
On the New Edition of
Savitri

Sri Aurobindo Ashram
Pondicherry

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Publisher's Note

A new edition of *Savitri* was brought out in 1993 by the Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust. This edition was the result of many years of intensive work. Sri Aurobindo's manuscripts were carefully compared with all copies, typescripts and printed texts. Wherever it was found that his lines had been copied, typed or printed differently from what he wrote or dictated, the lines were restored to their authentic form.

As there has been some misunderstanding regarding this edition, we publish here five statements by members of the Ashram. Readers having questions or seeking further clarification may write to the Copyright Department, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry 605002.

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The Authority for the New Edition

On what authority were changes made in Savitri?

Sri Aurobindo's manuscripts are the main authority for the changes.

What Sri Aurobindo wrote has not been changed anywhere in the new edition. What have been corrected are mistakes of various kinds that occurred when his lines were copied, typed and printed. Our idea was that *Savitri* should consist of Sri Aurobindo's own words as far as possible. Some people may disagree with this, but it is the principle on which the work has been based.

Corrections have been made in every edition of *Savitri*, so there is nothing alarmingly new about what has been done in the Revised Edition. The complete epic first appeared in two volumes in 1950–51. But this edition was soon found to contain mistakes. When the University Edition (1954) was being prepared, Nirod asked the Mother if he could take Amal's help in detecting errors. She gave her approval. Several dozen corrections were carried out in that edition. In the Centenary Edition (1970), another hundred or so corrections were introduced. But there were also typographical errors in both these editions. Some such mistakes in the Centenary Edition were corrected in the 1976 reprint. When people say "*Savitri* should not have been changed", it is not clear which edition should not have been changed.

The preparatory work for the Revised Edition of *Savitri* was done by the Archives. But its chief editors were Nirod and Amal, who have been responsible for all editions of *Savitri* up to the present. The Revised Edition (1993) may be considered the continuation and culmination of Nirod's and Amal's effort to eliminate errors from the text of *Savitri*. The difference is

that this time they have had the help of the Archives. The result has been the most meticulously prepared and error-free edition to date. It is also the first time a list of the changes has been published. This is perhaps the main reason for the controversy.

The Archives' work on *Savitri* began in the late seventies under Nirod's supervision. Before that, Sri Aurobindo's manuscripts of the poem had been consulted now and then to decide doubtful points that came up. But nobody had thought of systematically comparing the manuscripts with the various copies, typescripts and printed texts. This was the exacting and time-consuming procedure that now began. After one phase of this work was finished, I asked Nolini-da if corrections could be made in view of certain discrepancies that had been noticed. His reply was simple and straightforward: "You can make the changes if Nirod approves of them."

Those who have read *Savitri* only in a printed form can have little idea of the complexity of the process that led from Sri Aurobindo's last handwritten version to the published text. Nirod had first-hand experience of all this. Being well aware of the numerous possibilities of error, he readily agreed to the Archives' idea of checking the text. This meant tracing the history of each line, sometimes through six or seven stages. It was suggested that mistakes that were found to have occurred at one stage or another should be corrected, unless Sri Aurobindo's later revision made it inadvisable to do so. Nirod approved of this principle, as did Amal.

After the Archives had been working on *Savitri* for about seven years, a list of proposed changes in the printed text was published in the December 1986 issue of the *Archives and Research* journal. Both Nirod and Amal saw and approved of this list before it was published. But their confidence in the Archives was such that at this stage they did not take the time to look closely at the specific reasons for each change. They did so only in the next phase.

The list of suggested corrections aroused strong opposition in some quarters. In order to resolve the controversy, a series of discussions took place during the period 1988–92 at Amal's

place. Nirod, Amal, Jugal and Deshpande took part initially. Later, Richard from the Archives was invited to join and Jugal discontinued.

This group went into all the points in minute detail. Richard brought the manuscripts and other documents to the meetings and submitted reports on the more complicated questions. Nirod and Amal examined the manuscripts before making the final decision on each point. Deshpande recorded the proceedings of the meetings. Occasionally when Amal and Nirod disagreed, Tehmi was asked to give her view, though she did not attend the meetings. But in fact there were very few substantive disagreements between Nirod and Amal. Long hours were spent discussing punctuation. But on more significant points, the evidence of the manuscript was almost always decisive and there was little room for differences of opinion. In doubtful cases, the text was left as it was.

Weekly meetings went on like this for about four years. Eventually a new list of changes was finalised, similar to the original list but slightly longer. Nirod and Amal gave their written permission, as reproduced on the next page, to carry out these corrections in a new edition.

A new edition incorporating the approved changes was brought out in 1993 and reprinted in a deluxe format the following year. A Supplement listing and explaining the differences between this edition and previous ones was issued separately.

August 1998

JAYANTILAL PAREKH

10.10.92

To Shri Manoj Dasgupta.

We the undersigned - Nirodbaran and Amal Kiran - have finished our work of checking the text for the Revised Edition of Savitri.

Now you may go ahead - with Richard's help- to get ready all the materials required and pass them on to the Ashram Press to bring out the Revised Edition as soon as possible.

Jayantilal has in mind a slightly different format for the new publication to make it as beautiful as possible. He would like to get in touch with you for this purpose.

Nirodbaran
Amal Kiran

The Mother on Corrections in *Savitri*

An interview with Amal Kiran on 8 June 1999

According to your book Our Light and Delight [p. 23], the Mother once told you, "I won't allow you to change even a comma in Savitri." Is this true?

AMAL: Yes, but she meant I could not change anything according to my own ideas. After that I made it clear to her that corrections would be only according to Sri Aurobindo's latest version. Some words had been misread and I had suggested what might be the right reading. But we would not dare to change anything on our own. I told her this. And Mother quite understood the situation. "That's a different matter," she said.

So she approved of my making my suggestions, and many of them were found to be correct when the manuscripts were checked.

Have you written about this anywhere?

AMAL: Part of it is there in *Our Light and Delight*. To anyone who reads it carefully, the Mother's attitude towards the correction of copying mistakes and such things should be clear enough.

But most of the conversation recorded there [*Our Light and Delight*, pp. 23–25] is not about such corrections at all. It is about a statement I wanted to include in the Publisher's Note. I wanted to say that certain passages in Parts II and III had not received Sri Aurobindo's final revision. The Mother's strong reaction to this has been quoted as if it showed that she was against correcting copying mistakes or typographical errors in *Savitri*. But she never objected to corrections of that kind.

Naturally she wanted Sri Aurobindo's own words to be printed in *Savitri*, not a version with words accidentally substituted by others.

Later, the Mother even accepted the substance of what I had wanted to write in the Publisher's Note. She agreed to have it included in the Note before the letters at the end of the 1954 edition. It was only something in my attitude that had provoked her reaction. This was her way of working. It brought about a great change in me.

Extracts from *Our Light and Delight* by Amal Kiran

... when the second volume of the first edition of *Savitri* was under preparation, a sadhak had stressed to the Mother the danger of sending the proofs to me. The Mother seems even to have passed an order against sending them. But Prithwisingh and Nirod made urgent representations to her, saying that it would be a great mistake not to let me see the proofs, for I had made very appropriate suggestions in the past, which had been found correct when the typed copy had been compared with the original manuscript. So the Mother cancelled her order but left, of course, the final decision in the hands of Nolini and Nirod. [p.23]

"Mother," I said, "I am not wanting you to sanction the changing of commas and such things. All I want is that in some sort of Publisher's Note we should say that certain passages in Parts II and III did not receive final revision: otherwise critics will think that they are what Sri Aurobindo intended them finally to be." [p. 24]

Some time afterwards, when I was putting together the letters which Sri Aurobindo had written to me on *Savitri* to serve as a supplement in the last part of the volume, I spoke to the Mother of an introductory note to them. She consented to listen to what I had a mind to write. In that note most of the points which I had previously put to her but which she had rejected came in

again, amidst some other matters. She approved of all of them unconditionally. And when I proposed that this note might go as a footnote in small print she expressed her wish that it should go as a real introduction in its own right. [p. 27]

I have related elsewhere some other incidents connected with my editorial work on *Savitri*. I may here mention the grand finale, as it were. After the last pages had been printed, the Mother calmly announced to me: "The Press is very displeased with you." I answered: "I know it, Mother, and I am sorry I have troubled the Press. But are you displeased with my work?" She gave a faint smile and said: "No." [p. 212]

Letter to Dr. Karan Singh

April 27, 1999

Respected Dr. Karan Singh-ji,

Apropos of my brief faxed reply to your kind letter of 9.4.99, I put down in relative detail some cardinal facts about the new edition of *Savitri*.

The Epic *Savitri* was composed spread over a period of three and half decades (1916 – 1950). Sri Aurobindo used different kinds of paper at different times, altered, omitted and introduced new words often along the margins of the papers and it was far from easy to make out several words of his text. While making fresh copies of the original manuscripts, his disciples unwittingly made several errors. Then came the stage when parts of the epic were dictated by the Master (from the mid-forties). Not only numerous punctuational omissions, but also errors in words (confusing ‘soul’ to be ‘sole’, for example) crept in. The text did not fare much better in the early stages of its printing, first in some periodicals and then as volumes. That was a time when the Ashram had no expert proof-readers and compositors. (Even in early sixties I detected the word ‘Capital’ in *The Synthesis* which I felt should not be there and when the original manuscript was consulted, my feeling proved correct. Obviously, an early proof-reader had written that word in the margin to indicate that a letter should be capitalized. The compositor had incorporated the word!) Despite all the dedication of the people concerned, numerous errors persisted in *Savitri*.

The first volume of *Savitri* was published in book form in 1950 shortly before Sri Aurobindo’s passing away. Sri Aurobindo by then was hardly in a position to read the proofs himself. The second volume followed in 1951. The three disciples

who were responsible for copying, taking dictation and type-writing the epic, were Nirodbaran, K. D. Sethna (Amal Kiran) and Nolini-da. While editing the subsequent editions in 1954 and 1970, they detected several errors and with the Mother's approval, corrected them.

During the 1970s, Nirodbaran gave the manuscripts of *Savitri* to the Archives of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram for preservation, microfilming, and study. During the preliminary examination of the manuscripts, carried out under his direct supervision by his assistant and a member of the Archives, it was found that a number of copying errors had been made during the long process of the poem's revision. Some of these 'transmission errors' (as they are called by specialists in the field of 'textual criticism') had inadvertently found their way into the text of the epic. Once this discovery had been made, Nirodbaran authorised a full and careful examination of all the relevant manuscripts with the aim of removing all such errors from the text of the poem. In reply to a categorical question put to Nolini-da by Jayantilal-da (the man who was the architect and leading spirit of the Archives), Nolini-da gave his green signal for the corrections approved by Nirodbaran to be carried out.

The editorial task and technique were painstaking and complex. Each printed line was compared with the line in the manuscript. The manuscripts as well as the available earlier corrected proof-sheets, were subjected to detailed examination by the editors with the aid of the latest computer and photographic technology. I need not describe the process in detail. But anybody with genuine quest can see that the process involved honest and intelligent labour of a dedicated team for ten long years, for the new edition to emerge. An average person with the minimum goodwill can understand that there could be no other motive for this difficult and monumental task to be undertaken except the inspiration that it is the Ashram's sacred responsibility to present the Master's work in the accurate-most form. The main authority is Sri Aurobindo's text. What has been 'corrected' is not Sri Aurobindo's text, but the errors of the scribes and the proof-readers. Why at all should a team led by

Nirodbaran, K. D. Sethna (Amal Kiran) and Jayantilal Parekh do anything else?

In fact, every edition has been an improvement in the sense of coming closer to the original and the latest edition is the culmination of the process. It is the term 'revised', understood superficially, which scared some people. Added to that was the supplementary volume explaining the *raison d'être* of the corrections. Produced in good faith, the supplementary volume only made some people pounce upon the great number of corrections (in fact the bulk of it is punctuational though) and make a hullabaloo, without caring for the explanations.

The irony is, an Advocate of Calcutta High Court (God save the legal system) who literally cannot spell the name of Sri Aurobindo or *Savitri* correctly, brought a P.I.L. in the Calcutta High Court, praying for an order to withdraw the new edition of *Savitri*!

The judgement delivered on 20.4.99 reads:

"The present edition is not the first to contain corrections. Each previous edition of *Savitri* has amended a number of errors noticed by the editors or brought to their attention by readers. Once a likely mistake had been observed, the manuscript was sometimes consulted for confirmation. But a systematic search for errors was not conducted until the work began on the present edition.

"The reasons are convincing. The supplementary volume also gives a table of emendations to show the present readings and the previous readings. A table of alternative readings has also been printed in the volume. A researcher or a serious student of Sri Aurobindo can very well find out the original text as well as the amended ones. There appears to be no distortion in the revised edition.

"We are, therefore, of the view that there is no force in this petition and the same deserves to be dismissed and is hereby dismissed."

Here is a passage from Udar's reminiscences:

"One day the Mother told me that the whole of *Savitri* was a Mantra for the transformation of the world. I then asked the

Mother why is it that we can see no sign of its action in the world so far? She replied, "The original transcriptions of the manuscripts of *Savitri* have some mistakes in them, and these mistakes have dulled its force.' So the Mother Herself knew that there were mistakes in the original publication of *Savitri*." If people like X desire to continue with the earlier editions of *Savitri*, who is stopping them from doing so? In a few years the copyright of the work will cease to be with the Ashram. We cannot stop anybody from bringing out a new print of any of the old editions.

There is a Chinese proverb: "When a finger points at the moon, the imbecile looks at the finger, instead of at the moon." I cannot, by any stretch of imagination, look upon these people as imbecile. At the same time I fail to understand their wisdom. The supplementary volume is self-explanatory. In any case they could have paid a visit to our Archives and got their curiosity satisfied instead of rushing to the Court or sensationalising it in various ways.

Are they a part of a wider effort to scandalise the Ashram? Disappointed at some other fronts, are they banging their fists on his beautiful work - the new edition of *Savitri*, closest so far to the Master's original? I do not know.

Thanking you for writing to me and with warm regards,

Yours sincerely,

MANOJ DAS

Editions of *Savitri*

How and Why Do They Differ?

All editions of *Savitri* have been prepared with the same purpose: to publish Sri Aurobindo's epic in his own words, exactly as he wrote and revised it. Yet each edition has differed somewhat from previous editions. This fact may seem puzzling, but it has a simple explanation.

Before *Savitri* appeared in print, it passed through the hands of those who copied, typed and typeset Sri Aurobindo's lines. These were not easy tasks. The manuscripts were difficult to read, Sri Aurobindo's revision was complex, and the work was often done under pressure of time. Not surprisingly, words were sometimes miscopied, mistyped or misprinted, dictation was heard incorrectly, punctuation was missed, or entire lines were left out.

Thus the first edition did not agree at every point with what Sri Aurobindo had written or dictated. There were even some obvious errors, as will be shown by the examples on the following pages. Part One of *Savitri* was published in 1950, shortly before Sri Aurobindo's passing. But he could no longer see well enough to check it with his own eyes. In the 1954 edition a number of corrections were made, after consulting the manuscripts whenever possible. This was done with the Mother's approval. Further corrections were made in the Centenary edition.

In the 1970s, the first thorough study of the manuscripts of *Savitri* was begun. Many discrepancies were found between what Sri Aurobindo had written or dictated and what was copied, typed and printed. In the Revised Edition, these discrepancies have been removed. The lines that had been accidentally altered have thus been restored to what Sri Aurobindo intended.

Facts and Figures

Many people assume that *Savitri* was printed with little or no change for the first forty years. These are the facts:

A. The length of the poem [*]	
1. Lines in the first edition (1950–51)	23,811
2. Lines in the second (“University”) edition (1954)	23,812
3. Lines in the third (“Centenary”) edition (1970)	23,803
4. Lines in the fourth (“Revised”) edition (1993)	23,837
B. Verbal differences ^{**}	
1. Between the first edition and the second (1954)	42
2. Between the first edition and the third (1970)	103
3. Between the first edition and the fourth (1993)	476
C. Non-verbal differences ^{***}	
1. Between the first edition and the second (1954)	131
2. Between the first edition and the third (1970)	237
3. Between the first edition and the fourth (1993)	1498
D. Total differences	
1. Between the first edition and the second (1954)	173
2. Between the first edition and the third (1970)	340
3. Between the first edition and the fourth (1993)	1974

Examples

Savitri contains more than 180,000 words; 99.75% of these are the same in all editions. Examples of differences in the other 0.25% are given below.

These examples are grouped under three headings according to the principal causes of error: (A) typographical errors, (B) mishearing of dictation, (C) miscopying and mistyping.

* Lines printed in footnotes are not included in the totals.

** Differences in wording are termed “verbal”. These do not include variant spellings or misspellings of the same word.

*** Differences in punctuation, capitalisation, hyphenation and spelling are termed “non-verbal”.

A. Typographical errors

1. Misspelled words

(a) 1950 edition:¹

Each part in us desires itsb asolute*

(b) 1954 and later editions:

Each part in us desires its absolute. . . .

Here the misplacement of a “b” produced two nonsensical words in the text published during Sri Aurobindo’s lifetime. The intended words are obvious.

Most misspellings in editions of *Savitri* were corrected in the next printing. Errors of this kind usually came about through the accidental insertion, omission, substitution or transposition of individual letters:

1950 edition

inscient (for “inconscious”; page 123, line 33)

worsihp (for “worship”; page 301, line 38)

1954 edition

Hs (for “He”; page 74, line 19)

lightining (for “lightning”; page 473, line 21)

Beacause (for “Because”; page 591, line 1)

vison (for “vision”; page 595, line 29)

ministrelsies (for “minstrelsies”; page 788, line 1)

1970 edition (“Centenary”)

Obsoured (for “Obscured”; page 223, line 27)²

approching (for “approaching”; page 395, line 36)

unconsious (for “unconscious”; page 449, line 35)

exguous (for “exiguous”; page 591, line 22)

2. Incorrect words

(a) 1948 fascicle and 1950 edition:³

Her dreadful strident in her shadowy hand....

(b) 1954 and later editions:⁴

Her dreadful trident in her shadowy hand....

* Errors are underlined.

This is almost as obvious as the preceding example. The misprint, “strident”, is an English adjective, but here a noun is required and “strident” (loud and harsh-sounding) has no meaning in this context. The word dictated by Sri Aurobindo was “trident”.

Yet “strident” was printed twice during his lifetime. This shows that such mistakes could escape Sri Aurobindo’s notice when the proofs were read to him.

3. Inappropriate words

- (a) Sri Aurobindo’s dictation and typed copy:
And slowly wakes beneath the blows of life....
- (b) 1948 fascicle; 1950, 1954 and 1970 editions:⁵
And slowly wakes beneath the glows of life....
- (c) 1993 edition (“Revised”):
And slowly wakes beneath the blows of life....

Here “glows” is grammatically possible, unlike “strident” in the previous example. But it does not give a convincing meaning. The word Sri Aurobindo dictated was “blows” and there is no evidence or likelihood of his changing it to “glows”. The substitution of “g” for “b” in the first printing was clearly a typographical error, like the “s” that appeared before “trident” in the same fascicle.

This sentence describes how the knowledge that is asleep within us is awakened by the experiences of life. Cf. another line in *Savitri*, where “blows” occurs in a similar context:⁶

Perception answered Nature’s wakening blows....

4. Misleading words

- (a) Sri Aurobindo’s manuscript; 1950 and 1954 editions:⁷
Our thoughts covet the everlasting Light....
- (b) 1970 edition (“Centenary”):⁸
Our thoughts cover the everlasting Light....
- (c) 1993 edition (“Revised”):
Our thoughts covet the everlasting Light....

This typographical error produced a statement that makes sense, but is not what Sri Aurobindo intended. The word written by him and reproduced up to 1954 was “covet”. An “r” was substituted for the “t”, no doubt accidentally, when the Centenary Edition was typeset.

When a misprint happens to give a plausible meaning, readers will not suspect a mistake and are more likely to be misled than by obvious typographical errors. Several Centenary misprints resulted in such unintended changes in meaning, e.g.:

1950–54	1970	1976	1988	1993	Pg. Ln.
tremulous	<u>tremendous</u>	<u>tremendous</u>	<u>tremendous</u>	tremulous	147 10
trail	<u>train</u>	trail	<u>train</u>	trail	194 1
tollings	<u>toilings</u>	tollings	tollings	tollings	229 33
ideal's	<u>idea's</u>	<u>idea's</u>	<u>idea's</u>	ideal's	281 23
words	<u>worlds</u>	words	<u>worlds</u>	words	421 6
heart	<u>earth</u>	heart	<u>earth</u>	heart	706 33

B. Mishearing of dictation

1. Confusion of vowels

(a) 1950 and 1954 editions:⁹

Feeling earth's smallness with their boundless
breadths....

(b) 1970 edition (“Centenary”):¹⁰

Filling earth's smallness with their boundless
breadths....

This line occurs in several manuscripts. It begins with “Filling” in all versions in Sri Aurobindo’s hand. In one MS, the sentence is found in its final form:

The universal strengths were linked with his;
Filling earth's smallness with their boundless
breadths,
He drew the energies that transmute an age.

After writing this in his own hand, Sri Aurobindo dictated a longer version of the passage, adding several new lines before

this sentence. At this time, the scribe who was taking dictation wrote “Feeling” instead of “Filling”. He evidently misheard, confusing the similar vowels of the two words.

2. Confusion of consonants

(a) 1950 and 1954 editions:¹¹

The mighty daemon lies unshaked within....

(b) 1970 edition (“Centenary”):¹²

The mighty daemon lies unshaped within....

There is no such word as “unshaked”. The next line is: “To evoke, to give it form is Nature’s task.” The words “to give it form” imply something that was previously formless, i.e. “unshaped”. This must have been the word dictated by Sri Aurobindo. The scribe apparently misheard the “p” as a “k”, another unvoiced consonant.*

3. Words identical in sound

(a) 1951, 1954 and 1970 editions:¹³

Assumed ears of the fawn, the satyr’s hoof....

(b) 1993 edition (“Revised”):

Assumed ears of the faun, the satyr’s hoof....

Satyrs and fauns are related Greek and Roman spirits depicted in forms that are partly human, partly animal (mainly goat). The ears of a young deer (“fawn”) would be entirely out of place in this sentence describing the “Idols of an oblique divinity”.

Sri Aurobindo did not spell out each word when he dictated. Evidently his scribe confused two words that sound the same, but are spelled differently and have different meanings.

Most of the important emendations of mishearings were made in 1954 and 1970. The Revised Edition contains a few new ones. But the errors corrected in 1993 belong mainly to the next category.

* Similar confusions of “k” with “p” and “t” occur elsewhere in dictated lines in *Savitri*. Cf. “stop” (1951, p. 125, l. 12) emended to “stalk” (1954, p. 547, l. 4), “awake” (1951, p. 118, l. 26) emended to “await” (1970, p. 474, l. 26), and “mate” (1951, p. 283, l. 3) emended to “make” (1970, p. 655, l. 14).

C. Miscopying and mistyping

1. Omission of lines

- (a) Sri Aurobindo's manuscript, revised by dictation:

A primal Air brought the first joy of touch,
Contracting and expanding this huge world
In its formidable circuit through the Void;
The secret might of the creative Fire....

- (b) Copied by the scribe:

A primal Air brought the first joy of touch,
Contracting and expanding this huge world
In its formidable circuit through the Void;
[52 lines omitted]

The omission of the 52-line passage beginning with "The secret might..." occurred because the scribe turned two pages at once while copying.

- (c) Typed copy revised by dictation:

A primal Air brought the first joy of touch;
A secret Spirit drew its mighty breath [*line added*]
Contracting and expanding this huge world
In its formidable circuit through the Void;
[52 lines missing]

The added line was written by the scribe on a carbon copy of the typescript. This was overlooked at the next stage.

- (d) *Sri Aurobindo Mandir Annual*, August 1950:

A primal Air brought the first joy of touch,
[*line omitted*]
Contracting and expanding this huge world
In its formidable circuit through the Void;
[52 lines missing]

This is the form in which the passage was printed during Sri Aurobindo's lifetime. Fifty-three lines were missing.

(e) 1951 and 1954 editions:¹⁴

A primal Air brought the first joy of touch;
 A secret Spirit drew its mighty breath,
 Contracting and expanding this huge world
[line omitted]
 The secret might of the creative fire....

In 1951, the editors of the second volume of the first edition discovered the fifty-three omitted lines and restored them to the text. But another line was dropped at the same time, and there were several inaccuracies of transcription.*

(f) Revised edition:¹⁵

A primal Air brought the first joy of touch;
 A secret Spirit drew its mighty breath
 Contracting and expanding this huge world
 In its formidable circuit through the Void;
 The secret might of the creative Fire....

In the Revised Edition, all lines have finally been restored to the text in the form in which Sri Aurobindo wrote or dictated them.

2. Errors within a line

- (a) Sri Aurobindo's manuscript:
Only the mute Alone can for ever be.
- (b) Copied by the scribe (wrong capitalisation):
Only the Mute alone can for ever be.
- (c) Typed copy; 1951, 1954¹⁶ ("for" omitted):
Only the Mute alone can ever be.
- (d) Centenary edition¹⁷ (capitalisation corrected):
Only the mute Alone can ever be.
- (e) Revised edition ("for" restored):
Only the mute Alone can for ever be.

* For example, a full stop was added after "breath", breaking the connection between "breath" and "Contracting and expanding". In 1970, the full stop was changed to a comma, with a semicolon after "world".

This example illustrates the general pattern of the history of the text of *Savitri* up to the present:

- (1) Sri Aurobindo's lines passed through other hands and suffered from occasional inaccuracies in copying, typing and printing.
- (2) The most obvious of these mistakes were corrected in early editions, up to the Centenary.
- (3) After systematically comparing the manuscripts with the copies, the text was restored to its authentic form in the Revised Edition.

References

1. Page 155, line 32.
2. "Obsoured" occurs only in the Popular Edition of the Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library (1970); it was corrected in the De Luxe Edition in the same year. The other misspellings except for "unconscious" were corrected in the 1976 reprint; "approching" reappeared in 1988.
3. Fascicle of Book Two, Cantos 7 – 15, page 19, line 7; 1950 edition, page 202, line 9.
4. Centenary edition, page 222, line 12.
5. Fascicle of Book Two, Cantos 7 – 15, page 39, line 23; Centenary edition, page 244, line 7.
6. Revised edition, page 137, line 8.
7. Page 155, line 33; page 193, line 8.
8. Page 170, line 24. The error was corrected in the 1976 reprint.
9. Page 42, line 32; page 51, line 31.
10. Page 44, line 34.
11. Page 222, line 29; page 277, line 5.
12. Page 244, line 8.
13. Page 256, line 13; page 702, line 12; page 625, line 25.
14. Page 63, lines 19 – 22; page 471, lines 19 – 22.
15. Page 415, lines 19 – 23.
16. Page 241, line 29; page 684, line 4.
17. Page 608, line 28.

