

The Seven-fold Integral Knowledge

“The **seven ancient Rishis** representing Integral Knowledge, the four Manus or All-Father representing four Divine *Shaktis* are My (Over) Mental becomings, from them are all these living creatures in the world”

The Gita-10.6

“**Seven steps** has the ground of the Ignorance, **seven steps** has the ground of the Knowledge”

Mahopanishad-V-1

“We have now, by our scrutiny of the **seven great terms** of existence which the ancient seers fixed on as the foundation and **sevenfold mode** of all cosmic existence, discerned the gradations of evolution and involution and arrived at the basis of knowledge towards which we were striving.”²

Sri Aurobindo

The Gita hinted of seven-fold Integral Knowledge as *Maharsaya Saptapurbe* and four Divine *Shaktis* as *chatwaro manabstatha* from which this creation of Integral Evolution rose. The aim of Integral Evolution is fullness of Being, fullness of Consciousness and fullness of Life. The Integral Knowledge is the complete knowledge on the world, complete knowledge on the Self and complete knowledge on the God. It is a Consciousness which possesses the highest Truth. Man, therefore has to enlarge his knowledge of himself, of the world and of God until in their totality he becomes aware of three successive realisations of INCLUSION, of realising the Divine in the heart centre; INDWELLING, of realising the whole creation within the Divine and IDENTITY, of realising oneness with the Divine.

Knowledge, *Vidya*, is the exclusive knowledge of the One, the realisation of the Being. Ignorance, *Avidya*, is purely and trenchantly the exclusive knowledge of the divided Many divorced from the unifying consciousness of the One Reality. The subjection of the being, *the Purusha*, to the mechanism of the Energy, *the Prakriti*, that are the efficient cause of our ignorance and imperfection. Ignorance is the self-oblivion of the Being, the experience of separateness in the multiplicity and a circling in an ill understood maze of becomings. This Ignorance is the Mind separated in knowledge from its source of knowledge and gives a false rigidity and mistaken appearance of opposition and conflict to the harmonious play of the supreme Truth in its universal manifestation. The **division of consciousness** is the basis of the Ignorance, a division of individual consciousness from the cosmic and the transcendent of which yet it is an intimate part, in essence inseparable, a division of Mind from the Supramental Truth of which it should be a subordinate action, of Life from the original Force of which it is one energy, of Matter from the original existence of which it is one form of substance. Integral Knowledge of

Brahman is a consciousness in possession of both, the knowledge of Being and knowledge of Becoming.

Ignorance is separative part knowledge of our becoming in a material, temporal and spatial universe. The origin, character and boundaries of Ignorance are identified as limitation, separation of being from its own entire reality and separative development of consciousness respectively, which oblige us to live in an apparent surface existence. A return to integrality, a breaking down of separateness and an overpassing of the boundaries are sign of inner turn towards knowledge. Knowledge is concealed behind the Ignorance; it has rather to be unveiled and revealed than acquired and learned by an inward and upward self-unfolding. Our real difficulty can be resolved if we can find a link between the limited or constructed consciousness, a status of Ignorance and the Infinite self-knowledge and all-knowledge. We have to discover the secret nature and full extent of the many-sided self-Ignorance which has many sided self-seeking. They are identified as seven-fold ignorance and by full evolution of the Soul and Nature or by emergence of seven-fold Self-revelation³ we arrive at Integral Knowledge.

1) Constitutional Ignorance:

“Alight, the dun unplumbed **subconscient caves**
Thrilled with prescience to her longed for tread
And filled with flickering crests and praying tongues.”

Savitri-334

“A **soul** shall wake in the **Inconscient’s house**;
The mind shall be God-vision’s tabernacle,
The body intuition’s instrument,
And life a channel for God’s visible power.”

Savitri-707

The root or heart of all Ignorance is identified as constitutional Ignorance.⁴ We are ignorant of the true constitution of our becoming and consider mind, life and body as the true principle and whole account of our surface identity and oblivious of their Inconscient and Subconscient origin and Occult Presence that determine their existence. The mental intelligence is preoccupied with material existence through sense mind and physical mind and experiences a compromise between the life and matter which is the special feature of constitutional Ignorance. We emerge out of this Ignorance when we discover the true relation of the inner Self with the mind, life and body and subsequently this relation is extended to the Spiritual being and Supramental Being above and Subconscient and Inconscient Self below. These relations continue until one discovers that all in him is an expression of the Spirit and distinguishes the link between his lower apparent and his higher Spiritual existences; thus, he sets out to remove his **constitutional self-ignorance**.

2) Psychological Ignorance:

“Our **inner Mind** dwells in a larger light,
Its brightness looks at us through hidden doors;...
A mighty **life-self** with its inner powers
Support the dwarfish modicum we call life;
It can graft upon our crawl two puissant wings.
Our **body’s subtle self** is throned within
In its viewless palace of veridical dreams
That are bright shadow of thoughts of God.”

Savitri-485

The conquest of constitutional Ignorance cannot be dynamically and integrally complete if we have not conquered the psychological Ignorance. Our self-knowledge is limited to the little wave of superficial stream of our being; we take the surface becoming with its small selection of overtly mentalised experiences for our whole existence and ignorant of subtle physical, subtle vital and subtle mental sheath behind. This part of our being is an original flux of half-formulated movements carried on 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. So, we are ignorant of our large complex being, of our greater inner existence behind the surface, of that in us which is superconscient, intraconscient and circumconscient to our surface becoming which forms the basis of our psychological ignorance. The removal of this ignorance begins when we discover our true physical being, true vital being and true mental being and learn that this surface waking state is only a small part of large subliminal being, then we begin to fathom the abyss of the Inconscient and the depths of Subconscient and Subliminal and scale the heights of the Superconscient. We must enter into the inner subliminal and higher Psychic Sheaths of ourselves by an inward plunge or disciplined penetration and bring back with us to the surface their manifesting secrets. Or we must learn to live within and act from the greater and inner depths and from a Subliminal Soul that has become sovereign over the nature.

3) Temporal Ignorance:

“Earth must transform herself and equal Heaven
Or Heaven descend into earth’s mortal state.
But for such vast spiritual change to be,
Out of the mystic cavern in man’s heart
The heavenly **Psyche** must put off her veil
And step into common nature’s crowded rooms
And stand uncovered in that nature’s front
And rule its thoughts and fill the body and life.”

Savitri-486-487

We are ignorant of our All Life or the eternal becoming in Time and consider this small span of Time in a petty field of Space as our beginning, middle and end. This is the temporal ignorance which we can remove by the knowledge of our Psychic entity and its immortal persistence in Time beyond death and earth-existence. We have to know that this whole life is a small fragment of eternal All Life, to get at the conception of our own temporal eternity, to realise and become concretely aware of the subjective persistence or immortality of the Soul. When we begin to know that there are states behind the material and lives behind and before us, a pre-existence and a subsequent existence, then we are on the way to get rid of this **temporal Ignorance** and possess the eternity and live in the Timeless Self. The true Psychic consciousness within is not unaware of its past; it holds the direct retro-vision of the past there in the Being, ready with its fruits, and sends it up from time to time in memory or more concretely in result of past action or past causes to the superficial surface conscious being as *Karma*. It can be aware too of circum-vision of the present and the pre-vision of the future, for there is somewhere in the inner being a field of cognition open to future knowledge, a potential and reasonable Time-sense, Time-vision, Time-perception; something in it lives indivisibly in the knowledge of three times and contains all their apparent divisions and discords, holds the future ready for immediate manifestation within its integral vision. Those whose Psychic being are open live in the waking trance and become instrument of large and ceaseless Divine action.

4) Egoistic Ignorance:

“He glimpses eternity, touches the infinite,
He meets the gods in great and sudden hours,
He feels the universe as his **larger self**,
Makes **Space** and **Time** his opportunity
To join the heights and depths of being in light,
In the heart’s cave speaks secretly with God.”

Savitri-659

We are ignorant of our universal Self, the cosmic existence and cosmic consciousness, our infinite unity with all being and becoming. In the egoistic Ignorance we consider our egoistic mentality, vitality and corporeality as our true Self and regard everything other than that as not-Self. We begin to remove this Egoistic Ignorance when our Psychic being and Spiritual being are universalised, the universal Mother consents to live permanently in the Psychic heart centre within and Spiritual centre above the head, we gain the knowledge of the world as one with us in the consciousness of our true Self, thus cancelling our division from it by the separative idea and life of ego. Those who have realised their Cosmic Self become instrument of large world action and it gives the feeling that the world exists within them.

5) Cosmic Ignorance:

“Upon her silent heights she was aware
Of a **calm Presence throned above her brows**
Who saw the goal and chose each fateful curve;
It used the body for its pedestal;
The eyes that wandered were its searchlight fires,
The hands that held the reins its living tools;
All was the working of an ancient plan,
A way proposed by an unerring Guide.”

Savitri-378

We are ignorant of the Spaceless, Timeless, immobile and immutable Self, *Akshara purusha* and take this constant mobility and mutation of cosmic becoming in Space and Time as the whole truth of existence; that is cosmic Ignorance. All circumstances of opposition between knowledge and ignorance, light and darkness, delight and suffering are outcome of being's ignorance of individual self and self of all which is the cause of original cosmic Ignorance. The result of this Ignorance is limitation of consciousness and life is faced with the division in consciousness, division in will, division in knowledge, love and force. We remove this Cosmic Ignorance by realising and becoming aware of the knowledge of the Immobile Self above the head, the Spirit, the Being, *Sarbabhutasta atmanam*, the Self in all existences, the cosmos as Self's becoming, a manifestation of the Spirit. Those who have realised their Spiritual Being live in the silence of the eternity and remain witness of the Divine's endless work

6) Original Ignorance:

“Our conscious movements have **sealed origins**”

Savitri-161

“Abandoning the dubious middle Way,
A few shall glimpse the **miraculous Origin**
And some shall feel in you the secret Force
And they shall turn to meet a nameless tread,
Adventurers into a mightier Day.”

Savitri-704

The sign of original Ignorance is that we feel ourselves as if the centre point of the whole existence and hence infinitely important to All, but to us all existence is negligible, not fit to receive our care and attention. We are ignorant of our Source, origin and support and secret Reality of all things, *Sachchidananda, Purushottama, the Para-Brahman*, the source of all Being and Becoming; we take partial realisation of Being and temporal relation of the Becoming as the whole truth of existence; that is Original Ignorance. Absolute Reality is indefinable and ineffable by mental thought and mental language cannot define and limit it. It can be seized by Spiritual consciousness and with the help of knowledge by identity.

This Original Ignorance is removed by realisation of the Absolute as the origin of all things. Those who have gone through the Spiritual realisation of experience of the origin or the luminous Source of this existence are able to stand the catastrophes of all kind¹ and arrive at the golden glory.

7) Practical Ignorance:

“But not for self alone the Self is won:
Content abide not with one conquered realm;
Adventure all to make the whole world thine,
To break into greater kingdoms turn thy force.”

Savitri-536

Due to above six self-ignorance, we miss the true knowledge, government and enjoyment of our life in all the worlds; we are ignorant in 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 changed goal, --that is the practical ignorance. When this Ignorance is removed, we become aware of the true harmony and 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. Thus, we have set our step on the path which leads out of the falsehood and suffering of a limited and partial into the perfect possession and enjoyment of a true and complete existence.

Recapitulation:³

“Accepting the universe as her body of woe,
The Mother of seven sorrows bore
The seven stabs that pierced her bleeding heart:”

Savitri-503

The fixed fate or doom of an individual is the outcome of *Karma*; *Karma* is the outcome of sin; sin is the outcome of evil; evil is the outcome of wrong action; wrong action is the outcome of wrong will or activation of physical and vital mind; wrong will is the outcome of wrong consciousness; wrong consciousness is the outcome of falsehood; and falsehood is the outcome of Ignorance or part knowledge. So, all doom can be transformed into high Spiritual destiny by emergence of integral Knowledge.

So, man first has to work in Ignorance and learn the lesson within its limitation. He has to know it up to its farthest point so that he may be able to arrive at the border of Ignorance and Knowledge, where he meets the Truth, touch the final lid of its obscurity and develop faculties which enable him to overstep the powerful but really unsubstantial barrier of Ignorance. An integral Knowledge⁵

is a knowledge of truth of all planes of existence both separately followed by relation of each to all and relation of all to the truth of Spirit.

1: Original Ignorance: Not knowing the origin, Source of our existence, the Supramental Self or extending ahead to Bliss Self.

2: Cosmic Ignorance: Not knowing the immobile and immutable Self, the Spiritual Self.

3: Egoistic Ignorance: Not knowing the Universal Self, the Cosmic Self.

4: Temporal Ignorance: Not knowing the Psychic Being.

5: Psychological Ignorance: Not knowing the subliminal Self which constitute our true physical being, true vital being and true mental being.

6: Constitutional Ignorance: Not knowing the Subconscious Self, Inconscient Self and their influence on the waking Self.

7: Practical Ignorance: Not knowing the right relation of the surface physical, vital and mental Nature with the above ten Selves.

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References:

1: “They alone, who by their aspiration are able to pass through to the Divine Origin, will escape catastrophes... Only those who have an aspiration, a sincere and *unconditional* aspiration towards the Divine, only they will escape – they will stand in a golden glory.” The Mother/4th May/1972,

2: CWSA-21/The Life Divine-276,

3: 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: (1) — it will mean the knowledge of the Absolute as the origin of all things; (2) 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; (3) the knowledge of the world as one with us in the consciousness of our true self, thus cancelling our division from it by the separative idea and life of ego; (4) the knowledge of our psychic entity and its immortal persistence in Time beyond death and earth-existence; (5) the knowledge of our greater and inner existence behind the surface; (6) 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; (7) the knowledge, finally, of the true harmony and 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.” CWSA-22/The Life Divine-681-82,

4: “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.” CWSA-22/The Life Divine-656,

5: “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.” CWSA-22/The Life Divine-770

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