UNVEILING OF THE MYSTERY OF CONSCIOUSNESS ON THE VITAL PLANE
CHAPTER VII

Unveiling of the Mystery of Consciousness on the Vital Plane

As noted in the previous chapter, Sri Aurobindo maintains that 'There is a vital plane (self-existent) above the material universe which we see'. He also says that the whole of vital plane is connected with the life-world or desire-world and that the entire vital plane is hidden within us. It is 'a secret consciousness' in us in which life and desire find their untrammelled play and their easy self-expression and from there throw their influences and formations on our outer life. Further, in this vital world Matter is not supreme but rather Life-Force takes its place as the first determinant. There, forms do not determine the conditions of the life. On the contrary, life determines the form. Consequently, forms are there 'much more free, fluid, largely to our conceptions strangely variable than in the material world.' Like the physical, this life-force also, says Sri Aurobindo, is not inconscient material force. It is not even an elemental subconscient energy, except in its lowest movements. Instead it is a conscious force of being which makes for formation, but much more essentially for enjoyment, possession, satisfaction of its own dynamic impulse. In this way, 'Desire and the satisfaction of impulse are the first law of this world of sheer vital existence, this poise of relations between
the soul and its nature in which life-power plays with so much a greater freedom and capacity than in our physical living'. In Sri Aurobindo's opinion, the vital world therefore, 'may be called the desire-world, for desire its principal characteristic.

Speaking about the nature of the vital world, and the effect it produces Sri Aurobindo says, 'The vital world is on one side the world of beauty'. That is why, he adds 'the poet, artist, musician are in close contact with it; it is also a world of powers and passions, lusts and desires'. In view of this, 'our own lusts and desires'. In view of this, 'our own lusts desires, and passions and ambitions can put us into connection with the vital worlds and their forces and beings.' This, however, is not all, according to Sri Aurobindo. For, the vital world 'is again a world of things dark, dangerous and horrible.' As such, 'Its influences are also the source of much in men that is demoniac, dirty, cruel and base.' It is significant to note here that "life-plane" and "life-world" are the synonyms of "vital plane".

The apocalyptic significance of the vital plane, according to Aurobindonian scholars, consists in the fact that 'The vital is indispensable for the divine or spiritual action' since 'without it there can be no complete expression, no realisation in life'.

9
Similarly, 'there is no life-force or creation or manifestation' without the vital; 'it is a necessary instrument of the spirit of life.' Further, 'The vital is a good instrument but a bad master.' If it is allowed to follow its own likes and dislikes, fancies and desires, as well as its bad habits, it becomes our master and, as a result, peace and happiness are no longer possible for us. In such conditions, it does not remain our instrument or the instrument of the Divine *Shakti* but of any force of the Ignorance or even of any hostile force able to seize and use it. As such, the vital is good when it is properly used and therefore becomes a necessary instrument for action.

According to Sri Aurobindo's idea, there are three types of the vital,—higher vital, middle vital and lower vital, Higher vital usually refers to the vital mind and emotive being. It is opposed to the middle vital which is dynamic, sensational and passionate. Besides, higher vital is different from the lower vital also since the lower vital is made up of the smaller movements of human life-desire and life-reaction. The effect of the lower vital is that anger, fear and jealousy touch the heart just as they touch the mind. But they rise both from the lower and the middle vital. Secondly, the lower vital refuses to listen to reason. It acts in its own particular way since it is accustomed to act in that way. It goes on behaving unreasonably in spite of any painful
reaction it brings about.  

Besides these three types, there are also (1) material vital and (2) physical-vital. The material vital is found so much involved in Matter as to be bound by its movement and gross physical character. Its action is to support and energize the body and keep in it the capacity of life, growth, movement etc, as also of sensitiveness to outside impacts. On its part, the physical-vital is the being of small desires and greeds etc. It is full of nervousness. Besides, it is closely connected with the material vital.  

Probably the most helpful ideas about the vital world are contained in the following words of the Mother of Sri Aurobindo Ashram:  

(1) The vital world is quite different from the physical subconscious which is closely connected with human beings. The vital world is inhabited by vital beings who are not human, some are very beautiful and resemble gods, some are hideously ugly, but all or almost all are anti-divine and try always to turn human beings from their Divine Goal. The vital world itself in its higher regions is very beautiful, dangerously beautiful and attractive -- in its lower parts it is dark and frightful. One must not go into the vital world without a special purpose or command and a special protection.  

(2) The vital is most important for the transformation of the physical but its importance is rather little for those who want to escape life rather than transform it.  

As in the case of the conceptual frames of terms such as the "physical plane", all these conceptual ideas about
the "vital plane" (or the "vital world") are themselves immensely revelatory to us and therefore quite apocalyptic in themselves. We do not have, and probably cannot expect to have, such revelatory concepts of these psychological terms from any Western thinker, philosopher or psychologist. This is so because, Sri Aurobindo was not only entirely original (in being strictly oriental in his thinking) but also a "decolonised" Indian who lived long before the idea of "decolonising" the Indian mind came into existence.

In "The Book of the Traveller of the Worlds" from Savitri, Sri Aurobindo devotes as many as five cantos to the exhaustive examination of the revelatory nature of various aspects of the vital plane of Consciousness, as against the single Canto II devoted to "The Kingdom of Subtle Matter". The five cantos are: Canto III "The Glory and Fall of Life"; Canto IV "The Kingdoms of the Little Life"; Canto V "The Godheads of the Little Life"; Canto VI "The Kingdoms and Godheads of Greater Life"; and Canto IX "The Paradise of the Life-Gods". Of these, Canto III: "The Glory and Fall of Life" may be said to deal with the general characteristics of the Vital world as a whole. As their names suggest, Canto IV and Canto V are devoted to the unravelling of the secret nature of what Sri Aurobindo and the Mother conceptualise as the Lower Vital world. Canto VI may be considered as dealing with the Middle Vital world. Similarly, Canto IX
seems to have been devoted to the description of the revelatory nature of the Higher Vital world as defined by Sri Aurobindo.

As we have already seen, in his revelations regarding the physical, the vital and the mental manifestations of the Divine Consciousness, Sri Aurobindo integrates into his spiritual and apocalyptic accounts what the twentieth century sciences of evolution broadly say about the emergence of Matter (in all its three forms,—gas, liquid and solid), Life and Mind in the origin and evolution of the universe. According to modern science, the first of the three to manifest was Matter. That is why Aswapathy as the Traveller of the Worlds unravels in Canto II the mystery of the Physical with reference to its subtle manifestation. Since, scientifically speaking, Life evolved out of solid matter on earth, the second set of revelations to be realised and made by Aswapathy (really speaking, Sri Aurobindo himself) have got to be about the apocalyptic nature of Life as a manifestation of Consciousness following its manifestation as Matter. The revelations made about the manifestation of Life are nothing but revelations made about the Vital world. They are also based on twentieth century sciences dealing with evolution. In this sense all the apocalypticism in Savitri is an example of revelations made in the twentieth century. But since Sri Aurobindo envisions and reveals the apocalyptic mystery of
the Physical, the Vital and the Mental worlds against the background of his Integral Philosophy based on the Indian Vedantic and Tantric spirituality as well as on his own, and therefore Indian version of Involution-Evolution, *Savitri* also becomes an example to twentieth century apocalyptic literature.

According to evolutionary sciences, emergence of life in the evolution of the universe began on a low level first. Sri Aurobindo, therefore, apocalyptically conceptualises the mystery of what he calls the Lower Vital, after he gives a general description of the Glory and Fall of Life at the outset of Aswapathy's spiritual journey into the various parts of the world of the Vital manifestation of Consciousness. Significantly, he calls the first emergence of Life as "The Glory and Fall of Life". As in the case "The Kingdom of Subtle Matter", he explores the Vital Plane as a traveller who has undertaken an inward vision-like journey by descending into his own inner being.

Therefore, as in the case of the canto on the Kingdom of Subtle Matter, again, Aswapathy first gives in Canto III what can be, vaguely at least, taken as a topographical description of the Vital World. Witness the beginning of the Canto, on the Glory and Fall of Life for example. It says, 'An uneven broad ascent now lured his (Aswapathy's, or more appropriately, Sri Aurobindo's)
feet.' On the basis of such topographical hints given by Sri Aurobindo in the case of all manner of journeys undertaken by different characters (of course, mainly by Aswapathy and Savitri) we can conclude that the location of each one of the worlds travelled through by Aswapathy is itself apocalyptic in the same tradition as the various visions, dreams and journeys mentioned in various apocalyptic writings of Judaism, Christianity and other religions or religious sects of the West. Similarly, Aswapathy's description of the details of the nature of the regions covered and beings inhabiting the worlds can be taken as the revelation of the apocalypticism of the world concerned. Accordingly, in the Canto dealing with the Glory and Fall of Life, after 'an uneven broad ascent' lures his feet, Aswapathy crosses limits of Mind and enters 'wide obscure disputed fields' which constitute the region of the Vital world. This is Aswapathy's revelation of the location and general nature of the early manifestation of the Vital world. In scientific terms, it means that at the beginning of the appearance of various primeval creatures on the earth, the nature of the animal kingdom was obscure and open to dispute. Secondly, the Vital world is full of doubt and change. It is a world of search and toil without rest. Aswapathy travels through this land. Everything there is like a mirage. There is an endless vagrancy without any destination. There is nothing in the Vital world to
satisfy the heart of an Integral Yogi such as Aswapathy because life there is the manifest incalculable. It is 'a long/ And venturesome leap of spirit into Space,/ A vexed disturbance in the eternal Calm,/ An impulse and passion of the Infinite.' This means that, here Sri Aurobindo simultaneously refers to the "Descent" of Sachchidananda and the Involution and Evolution of Consciousness. Therefore, the characteristics of the Vital world given by Aswapathy here are apocalyptic revelations. As already seen in the Canto dealing with "The Secret Knowledge", Sri Aurobindo firmly establishes the concept of the Transcendent One as the original entity and the Mighty Mother as His Force assuming the form of Nature or Life. From that Canto onwards, all through Savitri, he refers to, and depicts Life as a feminine entity. Therefore, in his description of the Vital he says that Life has left the safety of the tried and known and assumed whatever her fancy wills. Also, she has escaped from the restraint of settled forms. More significantly, she accepts disaster as a common risk at this level. At one and the same time, she aspires to heaven and turns her steps towards hell, choosing Chance and danger as her playfellows and Fate's dreadful swing as her cradle and seat. Obviously, this is what Sri Aurobindo apocalyptically reveals to us as the Fall of Life in the beginning of the evolution of life on earth. Because of her primeval nature of this kind, Life in the
Vital world (Scientifically, in the beginning of the appearance of life on earth) wrestles with danger and discovery in the unexplored regions there which are nothing but expanses of the Soul when it descended from the heights of Sachchidananda. At that primeval time, she passed from thought to thought, from phase to phase since she was tortured by her own powers. Apocalyptically, so astonishing is the Fall of Life that she sweeps through the race-fields of Circumstances in a gallop of thunder-hooved vicissitudes. She is tossed between her heights and deeps. In the form of members of the insect kingdom, she becomes a worm amid worms in Nature's mud. At the same time she becomes Titan-statured (cf., the dinosaurs and other gigantic species) and takes the whole earth for food. Thus, the original Divine Consciousness, now in the form of Life, plunges into the anguish of the depths, wallows in them and clings to her own misery. Yet, Aswaphathy significantly points out, 'pure and bright from the Timeless was her birth,/ A lost world-rapture lingers in her eyes./ Her moods are the faces of the Infinite'. Obviously, this is an apocalyptic revelation of the true original heavenly glory of fallen Life. In order to understand the revelatory nature of such statements in this canto, we have constantly to bear in mind what Sri Aurobindo copiously describes (and we have analysed in our chapter on Human existence as the play of the Transcendent One
[Hel and the Mighty Mother [Shel) in the canto dealing with "The Secret Knowledge". Because of her origin in the transcendent One and the Mighty Mother, Life in the Vital world enjoys beauty and happiness as her native right and makes endless bliss her eternal home.

As Aswapathy reveals, this heavenly aspect of Life now reveals its antique face of joy. It makes a sudden disclosure to the heart of grief. As a result, now Aswapathy sees the image of a happier state of Life. The reason for Life's happier state is that from 'As far as heaven' yet 'as near as thought and hope', in the heart there 'Glimmered the kingdom of a griefless life' from its high summit of the world-pile. In a heavenly vault far above him the stars of the higher planes of Consciousness appear to Aswapathy as if they were swimming in a rippled sea of sky. Towered spirals, magic rings of clear colours and shining spheres of strange happiness also appear to him floating through distance like a symbol world. Since they are far away from the trouble and the toil, the unhappiness and suffering, struggle and grief and anger, gloom and hate of the Vital world these glimmering kingdoms of a griefless life do not share the unpleasantness of the early Vital world. They remain absorbed in their own beauty and content, being sure of their immortal gladness far above the Vital world. Even so, from them trickles down some divine influence since they are calm heavens of imperishable
Light, shining continents of great peace, oceans and rivers of the mirth of God and griefless countries under purple suns. The Vital world catches some heavenly influence of those higher realms. The influence now takes a close shape of reality. As a result, 'The gulf between dream-truth, earth-fact was crossed, / The wonder-worlds of life were dreams no more'. They reveal to Aswapathy their wonderful glory. His vision makes all they unveil its own. From among those Vital worlds, a breathless summit region draws his gaze. Here Life's supreme delight glows in its quintessence. Pointing out the reason for this, Aswapathy reveals that 'Only a miracle's high transfiguring line / Divided life from the formless Infinite' on the spiritual and mysterious peak of the summit region. Out of the formless stuff of the summit region, Time mints his shapes as an aspect of the eternal play of transcendent One and the Mighty Mother (beautifully described by Sri Aurobindo on pp.121-2). That is why, as Aswapathy discovers, here are worlds lifted half-way to heaven. No doubt, the Veil of our Ignorance of the Play. He and She indulge in, is there but the Shadowy Wall is not there. As a result, some passion of inviolate purity, a ray of the original Bliss breaks through and touches the worlds of the Vital. Therefore, these worlds can feel God's breath visiting their tops. In these worlds live a purer and fierier sense, a burning urge unearthly in its nature. As part of
the Glory of Life displayed here, the voice of time sings of the Immortal's joy. The moments come with ecstasy on their wings; Beauty unimaginable moves. Creation leaps straight from the hands of God. As such, Life is a happy laughter of the soul Joy is king with Love for minister. In this way, divine spiritual Love manifests in the Vital world to take charge of its management. Consequently, none remains weak in that world. So falsehood cannot live there. In the Glory of the Vital world, assemblies, crowded senates of the gods, Life's puissances, high dominations and autocracies manifest there. All things become great and beautiful there. All beings inhabiting the Vital world wear a royal stamp of power. As a result, all the soul's postures don divinity. In the Glory of the Vital world, Aswapathy reveals that 'A captive Life wedded her all his own. That is why Aswapathy reveals that 'A captive Life wedded her Conqueror.' there. She builds all her world newly in the wide sky of her Lover. She gives to mind the motor's speed. She gives to thinking a need to live what the soul sees. Besides, she gives to living an impetus to know and see. On account of this, the splendour of Life's Lord grasps her. All her puissance clings to him. She makes Thought a monarch with her magic serpent sceptre. The victor Light of Thought rides on Life's deathless Force. She sits on the throne with mind and they become a double majesty. Life thus, Aswapathy
reveals, is an eternity of rapture's moods. In the Vital world the God-children run in their play-fields carrying the pride and mastery of their charm. 'There was no falsehood of soul's severance,/ There came no crookedness of thought or word / To rock creation of its native truth'. The Glory of Life in the Vital world is such that all is sincerity and natural force there and freedom is sole rule and highest law.

As Aswapathy discloses, these worlds climb or plunge in a happy series. No limit is set there to Life's greatness and grace, to her glory and heavenly variety. In all this, no guide she needs except her luminous heart. No fall debases the godhead of her steps. No alien Night has come to blind her eyes there.

Continuing his disclosure of the general nature of the Vital world, Sri Aurobindo says that Aswapathy saw this world of bliss and felt its call. But he finds no way to enter into the joy of the Vital world. His soul is still encircled by a darker air because its is tied to an image of unquiet life. He is unable to overcome his sense of human suffering, grief and pain in life. According to Sri Aurobindo's revelation, Aswapathy feels dissatisfied because, as human beings at present, 'A dire duality is our way to be.' For example, Life in its essence and as a manifestation of divine Consciousness hears the forlorn call of yearning earth to go to earth's
rescue, and in answer leaves her native light. She stoops to make her home in transient shapes on earth in the form of Vital life. She casts the Immortal’s fire in the unfeeling Vast. As realised by Aswapathy, she also wakes thought and hope on earth. She forces delight insensible earth by manifesting her glory in the form of trees and herbs and flowers, rivers and lakes and seas; in the form of the beauty of beasts; and in the form of man’s daring thought.

As Sri Aurobindo reveals, this brighter aspect of the Vital world is one part of the dire duality. The other side of the duality is that, before Life’s gifts could reach the prisoned hearts of human beings, a dark ambiguous Presence questions all the ‘glory Life has scattered on earth. On account of the passion-play planned and being enacted by he Transcendent One and his Consort, ‘The Secret Will that robes itself with Night/And offers to spirit the ordeal of the flesh,/Imposed a mystic mask of death and pain.’ As a result, the glory of Life is buried now in the slow and suffering years. In her evolving process on the Vital plane she must obey the law of the Inconscient and accept sorrow and joy as struggling comrades. All her child-god happiness is slain. All her sweetness is changed to a maimed desire. Life’s doom now is to feed death with her works. As Aswapathy discloses, her immortality is so veiled that she seems just an episode in an eternal
death. The canto dealing with "The Glory and Fall of Life" comes to an end here.

As already observed, Cantos IV and V of Book Two of Savitri contain apocalyptic revelations regarding the various regions of the Vital world and their presiding deities. By using such terms as "Little Life", "Greater Life" and "The Paradise of the Life-Gods" to describe the entire Vital world, Sri Aurobindo seems to imply the Lower Vital by "Little Life", the Middle Vital by "Greater Life" and Higher Vital by "Paradise".

This is, slightly at least borne out by the fact that he calls Canto IV of Book Two "Kingdoms of the Little life" and describes several kinds of the kingdoms of little life by calling them "creations". Similarly, since he makes the statement that 'A third creation now revealed its face' (p.146.), at the beginning of the fifth verse-paragraph of Canto IV, we can reasonably assume that, according to Sri Aurobindo, there are "three Kingdoms" or "three Creations" of the Little Life.

The canto dealing with the Kingdoms of the Little Life, however, begins with a continued analysis of the characteristics of the whole Vital world in general. Note, for example, that, at the beginning of the Canto, Sri Aurobindo says that a quivering uncertain world appears in the emptiness where the feet of Life have trodden. Therefore, as Aswapathy finds, there is, in the
Vital world, a writhing of half-conscious force trying to find itself and its hold on things. This force strives to fill the aching gap between earth-pain and the divine Bliss from which Life has fallen. Aswapathy also reveals that, the half-conscious force in Life has joined its hunger to the hunger of earth. Therefore, a Power beyond earth's scope has touched the earth. On account of this, the repose which might have been on earth can no more exist in the world. There is a formless yearning in man's heart. If this tragic condition was not there man could have enjoyed his original childlike and pain-forgetting mind of beasts. Or else he could have lived happy and unmoved like flowers and trees. As the situation prevails at present, man's natural joy of life is overcast since the thoughtless joy of the animal in him is left behind.

Apocalyptically describing the first primeval appearance of Life on earth Sri Aurobindo says, 'Life cast her seed in the body's indolent mould;/ It woke from happy torpor a blind Force / Compelling to sense and seek and feel.' But the Force struggles for release. Yet, Life keeps on waking yearning in he inert cell and kindling a fire of passion and need in the heart of the body. In this way, she makes the chain which bind her to an instrument of hers. She is filled with instinct, effort, growth and striving nescience. She has brought her claim to her lost right into Matter's tenacity, as
also her tireless search, her uneasy heart, her unsure steps and her cry for change. Even then, no great transforming light comes down to Life. As Aswapathy discloses, in this way Life begins her mighty task in Nescience and at present she pursues her unfinished work in Ignorance. Sri Aurobindo describes Life in such revelatory terms as 'A foundling of gods' who wanders here ascending slowly with unconscious steps; Life is 'Like a child-soul left near the gates of Hell / Fumbling through fog in search of Paradise.' With this description of Life, the first verse-paragraph of the Canto on the Kingdoms of the Little Life closes.

Sri Aurobindo seems to devote the second and the third verse paragraphs of the Canto to the unravelling of the mystery of the first Creation of Life or the first of the various Kingdoms of the Little Life (which can be taken as the Quarters of the Lower Vital). Mark the opening lines of the second verse paragraph: 'In this slow ascension he must follow her pace'. The mention of 'slow ascension' and 'dim subconscient start' here appears clearly to indicate the Lower Vital world. The 'slow ascension' is that of Life. As the Traveller of the Worlds, Aswapathy must explore Life's mystery 'Even from her faint and dim subconscient start'. The apocalyptically revealing reason for this, according to Sri Aurobindo, is that 'So only can earth's last salvation come.' Every human being must realise the
revelatory significance of the beginning of Life because only by knowing it every one can know the obscure cause 'of all that holds us back and' all that 'baffles God/ In the jail-delivery of the imprisoned soul.' In order to fulfill this condition, Aswapathy stumbles into a grey obscurity filled with instincts. In this slow ascension (the first Creation of Life on earth) Life is vulnerable to Death and darkness. Thus, Life in the beginning is the inmate and the adopted child of Death and Night. She has hardly any hope to survive. Aswapathy tries to seek the reason for this and finds that Life lies far away from truth and thought which is the original seat of the dethroned, deformed and suffering Power. In her first Creation Life flaunts her animal disgrace. She is fallen and yet chooses to take delight in the vileness of her fallen state and in the graceless squalor of her beast desires. In fact, out of such squalor she first crawls out from her cabin of mud, Matter. As such, a darkness still clings to her and refuses to be effaced by Light. No redeeming touch from above comes to the rescue of Life in the first Creation.

It is at this stage of the first Creation of Life that the need for a body is felt. Accordingly, Life's mind asks for a body to translate its soul. But its prayer is denied. Therefore, it fumbles after thought in search of help. Even in this effort Life's mind in the first Creation fails. It could only live with great
difficulty. Therefore, Life's mind opens into a weird and pigmy world, strange domains where all is living sense. Even then mastering thought is not present there. Only crude child-heart of Life cries for toys of bliss. Her mind flickers. Random shapeless energies drive towards form. Still Life's mind can place no thinking steps. In this way, Life goes on following darkness' clue though she asks for light. She is nothing but Matter smitten by Matter. She glimmers to sense. Perception answers Nature's waking blows in Life. But there is still only a mechanical response from Life. Her rude impulses remain unchastened though they run about jostling. An unseeing desire in her feels out for food. She survives by adopting the gusts of Nature as the only law. In the first Creation of the Lower Vital, Sri Aurobindo reveals, Life happens to be a vain unnecessary entity.

In spite of this, Sri Aurobindo says that still the spirit's wakened eye of Aswapathy does not judge so. Because he sees the hidden apocalyptic purposed in the works of Time. He realises that 'Even in that aimlessness a work was done'. Of course, there are only foulness and force as yet, since it is a tardy fervent working the dark and the ferment of the soul's creation out of mire. Even so, Aswapathy cannot afford to forget the apocalyptic truth that all this grey disguise of Life in the first Creation is donned by a heavenly
process and that Life is only a fallen ignorance labouring to achieve its dumb work. Her hard but destined task is to release the glory of God in Nature's mud. Aswapathy's spiritual sight can see that a shifting flux animates the mute and solid cells in Life's body, leads the thought and longing of the flesh and directs the keen lust and hunger of its will. When Life breaks through the half-drowse of God's delight in the plant, in beast, in winged bird and thinking man, it makes of the heart's rhythm its music's beat. The rapture of God's delight forces the unconscious roots to awake in Life and to ask for happiness. It presses on the core and the vibrant nerve of Life's heart the sharp self-seeking of God's bliss. Therefore, it tears our consciousness. As such, our pain and pleasure have that sting of heavenly rapture for cause. We are thrilled with that rapture. Yet we are blind to its true joy. Hence the sad situation that our soul's desire leaps out towards passing things; all Nature's longing drive turns in us to finite loves and lusts. The early brief attempt of heavenly bliss to exist on earth is here in the first Creation of the Lower Vital, as Aswapathy apocalyptically realises. This attempt pursues all that we dream and do. Yet its roots of will are ever the same. The passions of Life are the stuff of which human beings are made. Thus, Life's passion is the first cry of the awaking world. It continues to be the fountainhead of Life in beast,
reptile and thinking man, even after reason is born on earth and soul takes form. The ignorant world of Lower Life is made under this law. That is why, Aswapathy can feel even in the formless coilings of the first writhings of Life Matter's response to an infant stir of soul.

The next verse paragraph of the Canto 21 begins with the statement that 'Then came a fierier breath of waking life'. It is reasonable to assume that in this statement we have the beginning of the description of the second Creation of the Lower Vital world. In pointing out how Aswapathy fares in this region of the Lower Vital, Sri Aurobindo points out the revelatory nature of this part of the Vital. Accordingly, there is a gulf of things here in this region. From this gulf the strange creations of the thinking sense arise. They are existences half-real and half-dream. Naturally, such a Life does not hope to survive. That is why there are beings in this region who are born but perish without trace. At the same time, a seeking Power finds out its road to form here. Consequently, patterns of love, joy and pain are built to satisfy the moods of Life. A whole insect kingdom appears crawling in its hedonism. They experience raptures and agonies as they crawl in the march and mire. Along with the insects, there appear huge forms of animals. Though they are great and powerful creatures they possess only a dwarfish brain.
Among the human species, pigmy tribes appear as a dwarf model of humanity. In the human model Nature now launches her extreme experience and master-point of the caprice of her design. As Aswapathy discovers, there also arises the Kingdom of the animal self. The apocalyptic meaning of this is that the divine Force which works by the light of Ignorance begins her animal experiment also. Thereby she fills her world-scheme with conscious creatures.

But, as Aswapathy reveals, each of the patterns of the body brought into being in the second Creation is unable to know its own soul within. It merely lives and longs experiencing anger, joy and grief. In the body thus created in the forms of insect, animal and dwarf humanity there is also a mind which meets the objective world. Those beings of this Creation who wear a human form do not know who they are or why they live. They are so unconscious that Life has no aim for them. They work entirely for the body's wants. In this way, they feel the quiver of life in the outward touch only. For their survival they form a tiny circle of defence against the hostile forces in the large universe. As they prey upon the world they also become the world's prey. As yet they never dream of conquering the forces of the universe and be free from danger.

Similarly, in this Creation there is no conscious
code or plan of life. The law of a traditional behaviour is fixed by the creatures of this Creation and is duly followed. The creatures turn in grooves of animal desire. They make even human selves their helpless prey. Each member of the group sees his own reflection in each member of his own kind. All of them serve the aim and action of the group as a whole. The human being of this Creation, for example, considers those who are like himself as parts of his own life or as his adjunct selves. Man becomes a master of the environment of his life. He becomes a leader of a human mass who come together for safety on a dangerous earth. Therefore, he considers as his enemy any one who is unlike his own kind. If he does not want to live in a group, he lives separately like the solitary animal. None of the creatures of this Creation dreams to make this earth a fairer world. Much worse, none feels some touch divine surprise his heart.

Returning to the spiritually apocalyptic explanation of this kind of life described in terms of scientific evolution of animals Sri Aurobindo says that in war and clasp these life-wants of the beings of this Creation join the All-Life. The apocalyptic reason given is that man the dim being must learn by failure and progress by fall. He must discover his deep soul by suffering.

But Life stops half-way here as she finds her faith
no more. In the creatures of this Creation, only the life can think and not the mind. Sense alone can feel but not the soul. Such is the mystery of the second Creation in the Lower Vital world.

At the end of it, a third Creation now reveals its face. At the outset of this Creation, a mould of body's early mind is made. But it is just a glint of light which kindles the obscure World-Force. Therefore, it endows the driven world of the third Creation with the seeing Idea and arms the act with Thought's dynamic point. As a result, a small thinking being starts watching the works of Time.

Continuing his revelations of Life in the third Creation, Sri Aurobindo says that Aswapathy at first sees a dim obscure mind-power moving but hidden by Matter and dumb life. There is no thinking self. There is no aim. There exist only unrecognised stress and vague seekings of the Vital kind. There rise to the surface Vital sensations, stabs and edges of desire, passion's leaps and emotion's cries. In the result, all on the surface is dim sparkle and nothing else.

'Then came the pressure of a seeing Power', as Aswapathy reveals. The Power draws all creatures of the third Creation into a dancing turbid mass, with the figure of a unitary Light within. The observing Power imposes its sight on Life there. It forces a limit and a
shape on the flux of life. It also creates the life-mind of bird and beast and the reptile and the fish. It also creates the primitive pattern of the thoughts of man. As a consequence, there comes a finite movement of the Infinite winging its way through a wide air of Time. Knowledge moves in Nescience and guards a separate soul in the form. Its right to be immortal it reserves but builds a wall against the siege of death and throws a hook to clutch eternity. Because a thinking entity appears in Space, an instrument-personality is born in the third Creation. A restricted clamped intelligence also comes into existence. It prohibits the adventure of the Unseen and the soul's walk through unknown infinities. This little being in the third Creation is satisfied with a little joy and knowledge. A thought is there which plans. There is also a will but it strives only for small aims within a narrow scope. Like the beings of the second Creation, this little being of the third Creation also knows itself as a creature of the mud. As such, it demands no larger law, no loftier air. Yet it seems to be the brilliant crown of Nature's works. Therefore, small egos take the whole world as means to satisfy temporarily life's dwarf lusts and brief desires. The little being of the third Creation is passionate only to survive. He does not know the immortal. He has no greater and deeper cause to live. Thought is his highest point or the lower rim. He sees an image of the external
world as also his own surface self. But he knows no more. His mind is tied to the soil. As such, human mind is inspired by common things only. It is attached to a confined familiar world.

In this way, according to Sri Aurobindo's revelation, Life is a play monotonously the same in the third Creation of the Lower Vital also. This petty state of Life is fixed to eternity of changeless type. As such, Life continues to be a little light born in a great darkness without knowing where it goes, without knowing from where it came. As Aswapathy sees, in the Kingdoms of the Little Life of this kind, 'Around all floated still the nescient haze.'

These various important apocalyptic revelations made by Sri Aurobindo about the nature of the Kingdoms of the Little Life are followed, in Canto V of Book Two of *Savitri*, by an equally interesting and impressive apocalyptic account of the undisclosed mystery of the supernatural beings, powers and creatures inhabiting the Lower Vital world and aptly termed by Sri Aurobindo as "The Godheads of the Little Life". Through Aswapathy, the Traveller of the Worlds, Sri Aurobindo begins by defining to us part of the geography of the abode of the godheads of the Little Life. Note, for example, the statement at the opening of Canto V to the effect that the empire of the Little Life is a fixed and narrow power
with rigid forms. It is an unhappy corner in eternity. It is protected by ignorance and it lives upon the margin of the Idea. Hoping to learn the secret of this world Aswapathy peers across its fringe. He seeks to disengage the Force that moves this world and the Idea that makes it. He wants to know the ruling spirit of its littleness and its claim on Nature. Here, all lurking things are torn out of their veils and held up to the blaze of Aswapathy's vision. As he discovers, there is here a busy restless uncouth populace. They are the little deities of Time's nether act. They work remote from Heaven's controlling eye. There in this world of the Little Life they plot the small conspiracies of this petty reign. They include such "Godheads of the Little Life" as elfins, imps, sprites, fairer genii as well as fallen human beings with their heavenly parts lost who are the errant divinities trapped in Time's dust. There are also ignorant and dangerous wills of beings. Their mood and their shape are half-animal and half-god. As Sri Aurobindo reveals here, their whispers come to influence us as an inarticulate force. They draw our heart's sanction to their sting of impulse and do their work in that little Nature. They fill its powers and creatures with unease. They put out the scanty light of our hearts with error's breath. They turn our heart's surface truths to the purposes of falsehood. It is for this apocalyptic reason that Life in the world finds no
escape from ignorance. These Godheads make knowledge a poison, virtue a dull pattern and lead our endless desires to an inescapable fatality. In the world of Little Life all is enacted by their influence. What is more revealing is that their empire and their role are extended further. They reach out wherever there are soulless minds and guideless lives and wherever self in a small body is all that counts, wherever love and light and largeness lack. In all such areas of our life these crooked Godheads of the Little Life take up their task. In this way, they extend their reign to all half-conscious worlds. That is why these godlings of the Little Life drive our human hearts here on our earth also. They stand between us and divine truth that saves us.

Unravelling the nature of the Godheads of the Little Life further, Sri Aurobindo says that they follow the wheel of law in their own fields and cherish the safety of a settled type. Their law is kept on earth thrown out of their changeless orbit. Their fixed form of things is lost. They are cast into a creative chaos where all is driven by Chance. For this reason, our life's uncertain way moves circling on while our mind's unquiet search asks always light since our conscious life obeys the inconscience' laws. As Sri Aurobindo says here, this is our doom until our souls are free. For this reason Life awakes from the inconscient's swoon and creates man
moulding him from the original brute. Man now raises his eyes Heavenward. As a result, the illumined soul-ray falls on human heart and flesh and touches the stuff of which the earthly dreams of man are made. With him, however, an immortal spirit is there behind his little personal form. It does not yet claim the earthly embodiment of man. As such, human life continues to be on the lower level. In this nether life of man he is therefore, pushed in a hundred different ways. He does not feel the hands that drive him. These hands are of a masked ironic troupe. These Godheads of the Little Life are themselves ignorant of their own fount of strength. Since they are supernatural beings inhabiting the world of the Little Life, they are agents of darkness imitating light just as they are perverse channels of a stupendous Will. Similarly, they are tools of the Unknown who use us as their tools. They bring the incoherences of Fate into the actions of mortals. The nether stuff of which these Godheads of the Little Life are made rebels against all higher Truth. Their will lies open only to Titan force. They inflict their little pigmy law on man and curb his slow rise upwards. Ultimately they end up his brief life on earth with death.

In spite of all this, Sri Aurobindo points out in the last two verse paragraphs of the Canto on the Godheads of the Little Life, that man shall rise out of the mischief of the forces of the nether life. His shape of person
shall be 'new-made in the image of the eternal Guest'. However, the one apocalyptic condition for this transformation of the human being is that we must first achieve the spirit's ascent.

In the third Creation of Little Life, Aswapathy now stands in the midst of the grey faces of the demon gods of the Little Life. Then, 'Adventuring once more in the natal mist' 'He through the astral chaos shore a way', and travels 'in stone strength' to the end of the region. As he moves, the watching opacity of the influence of the Godheads of the Little Life multiplies. But he moves on with courage with his spirit's flame as his only sunlight. His departure marks the end of Canto V,

Sri Aurobindo combines in the next Canto his unravelling of the apocalyptic nature of both the Kingdoms of the Greater Life and the Godheads of the Greater Life. In his description of the Kingdoms of the Greater Life (which seems to be, as already observed, nothing but the Middle Vital World) and its inhabitants, Sri Aurobindo thus departs from the pattern he laid down earlier for the description of the Kingdoms of the Little Life and the Godheads of the Little Life for which one separate canto each is devoted. Within the one single Canto devoted to the Kingdoms and Godheads of the Greater Life, he achieves his purpose of unravelling the apocalyptic nature of both the regions of the greater
Life as well as the Godheads inhabiting them.

The opening lines of Canto VI bring out the contrast between the dark or grey nether Kingdoms of the Little Life and the brighter atmosphere pervading the Kingdoms of the Greater Life. Note that he describes Aswapathy emerging from the Kingdoms of the Little Life and entering into the Kingdoms of the Greater Life as one who walks 'Towards the far gleam of a tunnel's mouth, / Hoping for light'. Aswapathy escapes from that grey anarchy.

Though not dark or grey like the Kingdoms of the Little Life, those of the Greater Life constitute an ineffectual world. It is a purposeless region of arrested birth. In that world, being flees from non-being and has the courage to live though not the strength to last long. There the sky above is tormented and full of doubtful haze. It is crying for a direction in the void. S vague questioning meets the query of Space there. There is a dubious hope also for joy of the mind's hazard and the heart's choice. From such a quarter Aswapathy's journey in the Kingdoms of the Greater Life leads him to a strange and uncertain tract 'Where consciousness played with unconscious self/And birth was an attempt or episode.' There, Aswapathy finds that Life labours in a strange air. She is denuded of her sweet magnificent suns. It is a region where one strays and
dreams but never seeks to achieve. The reason for this is that marvels of a twilight wonder-land are there, full of beauty. These marvels rouse the passion of the eye's desire, enforce belief on the thought and draw the heart but do not lead it to any goal. There, Life is a continuous search without any finding. Though all are allured there nothing satisfies. Images which look like living acts are seen. Pale dreams grow real to the dreamer's eyes. The souls which vainly strive for birth and spirits entrapped arrive there. Everything there runs like a hope hunting a chance. All is unsafe, miraculous and half-true. All this mystery of the Kingdoms of the Greater Life is revealed to Aswapathy.

This atmosphere of the world of the Greater Life then becomes full of greater seeking and a broadened joy. They first bring the Kingdom of the morning star which is one of the Kingdoms of the Greater Life. The revelatory nature of this realm of the morning star is that, firstly, it inspires us with our vaster hopes. Because, its forces have made landings on our globe. Its signs have stamped their patterns on our lives. This Kingdom also lends a sovereign movement to our fate. It motivates the mighty flow of our life. Everything which human beings seek in this world, everything we have not yet known or even sought and everything which yet one day must be born in human heart is prefigured in the realm of the morning star. Secondly, as an Energy of perpetual
transcience, Life hopes to unroll all that could ever be. Therefore, her high procession moves from stage to stage. It is a process march from form to ampler form of life, to formations of a boundless Thought and Force. The revelatory secret and seemingly impossible task of Life as an Energy of this kind is to catch the boundless in a net of birth, to cast the spirit into physical form and to lend speech and thought to the Ineffable. In her experiments, no doubt, she repeatedly fails but her failure lives as long as the world lasts. Because it is 'A folly and a beauty unspeakable,/ A superb madness of the will to live,/ A daring, a delirium of delight.' Life's failure eternally lasts because it is the law of her being and its sole resource. A still greater revelatory significance of the Greater Life in the Kingdom of the morning star is that it is enamoured of the Unseen. It calls to some highest Light beyond its reach. In this way, Life in the kingdom of the morning star has its kinship with both the demon and the god. This explains the apocalyptic fact that life hungers for heights and passions for the supreme. To seek and to create thus is its greatness. That is why, as Sri Aurobindo reveals through Aswapathy here, this Greatness of the greater life must create on every plane. For, after all, she is the same on earth, in heaven and in hell. She participates in a big way in every fate. Even when she is opposed or oppressed, she bears God's urge to
be born.

After thus enumerating the main revelatory characteristics of Greater Life, Sri Aurobindo turns in the next verse paragraph to the description of the nature and significance of 'The beings of that world of greater life' in the next verse paragraph. Accordingly, the beings in the realm of the morning star are tenants of a larger air and freer space. Their seat of self is a deeper living. They live in an intense domain of intimacy where objects dwell as companions of the soul. The actions of the body there are the surface rendering of a life within. The revelatory nature of this Life is that 'A voice of unborn things whispers to the ear' in all those human beings 'who have risen to a greater Life'. Aspiration shows to their eyes the image of a crown. Her creatures live there in order to work out a seed thrown within them by greater Life. Also, they live to achieve her power in them. Each creature in the greater Life is a greatness growing towards the heights from his inner centre. At the same time however, the creatures who live in greater Life remain content with some small greatness won. This is the apocalyptic anti-climax of the mystery in them. That is why, their responsibility is to rule the little empire of themselves, to be a figure in a private world and satisfy their life-motives and life-wants. A further revelation accounts for this contradiction: 'This was transition-
line and starting-point, / A first immigration into heavenliness,/ For all who cross into that brilliant sphere'.

A still more significant revelation is that the beings of that world of greater Life are the kinsmen of our earthly race. Because the world of greater Life borders on our mortal state. It is, however, a wider world. it gives us our greater movements. Its strong formations build our evolving selves. Creatures inhabiting the world are brighter copies of ourselves. They are securely what we strive to be. They are superior to us because 'They follow the unseen leader in the heart,/ Their lives obey the inner nature's law.' For them, 'The soul is the watchful builder of its fate;/ None is a spirit indifferent and inert;/ They choose their side, they see the god they adore.' What is still more significant, even Ignorance in that world aspires to highest knowledge. Nature goes to the creatures of the world as a conscious force. Their leader or their king is always a high ideal. Besides, 'They call in Truth for their high government,/ Hold her incarnate in her daily acts'. They are so conscious of Truth that they 'fill their thoughts with inspired voice/ And shape their lives into her breathing form,/ Till in her sun-gold godhead they too share.' At the same time, they follow the contrary nature, in keeping with the revelation made about their self-contradiction. Therefore Sri Aurobindo
reveals that, as an alternative to the sun-gold godhead of Truth, they subscribe 'to the truth of Darkness'. They are compelled to carry on a war whether it is for Heaven or Hell. Thus, at once they are warriors of Good serving a shining cause or soldiers of Evil 'in the pay of Sin.' Explaining the mystery of this, Sri Aurobindo says that wherever Knowledge is Ignorance's twin, evil and good maintain an equal status. Even so, Sri Aurobindo additionally reveals, 'All powers of Life towards their godhead tend/ In the wideness and the daring of that air' of the world of Greater Life. He also says that Sin also is one of these powers of Life tending towards godhead. (such radical revelations about things we generally condemn as ungodly are scattered throughout Savitri and worthy of our highest notice.) As such, in the world of Greater Life Sin also is a divinity. As falsehood she is revered by her worshippers without knowing that she lies with the harlot Power that slays the Soul. Such evil Powers come out in the world of Greater Life uncovering their faces. Because, Sri Aurobindo reveals, whatever is occult in our world grows overt in that world. There, thought looks at thought to understand each other without speech, emotion clasps emotion in order to be felt. There 'Hate grappled hate and love broke in on love,/ Will wrestled will on mind's invisible ground'. In that world each inhabitant feels another's grief and joy invade and run through his breast
and blood. Similarly, 'Being felt being even when afar/ And consciousness replied to consciousness.' After revealing such brighter aspects of the world of Greater Life, Aswapathy immediately unveils its contrary qualities as well. Therefore, he observes, 'yet the ultimate oneness was not there.' Everything is still imperfect, half-known and half-done though the Superconscient looks down on all beings and objects in that world. No one there truly knows either himself or the world or the Reality hidden everywhere. Only they know what mind can take and build out of the secret Supermind’s huge store. In this way, there is paradoxically enough, a darkness under them and a bright Void above. They live in a great climbing’s space in uncertainty. They can solve no mystery, no riddle. Life, in this world of Greater Life is in this way, the ether of ambiguous life. As Aswapathy moves in this ambiguous world, therefore, 'Himself he grew riddle to himself'.

Aswapathy, therefore, moves further in the Kingdoms of the Greater Life across the leaping springs of birth and death and over shifting borders of soul-change. After all, he is a hunter on the Spirit’s creative track eager to follow the trails of life. As he proceeds, he sees the only wide source of all things looking towards a wider source beyond. Unravelling the mystery of this Sri Aurobindo says that as Life draws away from the earth a
tenser drag from the Unknown is felt and a higher thought drives her towards marvel and discovery. That is why a high release comes from petty cares in these further regions of the world of higher Life. There Life keeps on circling towards Light but her signs are still covered and remain unrevealed. Enigmatically, in spite of being in the world of Greater Life all the signs of Life lose their purport in the joy of use. Life thus, aims at an invisible target in that world. With a view to understanding this mystery, Aswapathy, scans Life's 'subtle tangled weird designs' and her clues traced in the sands of Time. He is able to read all Life's gestures hidden in the labyrinth pattern of her thoughts and hopes and her intimate desires. Ever he meets keywords to Life's mystery here and succeeds in reading the soul's search for lost Reality. All the hidden meanings of Life are read by him. As a result, he finds that, in that world a thousand baffling faces of the Truth look at him with unknown eyes. Similarly, unrecognizable and wordless mouths speak to him from the figures of the masquerade of truths there. In this realm of Greater Life ideas which seem unmeaning flash out Truth; voices coming from unseen worlds speak out the syllables of the Unmanifest. In this atmosphere pervaded by truth, there is the glow of bliss and the beauty of her flowers. He hears the laughter of the rose desires of truth. As Aswapathy moves he feels all these as close real forms.
Life in this Kingdom is more concrete than the lives of men. It expresses the reality hidden in it. What we merely think and feel here is embodied in that world. On account of his Yogic achievements Aswapathy finds himself accepted by Truth's mighty loveliness there. He becomes all that she was or longed to be. In that world he lives with her breaths and sees everything with her eyes so that he might learn the secret of her soul. He thrills to the insistence of her cry in that world. He feels 'the sorceries of her might', 'her abrupt mysterious will, / Her hands', 'Her touch that moves, her powers that seize and drive.'

Significantly again, the other side of Truth in that world is also revealed to Aswapathy. Hence Sri Aurobindo's revelatory statement: 'But this too he saw, her soul that wept within, / Her seekings vain that clutch at fleeting truth, / Her hopes whose sombre gaze mates with despair'. As a result, in this world of Greater Life Aswapathy always meets only 'a veiled and seeking Force'.

As revealed in the next verse paragraph, Life, naturally stares at the Traveller of the Worlds with confused outlines offering a picture the eyes cannot keep. This happens because Life's meanings flee from the pursuing eye of an able observer such as Aswapathy. Life's visage hides life's real self from sight. Only in
that Greater Life a cryptic thought is found. Here some interpreting word which makes the earth-myth an understandable story is hinted. As a result, Aswapathy finds that Life in that world is a half-blind chained divinity. He is bewildered by the world in which he is moving. Yet he is attracted to strange far-off shimmerings in that world led by the fluting of a distant Player. He seeks his way amid life's laughter and call towards some total deep infinitude. A whole forest of Life's signs crowd around him. In the midst of that, Aswapathy understands that everything is the play of the Transcendent One and the Mighty Mother. Because there, as Aswapathy realises 'The Word of Life is hidden in its script'. Therefore, a blind heart-throb reaches joy in life through tears. A yearning towards heavenly heights and an unfulfilled desire block the heavenward climblings of her voice. Life's happiness is short-lived and only on the surface. Her longing remains a deathless and veiled self's call. But, again paradoxically, the secret of Life is that 'Even grief has joy hidden beneath its roots:/ For nothing is truly vain the One has made:/ In our defeated hearts God's strength survive'. According to Sri Aurobindo's revelation, this joy or bliss gives to Life's music 'its anthem swell.' Life lends the glory of her voice to all. Transient yearnings of earth cry from her lips and fade away. Still no help comes to Life from the supernal peace. It is this aspect
of Life even in her Greater worlds which leads to the conclusion that 'Here is the gap, here stops or sinks life's force'. No doubt, Life's depths remember the purpose for which the original consciousness assumes the form of the Vital. But the mind has forgotten or the heart mistakes. 'In Nature's endless lives is lost the God.' Life toils to transform herself into the Absolute. She desires to bring the glory of the Absolute's force here in this world. She wants to bring together bliss and calm. She would like to lift earth to neighbourhood with heaven. She constantly labours to reconcile the Eternal and the Abyss. But in all her efforts Life, even in the Kingdoms of the Greater Life fails to achieve any of these objectives. In this way, this Greater Life wavers between earth and sky. In spite of this, however, life must struggle on although defeated in all her efforts. We have to remember that, in its present form, 'Our life is a march to a victory never won.'

All seems in vain, yet endless is the game. Impassive turns the ever-circling Wheel. Life has no issue, death brings no release. A prisoner of itself the being lives And keeps its futile immortality; Extinction is denied, its sole escape. An error of the gods has made the world. Or indifferent the Eternal watches Time.23

In this brief account of Aswapathy's exploration of the Kingdoms and Godheads of the Greater Life we find all the apocalyptic characteristics of the world of the Greater Life directly and indirectly revealed. With the lines quoted above, the Canto on the higher vital aspect of the
Divine Consciousness in the process of Involution—Evolution comes to its close.

Before he continues his journey into the still higher regions of the manifestation of Consciousness, Aswapathy is required temporarily to suspend his inward journey as a Traveller of the Worlds. Because, the stupendous failure of the Kingdoms of the Greater Life baffles him. Since he is 'One in the front of the immemorial quest'. 'A thinker and a toiler in the ideal's air' Aswapathy (in Canto VII and Canto VIII of Book Two of *Savitri*) turns 'to find that wide world-failure's cause.' In order to do that, he looks away from Nature's face and sends his penetrating gaze into the Vast by whose 'unconscious Breath' the worlds are built. As a result, Aswapathy sees the origin of the lasting pain pervading the world. He sees the very mouth of the black pit of Ignorance and the evil at the roots of life. He descends into the pit of Nescience and Night and dares to unravel the secret origin of all evil. In this Herculean task he is subjected to endless torture. But with his Yogic powers he faces the pain and danger of the world. He meets naked Hell with his bare spirit. Only then he is able to see and explore the hidden heart of Night, "The World of Falsehood, the Mother of Evil and the Sons of Darkness". All through his awe-inspiring descent into Night a light is with him. An invisible hand is laid upon the error and pain till it becomes a quivering
ecstasy. Then 'Falsehood gave back to Truth her tortured shape./ Annulled were the tables of the law of pain'. As a result, Life begins again to beat pure in the corporeal frame of Aswapathy:

Healed were all things that Time's torn heart had made
And sorrow could live no more in Nature's breast:
Division ceased to be, for God was there.
The soul lit the conscious body with its ray,
Matter and Spirit mingled and were one.25

With his objective of understanding the cause of world-failure thus achieved, Aswapathy proceeds further on his way to "The Paradise of the Life-God's" described in Canto IX. The title given by Sri Aurobindo to this Canto seems to imply the Higher Vital world. As in the case of his earlier explorations of the Subtle Physical and the Lower Vital and the Middle Vital Worlds, here also the various revelatory features of the Higher Vital or the Paradise of the Life-Gods are brought out in the form of the various experiences of Aswapathy as he travels to the Paradise of the Life-Gods and explores it.

Accordingly, as he comes out of the world of Falsehood, 'a great felicitous Day' begins to shine around him. It is full of golden laugh in which it holds 'Regions of the heart's happiness set free'. These are the regions of the Higher Vital in the form of the Paradise of the Life-Gods. The regions are immersed in light and perpetually divine. A silence of happiness
covers the heavens over them. A ceaseless radiance smiles on their heights. Intense rapture fills the hours in those regions. In such atmosphere Aswapathy traverses scenes of an immortal joy. Because, the Paradise of the Life-Gods is full of abysms of beauty and bliss. It is filled with a light of conscious suns and with a gladness of great symbol things. Below them there lie 'cities of Gandharva kings.' The Higher Vital world is full of the white-blue moonbeam air of Paradise. At the summit and core of that wonderful world there are high Elysian nameless hills with their peaks climbing towards a greatness beyond life. As Sri Aurobindo reveals, these are the parts of 'The shining Edens of the vital gods' which are full of deathless harmonies. Everything is perfect there. In these Edens beauty is creation's native mould; peace is nothing but a thrilled voluptuous purity; Love fulfils 'her gold and roseate dreams'; Desire climbs up; Pleasure has the stature of the gods; and all sweet and common things turn into miracles. In the Paradise of the Life-Gods pain is compelled to be changed to powerful joy capable of curing the antithesis between heaven and hell. Apocalyptically significant is the fact that

All life's high visions are embodied there,
Her wandering hopes achieved, her aureate combs
caught by the honey-eater's darting tongue,
Her burning guesses changed to ecstasied truths,
Her mighty pantings stilled in deathless calm
And liberated her immense desires. 26
Calm and heavenly rest are found there. As a result, the wounded limbs of a warrior like Aswapathy are healed there in the arms of Energies which are stainless and unafraid of their own bliss. There we can meet the forms that divinise the sight. All these rare things come out of 'the ineffable hush' prevailing there, with 'Thoughts whose desire new-makes the universe.' As it happens in the case of Aswapathy in that Paradise, our body glimmers there 'like a skyey shell'. Our mind and flesh grow capable of containing godhead into humanity. Human body, when it reaches the Paradise of the Vital-Gods, gets the ability to draw spiritual power from sight and sound. Our earth-nature gets reborn and becomes comrade of heaven. All human beings with the Yogic capacity of Aswapathy become equal 'with the godheads of the living Suns' of that Paradise. They are able to hear 'whispers of the Player never seen'; they listen 'to his voice that steals the heart/ And draws it to the breast of God's desire'; heavenly happiness flows through our veins like the rivers of Paradise; and human body is made 'a nectar-cup of the Absolute.' As result, like Aswapathy, human beings reaching the Higher Vital Paradise arrive at 'the rim of ecstasies unknown'. They experience a supreme touch created by the clasp 'of the Wonderful'. Eternity draws close there disguised as Love and places its hands on the body of Time. 'A little gift comes from the Immensitudes,/ But measureless to life its
gain of joy;/ All the untold Beyond is mirrored there.'
In view of this, the unknowable Bliss overwhelms our limbs there and becomes a fiery ocean of happiness around our soul.

These being the apocalyptically revelatory qualities of the Paradise of the Life-Gods, it is small wonder that, in that world, Aswapathy 'foundered drowned in sweet and burning vast'. 'Immortal pleasure cleansed him in its waves/ And turned his strength into undying power./ Immortality captured Time and carried Life.'

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Chapter Notes:


3. Ibid.


5. Ibid. p.433.


7. Ibid.

8. Ibid.


10. Ibid.

11. Ibid.


13. Ibid. p.299.


15. Ibid.


23. p. 201.