

THE SALVATION'S TESTAMENT SIGNED BY THE BLOOD OF CHRIST: ASSERTED THROUGH THE VEDIC SAGE, NARAD IN SRI AUROBINDO'S SAVITRI

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Abstract

Narad – is a Vedic Sage, famous in Hindu Tradition as a travelling Musician and Storyteller, who carries news and enlightening wisdom and appears in Hindu texts: Mahabharata, Ramayana and the Puranas. The Heavenly Immortal Sage: Narad appears in Sri Aurobindo's 'Savitri' in Book VI: The Book of Fate, Canto II: The Way of Fate and Problem of Pain. In response to the Queen's painful and ignorant speech on fate, Narad responds with thoughtful and wisdom filled flow of words. He discusses about the way of suffering undertaken by the World Redeemer who came to save the suffering world to release the yoke of grief and pain: Very explicitly Aurobindo picturizes and asserts Jesus Christ's Passion and Death as the greatest weapon to redeem the world through His 'Heavy Task' and thereby imprint Salvation's Testament signed by His Blood – to open the doors of peace. So, this article aims to explore 'The Problem of Pain' which is vividly analyzed by the Vedic Sage Narad who through his high spirited speech which raises the facts about Jesus Christ's Passion to Reality.

Keywords – *Passion, death, suffering, fate, heavy task, blood, messenger, struggle, sin, sacrifice, covenant*

In Book VI, Canto - II: "THE WAY OF FATE AND THE PROBLEM OF PAIN – Narad, a Vedic sage an 'immortal heavenly messenger' appears in Sri Aurobindo's Savitri as a discussor about the Fate of Savitri. This cosmic epic poem runs the cosmic action through the message of Narad who presents the true image of Pain and Suffering through the World Redeemer and his 'heavy task'.

Savitri tries to win the world through Love thereby to fight against Death which is destined for her a husband, Sathyavan. The Fate of Savitri disturbs her Mother, so the Queen raises out her inner thoughts and anguish about Fate, Suffering and Pain. It is the immortal messenger, Narad who intervenes and responds to the cry of the Queen. Pain is recounted as:

The World dread teacher, the creator, Pain.
(Savitri ,p .443)

Pain is the hammer of the Gods to break

A dead resistance in the mortal's heart
(Savitri p.443)

With Pain and labor all creation comes. (Savitri p.444)

The Spirit is doomed to pain till man is free.

Pain is hand of Nature sculpturing men
To greatness... (Savitri p.444)

It is at this instance 'PAIN' is pinned down to the World Redeemer by Sri Aurobindo through the words of Narad:

The Great who came to save this suffering world
And rescue out of Time's shadow and the Law,

Must pass beneath the York of grief and pain
(Savitri p.445)

The focus and the purpose of this article is to highlight the 'Great Redeemer', that is Jesus Christ-opted and designated by Sri Aurobindo to deliver the Concept of Pain and Salvation through Pain

.Aurobindo has chosen a Vedic Sage, an immortal heavenly Messenger instead of any other ordinary characters for the epic action-as his Alter-Ego. It is asserted through this Sage: Narad-that Mankind is redeemed by the Willing Passion and Death of Jesus Christ. A Yogi's statement is subtly signed to exhibit or give voice to the Testament which records the World's Salvation through 'The World Redeemer's heavy task'. (Savitri p. 448)

Moreover this article tries to keep on high Pedestal for visibility, the thought of a Hindu Yogi, Sri Aurobindo-to assert and acknowledge Jesus Christ as Great World Redeemer instead of any other deities of Hinduism, with special excerpts about Jesus Christ from the Rig Veda. To decode the Hindu texts which reverberates the crux of Christianity:

To begin with, Aurobindo through the insightful speech of Narad in Savitri-pens down:

The Son of God born as the Son of Man
Has drunk the bitter cup, owned Godhead's debt,
The debt the Eternal owes to the fallen kind
His will has bound to death and struggling life
That yearns in vain for rest and endless peace.
Now is the debt paid, wiped off the original
score.

The Eternal suffers in a human form.

(Savitri p.445)

To substantiate the above lines-it is vital and serves as a requisite to scan through the Rig Veda which records the image of PRAJAPATI ,who is referred to God or Creator of the Universe (Rig Veda 10:21).This Rig Veda and the Upanishads propose one theme of significance which is-One Supreme Sacrifice known as PURUSH PRAJAPATI ,which means the Lord of all creation who became Man(Sathpathbrahmana 10.2.2.1-2; Rig Veda Purushasukta 10:19).It is also mentioned in Yajur Veda(31:18) that this, Purush (Man) is the only way to Eternal life.

This Supreme Creator took perfect human body(Nishkalanka Purush) and offered it up as a self-sacrifice(Brihad Aranyak Upanishads 1.2 -

8).This Purush was symbolized by a lamb that was then the animal most commonly sacrificed(Mandyadinda Satapatha brahmana – III).This Purush was above sin, and only in knowing Him does one obtain immortality(Chandogya Upanishads 1.6.6,7) If one believes the Purush-sacrifice, Eternal life is rewarded(Katho Upanishads 1,3.8,11).This Purush is resurrected after offering Himself has Supreme Sacrifice(Brihad Aranyak Upanishads 3.9.28. 4-5; Katho Upanishads 3.15). The main motive and intention of this Sacrifice is to provide the Only Gateway to Heaven and also serve as the Only Way of escape from Hell(Rig Veda 9:113,7-11)

According to the Doctrine of the Vedas and Upanishads, no deities of Hindus Scriptures and Mythologies-offered them as Eternal Sacrifice who is stated as the Creator of the Universe. This reference to the Purush-can be equally collated to Jesus Christ who represents as the Redeemer through the Eternal Sacrifice by offering Himself for the sake of Mankind.

With this introduction of the 'Purush', according to the Vedas-the speech about the World Redeemer by Narad in Aurobindo's Savitri can be weighed up.

According to Narad, the 'Son of God' was born as 'The Son of Man' who voluntarily took up 'the bitter Cup' of suffering upon him to payback for the 'Original Score' ,that is Sins through suffering and death in his Mortal frame.

"The Eternal suffers in a human form." (Savitri .p.445)

By shedding his blood Son of Man opens the doors of everlasting peace. The Son of God embodied in human spirit carries the loads of punishment to be struck upon him thereby showing the path to Heaven, everything out of his Love for the people. Hence he sacrificed his life which is 'mysterious', for the sins of Mankind:

The Dark account of Mortal ignorance,

It is finished, the dread Mysterious Sacrifice;

Offered by God's martyred body for the World:

(Savitri.p.445)

The Son of Man carried his cross which is loaded with the sins of everyman, with no one to help him out except for:

... The curses of the crowd;

Insult and jeer are his right's acknowledgement.

(Savitri.p.445)

Moreover he was accompanied in 'Calvary' with 'two thieves' at death, though he took up the 'saviour's way' with 'bleeding brow'. Being one with God, the Son of Man paid the heavy price for Mortal man's sins by casting away His Mortal frame to death. But his soul, which is immortal triumphs over death. And being the 'Messenger of God', he has come:

...to help the world

And lead the soul of earth to higher things,

He too must carry the yoke he came to unloose;

He too must bear the pang that he would heal:

The Creator in human form underwent the trials and tribulations, in order to understand the sufferings and pains of Human beings, so that he can carry the burden of each soul and tread upon the same path.

Further the lines:

The struggle is there and paid the unseen price,

The fire, the strife, the wrestle are within.

He carries the suffering world in his own breast;

It sins weigh on his thoughts, its grief is his:

Earth's ancient load lies heavy on his soul;

Night and its powers beleaguer his tardy steps,

The Titan adversary's clutch he bears;

His march is a battle and a pilgrimage,

(Savitri.p.446)

explain that the conflicts, fights and sufferings of the Humanity – are laid heavily upon his heart and soul, as a result of the evil forces, the powerful

enemy whose actions encircled and clasped the 'march' of the Saviour to his destination.

A bisection of this assertive speech of Narad, can be set side by side with the Biblical references to the Life of Jesus Christ from the Old and New Testaments. To start from the scratch the term "The Son of Man" refers to Jesus:

"For the Son of Man is to save that which was lost."
(NIV.Matthew 18: 11)

In Matthew 20:28,

Even as the Son of the Man, came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many.

As Jesus took the human form to become the price or 'ransom' to free the captives from bondage, that is to redeem the sinners from the clutches of sin:

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus who being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of me. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. (NIV.Philippians 2: 5 – 8).

So being the Messiah, he had to drink the "Wrath of God". The bitter cup of suffering was accepted by Jesus, which symbolized the Pain he must endure at the hands of men, Satan and God Himself – to fulfill the Will of the Heavenly Father. The suffering of Jesus Christ is well prophesied in the Book of Isaiah 53: 3 – 12:

Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we consider Him stricken by God, smitten by Him, and afflicted. But He was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon Him, and by His wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep have gone astray, each of us have turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the

slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. By oppression and judgment he was taken away. And who can speak of his descendants? For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people, he was stricken.

He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it was the Lord's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the Lord makes his life as a guilt offering, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the Lord will prosper in his hand.

After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light of life and be satisfied, by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities. Therefore, I will give him a portion among the great and he will divide the spoils with the strong, because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of many, and made the intercession for the transgressors.

Furthermore, the reference to the 'bitter cup' is clearly stated in Luke 22:42 – "Father, if it is your will take this cup away from Me, nevertheless not My will, But yours, be done."

From the New Testament, the suffering of Jesus is explained in terms of great shame and the 'neglect of man';

How much more severely do you think a man deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God under foot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified him and who has insulted the spirit of grace? (NIV.Hebrews 10:29)

Moreover, Jesus offered himself as an 'Eternal sacrifice' being the 'Unblemished Lamb'-by undertaking the path of temptations and the Suffering of human race. The following verses justify the same:

For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for the sake. (NIV.1 Peter 1:18-20)

But what type of attribute did Jesus carry in him:

For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. (NIV.Hebrew 4:15)

This hope we have as an anchor of the soul both sure and steadfast and which enters the presence behind the veil, where the forerunner has entered for us, even Jesus, having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek. (NIV.Heb 6:19-20)

A High Priest being subjected to temptations was 'made like this brethren' In as much then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For indeed, he does not give aid to angels, but he does give aid to the seed of Abraham. Therefore, in all things He had to be made like this brethren that He might be a merciful and faithful High priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For in that He himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted. (NIV.Hebrews 2:14-17)

This Jesus Christ was the only World Redeemer who suffered from 'Gethsemane to Calvary' by carrying the cross which was loaded with the sins of man:

So the soldiers took charge of Jesus, carrying his own cross, he went out to the place of the skull (which in Aramaic is called Golgotha). Here they crucified him and with him two

others-one on each side and Jesus in the middle. (NIV.John19:17-18)

Two other men, both criminals, were also led out with him to be executed. When they came to the place called Skull. Here they crucified him, along with the criminals-on one his right,the other on his left (NIV.Luke 23:32,33)

In order to fulfill his Father's will ,Jesus offered himself as an Eternal Sacrifice ,instead of offering any unblemished animal as Sacrifice -- he offered himself as an 'Unblemished lamb' and took up his cross voluntarily. So he became: "...The victim in his own sacrifice" (Savitri p.447) according to Aurobindo through Narad's words.

He is aptly asserted by Narad in 'Savitri':

He is lashed with the whips that tears the world's worn heart;
The weeping of the centuries visits his eyes:
He wears the blood-glued fiery Centaur shirt,
The poison of the world has stained his throat.
In the market-place of Matter's capital
Amidst the chaffering of the affair called life
He is tied to the stake of a perennial Fire;
He burns on an unseen original verge.

That matter may be turned to spirit stuff.

To corroborate the above verse from 'Savitri', it is needful of the essence to record the Roman way of punishment which carried an old law stating that the maximum number of lashes a man could receive as punishment was 40. So, the Roman soldiers would have stopped at the whip count of 39, thereby not to exceed it. But the concept of giving not more than 39 lashes is actually Jewish in origin. This sort of punishment was common is asserted even more stronger by the reference to the whipping of Paul, who stated: "Five times I received at the hands of Jews the faulty lashes less one." (NIV.2 Corinthians 1: 24)

This particular text "On the Physical Death of Jesus Christ" affirms: "Flogging was a legal preliminary to every Roman execution... The usual instrument was a short whip with several single or braided leather thongs of variable lengths, in which small iron balls or sharp pieces of sheep bones were tied

at intervals. For scourging, the man was stripped of his clothing, and his hands were tied to an upright post... As the Roman soldiers repeatedly struck the victim's back with full force, the iron balls would cause deep contusions and the leather thongs and sheep bones would cut into the skin and subcutaneous tissues. Then, as the flogging continued, the lacerations would tear into the underlying skeletal muscles produce quivering ribbons of bleeding flesh...' (Vol 225, No 11)

After the scourging, the lacerated body of Jesus was again covered with a long 'purple robe' which was stuck to the wounded body of Jesus, which:

When the soldiers crucified Jesus, they took his clothes dividing them into four shares, one for each of them, with the under-garment remaining. This garment was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom. (NIV .John 19: 23)

As the coat was woven from top to bottom, the soldiers decided not to tear it, but cast lots for it, to claim for whom it is, thereby fulfilling the scriptural prophecy. This garment of Jesus becomes the 'fiery centaur shirt' – owing to its sheathing on the lacerated body of Jesus.

To refer back to the line 'the poison of the world has stained his throat,' actually falls in comparison to the' Gospel writers' words:

"They offered Jesus wine to drink mixed with gall; but after tasting it, he refused to drink it." (NIV.

Matthew: 27: 34)

"According to the tradition, the wine mingled with gall has an intoxicating effect thereby causing dullness or numbness to the senses that turned out to be poisonous at times. This 'poison of the world', metaphorically refers to the treacherous and deceiving nature of mankind which was denied by Jesus. Analogically, it referred to take up the sufferings of the human race upon him (Jesus), and metaphorically Jesus didn't want to be a part of the treacherous group. 'This willing passion of Jesus Christ' was carried through His 'cross-bearing' as an Everlasting Sacrifice – which is

asserted by the Indian Sage as: “He is tied to the stake of the perennial Fire” (Savitri. p. 447)

Through His Passion and Death, Jesus conquered death and hell by trampling Satan under His foot:

“Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through Him...this man was handed over to you by God’s set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put Him to death by nailing Him to the Cross. But God raised Him from the dead, freeing Him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on Him.” (NIV.Acts 2: 22-24)

There are many biblical assertions to Jesus Christ as the Conqueror of death and hell:

“I am the living One; I was dead and behold I am alive for ever and ever! and I hold the keys of death and hades” (NIV.Revelation: 1: 18)

“For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable and the mortality with immortality. When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable and the mortal with the immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: “Death has been swallowed up in victory.”

“Where, O death, is your victory?
Where, O death, is your sting?”

The sting of death is sin and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” (NIV.1 Corinthians 15: 53-57)

The above biblical references entails, to coalesce with the words of Narad from ‘Savitri’. To allude to the fact:

The Immortal bound to Earth’s mortality
Appearing and perishing on the roads of Time
Creates Gods moment by eternity’s beats
He dies that the world may be new-born and live.

Even if he escapes the fiercest fires, Even if the world breaks not in, a drowning sea, only by hard sacrifice is high heaven earned:

He must face the fight, the pang would conquer Hell. (Savitri.p .447)

And so,

He has signed Salvation’s Testament With His Blood:

He has opened the doors of His undying peace.
The Deity compensates the creatures’ claim
The Creator wears the law of pain and death.
A retribution smites the incarnate God.
(Savitri.p .445)

By offering His own life as a sacrifice for which Jesus came upon the Earth – He readily submitted Himself to the Will of the Father as a ‘Sin offering.’ Since ‘the wages of sin is death’ but the gift of God is eternal in Jesus Christ our Lord. (NIV.Romans 6: 23),

for which – the reparation was paid through the life of Jesus Christ, that is, why the Scripture says:

“In fact, the Lord requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness.” (NIV.Hebrews 9: 22)

It is because,

“Christ is the mediator of a new Covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised inheritance now that He has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant.” (NIV.Hebrews 9: 15)

To be in line with Scriptures, the works of Narad postulates that for this reason, Jesus Christ ‘has signed Salvation’s Testament with His Blood.’ (Savitri. p .445)

And this world Redeemer ‘gives the cross in payment for the crown.’ (Savitri p. 448)

To set side by side the biblical references towards the ransom paid for the sins of mankind by suffering and death through the Cross thereby redemption+n through it – Ergo the Scripture echoes as :

“When we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: while we were still sinners Christ died for us. Since we have now been justified by His blood, how much more shall we be saved from God’s wrath through Him! For if, when we were God’s enemies, we were reconciled to Him through the death of His Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through His life.” (NIV Romans 5: 6-10)

He must carry the yoke he came to
unloose;
He too must the bear the pang he would
heal
...How shall he cure the ills he never felt?
He covers the world’s agony with his
calm;
But though to the outward eye no sign
appears
And peace is given to our torn human
hearts,
The struggle is there and paid the unseen
price;
The fire, the strife, the wrestle are within.
He carries the suffering world in his own
breast;
Its sins way on his thoughts, its grief is
his:
Earth’s ancient load, lies heavy on his
soul;
Night and its powers he beleaguer his
tardy steps,
The Titan adversary’s clutch he bears;
His march is a battle and a pilgrimage.
Life’s evil smites, he is stricken with
world’s pain:
A million wounds gape in his secret heart,
He journeys sleepless through an unending
night;
Antagonist forces crowd across his path;
A siege, a combat is his inner life.

Even worse may be the cost, the direr the
pain:

His large identity and all-harboring love
Shall bring the cosmic anguish into his
depths,

The sorrow of all living things shall come
And knock at his doors and live within his
home;

A dreadful cord of sympathy can tie
All suffering into his single grief and make
All agony in all the worlds his own

(Savitri p. 446)

While carrying the yoke upon him, the World Redeemer by default has to encounter the same trials and tribulation of the sufferers only by taking the role of the sufferer. This suffering is termed as the “World Redeemer” and his voluntary role amidst the mankind is coined as the ‘heavy task’ by the Vedic Sage: Narad. This World Redeemer’s heavy task reverberates throughout the Scriptures, through the life of Jesus Christ, who is the redeemer:

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.” (NIV. Matthew 11: 28 – 30)

Some other affirmation:

“Now then why do you try to test God by putting on the neck of the disciples a yoke that neither we nor our fathers have been able to bear?” (NIV. Acts 15: 10)

The burden of Jesus Christ was such that his soul was tormented to the point of death by bearing all the sins and sufferings of the mankind upon him. It was an inner struggle, agony of the soul. This is revealed when Jesus prays on the Mount of Olives:

“Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me: yet not my will, but yours be down... And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground. (NIV .Luke 22: 42, 43)

“My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death, he said to them, ‘Stay here and keep watch’”.

(NIV .Mark 14: 34)

“Now my heart is troubled and what shall I say, Father save me from this hour? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour, Father glorify your name.”

(NIV .John 12: 27)

With such anguish and warfare within himself to ease the burden of all mankind, Jesus cleansed the sins of all, thereby redeeming the souls:

“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus:

(NIV.Romans 3: 23)

“... The blood of Jesus, his son, purifies from all sins.”

(NIV.1 John 1: 7)

“Hence, Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people.”

(NIV.Hebrews 9: 28)

“So he..... gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own.”

(NIV.Titus 2: 14)

Eventually, to defend the statement put forth by the Vedic Sage , Narad : ‘ He has signed Salvation’s Testament with his blood’(Savitri.p.445) broaches upon the ‘World Redeemer’s as the ‘Nishkalanka Purusha’(Supreme creator in human form) who became the Supreme Sacrifice: Purush Prajapti, and through Him is the way to Eternal Life, who was symbolized as a ‘ Spotless Lamb’.

The heavy task of the World Redeemer as propounded by Sri Aurobindo, a Yogi-never refers or hints at any animal sacrifice but refers to the ‘Immortal One’ in ‘ human form’. This Eternal Redeemer of the World without doubt distinctly endorses upon Jesus Christ as the World Redeemer who became the Purush Prajapti, the Spotless Lamb

and the Creator in human form (Nishkalanka Purusha).

According to the Veda’s, this Nishkalanka Purusha, that is, Jesus Christ:

God made him who had no sin to be sin for us ,so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. (NIV.2 Cor.5:21)

And,

He forgave us all our sins, having cancelled the written code , with its regulations ,that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross. And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

(NIV.Col.2;14,15)

Hence very aptly and subtly, Sri Aurobindo has integrated finely the World Redeemer’s grief and pain into the Epic frame of a Soul journey towards the higher levels through ‘Tapasya’ travel, in the story of ‘Savitri’.

Aurobindo has well incorporated the task and place of Jesus Christ , thereby quoting the Scripture’s as: ‘ The Son of God born as the Son of Man’(Savitri.p.445) who had to ‘pass beneath the yoke of grief and pain’(p.445) opting ‘Gethsemane and Calvary’(Savitri.p.445) as his lot and ‘ pays with the body’s death’(Savitri.p.445)

Therefore, becoming ‘the victim in His own sacrifice’(Savitri. p.447).

Ergo , signing with his Vedic and philosophical and spiritual knowledge, Aurobindo has asserted through the Vedic Sage, Narad’s character that this Jesus Christ:

The Eternal suffers in a human form

He has signed Salvation’s testament with his blood. (Savitri.p.445)

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