Vision as defined by the Oxford dictionary is “a person or thing which is apparently perceived otherwise than by ordinary sight; an apparition of a prophetic, revelation, or supernatural nature presented to the mind in sleep or in a state of heightened spiritual or emotional awareness.” It is again defined as a perception or contemplation of an imaginative or spiritual nature; imaginative or mystical insight or foresight. It is this heightened spiritual or mental awareness that confers a new sensibility, which makes the poet receptive to the life around him and the possible solutions to the fundamental questions that it raises. Hence the attempt of every great artist is a query in this direction, his work being the understanding he has reached as well as the solution to such questions. This multidimensional approach to the core issues becomes more poignant when seer poets of the calibre of Milton and Aurobindo undertake it.

Mankind, from its very early stages of development had probed into the questions of life, death and salvation. Existence becomes an enigma when its meaning is not understood properly and all the religions have tried to sort it out by offering a way out, though the redemptive measures differ in each case. Almost all cultures speak through their myths and legends of the glorious origin of man, his subsequent demotion to the present state as well as the possibility of a return to the initial greatness. To clearly perceive this variance, it would be
appropriate to perceive their views regarding the creation, fall, and redemption, which would give a clear picture of their vision regarding the cardinal question of human existence which has fascinated poets and seers alike.

Ever since the first man walked on this earth he must have probed into the mysteries of the wonderful existence he was exposed to. He must have looked around in awe, wondering when and where it all began. Civilizations throughout have tried to answer this enigma their own way though with contradictory explanations. Creation of the universe with man as the central piece is the theme of the first chapter of the Bible. It tells that God took six days to create this world with man in it. God made man out of sheer pleasure and good will, as the roof and crown of all other creations, conferred on him the right to extend his authority over the earth.

Milton and Aurobindo being seer poets have dealt with this aspect in their respective epics, though in both cases they adhere to their respective religious influences altering them gently to suit the vision they project through their works. If creation is a carefully worked out project by a diligent, omnipotent God in Milton, in Aurobindo it is something that evolved out of a mystically perceivable impulse impregnated by an ardent desire to be. It is the multifaceted product of an energy vibration that evolved from an inconscient state to a conscient one. Milton's picture of creation justifies the Biblical dual existence of God and man, while in Aurobindo it reveals the full profoundity of the evolving consciousness towards Godhood.
Yet there are points where they converge and give a uniformity of vision and instill into the mind of the reader the universal nature of their perceptions though fuelled and fruitioned by two different cultural attitudes and contexts. The very mode of operation of the epics probes into the mystery that is man so as to make alive the nature of man and his destiny by connecting it to an infinite and interrelated order. The purpose is to assist man to act rightly and responsibly and to do this he must know not only of himself but the entire cosmic order of which man, is the pivot and the nexus.

Milton adheres to the Biblical definition of the origin of the universe. He improves on it by making it more rational, taking into account the scientific advancements of the day. Creation is a purely mechanical process where the creator assumes the role of an adept architect who brilliantly and skilfully shapes out a magnificent world. The creator is entirely different from his creation by his superiority of nature, possessing an identity, which is inaccessible to the created. The world is just a manifestation of his Divine will. It is the playground of his desire, where order and discipline as stipulated by him should be adhered to, the failure of which would result in inviting his wrath. Creation is his pleasure and all the created are subject to his resolute decisions periodically directly related or spoken through his prophets.

The God in Milton stands an all-powerful, non-accessible and an authoritarian monarch who with a benign complacency rules over the universe adhering to a strict code of conduct. The rules and strictures that govern the movements of the universe are clearly codified by him, which is policed by a very
disciplined and alert agency of angels who are graded into different categories, similar to that of a modern military establishment. The created universe bespeaks the power, providence, and protection of the Divine. It is demarcated from chaos by golden compasses and hung from heaven by a golden chain. When evil enters its all but hermetically sealed perfection, sin and death build a causeway connecting the world to hell. The physical links have of course, a symbolic function; both ways lie open and it is for man to choose.\(^2\)

Milton in *Paradise Lost* has very creatively applied the concept of the celestial cycle, which is a part of the traditional Christian beliefs. The cycle comprises the creation, the fall of the angels, the fall of man, and the atonement.\(^3\) Creation ushers in a period of light while the fall of the angels’ denote darkness. This is remedied through the creation of man but his fall is a counter attack of darkness which is put to an end by the atonement of man which is the reassertion of light, ending the celestial cycle. Thus the fundamental opposites constantly operate in nature, forming part of the creative process.

The origin of the world from the word is a Biblical concept but the poet gives the picture a realistic touch when it is described as the Divine word of order directing the creation to commence. It is the Divine wish that transforms into the Word dissolving to form a formless mass, and ‘order from disorder sprung’\(^4\) which infact is more a scientific than a poetic description of the evolving mass. It also suggests that this order was latent in the disorder and that the formless solid mass had an intelligence of its own that was conscious of its role and place in the universe, as they “swift to their several quarters hastened.”\(^5\) This vision of the
void assuming an order and a will to function as per the Divine will directly correlates with the picture of the inconscient void in Aurobindo's vision of creation.

The creation of man in God's similitude, to rule over all other creations bespeaks the evolutionary superiority of man. He is something placed between God and the animals sharing elements of both but basically bearing the mark of his creator and hence in proximity close to the divine for man shares the image of God. "... And in thy nostrils breathed / The breath of life; in his own image he / Created thee, in the image of god."^6

Thus in essence Man was created from Divine substance and in 'Divine resemblance and such grace' just 'like in lively shines'\(^7\) to heavenly spirits. This similarity vouchsafes the innate Divine element in man that is congenital or in other words he belongs to the divine clan though a little inferior.

Man perceives himself to be different from his creator, only because he is unable to see through the apparent diversities that are but the manifestations of the fundamental one. It is also because of the manner in which Creation proceeds with the perception of a separate identity. Deep within, as every individual is made in the image of God or Divine resemblance, there is an underlying unity and commonness, which relates him with his God. It is this spark of subtlety that would ultimately enable him to eradicate the grossness of the human element and transcend to the higher realms of godlike existence. And this is not the case with man alone for this world has other dimensions of existence created by God that consistently recognise and praise his glory. "Millions of
spiritual creatures walk the earth / Unseen, both when we wake and when we sleep."^{8}

Hence creation is a multidimensional experiment, man just being one among the others though the 'celestial voices' that sing to the midnight air belong to dimensions higher than man does. This multi-phased aspect of creation in different ethereal forms is seen in Savitri, though in a different way. The different life forms presented in an allegorical hierarchy perceived by Aswapathy as he ascends the ladders of his consciousness can be related, though in a totally externalized manner to the different planes of ethereal existence in Milton's world. Though this might be an extended interpretation of the phenomena as explained in the poems, the fundamental vision of a multi-layered expression of gods' creation is common to both the epics.

Man was created with all the requisite qualities required to confer a life of effortless peace. As the primary intention of the creator was his well being on all levels, he was given happiness and immortality and a mind free of anxieties and worries: "I at first with two fair gifts / Created him endowed, with happiness / And immortality."^{9}

The purity of this state was later lost when the immortal elements^{10} of Paradise ejected him as tainted. The immortal elements here refer to the trees of the garden and other sustaining elements in Eden that conferred upon Adam immortality, ie freedom from the state of death, as long as he continued in obedience to God. As the only function they were expected to perform in the initial state of perfection was to worship and praise God, it obviously suggests that
the purpose of creation was primarily a spiritual one where the Divine spirit illuminated the mind of man, seeking its acceptance and acknowledgement.

God expects man to worship him in spirit and in truth. He desires intelligent and willing obedience, rather than ignorant and mechanical service. He had earlier created agencies that mechanically and blindly accomplished his will, but his design was to make a nobler thing, an intelligent thing in his own likeness, a lord for earth, whose loyalty and righteousness would be based on an appreciation of the right and the wrong, of good and evil. It is a spiritual progress that is expected here of him for in other aspects he is given definite instructions. In his food, in his relation to his environment and in his place amidst other creations there is a specific code to be observed, which is supervised by the angels deputed for the purpose. But when it comes to his intellectual and emotional functioning, factors that decide his spiritual self he is given absolute freedom.

It is the zone where his personal preference should guide him so as to enable him to choose his destiny. For man created with such care, though to be corrupted by Satan still holds the mysterious and sacred duty of synthesizing the Divine with the human. It is not through the angels that God effects a fusion of the Heaven and the Earth but through the man who is given the privilege of giving birth to the Holy Son as Jesus Christ.

The seed of woman . . .

High in the love of heav'n, yet from my loins
Thou shall proceed and from thy womb the son
Of gods most high; so god with man unites. 11
This vision is close to the picture of the purpose of creation in Aurobindo where man ultimately ends up as God or the divine descending on to him like the descent of the Holy Ghost onto Jesus on being baptized by John the Baptist. Thus the evolutionary fulfillment of the creative process ends up in the merger of God with man. It has to be noted that even the fallen man retains the capability of redeeming himself and evolving into the perfect being which even angels are not privileged. It seems a momentous experiment of the Divine was initiated in Eden and then reinstated to the earth to gradually undergo the full process and finally reach its climax somewhere in time, the end product being the transformation of the human into the Divine.

The moral sense or the faculty to discern between right and wrong and the liberty to use it, which Adam possessed, were the important features of his likeness to God. And this together with the full measure of his mental and moral faculties constituted in him an image of his creator. This was part of his nature, as it is part of the Divine nature. As ability to love implies ability to hate the creator made man with the power to love and do right, as well as the corresponding ability to hate and to do wrong. This liberty of choice termed free will is part of man’s original endowment. Thus the creation of life was a spontaneous one intended to multiply through ages.

The Christian theology proposed the restitution theory, where lower forms of life were created first, but man was created in perfection from which he fell. It also proposes that in due time God will bring to pass a restitution to the race to the original perfection and to every blessing then possessed. This will be made
possible through a life of repentance and ransom where the sacrifice of one man would save the race. And that the law of God which decides the course of creation, obedience to which has the reward of life and disobedience the penalty of death, must ultimately govern all of God's intelligent creatures. Ultimately when the purposes of God shall have been accomplished, the glory of Divine character will be manifest to all intelligent creatures.

We find that there is a shift from the physical to the mental and from the mental to the spiritual, a ladder climbed by the life force through time. Adam and Eve on being created revel in the physical delight of their being passively obeying without questioning and enjoying life in its sheer pleasure. Then comes the blot incited by a mind that starts functioning on its own questioning things and longing for individual experiences to believe. This leads to the fall and the consecutive existence of the being on the mental plane undergoing a course of repentance till his human nature is discarded for the divine will. This would restore him to the spiritual state where he would regain his initial purity with an enhanced understanding of himself in relation to his creator, which would fulfill the purpose of creation.

Milton presents this, as the picture of creation that he depicts through his epic. In *Paradise Lost* creation on these lines is justified and upheld as being the authentic explanation to the puzzle of human existence. This creation explains by itself and fits the purpose of the poet's vision of the destiny of man. The aim and natural course of creation is to attain the perfection of the Divine though submissive and loyal in faith and worship of the Almighty. *Paradise Lost* as an
epic is the expression of this idea, as we have the Son and Adam, the perfect of all God's creations submitting themselves to the Divine will. Perhaps this is the reason why Milton defined his mission as an attempt to justify the ways of God to man. Milton grounded his body of doctrine, including his heresies, strictly on what he found in the Bible. Milton could build on the strong foundation of traditional belief and emotional prepossessions. Paradise would not be the poetic achievement it is if it had been inspired by its author's own passionate religious vision.\(^\text{12}\)

Milton's view was that all matter was created by God and was therefore good. The difference between Earth and Heaven, like the difference between man and angels, was one of degree not of kind. Man as he believed could finally become more angel-like. He envisaged a dynamic universe where every thing was constantly aspiring towards its creator. The body transformed its food into spirit, man's virtuous life drew him closer and closer to the angels, and the angels grew more and more purely spiritual as they approached nearer to God.\(^\text{13}\)

The Vedic seers of ancient conducted their search and arrived at different conclusions though in its fundamentals they shared similar ideas. They concluded that pure consciousness is the source and basis of creation. Creation is the multi-dimensional play of the powers of the one conscious Being. This supreme consciousness 'chose to objectify himself, bring himself out of himself, witness himself in play'-the Upanishad says, the one who wished to have himself a second, a companion to himself.\(^\text{14}\) Thus creation is the descent of the pure
consciousness into layers of ignorance of the mental, physical and mundane plains, a descent from the subtle to the grosser levels of being. Evolution is a movement backward, a return journey from matter towards the spirit; it is the unrolling, the gradual disclosure and deliverance of the spirit, the ascension and revelation of the involved consciousness through a series of awakenings—matter awakening into life, life awakening into mind and mind now seeking to awaken into something beyond the mind into a power of conscious spirit.¹⁶

Sri Aurobindo penetrates deep into the essence of the ancient scriptures and presents a vision of creation in tune with the findings of the Vedic seers. The ancient Hindu thinkers proposed the successive development of the lower forms of life as the first and man as the last one in the order of creation. The creation of man differed from the other forms as it manifested the spirit’s development of life on the earth. The ancient seers discovered that the basic impulse that initiated the process of creation in each case literally referred to as the seed of creation and the principle of development in all the creations were the same.

It seems that nature wants to establish the basic oneness of every creation behind the seeming diversity of appearance. Aurobindo is not a votary of the spontaneous evolution as explained by some of the ancient religions and thinkers. He found it difficult to believe that the universe was a chance creation. James Jeans observes that “the universe cannot have been originated by chance.
out of its present ingredients, and neither can it always have been the same as now.\textsuperscript{16}

Aurobindo points out that the ultimate meaning of creation as a process is to attain the highest state of experience. Even the gross inanimate earth is seeking to release itself from its material sense to a spiritual one. This is obvious from the very pattern of the creative process. It is so graded that in the ladder like stages the base reveals a crude formative nature, while the ascending ones gradually lead to refinement and subtlety leading to the ultimate divine existence.

Creation in Aurobindo is an evolutionary phenomenon from the material to the spiritual. The initial identification is done with inanimate objects like the 'the sun and the sky and stone.'\textsuperscript{17} Through the gradation of the creative process, from the unicellular to the multicellular one, life is an expression of the divine play culminating in a spiritual attainment. The basic aspiration of life displayed right from the animal existence is to "sense, seek and find."\textsuperscript{18} It is this instinct that confirms into intellectual process in man. When "the blind necessity to know"\textsuperscript{19} assumes a thirst, he awakens and ascends higher in evolution. From the level of matter the progress reaches the mind and gropes further in 'search of Paradise.'\textsuperscript{20} And it is finally through man that matter wakes from its long obscure trance, and it is in him that earth feels the God-head drawing near.

Unlike that in Milton where we have a single God creating the world, we have here many gods who aspire and "earn for the release of the souls / Asleep in objects vague and in animals."\textsuperscript{21} The initial state of preparing the background for life is done though there remains the inanimate paraphernalia when the first
desire took shape. The tremendous urge, desire and impulse of the primordial Spirit to materialize from its statuesque repose, groping for sight, is related as the "Passioned for the movements of a conscious heart, / Furnishing for speech and thought and joy and love."  

This gradually matures into a concrete will of the intensely motivated moments of the Divine. And this impulse or rather urge gets a positive direction to commence the process of being and non-being, of birth and death, of creation and destruction. From the deep insensitive hours of the stillness and the silence the gods directed the "poised insconscience to invade the senseless mould / And in brute forms awake." Creation thus is an awakening like sleep where the being turns to waking aware of its buried reality. The undercurrent in creation is basically spiritual, as Aurobindo perceives it, the purpose being 'to release the glory of god nature's mind.'

The penetrative glance of God piercing through the haze of the created scans the secrets of the ever-changing flux. It is this Divine presence that animates these mute and solid cells. This presence has so created man that in his every physical make up he is capable of enjoying subtler feelings, endorsing the fact that even the physical existence is with a spiritual purpose.

Creation is the act of God. It pulsates with his presence. It reflects the glory and magnificence of his vision. He created man in his image. Here we have direct reference to the Biblical theory of the creation of man. There is an incidental similarity to the Christian vision of the creation of man as delineated by Milton in Paradise Lost, when Aurobindo portrays the same in his epic:
The absolute the perfect the immune
One who is in us as our secret self
Our mask of imperfection has assumed
He has made this tenement of flesh his own
His image in the human measure cast
That to his divine measure we might rise.\textsuperscript{25}

This intentionally created world is not an accident or the spontaneous emergence due to some chemical or physical phenomena. The active role of a superior force, with a definite intention and a pattern reflects his grace. Aurobindo defines creation through superbly penned lines as an act consequent to the touch of God’s rapture as a last remembrance in felicity that lurks still in the dumb roots of death and birth where “the world’s senseless beauty mirrors god’s delight.”\textsuperscript{26}

The propelling impulse for creation was the original word from which everything sprang, the first world that stood immutable with a nameless origin. Even God takes his form from the formless energy that existed without a name. Thus the poet presents creation as an unfolding dream, which gradually opens to a spiritual purpose. Aurobindo fuses the ancient knowledge with the modern scientific understanding into a marvelous homogeneity justifying the seers of old by applying their teachings to the modern scientific evaluation of the creative process. Modern science has postulated many theories as to the origin of the universe. The expansion theory which defines the universe as an ever expanding-contracting phenomenon, is very poetically presented by Aurobindo through the lines:
The lives upheld by a supreme Original breath

Expansion and contractions mystic act

Created touch and friction in the void . . . .

. . . Parent of an expanding universe.27

And again the big-bang theory is echoed through the picturesque presentation of the horizon after the stars were just created, lines that point to the spectacular array of brilliant stars as ‘That, scattering worlds as one might scatter seeds, / Whirled out the luminous order of the stars.28 This amalgamation of the ancient and the modern, of the scientific and the visionary give the ideas of Aurobindo an extraordinary punch to international acknowledgement, which many other poets lacked. The eternal nature of time is upheld by the ancient texts of India. As the universe has no beginning or end the process of being is divided into ages that undergo creation, existence and destruction periodically. Hence each age is categorically different from the other in the sense that each age display qualities and characteristic features that are unique to it. And this cyclic turn of four yugas as these ages are known in the Hindu mythical lore, is separated by a terminative phase of an equal period of non-existence known as Mahapralaya or the great flood of the inconscient darkness wherein nothing exists.

Creation then is the process of waking up from the state of non-being to being. The very first book which introduces the heroine Savitri waking up from her sleep, reveals at the same the universal creative process gradually unfolding
itself into its multifold splendour. "As if a present without future or past / Repeating the same revolutions whirl / Turned on its axis in its own name." 29

The eternal nature of man's soul is upheld by the ancient texts of India. Creation is the moulding of that which already existed into a new experience. The entire pattern of the created universe was just a reshaping of that which existed. From the infinite the finite took shape 'the ocean lived within a wandering drop and a 'time- made body housed the illimitable.' 30 The advent of man was just to live this mystery out.

This creation is the reflection of something that has been and shall always be, a world of lovelier form that lies near to ours. It is a world where undisguised by earth's deforming sight, all shapes are beautiful and all things true. The designs, patterns are all pre-determined, and heavens meanings steal through it as through a veil. Yet out of this chain of repetition, life rose once more from the initial stages of crudity as in the past, graduating to the complexity of its being.

Aurobindo unfolds an evolutionary process commencing from the inanimate material being gradually evolving to a higher spiritual self. Though this smacks of the evolutionary theory of Darwin it differs in the sense that it is not the purely automated evolvement of life into progressive cycles, due to chemical and physical changes. It is the desire of a will that actualises the movement from inanimate to animate. It is result of the desire of evolved selves referred to as gods who flag off this transformation. The soul of man was existent even before their evolvement into a physical being but lay dormant in the objects, as latent powers or seeds.
In the beginning there was but just the earth built in the material scene, with sea and sky and stone. Then "The young gods yearned for the release of souls, / Asleep in the objects vague inanimate"\textsuperscript{31} thus paving the way for life on earth. The presence of godhead prior to the creation of the world is emphatically stressed with everything else bare and vacant. The solid mass that lay in the inconscient being had the urge to come out of the passivity and express itself into the multifold selves. And then the poised inconscience stimulated by a touch of the Divine rushed to evolve and populate the senseless being with crude forms of creation. This led to a mighty process of a tremendous awakening of the universal being to turn and desire a conscious existence, to know, to aspire, to enjoy and to live.

The resultant action with the universal life-spirit's descend to fill the womb of matter with the immortal fire, filled the earth's great body with trees, herbs and flowers. With this was sent "delight on to the senseless form" of the earth, thus awakening her into a world of spectacular variety. And then man was placed as the central being, a being conscious of himself and his role, free to shape his own destiny, with a mission to fulfill the process of the creative process through self-realisation.

Complementing the process there arose with it a negative charge, a dark force that constantly moved against the onward movement pulling it back to crudity destruction and death. The gyre-like simultaneity in movement and action, of the dark forces of negativity constantly operating against the positive
creative urge provides the substance for the variety of creation. It has to be noted that this dark force compliments the role of Satan in this vision of creation.

A clutch of nether force is on her still;
Out of unconscious depths her instincts leap;
A neighbour is her life to insentient naught
Under this law an ignorant world was made.\textsuperscript{32}

Aurobindo repeatedly points to the darkness, the figurative ignorance from which everything emerged. It was into this void of darkness where nothing was shaped that the Supreme impulse made its impact to generate the seeds of becoming which culminated into the created truth. Thus the dualities of creation rose, both being functional aspects of the Divine.

Aurobindo the mystic explains the many dimensioned levels of creation. The visible world like the written word is the product of unseen thought. This invisible impulse that resulted in the visible creation reflects the nature, the desire that operated behind the creation of the perceived world. A cipher of some secret whole holds infinity in its entirety, from which the child is ever born, who tunes for ever in the vasts of God.\textsuperscript{33}

This primeval desire resulted in the creation of the world though in its absolutely crude form. The act of creation was rather a product of both material and spiritual responses. Aurobindo creates the external world in keeping with the scientific knowledge of his times. "A gas belched out from some invisible fire' / Of its dense rings were formed these million stars."\textsuperscript{34} This is in agreement with the prevalent notion of scientific understanding of the creation of the stars.
Thus the creation of life was an evolutionary one through ages. The ancient Hindu thinkers proposed the successive development theory, where lower forms of life were created first. These forms were given only the instinct to survive and nothing more. Though the forms that emerged next had mental or mind related functions, they were not consciously capable to voluntarily retain these capabilities, apart from displaying certain functions like, liking a memory on a very lower level. Gradually across a long span of time, life forms capable of showing improved responses proportionately progressing in performance entered the horizon. This flow of development graduated into higher forms of life by time, finally culminating in the creation of man.

We find that there is a shift from the physical to the mental and from the mental to the spiritual, a ladder climbed by the life force through time. Aurobindo sowed the seed of this idea to harvest it into the splendid concept of creation that he describes in his works. In Savitri there is frequent reference to creation on these lines. This creation explains its purpose by itself. It's each step naturally being an ascent to the next higher pedestal, until it reaches a stage where man ceases to function from the physical and mental plains and permanently operates from the spiritual self. Savitri as an epic is the expression of this stage, as we have Aswapathy and Savitri, functioning from their spiritual self. Perhaps this is the reason why Aurobindo defined poetry as mantra that emanates from the higher mind from the premises of the spiritual centre created by the spirit and appealing to the spirit level in others or the immediately lower level of the higher vital mind. The imagination of the poet with the vision of the mystic recreates this past, in its
reality, thereby instilling into the mind of the reader a concrete picture of the process.

To Aurobindo the very creation speaks of this mode: man, his faculties, his calibre, and his aspirations. All have been so created to be instrumental in this process. As man was made in the image of God he has all latent potentiality to reach the Omniscience of Godhood, thus breaking the barrier separating him from his Creator.

Milton and Aurobindo depict the process of creation in the perception of which they are influenced by their respective scriptural tradition and literature. Both the poets polish the process and update it in tune with the scientific findings of their day. There are points of similarity that are due to their poetical and visionary similitude which they share as seer poets who reflect the profundities of their inspired moments.

Fall

The fall of man, from the heights of his attainments or a divinely placed perfection, is in fact the subject of many a legend, folk tale and poems around the world. The Adam and Eve myth thus symbolically celebrates an ambrosial past a greatness to which man is heir to as his birthright. The Indian legends speak of glorious age that terminated with the advent of Kaliyuga. The Chinese and Japanese traditions have their pleasant Utopias, lost somewhere in the course of life's forward surge.
But all these stories end in portraying the present as a deteriorated and
degenerated one compared to the delectable past. It is quite natural that poets get
inspired by the memories of the race and celebrate it through their songs
highlighting the glory and the fall. Milton very deftly paints the fall in effective
picturesque lines, delineating at the same its intensity and pathos. The fall is from
a state of perfection, on all aspects of human existence. It is the loss of qualities
that man has aspired forever since his demotion. It has affected his spiritual,
physical and functional attributes necessitating a long process of waiting through
time and experience to restore himself to his original state. This again is not
assured but depends on the various factors, which are to be fastidiously adhered
to by man.

The initial state of innocence and effort free being, with bliss and beatitude
conferred by God has changed to that of suffering, tormenting and grief stricken
existence, bracketed by the forces of birth and death. The causes that led to this
fall as perceived through the Christian explanation are disobedience, pride and
impudence on the part of the first humans. Whether the fall has resulted in an
experience greater than that before the fall, or whether the redemptive measures
suggested are of a restoring nature are points of considerate interest to mankind
throughout history. Milton highlights the nature of this fall very clearly in his
epic, stressing that it has complicated the otherwise simple state of the human
mind.

The very nature of man, to enquire and acquire knowledge, naturally
contradicts the purpose of creation as spelt out by God and his angels. Milton
clearly points out that over inquisitiveness and consequent probing into the forbidden facets of creation is not part of man’s duty. His duty is to accept, acknowledge and obey, perform to the line of his conferred abilities. Violation of the basic tenets of his creation and withdrawal to the instincts of his subjective self resulted in his loss of Eden.

The essential effect of the fall is transformation from a particular state of existence to another where the changes bring in loss of the primary qualities of the being. This extent of the transition is so much that the very identity of the individual is temporarily shelved to put on a disposition that alienates its true nature. The fall then can be a phenomenon that operates on the same plane as in Savitri or there can be a change of place and atmosphere as in Paradise Lost where the created beings are shifted to another world quite in agreement with the changed state of the creation.

In such a context it is not a transmogrification limited to the human plane alone. This is obvious from the delineation of the transformation in Paradise Lost. There is complete shift from the world of Heaven to that of Hell. And Eden the natural habitat of the prelapsarian Adam and Eve gives way to the common place world of the humans after the fall. Though in Savitri there is no such total transportation of the entire paraphernalia to another world the references of the initial creation of the self and the mystic perfection of the universe gradually changes to suit to the crude and altered state of human consciousness. The consensus in the treatment of the fall in the two epics thus points to the nature of the universal perception of the fall across different cultures and civilisations.
Hence the treatment of the two seer poets, of a subject that has such profound significance assumes import.

It is the absence of the cardinal virtues that are to be practiced as well as the presence of the cardinal flaws which ought to be discarded that occasion the fall in *Paradise Lost*. The Christian view of a synthesis in the order of the universe with relation to its Creator and the purpose of creation with reference to the features of its functioning, get distorted when the created fail to tune themselves to the ordinate pattern of creation. This disruption results in a retrogressive mode of functioning, where the involved elements lose the latent capabilities to function and exist on a much lower and limited scale. It is this that happens to the fallen angels and the fallen man, both limited to function within a physically and mentally circumscribed setting.

Milton observes that this demotion from his superior position to that of an abject state is the consequence of a general failure to append to a behavioural code destined to the created by the creator. The created has to adhere to certain qualities that enable the smooth functioning of the entire system, failing which the order and scheme of things lose their hold and tends to dysfunction. Satan as well as man exhibits this negative trait proportionate to the intensity of their responsibility in the fall. As Satan is consciously and directly involved in the process of sinning against God, he is altered to an extremely doomed state of existence from where there is no escape while man not a conscious and wilful sinner has to suffer, yet stands the hope of resurrection to his prelapsarian self. In the act of sinning, the virtues that are expected to be confirmed to like obedience,
humility, faith, resistance to temptations, chastity and right thinking are cast aside for their antithetical ones, sealing the possibilities of an inevitable fall.

Both Satan and man fail to adhere to the principle of an unconditional obedience to the command of God. Obedience as a primary virtue is stressed throughout *Paradise Lost*. And the hierarchical superiority of obedience as a heroic virtue\(^35\) is asserted with reference to a study in contrast with the priority given to it by the Son, who places obedience to God as his primary duty. Abdiel in *Paradise Lost* displays the ideal pattern of behaviour with regard to the creature-creator relationship and the Son as the exemplar of filial relationship. Adams fall is his failure to realise this and maintain the ordinate nature of the stipulated Divine order.

Disobedience sprouts from pride and vaingloriousness, which are the end products of ignorance. Humility as a Christian virtue promotes obedience and faith in the mind of a person. It enables him to ascend from the fallen state. Thus the fall is a process of deterioration but that which gradually enables man to ascend perhaps higher than the initial level of attainment in the ladder of evolution. Pride as a sin assumes deadly proportions as it turns one blind to the very truths of existence. It brings in vain self-confidence that justifies the wrong actions and promulgates the inclination to distance oneself from the general notion of right and wrong through defenses that seem rational but lead to destruction. It is this relentless egocentric pride that is the chief characteristic of Satan\(^36\) which leads to his fall.
Satan whose pride justifies his fall takes this incorrigible stand and through his perverted logic drives Eve to misunderstanding of the Divine edict. It is his pride that repudiates his obligation to God by the casual rejection of his role as his creator. He tries to convince himself and the angel Abdiel that “We know no time that we were not as now; / Know none before us, self- begot self-raised / By our quickening power.”

Through such attitudes of ingratitude and arrogance the fall of Satan and his peers as well as man is a predestined fact. The fact that they are solely responsible for their fall attested by the Divine proclamation “freely they stood who stood, and fell who fell” reveals that they had fallen spiritually before their physical fall. God disowns the responsibility of their fall in words that justify his role as the creator. They were created with all the qualities that belonged rightly to them and so could not accuse God, their maker. “They themselves decreed. / Their own revolt not ‘not I.’”

This decree of man to disobey and undo himself was mainly due to the lack of faith in the universal order and through that in the will of God. Hence it is natural for them to question the established order and attempt to equate themselves with God. Ambition finds its place in such minds that are devoid of faith and humility. The seeds of the fall are then sown in this attitude that flower into a negative outlook of immense magnitude. Satan aspired to set himself above his creator. His lust for power is unconcealed though it is camouflaged under a veneer of democratic and republican sentiments. Eve longed for the knowledge of good and evil on par with the gods, which the tempter had.
promised. She wanted her eyes to be: “Opened and cleared, and yet shall be as
gods, / Knowing both good and evil as they know.”

It is not knowledge alone that attracts her. Her ambitious nature
unsatisfied with the hierarchical order laid by the Divine Creator, longs to topple
it by inserting a new one based on equality. She finds that the superiority
conferred upon Adam could be replaced by awarding herself an equal position or
perhaps more, with the aid of the knowledge acquired through the forbidden fruit
as well as the serpent’s assistance. She hopes the fruit to render her “more
equal,” or perhaps superior.

If faith is cardinal to the evolvement of humility and obedience, it also
helps one to resist the thorns of temptations that constantly prick the mind of the
individual. This would enable the self to rise and evolve to higher levels of being
whereas the absence of the wisdom to withstand the periodic tests of negativity
would result in the fall of the self to decadence and death. Satan is unable to
resist the temptations of his evil mind that needs no other external force to tempt
it. He by himself is ‘more a lie than a liar.’ He is able by his stratagems, and
rhetoric to manipulate his audience to subvert them to his stand against god and
goodness, the dual factors required to avert the fall.

Eve’s incapacity to resist the snare of the serpent and to overcome the
conflict within herself, as well as the failure of man to advocate a strong stand
within himself against the revolting tendencies of his mind is another cause that
tends to enhance the possibilities of the fall. It is the moral and spiritual reversion
that eats into the mind of the couple that makes them an easy prey to the
temptations of Satan augmenting their fall. If Eve contributed to the fall through her trust in herself, Adam plays the second fiddle justifying her actions by partaking from the same fruit and sealing his fate. Thus while the fall of the human pair is occasioned by the gluttony, vainglory, and desire for full knowledge it is the pride and arrogance of Satan that decides his fate.

Thus it becomes clear that the failure to follow an ordained way of life, conforming to the rules and regulations of the order results in a total malfunctioning of the system giving antithetical consequences. The major epics outline this principle though the values and codes of conduct might differ with reference to the cultural variations. It is the virtue of obedience that is stressed throughout Paradise Lost. Here man on being created is directed to stand by certain dos and don’ts though he is given a free will to manage things by himself within the framework of this stipulation. He is given "Knowledge of good and ill, which I have set, / The pledge of my obedience and my faith."43

Man is doomed to his fate as he blunders in the exercise of the faculty of reason allotted to him to supplement the absolute freewill with which God created him. It is this that should have directed his energies in the proper path. The application of true wisdom involves utilization of knowledge through proper reasoning, sifting the good and bad. The parameters of identifying goodness being the amount of righteousness that its exercise might confer to the individual and society around. To Satan the parameter he upholds being antithetical to the Divine nature, his positive approach is evil, as his good is God’s evil. But as man was created on a different base, in the image of God, these parameters naturally
flow in tune with the Divine will and expectation. Man was not created in the image of Satan, but that of God and hence his adherence to the stipulations of the Divine ideal alone would save him.

Adam and Eve misuse this reason. Eve listens to the words of Satan and lets him think for her, sincerely accepting his findings, and fails to recognise the deceit and fraud in it. Moreover instead of making use of the god given superior capabilities, position and intelligence to attain a more advanced state through thoughts and deeds of purity and merit they employ it to satisfy their personal ambitions. And this only helps to reduce her stature from the blessed state of Eden to that of cursed fallen mortals thrown out of a Paradise created for them. Their use of reason only helps in devising their own trap, as intellectual arrogance severs man from his virtuousness culminating in an inevitable fall. Cruelty in its turn is qualified by remorse but remorse is significantly coupled to passion and one is meant to remember that the usurpation of reason by the passions is a characteristic of Satan’s and Adam’s fall.44

The punishment, proportional to the intensity of the sin assumes this nature only because of man’s wilful disobedience. Prelapsarian virtues are not static and it is perhaps because of this that God offers them guidance through his angels to act rightly suggesting self control as the means to avoid the fall. Both Adam and Eve were timely intimated and warned about the possibility of the intrusion of Satan and his wicked intention. Yet they could not resist the tempter naturally making them unqualified to hold to the present post where the stipulated qualities alone would enable them to evolve further. It is like a student...
who happens to get admitted to a particular level but is demoted as he fails to show up to the required IQ when put to a test. Hence the fall is a measure, a sort of placement to enable man to progressively promote himself on the evolutionary scale from a point of development conducive to his nature.

As a result of the fall the Angels lose both their physical radiance and spiritual powers though they are able to retain some of their superior capabilities when compared to man. They turn more vicious and vengeful adding to the horror of their habitat, hell. Yet their innate tendency is to assert themselves against their creator, inspite of the awareness of his superior power to liquidate them. The fall here is spiritual as well as physical. The fall is not just terrestrial transfer from the comforts of the ever-lit shining orbs of heaven to the burning layers of sulphur and darkness. It is also the fall from an elevated state of awareness to that of a lower level of thinking and being. It is the descent from the higher levels of consciousness to the lower levels of the mind.

Hence the fall can be said to be an allegorical representation of the process operating within the individual mind. Creation imposes no limitations and man is born with immense power natural to the quality of his creator. He is placed on a dimension of existence where there is freedom of movement, thought and expression. The entire paraphernalia is set up in such manner that it is conducive to his growth and development to the higher scales of evolution. It is as if the creator has set him to motion, amidst an environment that would ameliorate his course of progress, with the right instincts and aptitude. There is
nothing that he falls short of, except the possibility of being enticed by the negative currents of creation that consistently act and react in time.

As he has been conditioned to freely choose his course, the right and proper selection of the course would land him in the attainment of his mission equating him with his creator. But if he falls prey to the tantalizing currents of the antithetical forces he would naturally take a course in the opposite direction altering the entirety of his being and redefining the values of his existence. Thus change results, which is total in character and limited in nature when compared to the initial state of his creation. As this state is alien to his latent self he undergoes spiritual, suffering, misery and agony punctuated with disease and death.

Aurobindo in his epic speaks of a fall that is holistic in nature. The transformation from the glory and innocence of a subtle mighty state to that of limitations is supplemented by a general demotion in the entire system. The loss is of 'child-god happiness,' and all sweetness into a 'maimed desire.' The helpless state where life is doomed to undergo the ceaseless mystery of death and birth constantly reminds it of its glory and immortality. This degeneration of the being though only in its transitory phases by itself an ordeal as it imposes misery and suffering. Aurobindo here refers to the original state of innocence and purity, which the consciousness possessed, lost in the process of death and birth. He points at the intensity of the negative transformation, the fall and its lasting effects on the struggling human being.

The dark forces of inconscience that act constantly, retarding the whole process of creation occasioned this fall. Unlike in Milton we do not have a
consciously malignant and intentionally evil factor operating against man
manipulating every chance to a trepidation of mankind. The negative force
functioning here is the aggregate of ignorance and consequent darkness that pulls
the momentum of creation in an opposite way undoing the positive urges of
creation.

The fall is consequential to the moment of creation, as the powerful forces
of negativity, which emerge simultaneously, with the positive forces at the time of
creation occasion it. Death is an offshoot of this dark force of ignorance and so
are qualities like anxiety, pride and other negative traits that pervade in man and
the universe that pull him back from the evolutionary ladder. Man essentially a
fondling of God, has been doomed to such a plight and has played into the
hands of ignorance. The efforts to move out into light are hampered by the
clouds of misled visions of life. Hence even the ultimate goal of existence is
misunderstood and the very process of thinking is distorted. The self exists but in
utter darkness of its true identity and like a 'Child-soul left near the gates of hell /
Fumbling through fog in search of paradise.'

The fall then is the loss of the basic characteristics that endowed god-like
purity in its latent nature, exposing the being to a wretched state of functioning. It
is far away from truth and luminous thought, a state of "the dethroned, deformed
and suffering power." 

It is 'An unhappy face of falsity made true' and a 'contradiction of our
divine birth' which is indifferent to beauty and to light. The original nature of the
self loses itself in the ignominy of a casual existence, mimicking its lost glory
obviously suffering within. The sort of exile from the congenital quality of eternal being and divine nature give way to falsity, pride and indifference to beauty and light. The transition from a higher level to a lower one was not an aspired one. As it was not a willed or desired change, it brought along, unwanted experiences that eats into the expected peace and harmony of the created. The suffering consequent to such a predicament is always something that is disdainful. It never promotes life along the path of evolutionary progress. This is particularly because man is unable to identify himself with his present predicament.

Man being the intermediary in creation purports a change towards the higher level, something that takes him to the next step in the forward march in time. Aurobindo makes this clear when he explains the truth about man’s place in the universe, with a heaven of creative truths above and a cosmos of harmonious dreams below. Between it is a chaos of dissolving forms below our inconscient base. And it is out of its fall that the denser matter of the world formed. This demotion of the created being into something crude and ignorant resulted in the transformation of the subtle to the dense as well as the failure of man to abide by his true nature. There is a mistaken identity because of which man constantly forgets himself and in ignorance identifies himself with the acquired nature. Thus “This fallen world became a nurse of souls / Inhabited by concealed divinity.”

The transitions of man are many but this is constantly subject to the deterrent forces of the world around him. The reason for such a restraint in his functional self is mystifying. These restraints imposed by the spiritual and emotional factors both externally and internally put a veil over his eyes. He is
unable to recognise the powers and potentialities latent within himself. This veil referred to in ancient Indian epics as Maya, which is a product of the interaction of the inconscient, and the empirical knowledge on the awareness, decimates the individual to a limited understanding of his faculties. Thus man inspite of his latent power and glory is forced to lead a wasted life of ignorance and suffering. The petrifying nature of this fall of life is disturbing in its effect yet it is taken casually by man because of his ignorance, which accepts disaster as a common risk, careless of suffering, heedless of sin and fall wrestling with danger and discovery.

This inconsequence is further complicated by the atmosphere of boredom created by repetition and empty vacant gestures of activity around. Life in all its diverse aspects becomes a stagnant pool with no fresh air or water purifying or revitalizing it. Aurobindo in some powerful strokes effectively and picturesquely paint the picture of this decomposition gradually taking place. "And in the new saw only faces of the old / And in every hour repeated the rest."48

The same passivity and sterile attitude to sex is reflected very clearly, through the "flickering zest that they left behind" or the "fierce lust that brings a dead fatigue."49 This picture is very similar to that of the world depicted by T. S. Eliot in his "The Wasteland" where the relation between man and woman is sterile. Milton does not condemn love but censures the passion void of reason which becomes sunk in carnal pleasure as 'rage', "a greedy coupling."50 The incident between the typist and the carbuncular young man is a picture of love so exclusively and practically pursued that it is not love at all.51 This sort of
meaningless attempts seeking to indulge for the sake of transcending one's essential isolation without involving into the mystery and meaning of the act reflects the mentally and morally decrepit state of man. The fall becomes conspicuous and projected when shown along with the pictures of the lost abode of the self painted through the exquisite lines "At a blue height which never was too high / A warm communion between body and soul."\textsuperscript{52}

This then is the state, man is heir to which he has to transcend. Aurobindo discusses this fall into the dimension of death and decay as the primary evil that has happened to the individual consciousness from which it should resurrect by its own effort.

The \textit{Bhagawat Gita} explains the basic nature of the human being as divine, instructs him to regain his lost state through his own effort. The different schools of thought and methods that enable man to transcend his limitations and reach the higher self are explained very diligently. Aurobindo takes the same route, elucidating the principles of pure existence, loss of this exemplary state and then the aspiration and means to regain this state, thus making the circle complete. Apart from the philosophical implications the artist and the poet in Aurobindo wakes up to explain and visualise the myriad levels of being, carefully portraying it with the clarity and seal of missionary.

\textbf{Redemption}

Every fall naturally has its own stage of redemption, whether it is a physical or a spiritual one. The nature of the redemption lies in the intensity or
character of the fall and the perceptual difference of the nature of redemption required. Naturally the means of the resurrection put forward by the two seer poets are characteristically different. They reflect the experiences, vision and realisations of two cultures separated by a sea of perceptions constantly at variance with each other. The methods suggested are reflective of the aspirations nurtured by the two cultures and the possible states of perfection as envisioned by their beliefs and traditions. On the peripheral level the fall in Paradise Lost is the story of losing a condition of wholesome existence undaunted by the basic fears of insecurity, old age, or death. And this we are told was because of an act of transgression on the part of man. But as the will of every creation is an expression of the supreme will of the Creator, an act of transgression naturally ruptures the harmony resulting in a breaking off. Aspiration to ascend to Godhead in power and knowledge is a temptation man fails to resist. The fall which is the consequence of this, can only be overcome by resisting the factors that caused it, and restoring the unity by casting away the acquired filth, alien to its nature.

Intrinsically deep within the myth, is the representation of the state of degeneration of the man from the initial state of innocence and purity that was transferred to man through the breath of God. Man, created in the image of God or as the youngest Son of God, forsakes this divinity because of disobedience. The natural course is to regain the purity by atoning for the sin committed, as well as through the ransom of a sacrifice wherein a descendant suffers the pain, death and agony of generations willingly. Along with this, the penitent human attitude to God supplicating him with obedience, homage and gratitude expressed
through prayers and a stipulated way of life alone stands as the panacea to redemption.

Milton here sticks on to the orthodox Christian perception. The element of sacrifice though a common feature of many religions as a means to a higher existence, here connotes the willing renunciation of the pleasures attained through the first disobedience. Milton stresses this element as the primary cause of the fall, which can be redeemed through “one man’s firm obedience fully tried.” Placed in the wilderness without any nourishment for many a day, beset by many other tribulations characteristic of the fallen world and above all, exposed to hostile forces, the Son in the brief epic shows obedience to the Will of God.53

Redemption as an act to free oneself from sin and damnation as denoted by Christian theology is not applicable to the oriental vision of deliverance from the worldly plane. Almost all Eastern and Western perceptions fundamentally agree to a metamorphosis that took place transforming man from his initial glorified state to a degenerative phase, and stress the need to regain the initial state. Yet as the means and the end differ the very concept of fall and its perception differs in each case. If the failure to adhere to the divinely ordained stipulations resulted in the fall of man, the possible means to save oneself from this situation is by the grace of God attained through penitence, thereby obtaining an occasion for refinement and regeneration. Through a life given to a total faith and practice of the virtues, man stands a chance to restore the lost energies squandered through a misadventure into areas of uncertainty and ignorance. God’s words assuring the opportunity is a reassertion of the traditional Christian
vision of salvation through sharp tribulations after life, and the consequent refinement by faith and faith works, to second life, waking him into a new existence that “Resigns him up with heaven and earth renewed.”

The key to redemption lies in the liquidation of Pride and disobedience, from the individual or the race, as these two qualities were the primary causes of the fall. Naturally these are the products of the negative application of reason and freewill. The very phenomenon of the fall implies the mode of redemption, as the cultivation of the contraposition of the causes of such a fate would lead to its antithesis. Man must learn from the experiences of Adam in Paradise ‘to obey is best’ the great Christian virtues of humility, temperance, fortitude, forgiveness and the hope of resurrection must always be the ultimate goal of human endeavor.

This process of refinement though a theological proposition holds a practical sense, which is analogical to the methods, applied by experimental science. The transition effected consequent to the loss of the initial state of purity naturally implies the corruption and defilement of the basic personality of man, which should be purified of the accumulated taint if to regain the original state. Applying the antithesis of the process that has initiated this change would abort the descension and reinstall the positive virtues of ascension. The antidote then is the complete obedience and surrender to the will of God, which the Son displayed through his life, and crucifixion to mankind.

Milton delineates the postlapsarian Adam and Eve as a transformed couple, humble and obedient who renounce their previous stand, ready for a
change to live as per the advice of Michael. This initiates their redemptive process and the poet upholds the chances of hope and the final resurrection of man to his glorified state. And it is through this total surrender that man shall reach the phase of his transition. Milton rejects the role of intelligence and practical sense in attaining this heightened level of existence but acknowledges the importance of wisdom in the selection of the course to the right path. It is the positive application of the faculty of reason and wisdom that shall refer him to the truth and provide him the capacity to discern the importance of returning to God and all that the divine stands for. This is revealed through the attitude of Abdiel and his return to his creator. His return ‘is the soul and supreme image in the poem of contrary choice, of the will to obey, to reject evil and to choose good.’

Redemption will confer the grace of God and it is this that alone would finally save him. Milton emphatically asserts that it is this mercy and not the logical consummation of human effort that would fruition to salvation. The words of God to this effect are a concrete assertion of this fact wherein the supreme compassion of God is emphasized and his love for man displayed “Man shall not quite be lost, but saved who will / Yet not of will in him, but grace in me / Fully vouchsafed.”

This grace is to be attained through worship. A true devotee lives a life of total surrender, entirely surrendered in him, whom he has experienced in his own heart. Everything else becomes unimportant, and such a devotee becomes totally committed to a god-centered existence. The assurance given by God to this effect underlines the importance of prayer that shall draw the mercy of God and thereby
save man from his present predicament. This is a way open to man to save himself from the fall and redeem his soul, hence restore the Paradise lost to him due to his disobedience “For I will clear their senses dark, / What may suffice, and soften stony hearts / To pray repent and bring obedience due.”

To facilitate this, the Divine has devised methods to empower man to venture into this path and reach the destination safely. Milton blends the prevalent theological interpretations of the congenital goodness of man, concealed within the innermost self as the murmuring voice beckoning man eternally to the right path. T.S. Eliot in his *Murder in the Cathedral* effectively projects this inner voice in the personified forms of the good and the bad Angels.

Poets, it seems are quick to recognise this deep-seated guide activating within the layers of the conscious mind. This merciful act out of Divine charity is a decisive pointer in the direction of predestined redemption assured to man. The will of the Omnipotent yet is conditional in the fact that it is man who has to willfully turn it to his welfare, by putting in effort through obedience, sacrifice and faith in the latent purity of his own inner self. The light that shines within the self of every human being is the spark installed by God to enable him to proceed in this direction which acts as his inner voice or conscience.

And I will place within them a guide

My umpire conscious, whom if they will hear,

Light after light well used they shall attain,

And to the end persisting, safe arrive.
The factors that advocate a redemptive process then are directly related to the cause of the fall. The cause of the fall as discussed were disobedience, over ambition tempered with pride. Thus faith gave way to over confidence misguided reason resulting in a catastrophic action of negation of the will of the creator.

This obviously amounts to self-negation as man was made in the image of God. The sacred bond between the creator and the created is violated leading to an inevitable fall, like a tree that falls cut off from its roots. A willing return to the rejected self is then the only solution to restore the bond. Milton emphatically upholds this as the corrective to solve the crisis of creation. It is this idea that is sounded to Adam and Eve through the words of God, the Son, and the angels. Their advice to man is to adhere to the cardinal virtues of faith, resistance to temptation, repentance, charity, humility and obedience and above all positive application of the faculty of reason and freewill conferred generously on man.

Since it is the absence of faith that led to the misappropriation of the Divine strictures, the restoration of this virtue in its sacred form is insisted. Faith assumes importance as a psychological corollary to enhance the mental dedication to the cause. Even in ordinary day to day life faith is an essential ingredient in the recipe of success. Its presence activates human development in every field intensifying the wholehearted input of effort. All religions without oriental or occidental differences have faith as their pivotal base on which the whole fabric of its institution is built. This enables the follower to proximate himself with his ideal.
Faith on the lower level is mutual trust and confidence. Even this form of its mundane expression gave way to the tempter's words, leaving Eve to shelve the words of Adam and act to the tune of the intruder's voice. But it is when this trust is regained and concretely embalmed in their hearts that they redeem their lost happiness. They regain happiness when they accept the pattern of life God had set for them and when Eve is reconciled to her husband and has total faith in him that "She trusts the future, she trusts Adam, and she trusts herself." Thus through the observation of obedience which is for Milton the virtue of all virtues, they allow the essential heroic qualities to prevail. These virtues maintain and sustain the network of relationships between the divine, the human, and the natural planes of being. If it is the restoration of faith that lights up the heart of Adam and Eve with hope, and it is the presence of it that would lead man to his ultimate truth and thus free him. The emphasis on faith rather than knowledge is recognised, as faith is an existential assurance of God's love.

Resistance to vices and the capacity to refrain from evil is a Christian virtue. The poem thus "concerns temptation or the significant trial of the hero, for it only such trial which makes heroism necessary. It is only by means of such trial that the nature of heroism can be made manifest." Eve's failure to resist the temptation of Satan and Adam's incapacity to free himself from his temptation is later compensated by the strong and courageous resistance shown by the Son of God as Jesus. Resistance to temptation seeks the welfare of the soul over the physical and the reward aimed at is physical in nature. Redemption as the process of progress takes the greatness of the soul as its primary objective than
that of a glorified physical existence. It is through such resistance of the eternal tempter Satan, that Christ displays his faith in God.

Repentance for the transgression of Divine law by the parents of mankind through an action or behaviour constituting this while facing the condition or state resulting from such transgression constitutes one of the basic tenets of Christian religious and moral principles. This penitence for the original sin should be pursued with utmost vehemence and patience, to effectively atone for the laxity of mankind towards Divine Will. "To a Christian, the courage to repent represents a finer, and a more difficult, heroism than mere stubbornness." It is built on the assumption that man being an imperfect creation is inclined to err while the Divine nature being perfect in itself, tends to forgive. It is this compassion that man should aim at and through a life of conscious regret for the sin committed, submit himself to the mercy of the Will of God unconditionally.

This calls for humility without which it becomes ineffective. Redemption calls for man's unconditional adherence to the will of God and humble acceptance of the Divine strictures. The redemptive process activates when the Son of God, as Jesus the son of man relates himself to the human context atoning for the first disobedience through total surrender and submission to the Divine Will though he is aware of the painful consequences. A mind that is filled with pride and a sense of arrogance naturally fails as does Satan, though conscious of his plight and its remedy.

... is there no place

Left for repentance, none for pardon left?
None left but my submission; and that word

Disdain forbids me... 67

Adam and Eve choose to repent, as they acquiesce to their sin. There is no pressure for them to behave the way they do. They could have willingly accepted their fate to build another life in the fallen state without relating himself or herself to the punishing god. This is exactly what Satan does, through the self-consolation 'better reign in hell than serve in heaven.' As God does not interfere or impose a course for man, he is absolutely free to define a destiny for himself. He has provided man with a free will, utilising which man is expected to choose his path. In this choice he is absolutely free but a wrong selection would impair his destiny. If man affiliates himself with Satan in disobedience and, falls, he disaffiliates from Satan in choosing to repent, and attains redemption. 68

The awareness and acknowledgement of one's sin in all its intensity and the preparedness both physically and mentally to undergo the punishment is a positive form of repentance. This is the attitude shown by Adam and Eve. As a suppliant when she begs clasping the knees of Adam conscious of the dual nature of the transgression committed by her against God and Adam, 69 the intensity of the sin fades and redemptive forces are at work. This is particularly so as she has undergone a total transformation from the selfish, intriguing woman to the selfless sacrificing individual. It is not the thought of attrition alone that transforms her but a genuine understanding that stems from true wisdom. Thus human re-conciliation paves the way for re-conciliation with God. It is she who inspires
Adam to repentance and patient resolution and it is she by her submission to Adam that shows the way by which they may both find pardon.⁷⁰

Repentance is not merely penitence. It also denotes alert awareness against the possibility of tainting oneself by evil of any kind and the attitude to depart from evil at any cost. Negation of evil implies acceptance and transformation to good. This conversion is to be achieved by the proper recognition of God's justice and faith in his mercy. Repentance thus is not a passive virtue but an active one that coordinates other virtues to the extent of bringing a total metamorphosis in the individual liberating him from the clog of all probable negative traits.

When man acknowledges and appreciates the value of this sacrifice through a life of humility and obedience to the Divine dictums, the forces of redemption begin to operate, to release him from the effects of the fall. Adam and Eve after their fall accept their predicament and realise the truth of the conditions that brought it. The transformation that they undergo towards the end of the poem makes them and their descendants eligible for a redemptive progress to a higher state. The words of Adam sum up this inner transition. "Henceforth I learn, that to obey is best / And love with fear the only God."⁷¹

And when Eve submits her fate perfectly to his,⁷² she has accepted her place and role in the moral hierarchy of Paradise Lost. In such a resignation she has positively assimilated the words of Michael. Milton emphasizes the heroic status of obedience by commencing his brief epic in a tone that is quite
antithetical to the beginning of *Paradise Lost*. He is singing the episode of the "recovery of Paradise to all mankind," by "one man's firm obedience."  

Compassion that accompanies charity redeems the spirit to free itself from the morbidity of the sin accumulated and purifies it to a point of preparedness for heavenly life. As man is a social creature, his duty to the society and the environment around him is as binding as the duty to himself. When Christ taught to love one's neighbour as one would love himself, it is this attitude of compassion and universal affection that is denoted. It is this compassion that leads the Son of God to plead for the cause of the fallen man and accept the mantle of suffering to liberate him. The angels display this attitude to man when he stands a sinner, about to be thrown away from Eden. They do not exhibit any anger or vengeance, on the contrary extend a helping and consoling hand assuring man of the possibility of his reinstatement after a life of penitence and atonement for the sin committed.

Milton believed that the soul and the body together constituted an inseparable being and that the soul died along with the body. He postulated a dynamic universe in which everything was moving upwards to its creator. Man's virtuous life drew him closer and closer to the angels. And the angels grew more and more purely spiritual as they approached nearer to God. The downward motion takes as the result of sin, as the natural motion of all things is to God.  

And again in the life of man the upward motion was that of reason while the downward motion was that of passion.
Thus the happiness of the evolving man would be assured only if reason and passion work together and his desires were on par with his moral sense. Thus to maintain a balanced state of his reason, will and passion would elevate him further in the progressive evolution of the individual to a higher degree of being. The redemptive process in Milton's vision operates for the fulfillment of both the physical and the spiritual, as he did not believe in the separable nature of the soul and body. He believed that two such apparently different entities as soul and body might yet influence each other. And in course of time human beings became more angelicas their souls and body became more refined.\(^75\) In Adam and Eve there is a dissociation of the two faculties that lead to a demotion instead of ascension and hence their fall. To correct this he advocated a life, suffering for truth's sake\(^76\) with an inner fortitude to bear 'either state, prosperous or adverse.'\(^77\)

This position sums up Milton's vision of man's redemption. As a true Christian he believed in the efficacy of Christian virtues as the only possible tool to help tide over the evolutionary crisis or the fall of man. But he successfully portrays this vision in very realistic terms dramatizing the immensity of the loss and the urgency of its rectification.

The basic concept of Moksha in the Hindu perception is different from the Paradise to be gained in Christian theology. Aurobindo on the other hand comes closer in his perception of the attainment of the divine nature, wherein man transforms himself to his true nature the divine self. Then redemption here acquires the sense of transition to this divinity and the means for redemption can be equated to the means for this transition. In Aurobindo it connotes the spiritual
transformation that would ultimately land man in his natural self of divinity. Aurobindo’s vision of the human evolution through an ameliorative process to reach finally the state of godhood is unlike Nietzsche’s idea of the superman who is the culmination of a strong and enlightened vital will. In Aurobindo it is the spiritualisation of the mental being, and a transformation based on the spiritual ideality.

It is a vision where the individual sheds his normal limitations to emerge the potent and radiant entity that he is on the soul level. Though it is not the superman of Nietzsche, it agrees in spirit to the idea of the transformation into a superior form of being which Aurobindo shares with him. Nietzsche’s idea that to develop the superman out of our present very unsatisfactory manhood is our real business is in itself an absolutely sound teaching. His formulation of our aim, “to become ourselves,” “to exceed ourselves,” implying, as it does, that man has not yet found all his true self, his true nature by which he can successfully and spontaneously live, could not be bettered.  

It is then this, that is speeded and the span of evolution redefined through the redemptive measures suggested by the poet. Aswapathy and Savitri embrace these redemptive means each in their own way and arrive at the point of perfection where they transcend their own ordinary selves to reach the pure state of blissful beatitude. The transformation then occurs on the spirit level, or in other words it is the revelation of the divine impulse in man and its advancement as the controlling factor that effects this miracle.
Therefore Aurobindo observes that it is not the intellect and will, but that supreme Spirit in us higher than reason, concealed behind the coatings of our real nature, which is the secret seed of the divinity and will be, when discovered and delivered, luminous above the mind, the wide ground upon which a divine life of the human being can be scarcely founded. The forces of Redemption constantly are at work within the individual being,beckoning him to the real nature and glory of his true being.

Life force exhibits this tendency to know about itself and the universe around. The inquisitiveness shown by Eve in the direction of being aware is perhaps as Aurobindo puts it a tendency of the self to know and thus free itself. And this at times becomes a blind necessity, an instinct. The means for the self to free itself from this predicament of deterioration is to follow the inner call, the call of the supreme reverberated within the inner mind, and "In this slow ascension he must follow her pace / Even from her faint and dim subconscious start; / So only can earth's last salvation come."

The fall can be transformed to redemption only if the root cause is understood. As in the Fisher King legend the malady can be cured only if the seeker listens to the questions that come from within and try to find the right answers. And there is sufficient help in the form of gentle reminders from the innermost being the lost world comes into memory though in flashes of a felicity once enjoyed and temporarily shelved.

The changes then to the positive state of realisation of one's true nature can be progressively achieved. Directing the energy latent in man through the
right aspiration can do this. He has to withdraw his immense energy and the mind given to petty things, recover the knowledge lost and break off from "the stone grip by the world's inconscience." This is possible by recognising the absolute in things that pass, the 'eternal touch in time made things. The deathless spirit dwells unborn immutable and immaculate in a world of motionless time. It is when man has corrected his misunderstood awareness of himself he attains the transcendental state of salvation. Aurobindo relates the transfiguration of the individual through a stroke of very clear and picturesque images like 'a ripple of gold light and glory wraps the brain.'

And in the introductory hymns to the Bhagawat Gita, Lord Krishna is praised as the boatman who roves carefully individual souls to their spiritual home through the seas of the unfriendly sea of worldly existence. Aurobindo explains that the transfer from the present to the divine future is only possible when ignorance the primary cause of the darkness is liquidated by the light of awareness. The transparency thus obtained can relieve man from his present state of miseries. This trip through birth and death this long voyage comes to a halt when the "nescient dusk is lifted from mans soul." It is only when the rays of God falls that he can pull anchor and rest until which the mighty traveler can never rest nor the mystic voyage cease.

Prayer as a means for liberation is a universally accepted belief and is acknowledged by all civilisations as a means to contact or reach the divine plane is also, or a process by which one is able to transcend to higher planes of being is accepted by Aurobindo. God is to be praised. He is interested and takes delight in
the praise of his devices that are his creation. When we pray, a contact is made with that transcendent force according to the intensity of our prayer, or again the same effect is attained through a master act: heroic action, a noble deed. A supreme act of chivalry, courage, sacrifice operates to move that will. Or by a king idea: an idea that towers over all others, a sovereign truth idea, also connects man with the transcendent, any of this can link man's strength to the transcendent force.84

God in his qualifiable nature shares the behavioral aspects of man. He takes to the pleasures of human positive endeavors particularly in activities that praise him. The very beginning of the universe was from the self-created prayer that originated from the primary word. It was the chant hymeneal to the unseen Divine and a flaming rhapsody of white desire that "Lured an immortal music into the heart / And woke the slumbering ear of ecstasy."85

Divine intervention is another means to elevate man to a higher pedestal. When the Supreme Self, perceives that man caught in the web of a stagnant destiny wriggles and cannot free himself from the cobwebs of age old customs, traditions, beliefs, his mind lost in the quagmire of a decadent and degenerative phase, with negativity holding the sway then the Divine being descents to free him from this predicament and establish a new order. This phenomenon usually referred to, as avatar is a fundamental belief of the Hindu tenet authenticated through the scriptures and declarations of the sages. Aurobindo develops this by further explaining the process as sacrifice from above. The Divine Mother
sacrifices herself, comes down into this world of suffering and darkness in order that it may be uplifted.

Milton presents it as the obedient Son who prepares to offer himself as the scapegoat to atone for the original sin. The idea of Avatar hood is directly related to the concept of sacrifice, which universally is recognised as a redemptive measure by many religions. The necessity of a supreme sacrifice wherein someone should willingly pay, "The rigid satisfaction death for death" is stressed by God and the advent of the Son as a mortal interacting with man to redeem him as "a sacrifice glad to be offered, he attends the will of his great father" is echoed in the arrival of the Mother as Savitri, suffering both physical and spiritual conflict as a human paradigm and through the struggle solving the crisis of mankind. It is quite interesting to note that in both epics this deputation of the Heavenly Spark as a mortal, are put to intense suffering, pain and agony, yet they fight against all the oddities and ultimately triumph defeating their adversaries. Hence the poets acquiesce to the importance of such Divine intervention in the redemptive process of man.

It is then that redemption becomes possible. It is only then that the Divine descents, for this is the Calvary he has accepted, the sacrifice of his divinity he agreed to in order that this undivine too may gracefully serve the Divine, be taken up and transmuted into the reality from which it fell, of which it is an aberration.

The approaches of the poets to the fundamental questions of existence like Creation, Fall and Redemption are distinctively different from the scientific and logical understanding of the phenomena. Hence to the pragmatic and realistic
mind this interpretation of the evolutionary process might seem irrational. They had infused into their vision the age old perception though this was amalgamated with the rational understanding of their times. Yet it is the ancient way that inspired and inculcated the muscle and substance to their vision. The ancient way invariably provided a direction and sense to the evolution of life and civilisation, and the species in general.

Modern scientific phenomena merely observe and record phenomena for phenomena's sake. And given this lack of wholeness, the results are more often a dry and methodological hypothesis. Creation as both poets agree was not the manifestation of dump inanimate matter gradually evolving to higher states of evolution. Nor is it the intelligence that we find manifested as man the gradual evolutionary blossoming of ignorant creatures but the innate light of the universe progressively maturing to a higher aspiration.

The purpose of creation as both poets agree was to project the manifest greatness latent in the Divine will or the intentional expression of a superior force in its attempt to unfold itself. It is not a blind course that the created phenomena go through but a definite path set and laid for the evolutionary fulfillment of its divine design. The cause for the fall as discussed point to the root of ignorance that sprouts into huge tree of negative traits that undermine the purity of the creation. And both the poets invariably point at the different levels on which the fall operates. The discussions of the fallen angels on the "diverse thoughts more elevate" lead no where but to a realisation of their own spiritual decay. Hence like Death in Savitri the fallen angels are obliged to resort to discursive
reasoning. True wisdom on the other hand consists in recognising the limits of one's own reason and in relying instead on faith, revelation, and providence. This is obvious from the attitude and actions of both Aswapathy and Savitri who seldom resort to their logic and intellectual prowess but submit to their faith and intuitionary revelation. It is this that the Son of God does in Paradise Regained. He does not struggle with the strong emotions that arise in his mind. His "emphasis on faith rather knowledge" is evident from his words, "for what concerns my knowledge God reveals."

Penitence was to be expressed by some external observance, visible to the eye, painful to the flesh. It is a modern thought that penitence is a private duty; it is a modern thought that it demands contrition instead of external observance as its essential; that it concerns the sinner and is, perhaps most sincere when least visibly manifest. The progress is from the objective external forms of atonement, of repentance to the exercises of the individual soul or in other words the process shifting from the externals to the inner interiors of the individual's mind. And in both epics we find that this quality stems from the basic nature of humility in thought and word and action. It is not a sign of one's weakness and timidity, but rather a symbol of one's greatness of spirit, and wisdom of the universe. Thus true repentance as we find is the result of a transition of perspectives and values.

It is this effort that effects a change on man and enables him to tread the path of a transformation to higher planes of being. Milton and Aurobindo speak of this change and though their methods differ, point to the same ultimate metamorphosis. Redemption is to them a sincere effort and its spiritual fruition. It
is the result of temptations and trials. It is only temptation or the significant trial of the hero, for it is only such trial which makes heroism necessary; it is only by means of such trial that the nature of heroism can be made manifest. And hence both speak of the efficacy of prayer, and the practice of a virtuous life, as a means to redeem oneself from the crudity of a fallen state. Thus it is to be noted that Milton and Aurobindo share on many points with regard to their views on creation and the consequent fall. Though they agree in spirit on many of the modes of redemption, the difference in the religious, cultural and historical perspectives prompts them to define and relate them in seemingly different voices. Yet one finds that in both poets the underlying motive acts to confer a singularity of treatment and similarity of purpose.
NOTES


2 Ibid. 18.

3 Ibid.


5 Ibid. line 714.

6 Ibid. Bk. VII, lines 525-527.

7 Ibid. Bk. IV, line 363.

8 Ibid. lines 677-78.

9 Ibid. Bk. XI, line 57-59.

10 Ibid. line 50.

11 Ibid. Bk. XII, line 714.


15 Ibid. 3.

16 Ibid. 77.


18 Ibid. Canto. iv.

19 Ibid.

20 Ibid.

21 Ibid. Canto. iii.

22 Ibid.
23 Ibid.
24 Ibid. Canto. iv.
25 Ibid.
26 Ibid. Canto. v.
27 Ibid. Bk. I, Canto. v.
29 Ibid. Canto. iv.
30 Ibid. Canto. i.
31 Ibid. Canto. iii.
32 Ibid.
33 Ibid. Canto. i.
34 Ibid.
38 Ibid. Bk. III, line 102.
39 Ibid. lines 103-104
40 Ibid. Bk. VIII, lines 324-325.
44 B. Rajan, Paradise Lost (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1964) 25.

46 Ibid.

47 Ibid. Canto. iii.

48 Ibid. Canto. ii.

49 Ibid.

50 Ibid.


58 Ibid. lines 188-90.

59 Ibid. lines. 194-96.


75 Ibid. 51-52.

77 Ibid. Bk. XI, lines 361-364.
79 Ibid. 219.
81 Ibid.
82 Ibid. Bk. II.
83 Ibid. Bk. I.
87 Ibid. line 270.