

EVOLUTION OF THE HIGHER CONSCIOUSNESS

STUDY GUIDE



PREFACE AND INTRODUCTION

Words to Know

Wisdom-Religion – One of the aims of Theosophy is to show the existence of an ancient ‘Wisdom-Religion’ from which all spiritual traditions, past and present, began. This idea is not new in human history, it has been proposed at different times by philosophers and mystics. However, it had been forgotten in the Western society of the nineteenth century. This Western influence was also beginning to affect the East, branding their ancient teachings as mere superstition. Today, it is widely recognized that there was wisdom in past cultures and religions. The East revalued its ancient teachings, and the existence of a “perennial philosophy” is accepted by many in the West. Encompasses the Wisdom Religion, Esoteric Philosophy and Occult Science. (*The Secret Doctrine, Past and Future*, Pablo Sender. <http://pablosender.com/the-secret-doctrine-past-and-future/>)

Ancient Wisdom – is a more general term, used for the knowledge that has been with humanity since the beginning of time. This is the wisdom in the teachings of the Vedas, the Egyptians, Pythagoras, among many others. In the 19th century Western thought tended to regard the past as a just a time of ignorance. Mme. Blavatsky contended that this wisdom has always existed and was expressed in different philosophical, scientific or religious forms.

Higher Triad - The Triad (sometimes called *upper triad*) is formed by the three higher Principles, *ātma-buddhi-manas*, the fruition of the latter assimilated by the first two after every terrestrial life. This is the perennial individuality that reincarnates in different personalities.

(https://theosophy.wiki/en/Triad#Human_triad)

Lower Triad and/or Quaternary -

(a) *sthūla-śarīra* - physical body - the vehicle of all the other Principles during life.

(b) *prāṇa* - life or vital principle - necessary only to a, c, d, and the functions of lower *manas*, which embrace all those limited to the (physical) brain.

(c) *līṅga-śarīra* - astral body - the double, the phantom body.

(d) *kāma* - seat of animal desires and passions - the centre of the animal man, where lies the line of demarcation which separates the mortal man from the immortal entity.

(<https://theosophy.wiki/en/Principle>)

Individuality – The higher ego, reflecting the dual monad - *ātma-buddhi* to a more or less extent according to its evolution. The permanent reincarnating Principle in humans. (*Evolution of the Higher Consciousness*, glossary)

Jñāna Yoga – (spiritual knowledge or wisdom) a path to attain the state of union of the higher and the lower. On this path, the aspirant studies spiritual teachings in a special way, seeking to raise consciousness so that truths can be realized, instead of merely becoming acquainted with the conceptual side of the teachings. (*Jñāna Yoga and “The Secret Doctrine”*, Pablo Sender - <http://pablosender.com/jnana-yoga-and-the-secret-doctrine-2/>)

Points to Ponder

Spiritual study involves a twofold dynamic:

1. A conceptual understanding of the information offered, and
2. A careful consideration of this information in a meditative and concentrated manner, seeking to grasp that which words can only indicate.

The perplexing style of Blavatsky's writings, which seem confusing and fragmentary, have the specific purpose of inducing the necessary exertion to reach those insights that will help us gain a more direct experience of what we are studying.

Sit with a notepad, ready to draw diagrams, write down key words, and consult other texts, if needed. As is to be expected, you will rarely get the main point in your first reading.

If study is to be a form of yoga, we must avoid the common tendency to select only those ideas that fit in our preconceived structure. ... The serious consideration of the contradictions will afford the necessary "upset" so that we do not get stuck in fixed views and are prepared to perceive something new.

Exercises to Explore

H. P. Blavatsky wrote:

The attitude of mind to receive the teachings is that which shall tend to develop the faculty of intuition. Practical esoteric science requires all the mental and psychic powers of the student to be used in examining what is given, to the end that the real meaning of the Teacher may be discovered, as far as the student can understand it. (Blavatsky Collected Writings, vol. 12, pp. 492-3)

Practice study as a form of meditation. Take a text from the book and follow these suggestions:

1. Set up a time when you will not be disturbed, as when you decide to meditate.
2. If needed, prepare a conducive environment for meditative study (burn incense, sit in a special place, turn off your phone, explore what will create this environment for you).
3. Spend a few minutes letting the mind rest. Let go of any thoughts that do not pertain to the study.
4. Start reading the text with complete attention. At this point, it is not important what you think about what the author says. The first step is to make sure you understand accurately the author's idea.
5. Study slowly—briefly pause after passages with a deep or profound meaning. Picture in your mind what the author is saying. Re-read the passage a few times until you feel you have grasped the totality of the meaning.

Questions to Answer

Discuss some of the differences between Western esoteric traditions, such as - Alchemy, Kabbalah, Hermeticism, Rosicrucianism, Freemasonry and Eastern philosophies, such as - Buddhism, Hinduism, Taoism, Yoga. And what aspects from both traditions do you see in Theosophical teachings?

Pablo tells us: Modern education stimulates primarily the cultivation of memory and the accumulation of conceptual content, the so-called "facts" From the esoteric point of view, however, memory and concepts, although necessary, are of secondary importance. ... the aim of teachers of this philosophy is to stimulate a "trans-conceptual" grasp of the realities described by the teachings. The way in which Blavatsky wrote encourages the student to make an effort to perceive the patterns and realities that stand beyond words This kind of effort stimulates the faculty of spiritual intuition in the student.

1. Discuss the purpose of Blavatsky's mission.
2. How can you best utilize study to gather more of a "trans-conceptual" grasp of the realities described in this book or any other?
3. Discuss how coming to our own perceptions instead of just memorizing someone else's words is important.

Further Reading

Bowen Notes – HPB How to Study Theosophy

The Seven Principles by Annie Besant

Diagrams

Divisions	Principles (Sanskrit)	Principles (English)	No.
Upper Triad	Ātman	Spirit	7
	Buddhi	Spiritual Soul	6
	Manas	Human Soul	5
Quaternary 1, 2, 3, 4	Kāma	Animal Soul	4
	Prāṇa	Vitality	3
Lower Triad 1, 2, 3	Liṅga-śarīra	Astral Double	2
	Sthūla-śarīra	Body	1

Resources for Research

Theosophical Web Search - <http://www.theosophicalsearch.org>

Theosophy Wiki - <https://theosophy.wiki>