



# Highlites of Savitri

(BOOK I and II)

By Roy Posner

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'**Savitri: A Legend and a Symbol**' is Sri Aurobindo's epic poem of 12 books, 24000 lines about an individual who overcomes the Ignorance, suffering, and death in the world through Her spiritual quest, setting the stage for the emergence of a new, Divine life on earth. It is loosely based on the ancient Indian tale of 'Savitri and Satyavan' from the Mahabharata.

This document is dedicated to analyzing Sri Aurobindo's poem so that it is more accessible for the average reader. I have only completed part of the work, and though I may take it up at a later time, I invite others to go further. My one observation is that to truly understand Savitri, one must come to know the mind of Sri Aurobindo. It is captured in full in his epic philosophical treatise 'The Life Divine.'

Thank you for visiting, and may this site serve you well as you journey on your own path of spiritual progress. -Roy Posner

**"... everything is there: mysticism, occultism, philosophy, the history of evolution, the history of man, of the gods, of creation, of Nature. How the universe was created, why, for what purpose, what destiny - all is there. You can find all the answers to all your questions there. Everything is explained, even the future of man and of the evolution, all that nobody yet knows. He has described it all in beautiful and clear words so that spiritual adventurers who wish to solve the mysteries of the world may understand it more easily." --The Mother, on Savitri**

**"Not only is Savitri a vision for individual and collective self-fulfillment, but, as a mantra, it has a directly transformative effect on the inner consciousness." -- David Johnston, PhD, from "A Myth for our Time."**



## BOOK ONE

### The Book of Beginnings

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#### BOOK ONE OVERVIEW:

[What follows is first an overview of Book One (of Part One), followed by detailed comments on the individual cantos. This approach is followed throughout this analysis. -RP]

#### The Creator Spirit is Absent in the Creation

There is the Spirit, the Source of creation. But in creating a universe, it withdrew Its spiritual properties (of Delight, Knowledge, Oneness, etc.). Savitri arose to bring that Divinity of the Pure Existent into the world, into the lives of men. She will do this by overcoming the limitations that exist in life, including the essential Ignorance, division, duality, conflict, pain, etc. born of creation, through her inner, spiritual quest.

#### Savitri Arises to Bring Divinity to the Earth

Her Infinite Love of being is expressed through her Love for Satyavan. He however is doomed to die. She must overcome all of the ills of the earth to save him, including death itself. (Her love for him, and the threat of his death are the

compulsion for Savitri to overcome the Darkness and limitations of life. Or to put it another way, the Divine person must bear the undivinity of the world to transform it.)

#### The King's Yogic Ascent, and Aspiration

Savitri's father King Aswapathy is a person who is going through his own willful conscious evolution -- i.e. yoga. Though he makes an initial effort to rise, he falls back in his efforts; but out of that he develops a new strength to rise again and go even higher. Thus, though there was difficulty in his ascent to higher consciousness, he develops an Equality of being that makes him more immune from the exigencies of the lower consciousness that wants to drag him down.

Aswapathy then resumes his inner spiritual ascent, and experiences along the way a personal evolution culminating in Spiritual Transformation. Through that process, he comes to know his soul and true self within; he perceives the transcendent Spiritual reality, and feels the Force of the Divine Mother within himself. As a result, he comes to understand the deepest meaning and purpose of life, and begins to be released from the essential Ignorance and other limitations that weigh down our normal human consciousness. As a result, of his vast new awareness and experience, he aspires for the same for the world -- i.e. for the progress, evolution, and transformation of all of humanity. His daughter Savitri, has come to earth to fulfill the King's aspirations. However, she will need to do so by overcoming Satyavan's impending death.

(to be continued)

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#### Additional Thoughts:

### *Symbolism of the Characters*

We can say that *King Aswapathy* represents human aspiration for the realization of a divine life. Savitri, his daughter, and the eventual incarnation of the Divine Mother, is here to fulfill Aswapathy's and the world's aspiration for its own transformation and fulfillment. Satyavan can be said to represent the soul of the world and Man. Through Savitri's quest she will overcome the limitations of life, lift up the soul of the earth, as symbolized by the soul of Satyavan whom she loves.

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## BOOK ONE DETAILS:

[Note: All items in **bold black** below are my summations for the indicated page areas. The summations can be used as a guide when reading the actual poem. Items in brackets, like this para, are my additional comments. -RP]

### CANTO ONE

#### The Symbol Dawn

P.1+

(Top, "It was the hour ...")

**It was the hour before the Gods awoke.**

[Powerful and well-known opening lines of the poem.]

(Below lines above, "A fathomless zero ...")

**The world is in a drowse, a void. It has forgotten its spiritual source, which is but a memory.**

(Bottom)

**But then a sliver of light enters.**

**The full spiritual power follows thereafter.**

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P.4+ (Near top, "An instant's visitor ...")

**Though the Spiritual power came, it withdrew thereafter because the earth could not hold it. Earth is then once again left with its ordinary existence.**

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P.6+ (New section, "And Savitri ...")

**Amidst the ordinary, fleeting, transient life of the world, Savitri arose. Her spirit comes forward amidst the limiting human life of the earth to bring a reminder of the Divinity there once was.**

[Perhaps we can say once was *before* creation, since the Spirit was really there as the Omnipresent Reality before the physical universe came into existence. The unconsciousness of the world really does begin with the creation of matter, or even before that in the inconscient energy and force that was enabled in the process of creation from the Omnipresent Reality on the way to creating the physical universe.]

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P.7+ (New section, "Earth's grain ...")

**Savitri brings Light to the Falsehood and Ignorance of the world.**

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P.8+ (Middle)

**Savitri bears the secret of the pending doom of the death of Satyavan.**

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CANTO TWO

The Issue

P.11 (Top, "Awhile withdrawn ...")

**Saviti's past comes before her conscious awareness. Her earliest years are described.**

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P.11 (Lower fifth, "An absolute ...")

**A darkness even comes to one who comes near to the Divine, in order to move to a higher consciousness (as in the case of Savitri). Through a period of darkness one is hurled from the surface being and its Ignorance to the wider Truths of the Spirit by connecting with our deeper Self within.**

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P.12

**The endless process of generations and limitations of life is described. Savitri through the fate of Satyavan must overcome these limiting aspects of life.**

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P.13

**Savitri must overcome the normal Law of life; of karma, pain, etc. in order to prevent the death of Satyavan.**

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P.13 (lower fifth)

**She kept the difficult knowledge of the potential death of Satyavan and her quest to overcome it to herself; holding it close to her spirit within.**

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P.14 (lower fifth)

**Savitri's spiritual nature is described.**

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P.17 (top)

**The divine person must bear the undivinity in the world. It is the burden of being in this unfinished, incomplete (i.e. not fully evolved) world.**

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P.17 (middle)

**The issue that this canto derives its name from is described.**

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P.20 (2/5ths down)

**Connecting to the spiritual Force is described.**

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P.20 (Bottom, "He feels ...")

**-The divinity in Savitri arose to meet the limits of life.**

**-She will become the Divine Mother on earth to overcome the limits of life.**

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CANTO THREE

The Yoga of the King:

The Yoga of the Soul's Release

P.22 + (Top, "A world's desire ...")

King Aswapathy's is the father of Savitri. The results of King Aswapathy's yoga is described in the ensuing pages. [These seem like Sri Aurobindo's own experiences and realizations, which they of course are since he wrote this book out of his own yogic experiences and realizations. His own yoga is closely associated with that of the King.]

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P.34 (Middle)

Here is described how the world, *we* cannot sustain the heights and there is a fall, as the King has experienced.

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P.35 (Middle, "To the still heights ...")

Though there is a fall, the King is able to rise to an even higher plane of existence.

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P.36 (Middle)

His spiritual presence and calm in the face of life's trouble is explained; i.e. his equality of being.

P.36 (Lower fifth, "As a sculptor ...")

The overcoming of the essential ignorance within him -- [that is actually in everyone] -- is described.

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P.37 (Middle, "Even on the struggling ...")

[What is described in this area is something akin to the Spiritual Transformation of Sri Aurobindo's Triple Transformation; i.e the middle, second stage.]

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P.38 (New section, "Oft inspiration ...")

Her [the Divine Mother's] Force and Being enters the king.

[At this point Savitri has not come to know that she is the incarnation of the Divine Mother. She will later grow into that role.]

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P.40

(Middle, "The balance ...")

-The reason and purpose of our existence is known to the King.

(Lower third, "In the immutable ...")

-He perceives the Real Ideas [i.e. the essential concepts that the Divine wishes to see manifest in the details of creation] of the Absolute (i.e. the divine aspect of Brahman).

P.44 (New section, "Thus came ...")

**His release from the Ignorance is described.**

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P.44 (Lower fifth, "Apart he lived ...")

**His aspiration for the overcoming of the limitations of life through the Divine action.** [King Aswapathy essentially represents human aspiration for the realization of a Divine Life. We could posit that Sri Aurobindo aspired for the Spirit to descend into life. He spent his life calling down the Force. His answer came with the arrival of the Mother, who was/is the instrument of the (supramental) Force for those who aspire to bring about the next stage in human evolution. She later continued Sri Aurobindo's work by bringing down the Force into the earth's atmosphere (beginning in 1956). The King had the same experiences and aspiration, which begins to be fulfilled through the incarnation of the Divine Mother in Savitri.]



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CANTO FOUR

**The Secret Knowledge**

P.49 (New section)

**Ordinary life seems without much purpose.**

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P.52 (Middle)

**Yet there is a Divine Plan beyond life's strife  
and apparent purposelessness.**

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P.52 (Bottom)

**-Our absorption in the outer existence [which prevents us from seeing the true unfolding, and meaning of life], and [thus] the need to move our center of consciousness within is described. [In his yoga we move from the surface mind dominated by the five senses to the inner mind and being, culminating in the psychic entity, within.]**

**-"The laws of the Unknown create the known"**

We see from the following quote that Sri Aurobindo is addressing the principle of [inner-outer correspondence](#) (and therefore the phenomenon of [Life Response](#)) here. I used this as the introductory quote in my book on Life Response.

"Our outward happenings have their seed within,

And even this random Fate that imitates Chance,

This mass of unintelligible results,  
Are the dumb graph of truths that work unseen:  
The laws of the Unknown create the known."

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P.53 (Middle)

**-The limits of living a mere outer existence; which causes us to be bound by Nature, by the past and future is described.**

**-Not knowing one's fate and future [as a result of living in the outer existence] is described.**

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P.55 (Top 2/3)

**Into this difficult world steals the Spirit.**

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P.57 (Lower 1/3)

**How the immortal eyes sees our lives is described.**

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P.59 (1/3 down)

**How the Infinite will come and overcome the limits of life is described.**

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P.60 (2/3 down, new section)

**The Spirit in the Universe, i.e. Life that the Supreme created is described.**

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P.62 (Top third; from 'too wears ...')

**The self-absorption (i.e. disappearance) of the Spirit in Creation/Life is described.**

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P.62 (Middle; from 'Although possessor ...')

**The Divine Mother's action in life is described. (ep)**

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P.63 (New section)

**The interaction between the King, who has embodied Spirit and Her, and the Divine Mother, who he surrenders to in life, is described.**

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P.66 (2/3 down; new section)

**The Eternal has come into life, Man.**

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P.67 (1/5 down; 'The Absolute, the Perfect, ...')

**Out of the Absolute comes life in the universe. Therefore, we can know how we can find the Spirit and Divine Nature there.** [Since the world comes from, is an extension of the Absolute, which is Spirit in essence, the Spirit can be found in life as well.]

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P.68 (Bottom third)

**The King's symbolic "sea journeying" to the Infinite, the Supreme is described.**

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P.71 (Middle)

**The King voyages into the deep of spirit, not knowing his goal or destination.** [Again, these appear to be Sri Aurobindo's own direct experiences and realizations. The King is in essence the symbol of Sri Aurobindo's life.]

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CANTO FIVE

**The Yoga of the King:**

**The Yoga of the Spirit's Freedom and  
Greatness**

P.74 (Lower third, new section)

**The King's journey to the Within ([the Soul](#)) is described.**

P.76 (Lower third, new section)

**-The King's [aspiration](#) to bring the Divine into the world is reiterated.**

**-Life is lifted through the Divine power (as explained in these three pages).**

P.79 (Middle 2/5th)

**The experience of the [silence](#) within is described.**

**His opening to [the Force](#) is described.**

**He connected to the Transcendent Divine is described.**

P.80 (Top)

**The King ascends to meet the Infinite.** [Note: The Infinite, the Supreme, the Divine, et al are interchangeable names for the ultimate Spiritual Reality, and Source of all things.]

P.80 (Bottom, new section)

**The descent of Force into his being, and his newly experienced Nature is described.** [Sri Aurobindo spent his days ascending to meet the supramental Force, and to bring it down into the earthly realm.]

P.84 (Top third)

**The [process of creation](#) is described.**

P.84 (Bottom)

**The power of Mind to overcome [Nature's](#) slow and difficult ways is described.** [Nature/Life normally progresses slowly, and through pain and suffering. Mind brings in a higher order that can enable progress with less pain and suffering. Ultimately spirit/soul connection will replace the slow and difficult methods of Nature.]

P.86 (Near top)

**The Divine Mother is described once more.**

P.89 (Lower two fifths)

**The King came to see the link between the creation and the Ineffable.**

**The bringing of the [Being into the Becoming](#); the [finite into the infinite](#) is described.** [The goal in the evolution is to bring the spirit into the becomings of our daily lives, which will lead to perfection and divinization of life. It will also enable the infinite potentials of life to replace the current finites, limitations of life.]

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P.91 (Last third)

**The [Knowledge beyond Ignorance](#) is described.**

[In the evolved world there will be the moment to bring the Being into the Becoming, the Infinite where there is currently Finite, and the replacement of the essential Ignorance born of creation (which is limited, exclusive, false, error-prone), with the integral, many-sided knowledge of the truth of all aspects of life, whether the details of a given object, or the integral knowledge of how life works at all planes, or the knowledge of our true nature and purpose. Sri Aurobindo explains all of these Ignorances in [The Life Divine](#) in the chapter on [the seven ignorances and the seven knowledges](#).]



## BOOK TWO

### The Book of the Traveler of the Worlds

#### BOOK TWO OVERVIEW:

(under development)

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#### BOOK TWO DETAILS:

##### CANTO ONE

##### The World-Stair

P.99 (bottom third)

In the involution of the creation, i.e. the descent from Spirit, but before the emergence of forms, there was a loss of that spirit (i.e. its self-absorption).

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P.100 (middle)

The Creation, Man begins as unevolved; but there is a promise of so much more.

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P.101+ (very bottom)

The king is now the Traveler of the Worlds who is discovering the planes of being -- both seen and unseen -- in the cosmos. The planes of his travels will in the following cantos be described.

demonstrate those properties (as opposed to the actual physical).

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## CANTO TWO

### The Kingdom of Subtle Matter

P.103 (middle) (Actual starting point quotes need to be added "Xyz .." as is down way down below.)

**The subtle physical plane of existence is come upon and described.** [It is the invisible physical plane, where things have an urge to take shape into the actual seen physical reality. Mother in [The Agenda](#) had visions of this plane often, and saw their individual she knew who had passed on and were now working in the subtle physical.]

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P.108 (middle, new section)

**The spirit behind matter is described.** [Sri Aurobindo in [The Life Divine](#) and elsewhere says that out of the Spirit emerged matter, and that we cannot see it, the Spirit is involved in it deeply. Through our own spiritual connection we bring out the spirit buried in matter, including our own physical bodies. Perhaps as he above indicated that the subtle physical has an urge to emerge from the physical, so too has the spiritual an urge to emerge from matter.]

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P.111 (lower two fifths)

**The infinite seeks to manifest its spiritual properties in life. In the unmanifest subtle physical realm, it more readily can**

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P.120 (lower half, new section)

**The King ascends to the peaks of Spirit, where that spiritual realm and earth life begun to melt into one another.**

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**CANTO THREE**

**The Glory and the Fall of Life**

P.116 (top)

**There is uncertainty in the next realm the King journeys into.**

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P.121 (bottom)

**He comes to know that even in the (just earlier described) dualistic, divided vital world of positive and negative that she (the Creator force) created, serves the Divine purpose.**

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P.117 (top)

**He comes upon a world devoid of knowledge; of infinite vicissitudes, circumstances that are described.** [Comment: At the physico-vital plane there is little knowledge, only a play of endless ways of living that have both and negative aspects. This is akin to the plane we ordinarily live in. It is the vital plane of the mesh and mixture of happiness and pain. Remember he is visiting many planes that are not necessarily an objective view of the actual planes we live in, but are symbolic or reflective of them -- though their nature is very similar to the real planes and real experiences of our lives.]

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P.124 (second fifth)

**He encounters a world of spiritual bliss (i.e. ultimate spiritual vital pleasure), and utter spiritual freedom that She -- the Divine Shakti/Creator -- has created).**

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P.128 (lower half, new section)

**But the King could not enter into the joy of this spiritual world of bliss. (The *ordinary* (vital) world pulled him down.)**

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P.118 (bottom third, new section)

**The hidden kingdoms of beatude are described.** [This is a deeper vital plane, of spiritual bliss, where there is only spiritual delight, joy, bliss without pain.]

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P.129 (top sixth)

**From the dumb material world that he has descended to, there is a call to [Life](#) (i.e. to something in Life) to invade this unconscious, senseless realm.**

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P.130 (second fifth)

The awakening of Life to a higher status is described.

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P.130 (lower two fifths)

**But there was darkness in the first realm of unfolding of life. (The unconscious [of unconscious matter's influence] pulls one down in this plane.)**



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CANTO FOUR

**The Kingdoms of the Little Life**

[The vital life is that of sensation, desire, want, need, emotion, feeling, trade, interaction, association, etc. This is the aspect of [vital plane of being](#) addressed here. There are other higher formations of the vital, such as affection, love, delight, etc.]

P.132 (top)

**The limited, unstable vitality of life is described.** [i.e. the nature of this vital existence. I.e. pleasure and pain, positive and negative circumstances mixed together. Love and hate. etc.]

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P.137 (lower quarter, new section)

**The King saw the Divine Will even in this mindless vital life.** [It is mindless because our mentality is not central here; feelings, emotions, wants, et all are. There is thinking only to the degree it serves the vital propensities.]

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P.140 (bottom)

**Creation brought with it limitation (as in this realm of life).** [A thought: The creation was born of inconstance of dumb matter, which had an impact on the planes that emerged out of matter, which was forth the vital plane, especially the first lower manifestations of the

vital plane, that we have been addressing above.]

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P.141 (of section, near bottom (bottom))

**The King sees the Spirit even in Nature's (limiting) course in Life.** [Comment: In this vital-oriented world there is contradiction and duality. Life however does progress, but through pain and conflict. This is Nature's Way, particularly at this Vital plane of contradictions. However, even though Nature's course (in life, vital life)) is slow and painful, it ultimately has the sanction of the Divine. Soul is however the method beyond Nature that the Divine seeks in the world.]

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P.141 (bottom)

**The animal-like life one lives in this lower vital existence, with only a limited mentality which takes form as mere sense oriented thought** (i.e. of what one derives with the five senses, as opposed to any real conceptual thought.) **is described.**

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P.142 (bottom)

**He saw the limitation of mind in this vital life; to perceive the true nature of the reality behind it.** [How it is sense-oriented, devoid of true thought, logic, real conception, etc.]

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P.144 (bottom)

**Relations of intense (vital) wanting between individuals is described.** [which occurs

particularly in this lower vital existence that we have been addressing.]

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P.146 (end of section)

**He saw the limited thinking being in this small vital realm.**

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P.147 (bottom)

**He saw the emergence of a seeing, observing power of man developing as he began to move out of the lower vital existence.**

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P.148 (middle)

**Sense mind is described.** [To reiterate: Sense mind can be described as a most primitive, outer faculty of mind, where one is absorbed with gathering sense data through the five senses, where we are overwhelmed by what is seen, heard, etc. as opposed to the more central aspects of mind; idea processing, rational and pure thinking, etc. Allured by the perturbations of the alluring surface of life, Sense mind prevents us from using the more rational faculties of mind. Sense mind is connected with the physical/vital nature of our five senses.]

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CANTO FIVE

**The Godheads of the Little Life**

P.160 (top, new section)

**The Ignorance that does not see is described.** [Integral Knowledge and Truth Sees in totality. Ignorance is the polar opposite. We can move to this Integral Knowledge.]

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P.162 (top, new section, "A thinking puppet..")

**The mind of the vital/life that we want to evolve beyond is explored.**

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P.167 (bottom, new section, "Yet was ..")

**There are the depths within and the spiritual heights beyond this small life.**

[There is the evolving soul in the depths of the horizontal plane, and the heights of spiritual mind and beyond in the vertical plane. How can we move toward the Integral Truth and Knowledge? One way is a movement within.]

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P.168 (top third, "And when ..")

**We can make a connection to the soul within.** [The greatest depths is the Soul within, a spark of the Divine.]

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P.171 (top, "And when ..")

**The descent of the greater Self can come into our lives.** [There is a spiritual reality which we can call the Self (Atman in Sanskrit). We can embody that Spirit Self in our own selves; through the discovery our True Self, personal Soul.]

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P.171 (bottom third, "But first ..")

**Before this descent of the greater Self can take place, we need to make the inner, Soul connection.**

[Sri Aurobindo in 'The Life Divine' speaks of the Tripe Transformation. Before we can make the Spiritual transformation we need to make the Psychic transformation; i.e. fully connect wt the Soul/Psychic Being within. The Supramental transformation is then beyond the Spiritual.]

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CANTO SIX

**The Kingdom and Godheads of the Greater  
Life**

P.173 (Start) [editing point]

**He came to a realm of intensity, but unsolid,  
where nothing aimed for was ever achieved.**

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P.183 (new section "A consciousness ..")

**Living deeper within is the first step in living  
the Greater Life.**

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P.187 (bottom third, "One felt ...")

**In this realm was a care for others; an inner  
connection between people, even from afar,  
though this was not quite a true Oneness.**

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CANTO SEVEN

The Descent into Night

P.205 (New Section, "As from...")

**A sinister place.**

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P.208 (New Section, "Then the scene...")

**It is a place of Ignorance, expressing through Individuality.**

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P.209

(Top, "There ego...")

**Ego and falsehood was there.**

(Middle, "True freedom...")

**Lack of true freedom was there.**

(Lower two fifths, "A proud...")

**Rigidity was there, a lack of openness.**

(Lower third, "Power and...")

**It was a place of power and domination.**

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P.210

(Top half, "All faith...")

**It was a place of tyrannous religion.**

(Lower two fifths, "A lie was there...")

**It was a place of the lie.**

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P.211 (New section, "A greater darkness...")

**They came to a place of even greater darkness. A land where spirit had no power; where there was pride, evil, and perversion.**

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P.212

(Top, "A strong and fallen goddess...")

**It was a place of hopelessness.**

(Middle, "Epics of horror...")

**Of horror, grimness.**

(Lower third, "Epics of horror...")

**Of sadistic ways.**

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P.213

(Top, "And art parades...")

**It was a place of horrible forms, of evil worshipping.**

(Middle, "Hatred...")

**Of hatred, torture, ugliness, dullness.**

(Bottom, "A new philosophy...")

**Of decadence, brutishness.**

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P.214

(Lower third, "Overthrow the reason...")

**There was non-reason there.**

(Lower third, "In others' suffering...")

**There was an enjoyment of others' suffering.**

-----

P.215 (Lower fifth, "In that wide cynic...")

**There was greed, hate; nothing noble was spoken.**

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P.216

(Top third, "All were deceived...")

**There was deceit, untruth, falsehood**

("All that is low...")

**Existence was sordid, base there.**

(Lower quarter, "All threatening...")

**Things were threatening; dogmas abounded.**

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P.216 (New section, "A lone discoverer...")

**The King was able to throw off this dark influence.**

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P.217

(Top, "Soon he emerged...")

**He came upon a void, but it still harbored a hostile life.**

(Middle, "he faced a sense...")

**There were voices of denial there.**

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P.217 (Bottom third, "He strove...")

**He was now in the pure Darkness, a realm devoid of all figures and life.**

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P.218

(Top quarter, "Drawn towards depths...")

**He was in the formless void; the dark grim.**

(Middle, "A nameless...")

**A nameless fear was there. There was an eternity of pain there. There was an anguished nothingness.**

(Bottom, "But he endured...")

**He was then able to return to the light.**

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**NOTE:** For more info on the various subtle, occult forces, powers, and planes, see [The Order of the Worlds](#) -- Book II, Chapter XXI of my analysis of Sri Aurobindo's *The Life Divine*.

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**-End of analysis of book two, The Book of the Traveller of the Worlds.**

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