

CHAPTER I
THEOSOPHICAL VIEW ON EVOLUTION



Words to Know

ātman – universal spirit.

buddhi – spiritual soul.

manas – human soul.

monad – divine spark.

Individuality – in Theosophical teachings, the term is used to refer to the source of our existence as a differentiated center of consciousness within the universal life.

Individualizing principle – is higher *manas* which serves as a vehicle (*upādhi*) for the universal Principles of *ātman* and *buddhi*.

psyche – the totality of mental and emotional activities of a person.

passional nature – animal soul, *kāma*.

intellect – in Theosophical literature it generally means the higher mind.

modern Theosophy – the teachings that came from the leaders and members of the Theosophical Society, as opposed to universal theosophy which came through sages from various times and traditions (notice the distinction in the capitalization of the “t”—capitalized in modern Theosophy and lowercase in universal theosophy).

unity – everything in the cosmos is the expression of a single source or Principle—the whole cosmos is one being.

upādhi – vehicle of consciousness

Points to Ponder

As you ponder over these points, what insights do you come up with that help you to hold the understanding of this chapter?

Below, we are summarizing some of the lists or classifications Pablo has used in gathering HPB’s teachings. As you read this section and throughout the book, it is important to remember:

“Any classification is an artificial division of something that is ultimately a unity.” (pp. 4-5)

1. Early Christianity postulated that every person consisted of a:

Body – which represents everything related to our physical nature, including the biological needs and instincts associated with it.

Soul – our psychological aspect, the element responsible for our conduct, whose activities are desire, will, memory, and thought.

Spirit – is the eternal and incorruptible spark within; the presence of the divine in each of us, from which spiritual qualities such as love, peace, joy, compassion and wisdom originate. (p. 4)

2. In the model that we examine in this chapter, there are the three higher planes of the cosmos which are regarded as divine. Because they are beyond our comprehension, they are not listed here. The septenary human being inhabits the four lower cosmic realms, of which we can gain a certain understanding.

Spiritual Realm – home of the divine spark, the monad. Consists of the two highest Principles in human beings: the universal spirit (*ātman*) and the spiritual soul (*buddhi*).

Intellectual Realm – plane of our spiritual Individuality (*manas*), frequently referred to as the “higher ego”. It is the divine spark when Individualized, also called the human soul.

Psychic Realm – a “ray” from *manas* “descends” to this plane and becomes entangled with the 4th human Principle, the animal soul (*kāma*), which is the passionate nature inherited from the animal kingdom. The “ray” is lower *manas*—our everyday mind that works under the influence of personal emotions and memories. This thought/emotion complex (*kāma-manas*) is the “lower ego.”

Physical Realm – home of the densest aspect of human beings—the body, which includes the three lower Principles: the physical matter and form (*sthūla-śarīra*), an ethereal counterpart or double (*liṅga-śarīra*), and the vital Principle that keeps the body alive (*prāṇa*). (pp. 5-6)

3. There are two aspects of the human being, one being permanent and the other transient.

Higher Triad – the permanent Individuality beyond life and death (*ātman*, *buddhi*, and higher *manas*).

Lower Quaternary – mind-body complex, the transient Personality, which changes from incarnation to incarnation (*kāma-manas*, *prāṇa*, *liṅga-śarīra*, *sthūla-śarīra*) (p. 6)

4. According to the Esoteric philosophy, evolution does not only take place on the physical plane know to scientists, but at three different levels. These are the Streams of Evolution.

Spiritual Evolution: concerned with the growth and development into still higher phases of activity of the monad (*ātman* and *buddhi*).

Intellectual Evolution: related to the higher ego (higher *manas*), the source of intelligence and consciousness in humans.

Physical Evolution: involving the body and its vital energy (*sthūla-śarīra*, *liṅga-śarīra*, and *prāṇa*). This body serves as the vehicle for “growth” and the transformations through *manas* and—owing to the accumulation of experiences—of the finite into the INFINITE, of the transient into the eternal and absolute.” (*SD*, vol. 1, p. 181) (p.8)

Questions for Discussion

1. What is the importance of lower *manas* in the evolution of higher *manas*? (p. 9)
2. “The final success of the Intellectual stream of evolution depends on the progressive ‘death’ of the personal ego (*kāma-manas*) as a center of consciousness.” (p. 9)
Discuss ...
First, how is this statement a paradox; since lower *manas* clearly has an importance in the evolution of the higher.
Second, what practical ways are there for us to achieve this “death” or, another way of putting it—dis-identification with the personal ego?
3. The universal monad journeys through the different kingdoms—What happens at the completion of the animal kingdom, before it arrives to the human stage of evolution? (p. 9)

4. Continuing on from the previous question—at this point in evolution the newly individualized monads have a new challenge ... what is that challenge? (p. 10)
5. What is the final goal of human evolution? (p. 10)
6. What is the goal of Physical evolution? (p.10)
7. Why did the forms that we call “humans” grow in intelligence so rapidly while other animal forms with good brains did not? (p. 11)
8. What is the aim of the present book? (p. 12)

Exercises to Explore

Annie Besant wrote:

In the eastern books you do not get a clear presentment of a doctrine as a whole—it is scattered over the books. In the old days men had to work out results; so they grew into great thinkers, because they exercised their minds. This characteristic makes some people reluctant to study this literature because it implies a special kind of effort and, being unaware of the true aim, the student sees no use in doing it. Also, they expect to get a clear picture out of the study and when they do not, they feel their effort was wasted.

Spend some time every day reading the last part of this chapter.

The aim of the first part of the Ego’s journey is to gradually awaken its dormant consciousness—something that takes place by going through the cycles of reincarnation. By means of this process, the Ego passes “through every experience and feeling that exists in the manifold or differentiated universe” (*KT*, p. 183) and gradually comes to realize that it (the Ego) is an Individual entity. Since in the first part of its evolutionary journey the Ego is unable to guide the human form, the latter, heavily influenced by the animal soul (*kāma*), uses the powers of thought and self-consciousness mainly to gratify the lower nature. As the cycle of incarnation progresses, the experiences gained on the lower planes gradually awaken the Ego to full consciousness on its own plane.

The Ego’s next goal in the evolutionary journey is twofold: to become the master of the lower Principles and to merge with the spiritual monad. In other words, the Ego has to strive to transcend its identification with the personality (through which it awakened to self-conscious life) and endeavor to realize its true identity—a divine spark (monad) dwelling in the Intellectual realm, and expressing itself on the lower planes. With the attainment of this goal the monad becomes self-conscious on all levels of the cosmos and the goal of human evolution is accomplished. (p. 12)

Read in a meditative way—slowly; briefly pausing after each sentence. Picture in your mind what the Pablo is saying here. Use diagrams and writing to make your thinking and insights more concentrated.

More Seeds for Meditation

We divide Man into seven Principles, but this does not mean that he has, as it were, seven skins, or entities, or souls. These Principles are all aspects of one Principle, and even this Principle is but a temporary and periodical ray of the One eternal and infinite Flame or Fire. (*SD*, vol. 1, p. 334)

The “seven Principles” are, of course, the manifestation of one indivisible spirit. (*CW*, vol. 10, p. 335)

Further Reading

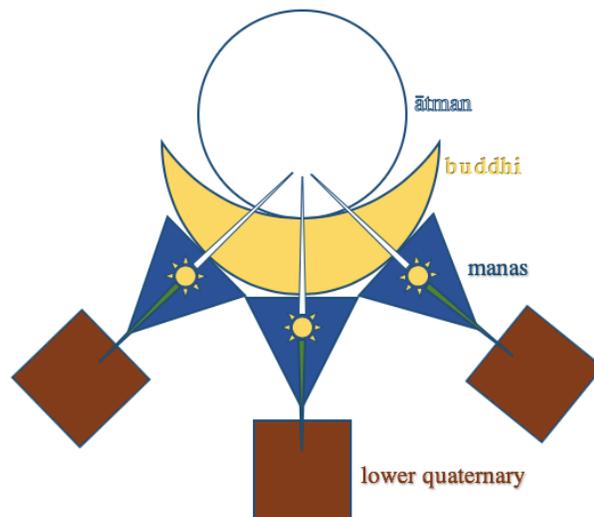
Seven Principles by Annie Besant – link

The Roots of Modern Theosophy by Pablo Sender – link

The Roots of Theosophy - Diagram by Pablo Sender – link

Diagrams

This diagram is an illustration of how the divine spark (monad: *ātma-buddhi*) which is essentially universal, is Individualized in different human souls (*manas*). Then, each individualized *manas* sends a “ray” (lower *manas*) to animate their respective lower quaternaries (the separate personalities). (p. 6)



The following diagram shows how a unified element (*ātman*) with 3 unseparated aspects (consciousness – matter – energy) gives rise to a septenary manifestation (7 Principles). (p. 5)

Aspects	Principles
C E ▲ M	<i>ātman</i> – spirit
C – E – M	<i>buddhi</i> – spiritual soul
C – M – E	<i>manas</i> – human soul
E – C – M	<i>kāma</i> – animal soul, passionate nature
E – M – C	<i>prāṇa</i> – vitality
M – C – E	<i>liṅga-śarīra</i> – ethereal double
M – E – C	<i>sthūla-śarīra</i> – physical body

Resources for Research

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

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