sri Aurobindo and the Christian mystics in the matter of the Divine Grace. Both assert strongly that man cannot raise himself solely by dint of self effort, however powerful. God's Grace is indispensable. "Grace is a generous gift which the Divine communicates to man and unites man to Him" (Nityabodhananda 89).

Everything we see, think, imagine or dream ordinarily occurs in elemental space or *mahakasa*. The yogi who has transcended Time and Space perceives supersensuous objects in mental space or *chittakasa*. When perception becomes objectless, and the soul shines in its own nature, it is knowledge space or *cidakasa*.

This too is accomplished by the rousing of *Kundalini*. Echoing this Vedic wisdom Sri Aurobindo metaphorically describes how a yogi is able to comprehend *akasalipi* 'etheric page' when his soul attains release from Ignorance because of the mighty fire. Time's secrets then become an oft-read book, and he can read the records of the future and the past intuitively (Savitri 1.3. p. 44).

Sri Aurobindo mentions in more than one place that Time, like Space, has different statuses depending on the observer's level of consciousness. The following passage from The Synthesis of Yoga is illuminating:

Time presents itself to human effort as an enemy or a friend, as a resistance, a medium or an instrument [ . . . ].

To the ego it is a tyrant or a resistance, to the Divine an instrument. [ . . . ] When the divine working and the personal are combined in our consciousness, it appears as a medium and condition. When the two become one, it appears as a servant and instrument. (61-62)

As the *Kundalini* rises even higher to the *Ajna* and beyond, all the subtler realms of Timelessness and Spacelessness are gradually revealed. The ascending soul realizes that there is not only no dichotomy between Time and Space taken together on the one hand, and Eternity and Infinity on the other hand, but also that

all these can coexist. In a majestic cascade of blank verse the poet presents before us the culmination of the journey from the mind to the Supermind: "At last the traveller in the paths of Time / Arrives on the frontiers of eternity." Then:

A beam of the Eternal smites his heart,  
 His thought stretches into infinitude;  
 All in him turns to spirit vastnesses.  
 His soul breaks out to join the Oversoul,  
 His life is oceaned by that superlife. (Savitri 1.3. pp. 23-24)

He thus becomes a *Jivanmukta* 'a liberated soul' endowed with a supramental vision of Time and Space, he experiences cosmic consciousness, which enables him to realize that he is merely a dot of concentration in the cosmic extension of the One Spirit, free of all the physical and mental limitations of terrestrial existence. His state can be thus epitomised: "A silence overhead, an inner voice, / A living image seated in the heart, / An unwalled wideness and a fathomless point [. . .]" (1.4. p. 49).

The supramental consciousness, in Sri Aurobindo's view, is "a triple time knowledge" based, firstly on "its eternal identity beyond the changes of time," secondly, on "a simultaneous eternity of Time" characterised by the coexistence of all the three times; and thirdly, on "a total view of the three times as one movement".



In contrast with the ordinary mental consciousness, the Supramental Consciousness will, therefore, have the knowledge of the three times, *trikaladrsti* "not as an abnormal power, but as its normal way of time knowledge" (SY 854).

Savitri abounds in passages that depict the superconscious vision of Time and Space. For instance, alluding to the Kingdoms of the Greater Knowledge the poet observes: "There consciousness was a close and single weft; / The far and near were one in spirit - space, / The moments there were pregnant with all time" (2.15. p. 301). In another passage, he remarks :

In the endless moment of Eternity,  
 It saw from timelessness the works of Time.  
 Overpassed were the leaden formulas of the Mind,  
 Overpowered the obstacle of mortal Space:  
 The unfolding Image showed the things to come. (3.4. p. 343)

Everything then is perceived by "a spiritual sense," as the result of the "touch of consciousness on consciousness" (2.14. p. 292). At the level of supramental vision, there exists a perfect unanimity of perceiving souls. Time and Space cease to exist. With their disappearance ego, division, pain, suffering, fate, and the fear of death also vanish. All that remains is Pure Consciousness.

The significance and relevance of Sri Aurobindo's ideas on Time, Space and

Consciousness can gain better currency by comparing them with the findings (both empirical and experimental) of modern psychology, Quantum Mechanics and the transcendental experiences of the Buddhist mystics. Fritjof Capra, the British physicist, observes that Eastern mystics including Sri Aurobindo "seem to be able to attain non-ordinary states of consciousness in which they transcend the three-dimensional world of everyday life to experience a higher, multidimensional reality" ("Space-Time" 52). He corroborates his finding by quoting from Savitri: "Thus Aurobindo speaks about "a subtle change which makes the sight see in a sort of fourth dimension"(52). This supramental Space - Time vision of Sri Aurobindo is similar to the one given in Relativistic Physics. Louis de Broglie interprets it in the following passage:

In space - time, everything which for each of us constitutes the past, the present, and the future is given en bloc. . . . Each observer, as his time passes, discovers, so to speak, new slices of space - time which appear to him as successive aspects of the material world, though in reality the ensemble of events constituting space-time exists prior to his knowledge of them. (qtd. in Capra, "Space-Time" 54)

Capra however adds that the dimensions of Space - Time may not be identical in science and mysticism (52).

There is some similarity between Sri Aurobindo's triple time knowledge and Priestley's notion of the three times. In Man and Time, the British playwright speculates: "We are at least entitled to say that it is as if there are three kinds of time" (qtd. in Susan Cooper 222). Accordingly, Time One is the passing time in which we live; Time Two denotes the time of dreams or precognition. All the alternative possibilities exist in Time Three. A distinction nevertheless exists: While Priestley merely toyed with his time theory without any personal conviction or experience, Sri Aurobindo had actually attained the supramental plane, and hence his triple time knowledge has the quality of authenticity. To cite Capra: "Consciousness is a central aspect of our inner world and thus, first of all, an experience" (qtd. in Kiran Kumar 143). This observation applies to Sri Aurobindo *in toto*.

Synchronicity, a theory of consciousness advanced by Carl Jung, is comparable with Sri Aurobindo's ideas of transcending Time and Space, especially, his insistence on the psychic opening as a prerequisite for attaining the supramental consciousness. Like Sri Aurobindo, Jung also believes that the individual self has fragmented itself from the general field of consciousness with the result that whole areas or planes of consciousness are lost to direct awareness. Following Jung, David Peat affirms that it is possible for the mind to reach down into its deeper and more subtle areas (234). He dilates on the concept of transformation:

Synchronicity is an image of the creative source, for within its timeless moment, awareness floods over the whole of consciousness and matter to produce a profound sense of identity. Out of this timeless moment flow the events and patterns of [. . .] a more creative life in which the self takes its proper place within consciousness. (237)

In Jung's view, such a state of existence is necessarily transcendental, "since, as the knowledge of future spatially distant events shows, it is contained in an irrepresentable space-time continuum" (qtd. in Kothari 49). The principle of Synchronicity indicates the possibility of attaining the supramental Space - Time vision, which eventually leads to the Timeless Infinite. Jung is at best perceptive, intuitive. Sri Aurobindo goes far ahead of him in that he illustrates in Savitri how Synchronicity can become a real experience. The Yogas of Aswapathy and Savitri are actual demonstrations of how the mighty powers within can be tapped in order to accelerate the elevation of consciousness.