CHAPTER IV

THE YOGA OF ASWAPATHY

The Integral Yoga:

"All life is Yoga", says Sri Aurobindo. To him, Yoga is an effort towards self-perfection re-uniting God and Nature in a liberated human life. The body, the mind, the intellect, the heart — any of these may be made the means of self-purification. In Hathayoga, the body is the principal agent of transformation. Through the disciplines of 'āsana' and 'prānāyāma', the Hathayogin achieves control of his body's vital energy and links it with the universal energy. In the Rājyoga, mind is the field of action. With the help of āsana, prānāyāma and the incantation of the mantra, it controls the movements of mind and achieves the total mastery of consciousness. Its aim is invariably the trance of 'Samādhi'. Sri Aurobindo does not consider physical techniques to be essential. He emphasises that the aim of Yoga should not be 'samādhi', but the transformation of lower nature in the light of higher consciousness.

There are three other paths of Śādhanā — Karma Yoga, Jñāna Yoga and Bhakti Yoga. In Karma Yoga, the will to action is the most important agent. Through the renunciation of egoistic self-indulgence and total indifference to the
fruits of action, the Karmayogin makes himself the vehicle of the universal energy and achieves release and fulfilment in the completion of work. In the Jñāna Yoga, the ratiocinative-intellect is the actor. Following the discipline of self-inquiry, the Jñānayogin perseveres towards Truth by means of 'Viveka' (right action) and achieves the knowledge of the self as being one with Brahman. In Bhakti Yoga, the sovereign action is the heart. Having purified his human emotions, a Bhakta emancipates himself from the vicissitudes of every day existence and becomes a sharer in the divine 'Lilā' of the Lord.

In Sri Aurobindo's Integral Yoga body, mind, intellect and heart together are supposed to aspire for the realisation of the Divine. To achieve this purpose, a sādhaka has to unite the human self with the Divine and call Him in to transform his entire being into His;

"The method we have to pursue, then, is to put our whole consciousness into relation and contact with the Divine and to call Him in to transform our entire being into His, so that in a sense God Himself, the real person in us, becomes the sādhaka of the Sādhanā as well as the master of the Yoga by whom the lower personality is used as the centre of a divine transfiguration and the instrument of its own perfection", 2

Psychologically, Yoga is the process of the progressive surrender of the ego to the Beyond ego. Certainly, it is not an easy sādhanā. It requires colossal faith, an absolute
courage and an unflinching patience. It suggests three stages of which the last can be wholly blissful. First, the ego must attempt to enter in contact with the Divine. Secondly, the whole lower nature must be prepared by the divine working to receive and become the higher nature. Lastly, the Divine must transform the ego into the Beyond ego. The divine strength, in fact, substitutes itself for our weakness and supports us through all our failings of faith, courage and patience. It "makes the blind see and the lame stride over the hills":

He comes unseen into our darker parts
And, curtained by the darkness, does his work,
A subtle and all-knowing guest and guide,
Till they too feel the need and will to change.

The sadhaka of the Integral Yoga is expected to practise mainly three disciplines. First, he must aspire his innermost soul to come in the forefront and take a lead in the governance of his external mind, life and body. Secondly, he must become aware of the Cosmic being and seek the union with all the planes up to the Overmind. Lastly, he must gain contact with the transcendent Divine. Besides, he has to aspire constantly for the Divine, reject all that is contrary to the Divine and offer all of himself in absolute surrender to the Divine.

It is also necessary to practise the concentration of consciousness within oneself. There are two centres for
this concentration - the heart and the mind. Concentration in the heart leads to an inward opening and the seeker becomes aware of his soul. But the concentration in the head leads to the silencing of the mind and opening of the inner, larger, deeper mind which is capable of receiving spiritual experience and knowledge. Pressing upward beyond the mental ranges, consciousness finds a centre above the head where it is released into the Infinite. There it establishes increasing contact with the cosmic self, enters into That and becomes That bringing a progressive descent of Light, Power, Knowledge, Bliss into the lower nature.

II

The Yoga of the King:

Aswapathy's Yoga is narrated into three parts. As an individual being he first takes pains to attain his self-perfection. Then, as the representative of mankind, he undertakes an upward journey to explore the mysteries of the occult worlds. Lastly, on behalf of suffering humanity he implores the Divine Mother to descend and break the iron law of Fate.

The last three cantos of Book One are devoted to the Yoga of the King. Aswapathy makes an effort to liberate
his soul from the bondage of Ignorance. Ignorance is sevenfold in its true nature. Sri Aurobindo explains it thus:

"We are ignorant of the Absolute which is the source of all being and becoming; we take partial facts of being, temporal relations of the becoming for the whole truth of existence — that is the first, the original ignorance. We are ignorant of spacelessness, timeless, immobile and immutable Self; we take the constant mobility and mutation of the cosmic becoming in Time and Space for the whole truth of existence — that is the second, the cosmic ignorance. We are ignorant of our universal self, the cosmic existence, the cosmic consciousness, our infinite unity with all being and becoming; we take out limited egotistic mentality, vitality, corporeality for our true self and regard everything other than that as not — self — that is the third, the egotistic ignorance. We are ignorant of our eternal becoming in Time; we take this little life in a small span of Time, in a petty field of Space, for our beginning, our middle and our end — that is the fourth, the temporal ignorance. Even within this brief temporal becoming we are ignorant of our large and complex being, of that in us which is super-conscious, sub-conscious, intra-conscious, circum-conscious to our surface becoming; we take that surface becoming with its small selection overtly mentalized experiences for our whole existence — that is the fifth, the psychological ignorance. We are ignorant of the true constitution of our becoming; we take the mind or life or body or any two of these or all three for our true principle or the whole account of what we are, losing sight of that which constitutes them and determines by its occult presence and is meant to determine by sovereignty by its emergence their operations — that is the sixth, the constitutional ignorance. As a result of all these ignorances, we miss the true knowledge, government of our life in the world; we are ignorant of our thought, will, sensations, actions, return wrong or imperfect responses at every point to the questionings of the world, wander in a maze of errors and desires, strivings and failures, pain and pleasure, sin and stumbling, follow a crooked road, grope blindly for a changing goal — that is the seventh, the practical ignorance. 4."
Aswapatby resorts to the yoga of self-perfection in order to release himself from the sevenfold ignorance. There are two stages in this system of Yoga. First, the whole being of a person aspires for the Divine:

"A spiritual desire of the Divine and of the divine perfection, of a unity with Him in all our being and a spiritual perfection in all our nature is the effective sign of this change, the preciousy power of a great integral conversion of our being and living".5

Secondly, he has to surrender himself to the Power that descends from above:

"The second stage of this Yoga will therefore be a persistent giving up of all the action of the nature into the hands of this greater Power, a substitution of its influence, possession and working for the personal effort until the Divine to whom we aspire becomes the direct master of the Yoga and effects the entire spiritual and ideal conversion of the being".6

Aswapatby passes through both these stages of Yoga. He earnestly aspires to meet the Oversoul:

A beam of the Eternal smites his heart,
His thought stretches into infinitude:
All in him turns to Spirit Vastnesses,
His soul breaks out to join the Oversoul,
His life is oceamed by that superlife. 7

In response to his sincere aspiration a higher Power descends on him:
A static Oneness and dynamic Power
Descended in him, the integral Godhead's seals;
His soul and body take that splendid stamp. 8

Consequently his ego-sense is replaced by a consciousness
of beauty and bliss:

A consciousness of beauty and of Bliss:
A knowledge which became what it perceived,
Replaced the separated sense and heart
And drew all Nature into its embrace. 9

He enters into a nameless Vast where he realises the
world as the expression of the Supreme:

The Supreme's gaze looked out through human eyes
And saw all things and creatures as itself,
And knew all thought and word as its own voice. 10

He attains his infinity and bases his life on it:

He plunged his roots into the Infinite,
He based his life upon Eternity. 11

He moves forward to reach the realm of Light. After
crossing many spiritual levels of consciousness, he arrives
at the realm of the still self:

A constant lodging in the Eternal's realm,
A safety in the Silence and the Sea,
A settlement in the Immutable
His heights of being lived in the still Self. 12

It is recorded that Sri Aurobindo himself realised this
state of consciousness under the guidance of Yogi Lele.
during his stay in Baroda. To Sri Aurobindo, it was an experience of the sheer Nirvanic silence:

All was abolished but the mute alone.
The mind from thought released, the heart from grief
Grew inexistest now beyond belief;
There is no I, no Nature, known-unknown. 13

Having realised the still self, Aswapathy becomes free from the cord of Ignorance. So he can converse with the unknown guardians of the worlds:

The universal strengths were linked with his;
Filling earth's smallness with their boundless breaths
He drew the energies that transmute an age, 14

Free from Ignorance, Aswapathy acquires the Secret Knowledge.
It is really what Sri Aurobindo calls the Integral Knowledge:

"Integral Knowledge will then mean the cancelling of the sevenfold Ignorance by the discovery of what it misses and ignores, a sevenfold self-revelation within our consciousness; it will mean the Knowledge of the Absolute as the origin of all things; the Knowledge of the Self; the Spirit, the Being and of the cosmos as the Self's becoming, the becoming of the Being, a manifestation of the Spirit; the Knowledge of the World as onewith us in the consciousness of our true self, thus cancelling our division by the separative idea and life of ego; the Knowledge of our psychic entity and its immortal persistence in Time beyond death and earth-existence; the knowledge of our greater and inner existence behind the surface, the knowledge of our mind, life and body in its true relation to the self within and the superconscious spiritual and supramental being above them; the knowledge, finally, of the true harmony and the true use of our thought, will and action and a change of all our nature into a conscious expression of the truth of the Spirit, the Self, the Divinity, the integral spiritual Reality". 15
Aswapathy perceives, from the summit of his liberated consciousness, that Nature is yet to evolve an 'unborn power' to build up reality in the Universe. He finds that man is not merely "A death-bound littleness". Man is great because he has the flame of the Divine within himself that inspires him to grow towards the Light:

Our souls can visit in great lonely hours
Still regions of imperishable Light,
All-seeing eagle - peaks of silent Power
And near-flame oceans of swift fathomless Bliss
And calm immensities of spirit Space. 16

Man's separate Self melts into the cosmic Self when an inscrutable Mystery descends into his Finite Consciousness:

Then 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. 17

Aswapathy realises that everything in this universe is subliminal and mystical. It can be known only through "an inward turn". In its absence, the earth looks like a meaningless machine.

At this stage of evolution, man is rooted in his outer consciousness and so he cannot decipher the true nature of the existence:

He is ignorant of the meaning of his life,
He is ignorant of his high and splendid fate. 18
His condition is interregnal. He is for "from the original dust" and the "final flame". Nevertheless, man has a hope that he shall reach the height of his divinity:

In Matter shall be lit the spirit's glow,
In body and body kindled the sacred birth;
Night shall awake to the anthem of the stars,
The days become a happy pilgrim march,
Our will a force of the Eternal's power;
And thought the rays of a spiritual sun.

Man, when he strives for his spiritual transformation, is helped by the gods who dwell in the higher planes of consciousness. These gods have self-knowledge and self-power. Careless of our grief, they obey strictly the laws of the eternal Being:

They look on our struggle with impartial eyes,
And yet without them cosmos could not be. 20

Aswapathy perceives the cosmos as the delightful of Purusā and Prakṛti. In this play Purusā has forgotten himself and consented to do what Prakṛti wants him to do:

He knows her only, he has forgotten himself;
To her he abandons all to make her great.
He hopes in her to find himself anew,
Incarnate, wedding his infinity's peace
To her creative passion's ecstasy. 21

The Absolute creates the world and assumes the mask of our imperfection so that we may rise to his divine measure. Life appears to be a paradox if we do not realise the Absolute.
The Absolute as Spirit has descended into the Inconscient Matter and so Matter should be considered as the manifestation of the Spirit.

After receiving the Secret Knowledge Aswapathy enters into the 'occult cave' (the soul) to realise the freedom and greatness of the Spirit. He gets there the vision of the Divine Mother who

...Works and through the appearance of a soul
By a miraculous birth in plasma and gas
The mystery of God's covenant with the Night.22

Sri Aurobindo is said to have realised the presence of the Divine Mother in the temple of Goddess Kali at Karnali, Gujarat State. He expressed his experience thus:

The great World Mother and her mighty will
Inhabited the earth's abysmal sleep,
Voiceless, omnipotent, inscrutable,
Mute in the desert and the sky and deep.23

Aswapathy finds that human mind is tied to Ignorance, but his soul is free to soar into the realm of the Divine. To realise his soul he withdraws his consciousness from the external world and retires into a complete inner silence. In this state of Silence, currents of light, power and bliss descend on him and transform his physical being:

A universal light was in his eyes,
A golden influx flowed through heart and brain;
A force came down into his mortal limbs,
A current from eternal seas of Bliss;
He felt the invasion and the nameless joy.24
Sri Aurobindo realised this golden Light and revealed his experience thus:

Thy golden Light came down into my brain
And the grey worms of mind sun-touched became
A bright reply to Wisdom's occult plane,
A calm illumination and a flame.

Thy golden Light came down into my throat,
And all my speech is now a tune divine
A pensive-song of thee my single note;
My words are drunk with the Immortal's wine.

Thy golden Light came down into my heart
Smiting my life with Thy eternity.
Now has it grown a temple where Thou art only
And all its passions point towards Thee.

Thy golden Light came down into my feet
My earth is now thy playfield and thy seat.

Soon after the descent of the golden light, the ego-sense of Aswapathy melted and he was able to commune with the cosmic spirit.

Sri Aurobindo seems to have reached this state of consciousness in the Alipur Jail where, he said, he was surrounded by the dynamic presence of Vasudeva.

"I looked at the jail that secluded me from men
And it was no longer by its high walls that I was imprisoned; no, it was Vasudeva who surrounded me... I looked at the prisoners in the jail, the thieves, the murderers, the swindlers and as I looked at them I saw Vasudeva, it was Narayana whom I found in these darkened souls and misused bodies."
It was also in the Alipur Jail that Sri Aurobindo received from Swami Vivekananda the gift of vision opening the ranges of consciousness from the mind to the Supermind. He expressed this vision in his sonnet called 'Evolution':

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{And man but a half-dark half luminous sign} \\
\text{of the transition of the veiled Divine.} \\
\text{From Matter's sleep and the tormented load} \\
\text{Of ignorant life and death to the Spirit's light.} \\
\text{Mind liberated swam Light's ocean vast;} \\
\text{And life escaped from its grey tortured line.} \\
\end{align*}
\]

Like Sri Aurobindo, Aswapathy finds that "mind is a mediator divinity". After this experience, Aswapathy ascends to the realm of the Silence of the Infinite and realizes the freedom and greatness of Spirit. Then he looks upward and sees a giant order of the occult and mystic worlds across the "Seas of the Self". These subtle worlds appear to be the sunbelts of knowledge and the moonbelts of delight. He makes up his mind to traverse these deathless countries of the Unknown:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Adventuring across enormous realms,} \\
\text{He broke into another Space and Time.} \\
\end{align*}
\]

III

The Yoga of the Traveller of the Worlds:

Sri Aurobindo believes that the earthly life is highly influenced by the mystic forces from the subtle and occult
worlds. In fact, the earth is a fragment and a residue of the greater worlds:

Her power is packed with the stuff of greater worlds and steeped in their coloured lustures dimmed by her drowse;

These greater worlds are already suggested in the *Vedas.*

Commenting on them Sri Aurobindo writes:

"The Godhead has built this universe in a complex system of worlds which we find both within us and without, subjectively cognised and objectively sensed. It is a rising tier of earths and heavens, it is a stream of diverse Waters; it is a light of seven rays, or of eight or nine or ten; it is a Hill of many plateaus. The seers often image it in a series of trios; there are three earths and three heavens. More, there is a triple world below—Heaven, Earth and the intervening mid-region, a triple world between, the shining heavens of the Sun; a triple world above, the supreme and vapturous abodes of the Godhead."

He also insinuates that there are seven principles of existence and the seven puranic worlds correspond to them, with sufficient precision, thus;

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principle</th>
<th>World</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Pure Existence—Sat</td>
<td>Satyaloka</td>
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<td>2. Pure Consciousness—Chit</td>
<td>Tapoloaka</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Pure Bliss—Ananda</td>
<td>Janaloka</td>
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<td>4. Knowledge or Truth—Vijñana</td>
<td>Mahayloka</td>
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<td>5. Mind</td>
<td>Swar</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Life</td>
<td>Bhuvnr</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Matter</td>
<td>Bhur. 31</td>
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Each principle, says Sri Aurobindo, can be modified by the subordinate manifestation of the others within it. So each world can also be divided into several provinces according to self-orderings of its creative light of consciousness. But the pertinent question is: Where are these worlds and whence are they created? As a representative of mankind Aswapathy sets out to explore the secrets of these subtle worlds. He traverses the following planes of Consciousness:

1. **The Kingdom of Subtle Matter:**

   It is the origin of the gross earth. The subtle forces from this plane project the material world harmonising Matter and Spirit:

   Matter and soul in conscious union meet
   Like lovers in a lonely secret place. 32

Below this plane is the subtle material world. When the subtle Matter falls down, the denser matter comes into existence:

   It plunges lost in our inconscient base.
   Out of its fall our denser Matter come. 33

It is a plane of fantasy, symmetry and grace where perfection comes by the acceptance of limits. The human soul is not satisfied with it, and so Aswapathy moves forward:

   He left that fine material Paradise.
   His destiny lay beyond in larger Space. 34
2. The Glory and Fall of Life:

It is a plane of the vital Beings who are dominated by change, doubt, adventure and toil without repose. Life can take any shapes, small or big, on this plane of consciousness. It often moves forward to meet Heaven, but somehow it turns towards Hell.

Above this plane comes the Kingdom of "a griefless life". It has neither struggle nor suffering and it offers immortal joy to its creatures. It also leads us to the highest plane of the vital beings where gods are inclined to proffer brilliant pursuits and victories to mankind. An adverse process is seen there in which the upper life is becoming its very opposite bringing into existence struggle, sorrow and suffering. Between the high vital heaven and lower depths, we have intermediate regions where Life obeys the law of Eternity spontaneously:

Life was an eternity of rapture's moods
Age never came, care never lined the face. 35

In response to a call from the imprisoned spirit, Life stoops down from her high home to awaken feeling, hope, thought in mankind and to create charm and beauty upon the earth:

Life's glory and swiftness ran in the beauty of beasts
Man dared and thought and met with his soul the world. 36
Meanwhile a dark presence appears to question the very existence of Life. Life fails to assert herself and she submits herself to this Lord of the Inconscience:

And all her glory into littleness turned
And all her sweetness into a gnawed desire.
To feed death with her works is here life's doom. 37

3. The Kingdom of the Little Life:

On this plane of the lower vital beings, the life-force, though sub-conscious in nature, is struggling to reach its original status. Its first creation is the tiny forms of life crawling out of mud-life in cells, in worms, in reptiles etc. These creatures face the problem of survival:

The need to exist, the instinct to survive
Engrossed the tense precarious moment's will
And an unseeing desire felt out for food. 38

Its second creations are the animals who have a 'dwarfish brain'. They seem to act according to their instinct. Men themselves were like animals in the primitive stage of life:

They worked for the body's wants, they craved no more, Content to breathe, to feel, to sense, to act. 39.

"A Small thinking being" is the third creation of the life-energy. This creature, with a limited consciousness, is satisfied with the petty needs:
This creature passionate only to survive
Fettered to puny thoughts with no wide range. 40

There Life appears to be ignorant of her origin and final destination:

Life knew not where it went nor whence it came,
Around all floated still the noiscent haze. 41

The Little Life has its own gods - the irrational desires, ignoble impulses, impassions and lust. They look like goblins or imps with wry limbs, and fasten our mind to ignorance:

To sport with good and evil is their law,
Daring to failure and meaningless success,
All models they corrupt, all measures cheat,
Make knowledge a poison, virtue a pattern dull. 42

Man is, thus, moulded not only by the earthly environment but also by the forces of the other worlds:

This earth alone is not our teacher and nurse; 43
The powers of all the worlds have entrance here.

As apathy perceives that the vital forces make man restless and create in him the conditions of crude earthliness, self-will and pettiness. They also hamper and retard his progress towards the higher truth:

Thus they inflict their little pigmy law
And curb the countering slow uprise of man,
Then his too scanty walk with death they close. 44
Notwithstanding, man is the crown of the realised evolution. His entire knowledge is not contained within the formula of his rational knowledge. His witness—soul may have the intuitive knowledge of 'truth unseen'. Man must, therefore, realise his soul to effect his spiritual transformation:

The soul must soar sovereign above the form and climb to summits beyond mind's half-sleep.

4. The Kingdom and Godheads of the Greater Life:

On these planes of higher vital consciousness Life appears to be an ineffectual search that never ends in a victory. Everything allures there but none satisfies:

All was unsafe, miraculous and half-true. It seemed a realm of lives that had no base.

There the imprisoned spirit is able to find some expression and the life-force gets a faint hope to reveal the Unmanifest:

This is her secret and impossible task
To catch the boundless in a net of birth,
To cast the spirit into physical form;
To lend speech and thought to the ineffable;
She is pushed to reveal the ever Unmanifest.

The beings of these planes feel the need of transforming the earthly life and so they incarnate ideals in their daily acts. When they manifest themselves on earth, they upset the balance on the material existence and create the possibility of collective life;
In the depth of the vital plane, Aswapathy watches that Life is always busy with inventing and producing many things; but it never leads to any real perfection. Yet man seems to have a firm belief in the advent of a Divinity:

One day he shall lift his beauty's dreadful Veil,
Impose delight on the world's beating heart
And bare his secret body of light and bliss.

5. Descent into Night:

Aswapathy enters into the nether world of Nescience where all cardinal virtues are perverted by Ignorance:

All glory of life dimmed tarnished into a doubt,
All beauty ended in an aging face;
All power was dubbed a tyranny cursed by God
And Truth a fiction needed by the mind;
The chase of joy was now a tired hunt;
All knowledge was left a questioning Ignorance.

It is a world of pretence and falsehood where none confessed to his own pretence. The beings of this plane cannot be trusted because, with their deceptive power, they make the false appear true. They doubt each other, but they gather together to oppose a person who seeks some ideals in life. They never tolerate anyone or any idea that contradicts the anarchy of their state.

This world, founded upon the forces, is ruled by Ego and Falseness. It is a dark abyss which may be regarded
as hell. Crossing this dark abyss Aswapathy moves to the nethermost region of Nescience where he finds the presence of a hostile life. Further, he witnesses the presence of Night that threatens to annihilate everything.

6. The World of Falsehood:

It is a spiritless blank eternity where a brute principle of life exists without the revealing presence of the divine Light. Here Evil and Pain give rise to the Powers of Inconscience. Though Life tries to create the right form for the manifestation of the spirit, her efforts are obstructed by the power of Night. This power slows down the process of evolution by introducing errors to man. It is afraid of the birth of the soul.

Aswapathy goes deeper into the world of pain where he finds people taking joy in cruelty. There jealousy, spite, hate and lust lead mankind to its tragic fate:

It was a world of sorrow and of hate,
Sorrow with hatred for its lonely joy;
Hatred with others' sorrow as its feast;

Passing through the dark region Aswapathy comes to the door of the subconscious and sees the Being as working unconsciously:
He saw in Night the Eternal's shadowy veil,
Knew death for a cellar of the house of life.
In destruction felt creation's hasty pace,
And hell as a short cut to heaven's gates.

After this realisation, the mechanical rule of Ignorance
is expunged and forms of earth become the vessels of the Divine:

Division ceased to be, for God was there.
The soul lit the conscious body with its ray,
Matter and Spirit mingled and were one.

7. The Paradise of The Life - Gods:

It is the heaven of the vital Code where Peace, Beauty,
Love and Strength stay for ever:

Beauty was there creation's native mould,
Peace was a thrilled voluptuous purity,
There Love fulfilled her gold and roseate dreams
And Strength her crowned and mighty reveries.

Here, it appears that Eternity as Love has entered into the
realm of Time:

Eternity drew close disguised as Love
And laid its hand upon the body of Time.

8. The Kingdoms and Godheads of the Little Mind:

These are the planes of lucid mind where ignorant
forms of life are devised. There mind is ignorant, but it
always seems to be curious to know:
Ignorant of all but eager to know all,
Its curious slow enquiry there begins: 55.

These planes are governed by "A dwarf three-bodied trinity". The three dwarfs are the physical mind, the mind of desire and the mind of reason. The first is

A pigmy Thought needing to live in bounds
For ever stooped to hammer fact and form.
Absorbed and caged in external sight,
It takes its stand on Nature's solid base. 56

Being a slave to habit it appears to be content with the commonplace:

Abhorring change as an audacious sin,
Distrustful of each new discovery,
Only it advances step by careful step
And fears as if a deadly abyss the unknown. 57

The second dwarf is described as "the burning vision of desire". It is said to be a force that assumes a thousand shapes:

Ardent to find, incapable to retain,
A brilliant instability was its mark,
To err its inborn trend, its native cue. 58

The mind of reason is the third dwarf that vainly struggles to solve the enigma of the universe. It doubts everything and so its play is inconclusive. It is

A bullock yoked in the cart of proven fact,
She drags huge knowledge—bales through Matter's dust
To reach utility's immense bazaar. 59
It dissects Truth to understand:

Finding her hands too small to hold vast Truth
She breaks up knowledge into alien parts. 60

This plane is said to be the origin of our hopes and aspirations. It explains us what we are and what we must be. It also brings a timeless knowledge to human mind:

A timeless knowledge it shall bring to mind,
Its aim to life, to Ignorance its close. 61

Just above the human mind there is a realm of bright Light whence two demons observe the whole scene of Life. The one is a "Life-Thought" and the other is a pure "Thought-Mind". They are supposed to help man to break the limits of his mortality:

A power to uplift the laggard world,
Imperious rode a huge-winged Life-Thought...
Impassive to the cry of life and sense,
A pure Thought-Mind surveyed the cosmic act. 62

9. The Kingdoms and the Godheads of the Greater Mind:

These planes of ideal mind belong to the living Gods. There knowledge is certainty and delight is spontaneous. It is, in fact, a "triple realm of ordered thought". The first realms are close to the human mind. Their deities proffer knowledge to the seeking mind, create Matter and support the unconscious life. The deities of the second
realms have "a light of liberating knowledge". They are

High architects of possibility
And engineers of the impossible.

The deities of the third realms have "all-containing consciousness". They bring those things to human mind which it alone can never reach. Moreover, they prepare the human mind to hold the Divine and attract the Timeless Light in Time.

10. The Heavens of the Ideal:

The heavens of the Ideal have two sides. On the one side are "the lively kingdoms of the deathless Rose". These kingdoms are between "the super conscious realms of heavenly peace" and "the Inconscient's sullen din abyss". The rose stands for the essence of God. Though it blooms for ever at the feet of God, it sometimes stews in human breasts too. Then

...by a touch, a presence or a voice
The world is turned into a temple ground
And all disclosed the unknown Beloved.

On the other side are "the mighty kingdoms of the deathless Flame". This flame burns in the soul of gods as well as in the minds of men:

It burns for ever on the altar Mind,
Its priests the souls of dedicated gods,
Humanity its house of sacrifice.
These realms are the houses of unfallen sight and heavens of unchanging good. Will is there one with Truth and Good with Power. Deities of these realms are "heirs and co-sharers of divinity":

The radiant children of Eternity dwell
On the wide spirit height where all are one. 66

11. In the Self of Mind:

The Self of Mind is omnipotent, immoveable and aloof. It does not act, but it only witnesses the workings of Nature. It creates both the soul and the cosmos out of its Silence:

The Silence knew itself and thought took form,
Self made from the dual power creation rose. 67

The Self of Mind looks like a Veil. It is just an idol and not the living body of God. It can have the experience of deep peace but it cannot possess a nameless Force because

Our sweet and mighty Mother was not there who gathers to her bosom her children's lives. 68

12. The World—Soul:

It is a wonderful bodiless plane of consciousness where the silent soul of all the worlds eternally exists:

A being lived, a Presence and a Power;
A single Person who was himself and all... 69
This silent Soul transforms all the bitter experiences of life into delight and turns the evil things towards their secret good. It is a formless Spirit which becomes the soul of every form. On that plane only Soul lives in its eternal Silence:

All there was soul or made of sheer soul-stuff. 
A sky of soul covered a deep soul-ground.70

There is no thought but Knowledge by identity; there is no life but an impassioned force. There is not even body because soul itself is its own deathless form. It appears to be the centre of creation where psychic beings remould their purpose and then

Resume their place in the process of the Gods
Until their work in Cosmic Time is done. 71

Aswapatfey beholds there the figure of the "deathless Two - in - One". Behind this dual Power exists the Supreme Creatrix of the world:

Above them all she stands supporting all, 
The sole omnipotent Goddess ever-veiled 
Of whom the world is the inscrutable mask; 72

Aswapatfey worships this Goddess of creation with his folded hands and She, in her sheer grace, uncovers to him only half of Her face. Overwhelmed by Her light and bliss Aswapatfey surrenders himself to Her:
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. 73

13. The Kingdom of Greater Knowledge:

It is a plane of the undetermined Spirit where all cease and all begin. There is Knowledge by which the Knower is Known and Love in which the beloved and the lover are one. It is really a high realm

Where all are different and all is one,
In the Impersonal's ocean without shore
The person in the World-Spirit anchored rode; 74

On this plane, Aswathaya realises the Overmind consciousness that transforms his being. Now he emerges as "new born, infant and limitless":

He thought and felt in all, his gaze had power.
He communed with the Incommunicable; 75

The Overmind is the highest level of mental consciousness. It alone receives inspirations and intimations from the Supermind. Aswathaya, thus, explores the mysteries of the Overmind:

He scanned the secrets of the Overmind,
He bore the rapture of the Oversoul. 76
On the 24th November, 1926, Sri Aurobindo himself realised the direct descent of the Overmind into his physical consciousness. He expressed his experience thus:

"The 24th November, 1926 was the descent of Krishna into the physical. Krishna is not the supernal Light. The descent of Krishna would mean the descent of the Overmind Godhead preparing the descent of the Supermind and Ananda. Krishna is the Anandamaya; he supports the evolution through Overmind leading it towards his Ananda.77

This is the story of the ascent from Matter to Mind. Behind Mind exists a witness-soul which must be brought to the forefront to guide the course of spiritual evolution. The Life Divine reveals:

"In ourselves, behind our surface natural being, there is a soul, an inner mind, an inner life-part which can open to these heights as well as to the occult spirit within us and this double opening is the secret of a new evolution... For the mental man has not been Nature's last effort or highest reach... The spiritual man is her supreme supernormal effort of human creation."78

IV

The Yoga of the King for the Descent of the Divine Mother:

Having discovered his soul and the secrets of the subtle worlds, Aswapathy now moves on to meet the Divine Mother and call Her to come down to the earth. He arrives at the Void of Reality where he faces the adventures of the Inane. This Inane is the origin and the final destination
of evolution:

From It all sprang; in It is called to cease.
But what That was, no thought or sight could tell. 79

It has no second, no partner, no peer; it is only a pure existence or infinite consciousness:

A Being formless, featureless and mute
That knew itself by its own timeless self,
Aware for ever in its motionless depths,
Uncreating, uncreated and unborn,... 80

Sri Aurobindo perceived the formless Reality on the hill of Shankaracharya and described it thus:

Around me was a formless solitude:
All had become one strange Unnamable,
An unborn sole Reality World-made,
Topless and fathomless, forever still. 81

Aswapathy is suddenly drawn to the Presence of the Divine Mother who has a body of wonder and translucency; She is

The Mother of all godheads and all strengths
Who, mediatrix, binds earth to the Supreme.82

It is She whom even Nature invokes for help:

All Nature dumbly calls to her alone
To heal with her feet the aching throb of life. 83

The Mother’s Beauty, Light and Bliss pour down upon Aswapathy and he attains his personal liberation. But he also yearns
the Mother's light and bliss for all mankind:

Only he yearned to call for ever down
Her healing touch of love and truth and joy
Into the darkness of the suffering world. 84

Aswapathy is led to the House of the Spirit where he offers
his desireless heart to gods and experiences a cosmic
harmony:

He felt the joy of others as his joy;
He bore the grief of others as his grief; 35

He further rises to the realm of “the featureless
Nothingness”. It is the house of the Spirit which has no
duality of love and hatred, good and evil, fate and free-
will, truth and falsehood. Moreover, there is no conflict
between thought and thought, truth and truth, right and
right.

Suddenly 'a living Oneness' widens and joins Aswapathy.
This Oneness is A Bliss, A Light, A Power, A Flame-White
Love. From Her rises a living and marvellous creation.
It is a world of unmeasured happiness where all are related
to all by a spiritual link.

None was apart, none lived for himself alone,
Each lived for God in him and God in all, 85.
There is no sob of suffering, no spot of darkness but pure light and intuitive truth.

The eternal Goddess is seen moving in her cosmic house:

Sporting with God as a Mother with her child
Endlessly she unrolled her morning out. 87

The life of this creation is nothing but what Sri Aurobindo calls the Divine Life:

"A life of gnostic beings carrying the evolution to a higher supramental status might fully be characterised as a divine life, for it would be a life in the Divine, a life of the beginnings of a spiritual divine light and power and joy manifested in material Nature". 88.

Aswapathy observes there two negations; viz., Matter which rejects the Spirit and a Spirit ignorant of the world it made. The world is striving to know its why and wherefore and the Self is struggling to emerge in order to rule Nature. This visible universe is governed by three powers:

In the beginning an unknowing Force,
In the middle an embodied striving soul,
In its end a silent spirit denying life. 89

Aswapathy ultimately meets the Divine Mother and appeals to Her to incarnate for the liberation of mankind. But he is advised by intuitive voice to remain content with what he has won:
Speak not my secret name to hostile Time;
Man is too weak to bear the Infinite's Weight.
Truth born too soon might break the imperfect earth. 90

The Voice assures him that man has nothing to worry, for God is his guide. Moreover, man can be free if he follows the ideals of love, beauty, goodness and knowledge. So the voice warns:

Ask not the imperfect fruit, the partial prize.
All things shall change in God's transfiguring hour. 91

Aesoppathy replies:

How shall I rest content with mortal days...
Hard is the doom to which thou bindest thy sense! 92

He knows that the creation of the Mother can never fail; but he is not satisfied with the slow movement of the evolving spirit:

All life is fixed in an ascending scale
And adamantine is the evolving Law; 93

Sometimes the superhuman beings come to help man, but even they fail to change the reverse course of the cosmos. Hence he implores the Divine Mother:

Incarnate the white passion of thy force,
Mission to earth some living form of thee,
One moment fill with thy eternity.
Let thy infinity in one body live;
All-knowledge wrap one mind in seas of light,
All-Love throb single in one human heart. 94
The Divine Mother gracefully grants his prayer:

One shall descend and break the iron Law,
Change Nature's doom by the lone Spirit's power.95

Aswapathy's Yoga is, thus, elaborately described in three phases of self-perfection. It is really the prototype of Sri Aurobindo's own 'sādhana' and 'siddhi' of The Divine. To some critics, it is an unnecessary digression in the poem. But Aswapathy's Yoga has three justifications. First, it is responsible for the descent of the divine Grace on earth. The first two cantos of Book One portray Savitri as the incarnation of The Divine Mother and the following twenty two cantos reveal how and why the Divine Mother incarnates Herself in the form of Savitri. We are convinced that Savitri has the divine strength to conquer Death which is an impossible task for a human being.

Secondly, it interprets the true nature of the world in a living language. The Universe is said to be the veritable creation of God. It is not what the materialists call a deterministic mechanism:

The universe was not now this senseless whirl
Borne round inert on an immense machine;
It cast away its grandiose lifeless front,
A mechanism more or work of Chance.
But a living movement of the body of God.96

Lastly, it emphasises that man is born not to submit himself to the laws of Death and Destiny but to break them heroically.
To conquer Death and Destiny, one has to realise his secret soul which Sri Aurobindo describes thus:

A Spirit that is a flame of God abides,
A fiery portion of the wonderful,
Artist of his own beauty and delight,
Immortal in our mortal poverty. 97.

Aswapathy’s Yoga, however, does not show us a clear way to realise the soul. For that we have to read the Yoga of Savitri. Thus, Aswapathy’s Yoga is related to Savitri’s sādhana of spiritual transformation. Both Aswapathy and Savitri aspire to transmute the established laws of the mechanical universe by bringing down a Power higher than mind into the earth-consciousness. Both resort to the Yoga of Transformation for universal welfare. In spite of this similarity, there is a subtle difference between the Yogas of the two. Aswapathy attains his psycho-spiritual transformation, while Savitri achieves the psychic, spiritual and supramental metamorphosis. Moreover, Aswapathy ascends from mind to Overmind and meets the Transcendent; whereas Savitri awakes the soul within herself and brings down the infinite power of the divine Consciousness in her.

Thus, the Yoga of Aswapathy is significant because it prepares the ground for the incarnation of the Divine Mother to transform the earthly life into the
Life Divine, interprets the mysteries of the occult worlds and illustrates that even yoga can be an appropriate theme of poetry. Based on the brief description of Aswapathy in *The Mahabharata*, it successfully expresses the spiritual realizations of the poet. It is elaborately narrated to bring out the significance of Savitri's birth in this dark and wide world.
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<th>SR</th>
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<td>ibid., p. 258</td>
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<td>ibid., pp. 258 - 259.</td>
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<td>ibid., p. 268</td>
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