Chapter Three
The Journey of the Soul
The Evolving Man and the Ascent of Consciousness

*Savitri* is the epic poem of the Life Divine. In this epic of the soul, Sri Aurobindo leads the reader on through the supra-physical domains of life, mind and spirit, as he traces the ascent of man's consciousness. *Savitri* may be regarded as a supreme poetic statement of Sri Aurobindo's integral yoga – the means of ascent, which can transform life on this earth into a Life Divine. This aspect of *Savitri* is brought out in one of Sri Aurobindo's letters: "I used *Savitri* as a means of ascension. I began with it on a certain mental level, each time I could reach a higher level I rewrote from that level ... In fact *Savitri* has not been regarded by me as a poem to be written and finished, but as a field of experimentation to see how far poetry could be written from one's own Yogic consciousness and how that could be made creative."

Poetry and Philosophy:

While Sri Aurobindo justifies a poet's right to philosophise and accepts that "the poet may express precisely the same thing in essence as the philosopher", he also insists that the poet has to transmute it and give us "the something more which poetic sight and expression bring. He has to convert it into the truth of poetry, and it will be still better for his art if he saw it originally with the poetic insight, the creative, intuitive, directly perceiving and interpreting eye; for then his utterance of truth is likely to be more poetic, authentic, inspired and compelling." He has achieved this task in his grand epic. It may be said that *Savitri* combines poetic fervour with philosophy, yogic consciousness, spiritual reality and mystic experience.
Perspective of Man and the Universe:

Savitri projects man’s environment, the material universe, as an objective manifestation of the Spirit and shows that the spiritualization of man, the physical being is possible because matter and spirit are not contradictory entities but different aspects of the same Reality. Savitri’s vast scope takes the whole of life as a field for the Divine to manifest Himself in. In the words of A.B.Purani, “Savitri calls out the Divine that is hidden at present in the human mould to deal direct with the problem of man’s emancipation and of establishment of the divine kingdom on earth.” In Savitri we find the hope as well as the fulfilment of this destiny.

Savitri projects Sri Aurobindo’s integral perspective of man the individual, man in the universe and man in the process of evolution. This chapter seeks to explore Savitri from this point of view. An attempt is made to follow the path of man’s evolution and identify some of the significant stages in this adventurous journey of the spirit through different planes of consciousness.

The Human Individual:

Sri Aurobindo looks at man, the individual as standing between Matter and Spirit with the power to mediate between them:

“A time-made body housed the Illimitable”

(2. 1. 237)

Man’s body is the grossest component of his personality into which all the higher principles of the Supreme Being have descended.
"... when a soul draws near the sill of birth,
Adjoining mortal time to Timelessness,
A spark of deity lost in Matter's crypt".

(l. l. 160-162)

The body is the vehicle for the expression of life and mind and for gathering the sense experience. It is the starting point of evolution. It is Matter, a physico-chemical entity, which undergoes a change when it is taken up by life:

"Life cast her seed in the body's indolent mould ...
Compelling it to sense and seek and feel".

(2. IV. 53-55)

The physical-vital being of man experiences only

"... an unseeing desire felt out for food
The gusts of Nature were the only law
And feelings and instincts knowing not their source,
Sense-pleasures and sense-pangs soon caught soon lost
(in) the brute motion of unthinking lives."

(2. IV. 190-196)

Man's vitalised body is taken up by the Mind. Man generally accepts the mind as the instrument of knowledge. His initial ignorant involvement and near obsession with the material and vital are followed by a development of his mental faculties and he masters many disciplines of knowledge that need an intensive application of thought, logic, and reason. He is not content with being a mere 'human edition of the animal round'. He tries 'to control, create and constantly recreate' himself in progressively better forms of self-expression.
With his 'groping mind' he tries to solve 'the thousand fold enigma of life and the world'.

"But thought nor word can seize eternal Truth
In our thinking's close and narrow lamp-lit house
The vanity of our shut mortal mind
Dreams that the chains of thought have made her ours, ...
But only we play...."

(2. XI. 571-576)

Man exists mostly in the physical, vital and mental planes – the annamaya, pranamaya and manomaya koshas. The vijnana and anandamaya koshas – the Supermind and the Supreme Sachchidananda are still involved and not manifest in him, for still ‘the human limits the divine’.

"Above the spirit cased in mortal sense
Are superconscious realms of heavenly peace
Below, the Inconscient’s sullen, dim abyss."

(2. XII. 29-31)

At the very basic level, animality is an important component of man's nature, and he uses even his mental energies to make the most of the law of Life in Matter. His activities are initially driven by the motive of profit and pleasure, artha and kama. His heart thrills with the ‘pleasure and laughter of brief delight’. At this stage man cannot resist all 'Nature's longing drive'.

"(He) turns to finite loves and lusts,
The will to conquer and have, to seize and keep,
To enlarge life's room and scope and pleasure's range,
To battle and overcome and make one's own,
The hope to mix one's joy with others' joy
A yearning to possess and be possessed,
To enjoy and be enjoyed, to feel, to live.”

(2. IV. 276-285)

It is only later that man allows into his life activities, the rule of some mental ideal – dharma or ethics. He is then not only governed by instincts, impulses and intellect but also guided by the ethical and aesthetic being in him. He seeks to possess and enjoy things more subtle, norms and values more refined and universal. He begins to uphold the values of truth, beauty and goodness.

“A fourth dimension of aesthetic sense
Brings ... high splendid glimpses of interpreting thought,
But not the utter vision and delight”.

(2. II. 338, 354-356)

As man develops further he comes into conscious relation with the chaityn purusha, the psychic being in him, that is the true centre of human functioning.

The psychic principle supports the three lower planes from behind without itself being a part of the seven-fold gradation of matter, life, mind, Supermind and Sachchidananda. Contrary to what the word psychic means in ordinary parlance, it has a deeper meaning and significance in Sri Aurobindo's philosophy. Sri Aurobindo explains that “it is the psychic personality in man that turns him towards the knowledge of Self and the Divine ... by bringing the psychic entity, this true soul in us, into the front and giving it the lead, we shall
gain all the fulfilment of our natural being and open the gates of the kingdom of the Spirit.”

The psychic personality is often confused with the pseudo-psychic entity of the ego that reigns. Ego, or as Sri Aurobindo calls it, the 'desire soul' which is generally the leader and director of man's activities, is both a helper and a bar. While it helps to crystallize and organize certain elements of Nature, it obstructs the true and final evolution of the Spirit in man.

“Our struggling ego cannot change her course:
Yet is it a conscious power that moves in us,...
An image of ego treads through an ignorant dream
In a false perspective of effect and cause, ...
It drifts incessantly from scene to scene
Whither it knows not, to what fabulous verge.”

(2. XI. 440-441, 2. II. 564-569)

The triple nature of the physical-vital-mental is associated with the ego in different ways. Man is a complex being. Each part of even his surface personality - body, sense, mind, heart, will and intellect - is in itself a complex phenomenon. He is multi-personality, chaos of conflicting claims, which clamour for order and harmony. Only the constant awareness and the enlightened guidance of a divine centre within him can create the desired harmony. It is only when the soul-personality comes forward and takes control of man's nature that a perfect harmonisation of his being and his life becomes a reality.

“But for such vast spiritual change to be,
Out of the mystic cavern in man's heart
The heavenly Psyche must put off her veil
And step into common nature's crowded rooms
And stand uncovered in that nature's front
And rule its thoughts and fill the body and life."

(7. II. 460-465)

The mental man is fully evolved; the spiritual man is yet to evolve. Man is only a middle term in the process of evolution. He therefore feels within himself an urge to go forward, exceed his present nature and rise to a higher level of consciousness. Divine consciousness has to awaken in him. This can happen only when he breaks through the bonds of ignorance and comes into constant relation with his real self. Leaving behind him the present animal vitality and the egocentric mentality, man is destined to become a transformed individual, a fit receptacle for the manifestation of the Spirit. Man can integrally transform his physical, vital and mental nature by the infinite consciousness and power of the Spirit. The Spirit, which is held captive in the bonds of material nature, has to emerge, take hold of man's outer nature and transform it into its Divine Nature. Such is the Divine denouement and the golden destiny of man.

Man, according to Sri Aurobindo, is a remarkable being; he is an evolutionary phenomenon, an enigma as well as an answer to many questions posed by Nature. He embodies within himself all the processes of evolution. There is something unique about him, for he represents a manifold synthesis of the physical and vital worlds with those of the mental and spiritual, of Time with the Timeless, and of the individual with the universal and transcendental. One therefore needs to have an integral perspective of man, the individual and man in his environment, the universe.
Man in the Universe:

According to Sri Aurobindo "Universe is a diffusion of the divine All in infinite Space and Time, the individual, its concentration within limits of Space and Time." The universe and the individual are thus the two essential appearances into which the Divine descends and through which it has to be approached. Sri Aurobindo further explains: "The descent of the supreme Reality is in its nature a self-concealing; and in the descent there are successive levels, in the concealing veils. Necessarily, the revelation takes the form of an ascent; and necessarily also the ascent and the revelation are both progressive. Each successive level in the descent of the Divine is to man a stage in an ascension; each veil that hides the unknown God becomes for the God-lover and God-seeker an instrument of His unveiling." Man is thus himself a riddle as well as the key to the riddle of the universe.

Savitri describes the world as ‘the little plot of our mortality’, ‘a playground of the living Infinite’ and man is -

"Protagonist of the mysterious play
In which the Unknown pursues himself through forms
And limits his eternity by the hours …
This bodily appearance is not all;
The form deceives; the person is a mask;
Hid deep in man celestial powers can dwell".

(I. III. 3-5, 39-44)

Man is an eternal soul working out in the universe his effective unity with the Divine. Though seemingly finite and separated, he is infinite and one with all beings in the universe. He is upon earth to work for the earth’s progressive
transformation through an increasing awareness of his own integral identity with the eternal Spirit. "His mind is a form and action of the universal mind. His call is not to be busy and concerned only with his own growth and perfection and natural destiny or spiritual freedom. A larger action too claims him. He is a worker in a universal work; the life of others is his life; world-consequences and the world-evolution are also his business." 

"A Mystery’s process is the universe ... 
Creation’s search for self began its stir
A spirit dreamed in the crude cosmic whirl
Mind flowed unknowing in the sap of life ...
A miracle of the Absolute was born;
Infinity put on a finite soul, ...
To live this Mystery out our souls came here."

(2. 1. 206, 230-238)

Man and Nature are terms and coefficients of God in his play of self-manifestation. While Man is an individual being of the Divine in existence, Nature is an extended phenomenon of multiple manifestations of the Truth. Man helps Nature to progressively grow conscious of her purpose of realizing the Divine in the Creation. Apparently limited, relative, divided and mortal, Man relentlessly strives to move towards the Infinite, the Absolute, the One and the Immortal. Man is neither an insignificant nonentity nor is he the almighty All. His mind, life and body do not constitute his entire being; the visible cosmos does not account for his existence. His limited intelligence carries a hint of omniscience; in his mortal life there is an implication of the eternal; his body is a constant reminder of the boundless and the bodiless Involved in Matter.
"A Power worked, but none knew whence it came.
The universal strengths were linked with his;
Filling earth's smallness with their boundless breadths"

(I. III. 816-818)

Man is not only a unique individual but also all of humanity. The marvellous biophenomenon, man is a Sachchidananda in the making. The universal man in him helps him outgrow the limitations of the individual and manifest the divine universality that is his essential nature. To rise out of massive Ignorance into infinite Knowledge is man's prerogative. In this progress he is inalienably linked with Nature on one side and the Divine on the other. Nature is the creative force of Divine Consciousness and Man is the most effective instrumentation of cosmic evolution and progressive manifestation of the Divine. Man is thus –

"A colonist from immortality.
A pointing beam on earth's uncertain roads,
His birth held up a symbol and a sign;
His human self like a transluscent cloak
Covered the All-Wise who leads the unseeing world …
Affiliated to cosmic Space and Time
And paying here God's debt to earth and man
A greater sonship was his divine right.
Although consenting to mortal ignorance,
His knowledge shared the Light ineffable."

(1. III. 11-20)
Man's initial incapacity to effectuate his mission is because of the fundamental division within himself, between the forces of Nature and God. Only a conscious unity between them can fulfil the Divine aim. This unity is the nature of the Supermind wherein consciousness and force, knowledge and will are integrated in a Divine equation. When 'the ambiguous crowded parts' meet 'the many-toned unity to which they move',

"The divine intention suddenly shall be seen, ...  
A graph shall be of many meeting worlds.  
A Mind shall think behind Nature's mindless mask,  
A conscious Vast fill the old dumb brute Space.  
This faint and fluid sketch of soul called man  
Shall stand out on the background of long Time  
A glowing epitome of eternity,  
A little point reveals the infinitudes."

(2. 1. 193-205)

A great spiritual destiny is concealed in man's fragile body. He consciously promotes and consummates the pilgrimage of the soul to the Divine. He not only epitomises Nature's forces but also manifests the Divine Will. He is both 'the son and hero-warrior of the earth' and 'the companion and playmate of the Spirit'. In the words of Sri Aurobindo, "Man is the highest realised here and now; he is not the highest realisable. As there is something below him, so there is something, if even only a possibility, above. As physical Nature concealed a secret beyond herself, which in him she has released into creation, so he too conceals a secret beyond himself, which he in turn must deliver to the light. That is his destiny."
Savitri depicts the evolving man who ultimately finds his destiny. This chapter focuses on how this evolutionary process has been worked out by man, who is represented by Aswapati.

Aswapati, a representative of mankind:

Aswapati, the name of Savitri’s father, means the lord of horses; it is a symbol of life energy. Aswapati in the legend is a childless king who performed worship and sacrifices for eighteen years to propitiate Goddess Savitri and as a result was blessed with a child. The penance of the king acquires great significance in Sri Aurobindo’s epic where Aswapati is a representative of mankind. What was only a brief episode in the legend spans almost a half of Savitri, which is a massive epic of the soul. Aswapati symbolizes the human soul aspiring to reach the Divine. He is -

“One in the front of the immemorial quest, ... 
A thinker and toiler in the ideal’s air, ... 
An aspirant to supernal Timelessness.”

(1. III. 2,7,142)

Aswapati performs yoga – a yoga involving his body, mind, psyche and spirit – with the intense will and aspiration to know the Reality. His yoga represents the human quest for the ultimate Truth. Aswapati acquires immense knowledge of the spiritual realms through his yoga. He plumbs the depths and scales the heights of human consciousness. Aswapati, ‘the Traveller of the worlds’ passes through several realms during his arduous and eventful journey. He feels his Self being lifted higher and higher even as he experiences something descend on him from above. The mystic vision he gains enables him to see the
entire cosmos in its infinity and eternity. He sees 'worlds piled upon worlds, planes upon planes of existence'. They represent the various stages in the evolution of the spiritual man. An attempt is made to follow the spirit on its flight through the different planes of consciousness. Effort is made to describe some of those planes, with the intention of grasping their significance in the gradual process of human evolution in its slow progress towards its destiny.

The Call: Eternity speaks

Man is generally so engrossed in the mechanical routine of ordinary life that he is hardly aware of his soul. 'Intimations of immortality' are lost in the noise of thought-activity and emotional chaos. So when 'eternity speaks, none understands its word.' Hence 'the Voice withdraws into its hidden skies'.

Of the countless creatures on the earth, only a few have reached that stage in the evolution of their consciousness where they are ready to hear 'heaven's call'. This call may take any form:

"A few rare intimations come as guides
Immense divining flashes cleave (the) brain,
And sometime in (the) hours of dream and muse
The truth ... looks out ...
As if far off and yet with (the) soul."

(1. IV. 191-195)

Ordinary men who are caught up in the crowded life of senses may not be aware of themselves as distinct from the external life-movements. Absorbed as we are in a 'routine of daily acts',
“Our eyes are fixed on an external scene;
We hear the crash of the wheels of Circumstance
And wonder at the hidden cause of things.”

(1. IV. 240-243)

Rare is the man who hears the call ‘while the world toils on with its deep blind heart’. Rarer still is the ‘heart that heeds’ the call of the Divine. Some who hear the call might still be bound by the chains of the material world and the interests of the lower life. Hence they may not respond to the call and change the direction of their lives.

The Aspiration:

The call is ‘heard by a few, but fewer dare aspire’. Man wants to get what he does not have; he tries to acquire what he needs; he makes an effort to achieve his goal. He aspires and then applies his will in the direction of his aspiration. If his aspiration is confined only to the physical-vital-mental part of his being, no spiritual progress is possible. However, if his aspiration exceeds his present self, he is sure to grow into higher dimensions of Being. Such an aspiration is the first requirement of spiritual growth. It is the flame that burns up all the earthly desires and keeps the spiritual endeavour alive.

“(Aspiration) uplifts its lonely tongue of conscious fire
Towards an undying Light forever lost;
Only it hears, sole echo of its call,
The dim reply in man’s unknowing heart.”

(1. IV. 152-155)
The Chosen Ones:

An overseeing Eye that regards the scene of evolution takes in the innumerable movements and forms. It watches to see which soul among the millions that are striving to evolve, is ready for the leap from the human to the Divine. It chooses the one who is ready. The chosen one may not even be aware of it, but from the moment of this choice by the Divine, he is guided by Him through the vicissitudes of life.

“One among many thousands never touched,
Engrossed in the external world’s design,
Is chosen by a secret witness Eye
And driven by a pointing hand of Light
Across his soul’s unmapped immensitudes.”

(1. II. 211-215)

The Beginnings – Awareness and Identification:

Aswapati, one of the chosen few, realizes that man is not a mere physical-vital being driven by animal propensities, but is a descendent of the Spirit who has come here to help the earth conquer its insconscience and ignorance.

“His was a spirit that stooped from larger spheres
Into our province of ephemeral sight, ...
He kept the vision of the Vasts behind: ...
A skyward being nourishing its roots
On sustenance from occult spiritual founts.”

(1. III. 9-31)
It is only when man becomes aware of the higher possibilities of spiritual life that he outgrows the limited confines of his earthly existence. He is then a pilgrim of the eternal who ‘arrives on the frontiers of eternity’.

“He feels his substance of undying self
And loses his kinship to mortality.
A beam of the Eternal smites his heart,
His thought stretches into infinitude;
All in him turns to spirit vastnesses.”

(1. III. 64-68)

When Aswapati goes beyond the ordinary life of ignorance and consciously enlarges his being, he recognizes his identity with the Divine.

“His soul breaks out to join the Oversoul,
His life is oceaned by that superlife.
He has drunk from the breasts of the Mother of the worlds.”

(1. III. 69-71)

When man crosses ‘nature’s border line and escapes into Supernature’s arc of living light’, his spirit is adopted by the Divine. His soul and body bear the ‘splendid stamp of Godhead’s seals’.

“Then is revealed in man the overt Divine
A static Oneness and dynamic Power
Descend in him ...”

(1. III. 80-82)
Awakening of the Latent Spirit:

Once the seeker identifies his self with the cosmic Self, he becomes an instrument of the Divine. The whole movement of cosmic evolution is controlled by the Divine who works from behind.

"The cosmic Worker set his secret hand
To turn this frail mud-engine to heaven-use."

(1. III. 102-103)

Then came 'an abrupt transcendent miracle' and 'life's barriers opened into the unknown.' When the 'ambiguous screen' of ignorance is lifted, Aswapati sees in a vision, 'his dreamed magnificence of things to be'. He realizes that a marriage of Earth and Heaven is possible 'annexing divinity to the mortal scheme'. A seer is thus born, 'an aspirant to supernal Timelessness'. He is liberated from the limitations of the human intellect.

"For him mind's limiting firmament ceased above ...
The landmarks of the little person fell,
The island ego joined its continent ...
Freedom and empire called to him from on high;"

(1. III. 120-125, 143)

Freed from life's barriers, Aswapati is awakened to the many latent powers of the spirit within him. There is a steady expansion of his inner being; his subtler nature unfolds. He comes into contact with several planes of consciousness beyond the earth as well as with several occult forces.
"Strange powers and influences touched his life.  
A vision came of brighter realms than ours,  
A consciousness of brighter fields and skies."

(1. III. 231-233)

Growth of Consciousness:

As Aswaphi travels from plane to plane, 'humanity framed his movements less and less' and the 'gifts of the spirit came crowding to him'. He becomes aware of the flowing currents of perennial beatitude beneath the fevered excitements of the outer nature. Higher powers and larger capacities of the spirit revealed themselves and came into operation opening new vistas and new dimensions in life. He perceives the presence of the Divine in every form, greets Him in every movement, and grasps His hand in every embodiment. He becomes capable of looking into 'the very self of things'.

"Deceived no more by form he saw the soul ...  
A heavenlier function with a finer mode  
Lit with its grace man's outward earthliness ...  
Each day was a spiritual romance ...  
Each happening was a deep experience."

(1. III. 170, 193-194, 315, 319)

He then passes 'the border marked for Matter's rule' and enters a zone where there are no more signs and symbols, for in that realm all is known by the 'light of identity' and 'Spirit was its own self evidence'. Life's contradictions lay resolved in this domain of Truth; sorrow and suffering, pain and conflict are all nullified. In this realm of the immobile Infinite, he experiences a vast stillness and perfect peace.
"Thought lay down in a mighty voicelessness;
The toiling Thinker widened and grew still, ...  
His soul could sail beyond thought's luminous bar; ...  
Across a void retreating sky he glimpsed ...  
The superconscient realms of motionless Peace"

(1. III. 417-424)

Aswapati goes through periods of varying intensities of consciousness, periods of ascent and descent, of divine afflatus and withdrawal. These experiences help him grow integrally and contribute to his evolution. Through all the ups and downs there is a steady growth of the Higher Consciousness, its power and light. He then attains a sense of complete equality, perfect purity and lasting peace. He realizes that this deathless peace and luminous silence is a dynamic power, which sustains all life and the universe.

Release from Ignorance:

Inspiration and intuition often filled Aswapati's being with the secret knowledge of the Infinite working in the world of ignorance. He sees the world as a reflection of the supreme Spirit and experiences the Divine both in His immanence and His transcendence. He comprehends behind the 'world-design', the unfolding of the 'world-idea'. He sees the 'tree of cosmos' supported by the Spirit. He possesses the wisdom that illumines and feels the strength of the Love that nourishes the world. His soul is released from Ignorance.

"A wide God-knowledge poured down from above,  
A new world-knowledge broadened from within."

(1. III. 789-790)
Aswapati realizes that the path to the divine is not something to be hewed away from life; rather, life itself is the path.

"Life now became a sure approach to God,
Existence a divine experiment
And cosmos the soul’s opportunity."

(1. Ill. 767-769)

He understands that the universe is not a ‘senseless whirl borne round inert on an immense machine’ but a ‘living movement’ directed by God. No longer does the earth appear to be ‘a brute mechanic accident, a net of death in which by chance we live’. The earth-process is not a meaningless movement from the unknown to yet another unknown. The force of evolution instils in the earth-nature a secret aspiration that uplifts her towards the Eternal. There is an endless striving in her to rise out of Inconscience and reach a state of perfection. The spiritual man sees in ‘the struggle and upheaval of the world, the labour of a godhead’s birth.’

Man is one with Nature:

Aswapati’s yoga has released his soul and he now stands on a height far from the ‘flat earthly state’ and looks towards greater heights. While he has attained liberation from the limitations of the earthly nature, he also knows that it is not required to reject life on the earth in order to attain the higher truths. He realizes that Truth is meant to manifest on the earth, which is constantly preparing for it. The awakened man is on a steady course of developing his consciousness so that he may receive eternal Truth, Light and Bliss, contain them in his being, express and organize them in his life on the earth.
On the mundane level man's life is restricted to the range of his senses; his sense of being is confined to the physical-vital-mental life centred round his ego; all else is other for his divided consciousness. Despite appearances to the contrary, there is a substantial oneness of life in the universe. The differences in forms and individuals are all on the gross surface. Deeper, there is a link that makes all one. There is one universal Matter of which all material forms are constructions, one universal stream of Life of which all individual lives are currents, one universal Mind of which all minds are projections, and one Soul, of which all souls are portions.

As man expands his being and enlarges his consciousness beyond the ego-raised barriers, he begins to embrace more and more of the universe in his consciousness and realize the basic oneness.

"...the small bodily ego thins and falls;
No more insisting on its separate self,
Losing the punctilio of its separate birth,
It leaves us one with Nature and with God."

(1. IV. 61-64)

Aswapati, the yogi, an integrally conscious individual, realizes that he can be instrumental in the earth's supreme self-discovery and her subsequent transformation. This is possible because the Divine has accepted human nature, and man, in turn, can develop into the Divine Nature thereby fulfilling the secret purpose of creation.

"This transfiguration is earth's due to heaven:
A mutual debt binds man to the Supreme:
His nature we must put on as he puts ours;
We are sons of God and must be even as He:
His human portion, we must grow divine.
Our life is a paradox with God for key.”

(1. IV. 776-781)

After attaining this realization, man earnestly sets out to explore the ‘ceaseless miracle’ of his self and the world.

"An unattained perfection calls to him
From distant boundaries in the Unseen:
A long beginning only has been made.”

(1. IV. 840-842)

We now see in Aswapati a ‘sailor on the flow of Time’ who has embarked on a long voyage upon ‘eternity’s seas’.

**Man, the free explorer of the spiritual realm:**

The seeker of the Divine builds up an unshakeable state of spiritual poise. Even as he continues his external activities in the position assigned to him and in the manner demanded of him, he is always exposed to the radiant Sun of Truth. The play of shades and clouds on the surface exterior do not affect him. He is not helplessly driven into the incessant movements of nature but is permanently stationed in the immutable calm and Silence of the Self. This ‘World-Matter’s slow discoverer’ sees his goal ‘fixed outside all present maps.’ He carries in his bosom ‘the sealed orders’ of the Divine Mother and ‘armed with her fiat’ attempts to decipher ‘the mystic script’.


This task can be fulfilled only by the Truth-Consciousness of the spirit. So Aswapati delves deeper into his innermost consciousness until he finds Him hidden in the cavern heart of his being. This luminous vision of Truth enabled him to free himself completely.

"He shore the cord of mind that ties the earth-heart
And cast away the yoke of Matter's law."

(1. V. 10-11)

All knowledge becomes self-known to him - the 'sacred Law', the contents of the 'Book of Being' and 'Nature's correspondence with the soul'. He recognizes the secret intent of the evolutionary force, the 'hard conditions for the mighty work' and the need for Nature's toil. His heart is seized by a strong Will and immense hope. He aspires to scale the yet 'unseen spiritual heights' and 'bring down a greater world', for he now sees that -

"The glory he had glimpsed must be his home ...
The Ideal must be Nature's common truth,
The body illumined with the indwelling God,
The heart and the mind feel one with all that is,
A conscious soul live in a conscious world."

(1. V. 89, 99-102)

All that he has perceived erstwhile in a 'borrowed light' now fades away to pale insignificance and Aswapati withdraws into an inner silence leaving behind the 'futile din of human toil' and the 'crowded tramp of life'. Since he is well set on the path of Yoga and is exclusively engaged in his pursuit of the Divine Reality, he is always in communion with the Silence of the Self. He is also attentive to the guiding Voice from within, amidst the welter of conflicting voices
that crowd upon him from the outside. He carries a vibrant image of the Ideal in his heart; it is a living and active Presence overseeing and governing his life movements. Even as he retreats from the frontiers of the mortal existence, he feels an awakening of the hidden power within him. The powers of the physical being - suppleness, strength, endurance; the powers of the life-being - inexhaustible energy, longevity, self-renewal; the powers of the mental being - intuition, inspiration, revelation: all this can be activated by the spiritual man. Deeper in his being there are other powers derived from the soul, which can link him to his Divine Source. They are the powers of Love, Harmony, Light and Peace. Aswapati has now awakened these powers and set them functioning in life so as to uplift and transmute it in its higher and nobler terms. Fully equipped, he now turns to his 'immense spiritual fate' ready to soar into the spaces of higher consciousness like 'an arrow leaping through eternity suddenly shot from the tense bow of Time.'

The whole range of the ascending and descending order of the worlds lay revealed to him. The manifold overt and occult powers of the Mind and their application in the total field of divine governance are also fully disclosed to him.

"A voyager upon uncharted routes
Fronting the viewless danger of the Unknown,
Adventuring across enormous realms,
He broke into another Space and Time."

(1. V. 623-626)

The Evolution of the Spiritual Man:

Aswapati, the seeker of the Truth, realizes that further self-expansion of man is possible only when he knows all the dimensions, powers and processes of
his own Self and the universe. He also knows that ‘the evolutionary process must proceed by a slow unfolding, because each new principle that evolves has to make its way out of an involution in Inconscience and Ignorance.’ He is ready to move ahead in the evolutionary march.

Aswapati, the hero-traveller of the infinite, goes beyond the confines of mortal nature. He sees all that the human eye has never seen; he knows all that ‘the mind has never grasped’. He enters a space which itself is a ‘vast experiment of the soul’.

"Here all experience was a single plan,
The thousand fold expression of the One.
All came at once into his single view;
Nothing escaped his vast intuitive sight."

(2. 1. 32-35)

The Ascent Begins:

A rising tier of worlds unravels in front of Aswapati. He also finds -

"A ladder of delivering ascent
And rungs that Nature climbs to deity."

(2. 1. 161-162)

Aswapati discovers through his yoga that there are a series of graded steps of consciousness. Each successive climb delivers the ascending spirit into a larger freedom, a greater puissance. This is the course adopted by Nature in its progression from Inconscience to Superconscience, from Matter to Spirit. This is also the way for man who seeks to fulfil his mission in life: to reach the Divine.
progression from Matter to Life, Mind, Higher Mind, Illumined Mind, Overmind, Supermind, Bliss, Consciousness and Existence - this is the broad evolutionary landscape spread before man.

Even as ‘world after world disclosed its guarded powers, and heaven after heaven its deep beatitudes’, Aswapati does not stop but keeps on moving higher and higher, his soul drawn by ‘the invisible Magnet’.

“A figure sole on Nature’s giant stair,
He mounted towards an indiscernible end
On the bare summit of created things.”

(2.1. 254-256)

Man in the Kingdom of Subtle Matter:

Next to our physical world, in the ascending gradation of the worlds and planes of existence, lies the world of subtle Matter. It is a world of harmony, beauty, rhythm and joy.

“A world of lovelier forms lies near to ours,
Where, undisguised by earth’s deforming sight,
All shapes are beautiful and all things true.”

(2. II. 12-14)

After stepping beyond the earth-zone, Aswapati enters this world of subtleties. This realm contains the truth of the workings of our material world; it is the origin of inspiration. It reveals that behind the opaque physical body, the soul wears a refined, subtle, luminous robe of beauty and truth.
"Beauty is his footprint showing us where he has passed,  
Love is his heart-beats' rhythm in mortal breasts,  
Happiness the smile on his adorable face."

(2. II. 332-334)

A 'fourth dimension of aesthetic sense' is awakened in the subtle world where everything is pure, inviolate and perfect. This perfection points towards man's goal; the entire life is to be taken up and built in the mould of the Ideal. Aswapati perceives that the forms are only self-castings of the Absolute. The man who sees the Absolute in every form is capable of shaping his life around It. Rather than remain 'a captive of its own beauty and ecstasy' the spirit yearns to rise higher and transcend all that is temporary and unreal. Aswapati seeks lasting light, aspires for real perfection, and longs for a greater spiritual adventure. So he moves on to other higher worlds.

"He left that fine material Paradise.  
His destiny lay beyond in larger space."

(2. II. 439-440)

Man meets Life, the Conscious Force of the Infinite:

When man crosses the limits of embodied Mind, he enters the world of Life. "Life reveals itself as essentially the same everywhere from the atom to man ... It is the operation that creates, maintains, destroys and re-creates forms or bodies and attempts to awake conscious sensation in those bodies ... Life is the Conscious-Force supporting and modifying the substantial existence of its own forms; it is a Force with sense and mind secretly active but at first involved in the form and preparing to emerge, then finally emerging from their involution. This
is the whole significance of the omnipresent Life that has manifested and inhabits the material universe.”

Aswapati first goes through the plane where Life is fluid, fearless and free to assume ‘whatever shape her fancy wills’, manifest herself in various fields of life activity, ‘accept disaster’, and ‘wrestle with danger and discovery’. Yet she writhes ‘amid a tedious crawl of drab desires’ and plunges into the depths of anguish. Even as she wallows in power, conquering worlds, she clings to ‘her own misery’ with the pain of limitation. She seems to need ‘the spur of pleasure and of pain’ while she can make endless bliss her eternal home.

Aswapati sees that it is the vital plane of Life from where humanity draws its sustenance and strength for the many pursuits of its mental and idealistic life. Yet it also brings in struggle, sorrow and pain. Aswapati catches a glimpse of the ‘world of bliss’ and ‘felt its call’,

“But found no way to enter into its joy;
Across the conscious gulf, there was no bridge.
A darker air encircled still his soul ...
Too near to suffering worlds his nature lived,
And where he stood were entrances of Night.”

(2. III. 441-454)

As he reflects upon human life which is a mingled note of pleasure and pain, the mystery of Life unravels before him: ‘In the crude beginnings of this mortal world’ when earth was just an ‘unconscious void’, material Nature, heavy with the ‘uncommunicated load of Godhead’ buried in its bosom, ‘yearned to know, to aspire, to enjoy, to live’, and ‘cried to Life to invade the senseless mould’.
"Life heard the call . . .
She stooped to make her home in transient shapes;
In Matter's womb she cast the Immortal's fire, . . .
And forced delight on earth's insensible frame . . .
But while the magic breath was on its way,
Before her gifts could reach our prisoned hearts,
A dark ambiguous Presence questioned all.
The secret Will that robes itself with Night . . .
Imposed a mystic mask of death and pain."

(2. III. 496-520)

It was the power of Inconscience that claimed it. Thus in embracing the earth,
Life became subjective to the law of 'dire duality' - of joy and suffering, pleasure
and pain, birth and death. This is the reason why Life does not function on the
earth with the freedom, joy and immortality that are native to it. Having
understood this aspect of Life's mystery, Aswapati goes further on into yet
another plane of Life.

The Little Life:

It is the world of the Little Life that comes into existence by the union of
Higher Life and Inconscience. Life in this quivering, uncertain world is a 'half
conscious Force tied to an instinct-driven Ignorance', that has bequeathed to man
her care and discontent, her hunger and the cry for change.

"It has given the law of craving to our lives,
It has made our spirit's need a fathomless gulf."

(2. IV. 20-21)
The life-energy of this feeble world follows a slow course of evolution ‘fumbling through fog in search of Paradise.’ Man must follow the pace of this slow ascension from Inconscience to the glory and felicity of Higher Life. Man’s progress corresponds with the need in him and the effort he makes. Each new attainment in turn gives rise to a still deeper need. Thus the cycle of progress goes on when man moves in response to the demands of the evolving spirit within. In the course of this evolution it is indispensable for man to shift his ‘centre of reference’ to the ‘single luminous point’ deep within his being. That luminous point is the projection of the soul’s light, which integrates all movements in one whole.

Aswapati finds the realm of the Little Life, with its limited power and fixed forms, to be ‘an unhappy corner in eternity’. There he sees different kinds of lower vital beings – the godheads of the Little Life who are the ‘crooked fashioners’ of cruel human fate and supporters of man’s suffering. They live in the ‘twilight of human nature’ and speak with the ‘voices of the Night’ luring men to promote their ends. Men are influenced not only by the earth but also by forces from different subtle worlds below and above it. Those who allow themselves to be ruled by the forces of the Inconscient cannot enter the world of eternal Light. However Aswapati perceives behind this insensible world, the ‘will of the supreme Unknown’ at work.

He sees that it is futile to waste ‘unmeasured toil on transient things’ striving for ‘small aims within a narrow scope’. His discerning eye glimpses the image of the Divine even in ‘the vague Inconscient’s dark and measureless cave’.

“The world’s senseless beauty mirrors God’s delight.

That rapture’s smile is secret everywhere.”

(2. IV. 255-256)
This remembrance of 'lost felicity' fires his aspiration. He does not wish to lose himself in 'vague immensities'. He finds a way out of the 'astral chaos' and 'the blind chasm', and continues his ascent to the summits of existence, guided by 'his spirit's flame'.

The Greater Life:

Escaping from the 'grey anarchy' of the lower-vital world Aswapati enters the plane of the Greater Life. This is a 'twilight wonderland' that offers 'dim tokens of a Splendour sealed above.' In this realm of fanciful realities, imperfect charms and pale dreams, everything seemed unsafe, miraculous and untrue.

"There nothing satisfied but all allured, ...  
And spirits entrapped might wander through all time,  
Yet never find the truth by which they live."

(2. VI. 68, 74-75)

Even here Aswapati feels 'the breath of a wider air' and the 'touch of sure delight.' He perceives this domain as a home of paradoxes:

"It is near to heavenlier heavens than earth's eyes see,  
A direr darkness than man's life can bear:  
It has kinship with the demon and the god."

(2. VI. 220-221)

Here the Spirit is still hidden, working covertly, yet all-pervading. Appearances are therefore deceptive. While circumstances might appear to control man's life, it is the soul who is the 'watchful builder of fate'. Aswapati realizes that one has to become more and more conscious of the soul within and act in consonance
with it so that evolution is smoother and quicker. He understands that the goal of the soul’s journey is to grow from the finite life and blossom into the Infinite.

Aspiring to live an unbounded life in an unbounded consciousness, he soars to the purer heights of consciousness, gathers up his life and being in a single movement of sacred offering and surrenders them to the Divine. This self-surrender helps him realize the Bliss of God.

Beauty, goodness and truth are the godheads of this realm, which ‘inspires us with vaster hopes’. However there is only a promise, not the fulfilment. Man persists in his belief that only an intervention from above can bring fulfilment. Until then ‘impassive turns the ever-circling Wheel,’ even as we say to ourselves rekindling faith:

“Oh, surely one day he shall come to our cry,
One day he shall create our life anew ...
And bring perfection to the scheme of things ...
One day he shall descend to life and earth, ...
And bare his secret body of light and bliss.”

(2. VI. 967-979)

Difficulties and Negative Forces:

Aswapati attempts to understand why even the kingdom of Greater Life fails to express perfectly the Supreme Spirit. He tries to find the cause of this failure.

“He saw the fount of the world’s lasting pain
And the mouth of the bleak pit of Ignorance.”

(2. VII. 15-16)
He sees Nescience in the dark abyss below, its 'hostile and perverting Mind at work' corrupting Truth and erecting its 'pylons of misrule' on the 'foundation of the cosmic Law'. He reaches the world of evil and falsehood, distrust and animosity, treachery and hatred; where 'Hell claimed rule'.

Aswapati sees ominous beings, 'whose very gaze was a calamity'. These hostile powers and malevolent forces oppose man's progress towards the Divine. Even out of good they make 'a hook to drag to hell'. Movements that are good in themselves are seized by them and turned into ends that are quite contrary to those anticipated. They promote feelings like egoism, pride of virtue and self-righteousness even in those who prefer the good to the bad, and bring about their stagnation and downfall. Aswapati realizes that constant vigilance is needed to keep such forces at bay and escape their insinuous attacks. Man also encounters obstructions caused by thoughts that taint and vitiate.

"Crowding and stinging in a monstrous swarm
Pressed with a noxious hum into his mind
Thoughts that could poison Nature's heavenliest breath."

(2. VII. 436-438)

Negative thoughts of evil and falsehood can sabotage Godward movements, question the aspiration and defeat the effort. These are the work of 'a demoniac force lurking in man's depths'. The 'heart's human law' can only suppress it but when vigilance is slack, it can spring up and overturn the poise of the being, occupying Life and pushing man back into the abyss of lower nature. If man gives in to these negative forces, he suffers 'the tragedy of the inner death': death of aspiration, of hope, of the will to progress. The purpose of embodiment of the soul in man is to progress in evolution. Inner death defeats that purpose and existence becomes meaningless.
"No longer burns the white spiritual ray
And hushed forever is the secret voice . . .
This is the tragedy of the inner death
When forfeited is the divine element
And only a mind and body live to die."

(2. VII. 181-189)

Aswapati resorts to prayer in order to avert this tragedy, to prevent the drying up of his resources and to preserve his strength as he negotiates these difficult and dangerous passages in the course of his spiritual voyage. It is 'a prayer upon his lips and the great Name' that saves him. He knows that in times of difficulty it is prayer that links us to the guiding Hand. He utters the Name of the Divine, knowing that the Name itself is a concentration of the power and consciousness of the Divine. Only he is safe who keeps God in his heart and has courage as his armour, faith as his sword.

Aswapati suffers the sorrows of this world of tragic cruelty, endures the fierce assaults, and bears the terrible wounds inflicted by its negative forces in his attempt to understand the purpose of its existence. Keeping always close to the radiant soul within, he tries to discover the mystery of this dark world. He detects a 'mute wisdom in the unknowing Night' and sees the Supreme Being sleeping unconscious of its own creative activity.

"There in the slumber of the cosmic Will
He saw the secret key of Nature's change . . .
He saw in Night the Eternal's shadowy veil,
Knew death for a cellar of house of life, . . .
And hell as a short cut to heaven's gates."

(2. VIII. 410-420)
With the realization of this underlying Truth, the 'Law of Pain is annulled' and in its place are revealed the 'divine documents' of a golden destiny written in the 'diamond script of the Imperishable'. Then Darkness is dispelled, Death and Division ceased to be. Aswapati finds God everywhere. He knew the integral union of Matter and Spirit when 'the soul lit the controversial body with its ray'.

Man in the Paradise of the Life-Gods:

When Aswapati steps out of the realm of gloom, he finds himself surrounded by a great felicitous Light. It was a world of beauty and bliss, love and purity, glory and peace, 'immersed in light, perpetually divine'. This paradise of life-gods succeeds in changing Aswapati's life-mould by 'recasting his being's aura in joy-glow' and blessing his earth with 'celestial competence'. He sees earth-nature reborn and made a 'comrade of heaven'. He receives heaven's gift to earth - a taste of celestial bliss.

"Immortal pleasure cleansed him in its waves
And turned his strength into undying power.
Immortality captured Time and carried Life."

(2. IX. 156-158)

Man traverses the planes of the Mind:

Aswapati leaves behind the paradise of the life-gods that points to an apex, which it cannot reach. He does not hug the limits of its exquisite frontiers to feel safe; nor does he tie himself up to its 'vital posts of joy'. He continues his journey to the unseen Light. He enters the realm of the Mind.
The Little Mind:

Man contains True Knowledge deep within his being, but it is not easily accessible. In the process of unfolding this hidden Knowledge, Nature is initially helped by the 'dwarf three-bodied trinity' composed of the crude material mind, the blind and hungry vital mind and the laborious mental mind.

The first, smallest of the three is 'a pygmy Thought' which lives in bounds 'absorbed and cabined in external sight', shunning 'each new discovery' and 'every unfamiliar light'. The second one takes 'a thousand shapes' and 'numberless names' on 'countless roads across the vasts of Time.' Ignorant of the 'deep law of being's ways' and 'unguided by reason or the seeing soul', it squanders 'life-force to achieve the impossible'. The last, and the greatest of the three, is the reasoning mind. It works tirelessly to explain the inexplicable through formulated thoughts. The mind's toil is absolutely inconclusive and its logic, fallible.

"Her thought is an endless march without a goal.  
There is no summit on which she can stand  
And see in a single glance the Infinite's whole."

(2. X. 498-500)

Rational mind is a slave of stark facts, not a master of the truth. There are depths below the physical exteriors - the subconscious, the unconscious and the inconscient - where the ordinary mind has no entry. There are heights beyond the range of reason and logic, which it fails to reach. It is only through a higher intuitive Mind that man can touch the peripheries of the timeless Knowledge.
Above the universe of mind, Aswapati sees the planes of the greater Mind 'exposed to omniscient immensities,' that bridges the gulf between the human and the Divine. It can help man commune with the Infinite. Thought vibrations from the regions of the greater mind inspire man to greater life and give him the courage and the faith to combat limitation and death. It is to this realm that man belongs; yet self-exiled lives upon the earthly plane forfeiting his heavenly right. Through conscious will and effort he can re-enter this luminous realm -

"Where Knowledge is the leader of the act
And Matter is of thinking substance made, ...
And Will is a conscious chariot of the Gods,
And Life, a splendour stream of musing Force, ...
Where Time's last ridges touch eternity's skies
And Nature speaks to the spirit's absolute."

(2. XI. 140-165)

This 'triple realm of ordered thought' comes first in Aswapati's 'immense ascent' above the planes of the mind. Above him he sees 'bright ethereal skies of mind' that skim the neighbourhood of eternity, widen into the infinity and are yet 'not too high for human hope'.

"On meditation's mounting edge of trance
Great stairs of thought climbed up to unborn heights"

(2. XI. 162-163)

Aswapati experiences a great upward movement of ascent as his consciousness gathers itself during meditation. Thought scales the rarefied
altitudes higher and still higher till he experiences a timeless stillness when Nature communes with the Spirit and there is nothing else but the Eternal. It marks the beginning of further ascent. In a more daring aspiration, he wends his way to a yet purer world of the Absolute where he sees ‘the great and boundless Goddess’ lean down ‘out of her hushed eternal spaces.’ Aswapati recognizes that it is he who has ‘made earth her home’ and ‘lowered her heights to the stature of our souls’ in order to help man step out of Ignorance and grow to reach the Divine.

It is ironical that ‘the human limits the divine’. Since man does not feel her ‘inspiring boundlessness’ or share her ‘immortal liberty’, he fails to grasp the Truth, which is ‘greater than her forms’. Man might try to express her through thoughts and symbols, icons and idols, but she transcends them all.

In the Heavens of the Ideal:

Awakened by the touch of the Divine, Aswapati sees the Ideal beckoning him from afar. He leaves ‘known summits’ behind, as he aspires for the ‘unknown peaks’. Between the abyss of Inconscience below and the superconscious realms of heavenly peace above, he sees the ‘lovely kingdoms of the deathless Rose’. The deathless Rose symbolizes the love of the Divine and its bud is born in human hearts. This supreme Love performs an alchemy that turns the world into a ‘temple ground’ and ‘Life yields to the divinity within’. It bestows Divine Grace on man and supports his aspiration. Strengthened by the Love and Grace of the Divine, Aswapati aspires to move through the sun-lit kingdoms of the Ideal and ascend to the realm of the immutable and all-inclusive Truth where all conflicting ideals would be reconciled. He longs ‘to find his soul in the world’s single Soul’, forever united and inseparable.
"Onward he passed to a diviner sphere:  
There, joined in a common greatness, light and bliss,  
All high and beautiful and desirable powers  
Forgetting their difference and their separate reign  
Become a single multitudinous whole."

(2. XII. 179-183)

In the Self of Mind:

Leaving behind him the world of the Ideal, Aswapati enters a region of 
wordless peace. He finds himself alone with the Self of Mind, which is the 
witness consciousness. It takes no part in the world that sprang from it. It is a 
foundation and not the living body of the Divine. This immobile void of deep 
peace and perfect silence is devoid of creative Energy, and the Force and Bliss of 
God. It is a nameless, formless, conscious Vacancy. Standing on the quiet 
summits of this mystic firmament Aswapati sees endless darkness below and the 
vastness of sublime Light above. Darkness and Light face each other leaving the 
Spirit to move in ‘the spiral of its acts’, the ‘cycles of its thoughts’. As Aswapati 
stands there on ‘a wide arc of summit Space’ -

"His mind reflected this vast quietism  
This witness hush is the Thinker’s secret base".

(2. XIII. 25-26)

Aswapati understands that this Nothingness is a stage in the ascent of 
consciousness when a powerful Silence settles upon oneself and all movement is 
relegated to a corner of the being. Nothingness rather than Existence seems the 
stuff of things. Realizing that this stage could be just a preparation for a more 
fulfilling experience to follow, he is ready to move on.
Man meets the World-Soul:

Aswapati discovers in the 'far shimmering background of Mind-space' a luminous shaft leading 'into the bosom of the Unknown.' As one drawn to his lost spiritual home, he moves on led by a mysterious summoning sound. He feels the Presence and the Power of the Divine all around him. The play of mind is no longer present and everything is known by a spiritual identity. 'A sense of universal harmonies' is revealed when consciousness communes with consciousness. Aswapati passes on towards the end of this realm, which is the beginning of all creation, the source of all things human and divine. There he sees the dual figure that sustains the world:

"The figure of the deathless Two-in-One, ...
A diarchy of two united souls,
Seated absorbed in deep creative joy." (2. XIV. 217-220)

Behind them Aswapati sees the sole omnipotent Goddess who is ever veiled, 'of whom the world is the inscrutable mask'. In mute adoration of the Divine Mother, he moves towards her, his hands folded in prayer. In an answering gesture She half-parts the eternal veil. He catches a glimpse of the mystic outline of her radiant face.

"Overwhelmed by her implacable light and bliss, ...
He cast from the rent stillness of his soul
A cry of adoration and desire
And the surrender of his boundless mind
And the self-giving of his silent heart.
He fell down at her feet unconscious, prone.”

(2. XIV. 249-258)
Beyond Freedom and Bliss:
Man seeks Transformation of the earth:

‘After a measureless moment’ Aswapati rises out of the ‘timeless depths’ of the ‘self’s colourless purity and bliss’. A new realization dawns on him. He now knows that all he has done is ‘to prepare a field’ -

“His small beginnings asked for a mighty end:
For all that he had been must now new-shape
In him her joy to embody, to enshrine
Her beauty and greatness in his house of life.
But now his being was too wide for self;
His heart’s demand had grown immeasurable:
His single freedom could not satisfy,
Her light, her bliss he asked for earth and men.”

(3. II. 193-200)

Aswapati is not content with personal fulfilment. In him there is a flaming urge to establish the world of Truth here on the earth. His seeking mind now rests in the Truth he knows. His life is now a flow of the universal life. He now awaits the ascent of the earth. Knowing that it cannot be accomplished without Divine Grace, he awaits the descent of the Divine that can save the world. He then hears the voice of the Divine Mother in the depths of his Self. She cautions him not to try hastening the pace of evolution -

“Man is too weak to bear the Infinite’s weight.
Truth born too soon might break the imperfect earth.
Leave the all-seeing Power to hew its way.”

(3. IV. 52-54)
The Divine Mother exhorts him not to desert the ‘fierce labour of the worlds’ but to help the world with the power and knowledge gained by his vast achievement. She assures him that he shall be guided by her Light, and her strength shall be his force. She declares that ‘all things shall change in God’s transfiguring hour’. She then permits him to ask for one boon to fortify his spirit and raise mankind. Aswapati performs an act of cosmic significance when he pleads for the descent of the force of the Divine Mother to help transform the earth:

"Incarnate the white passion of thy force,
Mission to earth some living form of thee ...
And with one gesture change all future time ...
And one great act unlock the doors of Fate."

(3. IV. 408-421)

The supreme Mother in her infinite grace grants him the boon:

"One shall descend and break the iron law,
Change Nature’s doom by the lone spirit’s power."

(3. IV. 430-431)

Savitri’s birth is the fulfilment of this boon. Thus it is that ‘a world’s desire compelled her mortal birth.’ Savitri’s birth is the manifestation of Divine Grace in response to human aspiration.

This culmination of Aswapati’s spiritual voyage is indeed a new beginning. The release of man from Ignorance, the evolution of the spiritual man and his awakening to the supreme Reality is certainly of great significance in the evolution of man and Nature. However, Sri Aurobindo does not see this as the
ultimate achievement. It is not a revelation of the Spirit but an integral transformation of Nature that is the goal of all creation. As Sri Aurobindo says, “What the evolutionary Power has done is to make a few individuals aware of their souls, ... aware of the eternal being that they are, to put them into communion with the Divinity which is concealed by her appearances; a certain change of nature prepares, accompanies or follows upon this illumination, but it is not the complete and radical change which establishes a secure and settled new principle, a new creation, a permanent new order of being in the field of terrestrial Nature. The spiritual man has evolved, but not the supramental being who shall thenceforward be the leader of that Nature.” 12

A greater destiny awaits man.

References

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2. Sri Aurobindo. The Future Poetry. 205
5. Ibid. 52.
6. Ibid. 51.
11. Ibid. 200-201.
12. Ibid. 925.