Chapter XIX

Out of the Sevenfold Ignorance towards the Sevenfold Knowledge

Seven steps has the ground of the Ignorance, seven steps has the ground of the Knowledge. *Mahopanishad*.1

He found the vast Thought with seven heads that is born of the Truth; he created some fourth world and became universal. . . . The Sons of Heaven, the Heroes of the Omnipotent, thinking the straight thought, giving voice to the Truth, founded the plane of illumination and conceived the first abode of the Sacrifice. . . . The Master of Wisdom cast down the stone defences and called to the Herds of Light, . . . the herds that stand in the secrecy on the bridge over the Falsehood between two worlds below and one above; desiring Light in the darkness, he brought upward the Ray-Herds and uncovered from the veil the three worlds; he shattered the city that lies hidden in ambush, and cut the three out of the Ocean, and discovered the Dawn and the Sun and the Light and the Word of Light. *Rig Veda*.2

The Master of Wisdom in his first coming to birth in the supreme ether of the great Light,—many his births, seven his mouths of the Word, seven his Rays,—scatters the darknesses with his cry. *Rig Veda*.3

All Evolution is in essence a heightening of the force of consciousness in the manifest being so that it may be raised into the greater intensity of what is still unmanifest, from matter into life, from life into mind, from the mind into...

1 V. 1. 2 X. 67. 1–5. 3 IV. 50. 4.
the spirit. It is this that must be the method of our growth from a mental into a spiritual and supramental manifestation, out of a still half-animal humanity into a divine being and a divine living. There must be achieved a new spiritual height, wideness, depth, subtlety, intensity of our consciousness, of its substance, its force, its sensibility, an elevation, expansion, plasticity, integral capacity of our being, and an assumption of mind and all that is below mind into that larger existence. In a future transformation the character of the evolution, the principle of evolutionary process, although modified, will not fundamentally change but, on a vaster scale and in a liberated movement, royally continue. A change into a higher consciousness or state of being is not only the whole aim and process of religion, of all higher askesis, of Yoga, but it is also the very trend of our life itself, the secret purpose found in the sum of its labour. The principle of life in us seeks constantly to confirm and perfect itself on the planes of mind, vitality and body which it already possesses; but it is self-driven also to go beyond and transform these gains into means for the conscious spirit to unfold in Nature. If it is merely some part of ourselves, intellect, heart, will or vital desire-self, which, dissatisfied with its own imperfection and with the world, strives to get away from it to a greater height of existence, content to leave the rest of the nature to take care of itself or to perish, then such a result of total transformation would not eventuate — or, at least, would not eventuate here. But this is not the integral trend of our existence; there is a labour of Nature in us to ascend with all ourself into a higher principle of being than it has yet evolved here, but it is not her whole will in this ascension to destroy herself in order that that higher principle may be exclusively affirmed by the rejection and extinction of Nature. To heighten the force of consciousness until it passes from a mental, vital and physical instrumentation into the essence and power of the spirit is the indispensable thing, but that is not the sole object or all the thing to be done.

Our call must be to live on a new height in all our being: we have not, in order to reach that height, to drop back our dynamic parts into the indeterminate stuff of Nature and abide
by this liberating loss in a blissful quiescence of the Spirit; that can always be done and it brings a great repose and freedom, but what Nature herself attends from us is that the whole of what we are should rise into the spiritual consciousness and become a manifest and manifold power of the spirit. An integral transformation is the integral aim of the Being in Nature; this is the inherent sense of her universal urge of self-transcendence. It is for this reason that the process of Nature is not confined to a heightening of herself into a new principle; the new height is not a narrow intense pinnacle, it brings with it a widening and establishes a larger field of life in which the power of the new principle may have sufficient play and room for its emergence. This action of elevation and expansion is not confined to an utmost possible largeness in the essential play of the new principle itself; it includes a taking up of that which is lower into the higher values: the divine or spiritual life will not only assume into itself the mental, vital, physical life transformed and spiritualised, but it will give them a much wider and fuller play than was open to them so long as they were living on their own level. Our mental, physical, vital existence need not be destroyed by our self-exceeding, nor are they lessened and impaired by being spiritualised; they can and do become much richer, greater, more powerful and more perfect: in their divine change they break into possibilities which in their unspiritualised condition could not be practicable or imaginable.

This evolution, this process of heightening and widening and integralisation, is in its nature a growth and an ascent out of the sevenfold ignorance into the integral knowledge. The crux of that ignorance is the constitutional; it resolves itself into a manifold ignorance of the true character of our becoming, an unawareness of our total self, of which the key is a limitation by the plane we inhabit and by the present predominant principle of our nature. The plane we inhabit is the plane of Matter; the present predominant principle in our nature is the mental intelligence with the sense-mind, which depends upon Matter, as its support and pedestal. As a consequence, the preoccupation of the mental intelligence and its powers with the material
existence as it is shown to it through the senses, and with life
as it has been formulated in a compromise between life and
matter, is a special stamp of the constitutional Ignorance. This
natural materialism or materialised vitalism, this clamping of
ourselves to our beginnings, is a form of self-restriction narrow-
ing the scope of our existence which is very insistent on the
human being. It is a first necessity of his physical existence, but
is afterwards forged by a primal ignorance into a chain that
hampers his every step upwards; the attempt to grow out of this
limitation of the wholeness, power and truth of the spirit by
the materialised mental intelligence and out of this subjection
of the soul to material Nature is the first step towards a real
progress of our humanity. For our ignorance is not entire; it is
a limitation of consciousness,—it is not the complete nescience
which is the stamp of the same Ignorance in purely material
existences, those which have not only matter for their plane but
matter for their dominant principle. It is a partial, a limiting,
a dividing and, very largely, a falsifying knowledge; out of that
limitation and falsification we have to grow into the truth of our
spiritual being.

This preoccupation with life and matter is at the beginning
right and necessary because the first step that man has to take
is to know and possess this physical existence as well as he can
by applying his thought and intelligence to such experience of it
as his sense-mind can give to him; but this is only a preliminary
step and, if we stop there, we have made no real progress: we are
where we were and have gained only more physical elbow-room
to move about in and more power for our mind to establish a
relative knowledge and an insufficient and precarious mastery
and for our life-desire to push things about and jostle and hustle
around amid the throng of physical forces and existences. The
utmost widening of a physical objective knowledge, even if it
embrace the most distant solar systems and the deepest layers
of the earth and sea and the most subtle powers of material
substance and energy, is not the essential gain for us, not the
one thing which it is most needful for us to acquire. That is
why the gospel of materialism, in spite of the dazzling triumphs
of physical Science, proves itself always in the end a vain and helpless creed, and that too is why physical Science itself with all its achievements, though it may accomplish comfort, can never achieve happiness and fullness of being for the human race. Our true happiness lies in the true growth of our whole being, in a victory throughout the total range of our existence, in mastery of the inner as well as and more than the outer, the hidden as well as the overt nature; our true completeness comes not by describing wider circles on the plane where we began, but by transcendence. It is for this reason that, after the first necessary foundation in life and matter, we have to heighten our force of consciousness, deepen, widen, subtilise it; we must first liberate our mental selves and enter into a freer, finer and nobler play of our mental existence: for the mental is much more than the physical our true existence, because we are even in our instrumental or expressive nature predominantly mind and not matter, mental much rather than physical beings. That growth into the full mental being is the first transitional movement towards human perfection and freedom; it does not actually perfect, it does not liberate the soul, but it lifts us one step out of the material and vital absorption and prepares the loosening of the hold of the Ignorance.

Our gain in becoming more perfect mental beings is that we get to the possibility of a subtler, higher and wider existence, consciousness, force, happiness and delight of being; in proportion as we rise in the scale of mind, a greater power of these things comes to us: our mental consciousness acquires for itself at the same time more vision and power and more subtlety and plasticity, and we are able to embrace more of the vital and physical existence itself, to know it better, to use it better, to give it nobler values, a broader range, a more sublimated action, — an extended scale, higher issues. Man is in his characteristic power of nature a mental being, but in the first steps of his emergence he is more of the mentalised animal, preoccupied like the animal with his bodily existence; he employs his mind for the uses, interests, desires of the life and the body, as their servant and minister, not yet as their sovereign and master. It is as he
Towards the Sevenfold Knowledge

759

grows in mind and in proportion as his mind asserts its selfhood and independence against the tyranny of life and matter, that he grows in stature. On one side, mind by its emancipation controls and illumines the life and physicality; on the other, the purely mental aims, occupations, pursuits of knowledge begin to get a value. The mind liberated from a lower control and preoccupation introduces into life a government, an uplifting, a refinement, a finer balance and harmony; the vital and physical movements are directed and put into order, transformed even as far as they can be by a mental agency; they are taught to be the instruments of reason and obedient to an enlightened will, an ethical perception and an aesthetic intelligence: the more this can be accomplished, the more the race becomes truly human, a race of mental beings.

It is this perception of life that was put in front by the Greek thinkers, and it is a vivid flowering in the sunlight of this ideal that imparts so great a fascination to Hellenic life and culture. In later times this perception was lost and, when it came back, it returned much diminished, mixed with more turbid elements: the perturbation of a spiritual ideal imperfectly grasped by the understanding and not at all realised in the life’s practice but present with its positive and negative mental and moral influences, and over against it the pressure of a dominant, an inordinate vital urge which could not get its free self-satisfied movement, stood in the way of the sovereignty of the mind and the harmony of life, its realised beauty and balance. An opening to higher ideals, a greater range of life was gained, but the elements of a new idealism were only cast into its action as an influence, could not dominate and transform it and, finally, the spiritual endeavour, thus ill-understood and unrealised, was thrown aside: its moral effects remained, but, deprived of the sustaining spiritual element, dwindled towards inefficacy; the vital urge, assisted by an immense development of physical intelligence, became the preoccupation of the race. An imposing increase of a certain kind of knowledge and efficiency was the first result; the most recent outcome has been a perilous spiritual ill-health and a vast disorder.
For mind itself is not enough; even its largest play of intelligence creates only a qualified half-light. A surface mental knowledge of the physical universe is a still more imperfect guide; for the thinking animal it might be enough, but not for a race of mental beings in labour of a spiritual evolution. Even the truth of physical things cannot be entirely known, nor can the right use of our material existence be discovered by physical Science and an outward knowledge alone or made possible by the mastery of physical and mechanical processes alone: to know, to use rightly we must go beyond the truth of physical phenomenon and process, we must know what is within and behind it. For we are not merely embodied minds; there is a spiritual being, a spiritual principle, a spiritual plane of Nature. Into that we have to heighten our force of consciousness, to widen by that still more largely, even universally and infinitely, our range of being and our field of action, to take up by that our lower life and use it for greater ends and on a larger plan, in the light of the spiritual truth of existence. Our labour of mind and struggle of life cannot come to any solution until we have gone beyond the obsessing lead of an inferior Nature, integralised our natural being in the being and consciousness, learned to utilise our natural instruments by the force and for the joy of the Spirit. Then only can the constitutional ignorance, the ignorance of the real build of our existence from which we suffer, change into a true and effective knowledge of our being and becoming. For what we are is spirit,—at present using mind predominantly, life and body subordinately, with matter for our original field but not our only field of experience; but this is only at present. Our imperfect mental instrumentation is not the last word of our possibilities; for there are in us, dormant or invisibly and imperfectly active, other principles beyond mind and closer to the spiritual nature, there are more direct powers and luminous instruments, there is a higher status, there are greater ranges of dynamic action than those that belong to our present physical, vital and mental existence. These can become our own status, part of our being, they can be principles, powers and instruments of our own enlarged nature. But for that it is
not enough to be satisfied with a vague or an ecstatic ascent into spirit or a formless exaltation through the touch of its infinities; their principle has to evolve, as life has evolved, as mind has evolved, and organise its own instrumentation, its own satisfaction. Then we shall possess the true constitution of our being and we shall have conquered the Ignorance.

The conquest of our constitutional ignorance cannot be complete, cannot become integrally dynamic, if we have not conquered our psychological ignorance; for the two are bound up together. Our psychological ignorance consists in a limitation of our self-knowledge to that little wave or superficial stream of our being which is the conscient waking self. This part of our being is an original flux of formless or only half-formulated movements carried on in an automatic continuity, supported and held together by an active surface memory and a passive underlying consciousness in its flow from moment to moment of time, organised and interpreted by our reason and our witnessing and participating intelligence. Behind it is an occult existence and energy of our secret being without which the superficial consciousness and activity could not have existed or acted. In Matter only an activity is manifest,—inconscient in the outside of things which is all we know; for the indwelling Consciousness in Matter is secret, subliminal, not manifested in the inconscient form and the involved energy: but in us consciousness has become partly manifest, partly awake. But this consciousness is hedged and imperfect; it is bound by its habitual self-limitation and moves in a restricted circle,—except when there are flashes, intimations or upsurgings from the secrecy within us which break the limits of the formation or flow beyond them or widen the circle. But these occasional visitations cannot enlarge us far beyond our present capacities, are not enough to revolutionise our status. That can only be done if we can bring into it the higher undeveloped lights and powers potential in our being and get them consciously and normally into play; for this we must be able to draw freely from those ranges of our being to which they are native but which are at present subconscious or rather secretly intraconscient and circumconscient or else
superconscient to us. Or, — the yet more that is also possible, — we must enter into these inner and higher parts of ourselves by an inward plunge or disciplined penetration and bring back with us to the surface their secrets. Or, achieving a still more radical change of our consciousness, we must learn to live within and no longer on the surface and be and act from the inner depths and from a soul that has become sovereign over the nature.

That part of us which we can strictly call subconscient because it is below the level of mind and conscious life, inferior and obscure, covers the purely physical and vital elements of our constitution of bodily being, unmentalised, unobserved by the mind, uncontrolled by it in their action. It can be held to include the dumb occult consciousness, dynamic but not sensed by us, which operates in the cells and nerves and all the corporeal stuff and adjusts their life process and automatic responses. It covers also those lowest functionings of submerged sense-mind which are more operative in the animal and in plant life; in our evolution we have overpassed the need of any large organised action of this element, but it remains submerged and obscurely at work below our conscious nature. This obscure activity extends to a hidden and hooded mental substratum into which past impressions and all that is rejected from the surface mind sink and remain there dormant and can surge up in sleep or in any absence of the mind, taking dream forms, forms of mechanical mind action or suggestion, forms of automatic vital reaction or impulse, forms of physical abnormality or nervous perturbance, forms of morbidity, disease, unbalance. Out of the subconscious we bring ordinarily so much to the surface as our waking sense-mind and intelligence need for their purpose; in so bringing them up we are not aware of their nature, origin, operation and do not apprehend them in their own values but by a translation into the values of our waking human sense and intelligence. But the risings of the subconscious, its effects upon the mind and body, are mostly automatic, uncalled for and involuntary; for we have no knowledge and therefore no control of the subconscient. It is only by an experience abnormal to us, most commonly in illness or some disturbance of balance, that we can become directly
Towards the Sevenfold Knowledge

aware of something in the dumb world, dumb but very active, of our bodily being and vitality or grow conscious of the secret movements of the mechanical subhuman physical and vital mind which underlies our surface, — a consciousness which is ours but seems not ours because it is not part of our known mentality. This and much more lives concealed in the subconscious.

A descent into the subconscious would not help us to explore this region, for it would plunge us into incoherence or into sleep or a dull trance or a comatose torpor. A mental scrutiny or insight can give us some indirect and constructive idea of these hidden activities; but it is only by drawing back into the subliminal or by ascending into the superconscious and from there looking down or extending ourselves into these obscure depths that we can become directly and totally aware and in control of the secrets of our subconscious physical, vital and mental nature. This awareness, this control are of the utmost importance. For the subconscious is the Inconscient in the process of becoming conscious; it is a support and even a root of our inferior parts of being and their movements. It sustains and reinforces all in us that clings most and refuses to change, our mechanical recurrences of unintelligent thought, our persistent obstinacies of feeling, sensation, impulse, propensity, our uncontrolled fixities of character. The animal in us, — the infernal also, — has its lair of retreat in the dense jungle of the subconscious. To penetrate there, to bring in light and establish a control, is indispensable for the completeness of any higher life, for any integral transformation of the nature.

The part of us that we have characterised as intraconscient and circumconscient is a still more potent and much more valuable element in the constitution of our being. It includes the large action of an inner intelligence and inner sense-mind, of an inner vital, even of an inner subtle-physical being which upholds and embraces our waking consciousness, which is not brought to the front, which is subliminal, in the modern phrase. But when we can enter and explore this hidden self, we find that our waking sense and intelligence are for the most part a selection from what we secretly are or can be, an exteriorised and much
mutilated and vulgarised edition of our real, our hidden being or an upthrow from its depths. Our surface being has been formed with this subliminal help by an evolution out of the Inconscient for the utility of our present mental and physical life on earth; this that is behind is a formation mediating between the Inconscient and the larger planes of Life and Mind which have been created by the involutionary descent and whose pressure has helped to bring about the evolution of mind and life in Matter. Our surface responses to physical existence have at their back the support of an activity in these veiled parts, are often responses from them modified by a surface mental rendering. But also that large part of our mentality and vitality which is not a response to the outside world but lives for itself or throws itself out on material existence to use and possess it, our personality, is the outcome, the amalgamated formulation of powers, influences, motives proceeding from this potent intraconscient secrecy.

Again, the subliminal extends itself into an enveloping consciousness through which it receives the shock of the currents and wave-circuits pouring upon us from the universal Mind, universal Life, universal subtler Matter-forces. These, unperceived by us on the surface, are perceived and admitted by our subliminal self and turned into formations which can powerfully affect our existence without our knowledge. If the wall that separates this inner existence from the outer self were penetrated, we could know and deal with the sources of our present mind energies and life action and could control instead of undergoing their results. But though large parts of it can be thus known by a penetration and looking within or a freer communication, it is only by going inward behind the veil of superficial mind and living within, in an inner mind, an inner life, an inmost soul of our being that we can be fully self-aware, — by this and by rising to a higher plane of mind than that which our waking consciousness inhabits. An enlargement and completion of our present evolutionary status, now still so hampered and truncated, would be the result of such an inward living; but an evolution beyond it can come only by our becoming conscious in what is now superconscient to us, by an ascension to the native heights of the Spirit.
In the superconscience beyond our present level of awareness are included the higher planes of mental being as well as the native heights of supramental and pure spiritual being. The first indispensable step in an upward evolution would be to elevate our force of consciousness into those higher parts of Mind from which we already receive, but without knowing the source, much of our larger mental movements, those, especially, that come with a greater power and light, the revelatory, the inspirational, the intuitive. On these mental heights, in these largenesses, if the consciousness could succeed in reaching them or maintain and centre itself there, something of the direct presence and power of the spirit, something even — however secondary or indirect — of the supermind could receive a first expression, could make itself initially manifest, could intervene in the government of our lower being and help to remould it. Afterwards, by the force of that remoulded consciousness, the course of our evolution could rise by a sublimer ascent and get beyond the mental into the supramental and the supreme spiritual nature. It is possible without an actual ascent into these at present superconscient mental planes or without a constant or permanent living in them, by openness to them, by reception of their knowledge and influences, to get rid to a certain extent of our constitutional and psychological ignorance; it is possible to be aware of ourselves as spiritual beings and to spiritualise, though imperfectly, our normal human life and consciousness. There could be a conscious communication and guidance from this greater more luminous mentality and a reception of its enlightening and transforming forces. That is within the reach of the highly developed or the spiritually awakened human being; but it would not be more than a preliminary stage. To reach an integral self-knowledge, an entire consciousness and power of being, there is necessary an ascent beyond the plane of our normal mind. Such an ascent is at present possible in an absorbed superconscience; but that could lead only to an entry into the higher levels in a state of immobile or ecstatic trance. If the control of that highest spiritual being is to be brought into our waking life, there must be a conscious heightening and widening into immense ranges of new being,
new consciousness, new potentialities of action, a taking up — as integral as possible — of our present being, consciousness, activities and a transmutation of them into divine values which would effect a transfiguration of our human existence. For wherever a radical transition has to be made, there is always this triple movement — ascent, widening of field and base, integration — in Nature’s method of self-transcendence.

Any such evolutionary change must necessarily be associated with a rejection of our present narrowing temporal ignorance. For not only do we now live from moment to moment of time, but our whole view is limited to our life in the present body between a single birth and death. As our regard does not go farther back in the past, so it does not extend farther out into the future; thus we are limited by our physical memory and awareness of the present life in a transient corporeal formation. But this limitation of our temporal consciousness is intimately dependent upon the preoccupation of our mentality with the material plane and life in which it is at present acting; the limitation is not a law of the spirit but a temporary provision for an intended first working of our manifested nature. If the preoccupation is relaxed or put aside, an extension of the mind effected, an opening into the subliminal and superconscient, into the inner and higher being created, it is possible to realise our persistent existence in time as well as our eternal existence beyond it. This is essential if we are to get our self-knowledge into the right focus; for at present our whole consciousness and action are vitiated by an error of spiritual perspective which prevents us from seeing in right proportion and relation the nature, purpose and conditions of our being. A belief in immortality is made so vital a point in most religions because it is a self-evident necessity if we are to rise above the identity with the body and its preoccupation with the material level. But a belief is not sufficient to alter radically this mistake of perspective: the true self-knowledge of our being in time can come to us only when we live in the consciousness of our immortality; we have to awaken to a concrete sense of our perpetual being in Time and of our timeless existence.
For immortality in its fundamental sense does not mean merely some kind of personal survival of the bodily death; we are immortal by the eternity of our self-existence without beginning or end, beyond the whole succession of physical births and deaths through which we pass, beyond the alternations of our existence in this and other worlds: the spirit’s timeless existence is the true immortality. There is, no doubt, a secondary meaning of the word which has its truth; for, corollary to this true immortality, there exists a perpetual continuity of our temporal existence and experience from life to life, from world to world after the dissolution of the physical body: but this is a natural consequence of our timelessness which expresses itself here as a perpetuity in eternal Time. The realisation of timeless immortality comes by the knowledge of self in the Non-birth and Non-becoming and of the changeless spirit within us: the realisation of time-immortality comes by the knowledge of self in the Birth and Becoming and is translated into a sense of the persistent identity of the soul through all changes of mind and life and body; this too is not a mere survival, it is timelessness translated into the Time manifestation. By the first realisation we become free from obscuring subjection to the chain of birth and death, that supreme object of so many Indian disciplines; by the second realisation added to the first we are able to possess freely, with right knowledge, without ignorance, without bondage by the chain of our actions, the experiences of the spirit in its successions of time-eternity. A realisation of timeless existence by itself might not include the truth of that experience of persistent self in eternal Time; a realisation of survival of death by itself might still give room for a beginning or end to our existence. But, in either realisation truly envisaged as side and other side of one truth, to exist consciously in eternity and not in the bondage of the hour and the succession of the moments is the substance of the change: so to exist is a first condition of the divine consciousness and the divine life. To possess and govern from that inner eternity of being the course and process of the becoming is the second, the dynamic condition with, as its practical outcome, a spiritual self-possession and self-mastery. These changes are possible only
by a withdrawal from our absorbing material preoccupation,—
that does not necessitate a rejection or neglect of the life in the
body,—and a constant living on the inner and higher planes of
the mind and the spirit. For the heightening of our consciousness
into its spiritual principle is effectuated by an ascent and a step-
ning back inward—both these movements are essential—out
of our transient life from moment to moment into the eternal
life of our immortal consciousness; but with it there comes also
a widening of our range of consciousness and field of action in
time and a taking up and a higher use of our mental, our vital,
our corporeal existence. There arises a knowledge of our being,
no longer as a consciousness dependent on the body, but as an
eternal spirit which uses all the worlds and all lives for various
self-experience; we see it to be a spiritual entity possessed of a
continuous soul-life perpetually developing its activities through
successive physical existences, a being determining its own be-
coming. In that knowledge, not ideative but felt in our very
substance, it becomes possible to live, not as slaves of a blind
Karmic impulsion, but as masters—subject only to the Divine
within us—of our being and nature.

At the same time we get rid of the egoistic ignorance; for so
long as we are at any point bound by that, the divine life must
either be unattainable or imperfect in its self-expression. For the
ego is a falsification of our true individuality by a limiting self-
identification of it with this life, this mind, this body: it is a
separation from other souls which shuts us up in our own in-
dividual experience and prevents us from living as the universal
individual: it is a separation from God, our highest Self, who
is the one Self in all existences and the divine Inhabitant within
us. As our consciousness changes into the height and depth and
wideness of the spirit, the ego can no longer survive there: it is too
small and feeble to subsist in that vastness and dissolves into it;
for it exists by its limits and perishes by the loss of its limits. The
being breaks out of its imprisonment in a separated individuality,
becomes universal, assumes a cosmic consciousness in which it
identifies itself with the self and spirit, the life, the mind, the
body of all beings. Or it breaks out upward into a supreme
pinnacle and infinity and eternity of self-existence independent of its cosmic or its individual existence. The ego collapses, losing its wall of separation, into the cosmic immensity; or it falls into nothingness, unable to breathe in the heights of the spiritual ether. If something of its movements remains by habit of Nature, yet these also fall away and are replaced by a new impersonal-personal seeing, feeling, action. This disappearance of the ego does not bring with it the destruction of our true individuality, our spiritual existence, for that was always universal and one with the Transcendence; but there is a transformation which replaces the separative ego by the Purusha, a conscious face and figure of the universal being and a self and power of the transcendent Divine in cosmic Nature.

In the same movement, by the very awakening into the spirit, there is a dissolution of the cosmic ignorance; for we have the knowledge of ourselves as our timeless immutable self possessing itself in cosmos and beyond cosmos: this knowledge becomes the basis of the Divine Play in time, reconciles the one and the many, the eternal unity and the eternal multiplicity, reunites the soul with God and discovers the Divine in the universe. It is by this realisation that we can approach the Absolute as the source of all circumstances and relations, possess the world in ourselves in an utmost wideness and in a conscient dependence on its source, and by so taking it up raise it and realise through it the absolute values that converge into the Absolute. If our self-knowledge is thus made complete in all its essentials, our practical ignorance which in its extreme figures itself as wrong-doing, suffering, falsehood, error and is the cause of all life’s confusions and discords, will yield its place to the right will of self-knowledge and its false or imperfect values recede before the divine values of the true Consciousness-Force and Ananda. For right consciousness, right action and right being, not in the imperfect human sense of our petty moralities but in the large and luminous movement of a divine living, the conditions are union with God, unity with all beings, a life governed and formed from within outwards in which the source of all thought, will and action shall be the Spirit working through the truth and
the divine law which are not built and constructed by the mind of Ignorance but are self-existent and spontaneous in their self-fulfilment, not so much a law as the truth acting in its own consciousness and in a free luminous plastic automatic process of its knowledge.

This would seem to be the method and the result of the conscious spiritual evolution; a transformation of the life of the Ignorance into the divine life of the truth-conscious spirit, a change from the mental into a spiritual and supramental way of being, a self-expansion out of the sevenfold ignorance into the sevenfold knowledge. This transformation would be the natural completion of the upward process of Nature as it heightens the forces of consciousness from principle to higher principle until the highest, the spiritual principle, becomes expressed and dominant in her, takes up cosmic and individual existence on the lower planes into its truth and transforms all into a conscious manifestation of the Spirit. The true individual, the spiritual being, emerges, individual yet universal, universal yet self-transcendent: life no longer appears as a formation of things and an action of being created by the separative Ignorance.