

Chapter 3

THE MONAD



Words to Know

ātman – is a non-localized, non-personal, no-dual Presence, which constitutes the unitive basis of everything that exists. *Be-ness*.

be-ness – the source of all the different types of being and consciousness manifesting in the cosmos.

buddhi – metaphorically seen as the “vehicle” (*upādhi*) of *ātman*. Spiritual intuition.

spiritual intuition – a buddhic faculty by which certain (in the sense of true) knowledge can be obtained. The kind of cognition that is not possible through thinking. A knowledge that is not mediated by intellectual processes.

monad – from the Greek *monas*, meaning One, a unit.

dual monad – *ātma-buddhi* ... the divine spark or “unit” that emerges from its condition of pure spirituality and “descends in matter” in order to undergo a process of cosmic evolution. (cML, no. 104, p. 362)

triple monad – *ātma-buddhi-manas*

consciousness – the ability to respond to the environment.

conscious being – one that is able to perceive the environment and respond to it.

cosmos – an ordered system, generally refers to the universe.

lunar form – *kāma*, the passionate nature or animal soul.

Name Game

Ātman ... be-ness ... divine spirit ... perfect ... ray of the universal seventh Principle ... absolute reality ... universal consciousness ... One element ... spiritual substance

Buddhi ... wisdom, enlightenment ... impersonal Principle ... beyond the realm of the mind ... divine soul ... vehicle of *ātman* ... mold of the garments of *ātman* ... first reflection of *ātman* ... universal seed of consciousness ... ray of the cosmic sixth Principle

Kuṇḍalinī-śakti ... energy-side of *buddhi* ... fire of friction ... electric fire ... Power ... World-Mother ... serpentine ... spiral force

Questions for Discussion

1. Compare and contrast the Hindu meaning of *buddhi* and the Theosophical view. (p. 33) See also “Buddhi” at Theosophical Wiki <https://theosophy.wiki/en/Buddhi>
2. What happens when *ātman* manifests in the conditioned cosmos? (p. 33)
3. Trace the two aspects of the Ultimate Reality (*ātman*) from the diagram on p. 34.
4. *Buddhi* is the first form in which *ātman* appears in the cosmos ... what are the subtle differentiations of *buddhi*? And what problem does this view pose? (p. 34)
5. If we limit ourselves to consider human existence, what can we say is the primary aim of the evolution of the monad? And why do we have to limit it to this level? (p. 36)

6. *Ātman* is described as “conscious non-consciousness,” *buddhi* is “simply the first differentiation [of the highest reality]” ... how is the description of *buddhi* different on the spiritual realm in relation to “this plane of finite consciousness”? (pp. 36-7)
7. What is an important goal during the human stage of evolution? (p. 37)
8. What Principle is needed for the dual monad to generate individual consciousness on the lower plane? (p. 37)
9. Delineate the differences between consciousness and self-consciousness. (p. 38)
10. When does the human stage of evolution begin? (p. 39)
11. What is the difference between spiritual and psychic intuition? (p. 41)
12. According to Blavatsky, which Principle is the source of “all beautiful inspirations of art, poetry, and music, high types of dreams, flashes of genius.” (p. 42)
13. What is the warning HPB gives when one attempts at “arousing [*kuṇḍalinī*] into action”? (p. 43)
14. What specifically needs to be “destroyed” before attempting to awaken *kuṇḍalinī*? Why? (p. 44)
15. “Although the activation of *buddhi* results in the awakening of the fiery power, the opposite is not necessarily true.” Explain this statement. (p. 44)

Points to Ponder

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

“When the ultimate reality is reflected in the realm of time and space, it appears as a basic duality—consciousness and substance [or spirit and matter]. Although seemingly different, they are but two aspects of one Reality.” (p. 34)

“The diversity we see in the cosmos is generated gradually, in a progressive movement of differentiation or densification. The first form in which *ātman* appears in the cosmos is called *buddhi*. *Buddhi* can therefore be thought of as a subtle conditioning of the consciousness-aspect of *ātman*, a subtle transformation of its energy-aspect, and a subtle differentiation of its substance-aspect.” (p. 34)

“*Buddhi* is the mold of the “garments of *ātman*, because *ātman* is no body, or shape or anything, and because *buddhi* is its vehicle only *figuratively*.” (SD, v. 1, p. 245 ... p. 35)

“While the image of *buddhi* as a transformation of *ātman* retains the idea of unity, that of *buddhi* as its reflection exemplifies better the concept of the immutability of *ātman*.” (p. 35)

“*Ātman*, being the ultimate reality, is perfect in itself, beyond any possibility of growth or development. What evolves is its reflection in *buddhi*.” (p. 36)

“The highest sees through the eye of the lowest in the manifested world; *puruṣa* (spirit) remains blind without the help of *prakṛti* (matter) in the material spheres; and so does *ātma-buddhi* without *manas*.” (SD, v. 2, p. 123, fn ... p. 38)

“What we can call human consciousness has its foundation in *ātman* but, as such, it originates from *buddhi* plus *manas*.” (p. 39)

“On one hand, the monad can be expressed on the lower planes by means of the Principle of mind. On the other, *manas* is assimilated by the divine spark, thus acquiring a spiritual sense of individuality.” (p. 40)

Spiritual intuition (*buddhi*) is ... “the only faculty by means of which men and things are seen in their true colors. It is an instinct of the soul ...” (p. 41)

“Another important aspect to keep in mind is that this knowledge is not based on the perception of an object by a subject that is separate from it. Since the ‘buddhic [is] the sense of being one with

the Universe,' (CW, v. 12, p. 253) this higher type of knowledge comes from experiencing a union with the object of knowledge. (p. 42)

Exercises to Explore

H. P. Blavatsky wrote:

“As one progresses in Jñāna Yoga one finds conceptions arising, which will form into mental pictures. Refuse to be deluded with the idea that the new found and wonderful picture must represent reality. It does not. As one works on, one finds the once admired picture growing dull and unsatisfying, and finally fading out or being thrown away. This is another danger point, because for the moment one is left in a void and may be tempted to revive the cast-off picture. The true student will, however, work on unconcerned until at last the mind and its pictures are transcended and the learner enters and dwells in the World of NO FORM, but of which all forms are narrowed reflections.”

Throughout the reading of this book, at some point in each chapter ... work at the three steps of spiritual studying: 1) reading or hearing of the text, 2) pondering over, and 3) meditating upon.

- a) Take a part of the chapter that inspires you and spend some time just reading it deeply. Have a dictionary close by and look up the terms you may not know, Make sure you *understand all the meanings of the words* and specifically the meaning used in the text.
- b) Once this is done, start reading the text slowly, allowing ample time for reflection. The aim here is *understanding the concepts* in a deeper way than merely knowing what the words mean.
- c) Finally, start meditating on the text chosen, using the concepts as a springboard to *sense* the reality that they are pointing to.

More Seeds for Meditation

“Since *ātman* is the one metaphysical element or spiritual substance from which everything is developed, it is also the material basis of all the planes, even the lowest of them—the physical. Ultimately speaking, everything emanates from (or, rather, within) *ātman*.” (p. 34) Use the diagram on that page to help in the mediation.

“All Principles, are but the one reality in its various aspects.” (p. 35)

“When this long process of human evolution is finished, the monad becomes “triple.” The totality of its Principles (*ātma-buddhi-manas*), which at the beginning of the evolutionary journey were latent, are now awakened. The divine spark becomes self-aware on all the planes of the system and is ready to move on to the next evolutionary start—that of a celestial being.” (p. 44)

Diagrams

Expanding from the reading on page 37, in this diagram are the correspondences between the Cosmic and Human Principles.

Cosmic Principles	Human Principles
PARABRAHMAN - absolute reality	ĀTMAN – higher self
ĀLAYA – universal soul	BUDDHI – spiritual soul
MAHAT – universal mind	MANAS – higher mind
KĀMA-DEVA – universal love	KĀMA – passionate nature

In the diagram below we can see the “light” of the one monad “overshadowing” the different kingdoms of Nature. Notice the reflection of the one monad becoming more and more differentiated and separated with each kingdom. From the reading on page 39.

Principle Developed	Kingdom	Differentiation of the Monad	“Overshadowing”	Presence of the Monad
physical etheric vital	Mineral		illumination evenly distributed	whole kingdom
	Plant		pockets of brighter light	whole species
kāma	Animal		almost separate reflections	groups of individual animals
manas	Human		bright and separated reflections	individual human beings

Further Reading

The Monad by Charles Leadbeater

Resources for Research

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

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