

## Chapter 4

# MANAS – THE EGO



### Words to Know

manas – mind, to think ... the mental faculty which makes of Man an intelligent and moral being, and distinguishes him from the mere animal

manu – man, the thinker

Principles – the basic “elements” or “essences” upon which everything is formed

Individuality – higher *manas*, which individualizes the dual monad (*ātma-buddhi*)

egoity – the higher “Individuality”

egotism – the higher sense of *I-ness* from the Individuality

egoism – the lower sense of *I-ness* from the “personality”; “selfishness” – the opposite of egoity

causal body – (*kāraṇa-śarīra*) is the vehicle of consciousness of the higher ego

inherent omniscience – the faculty to know or apprehend the essence of whatever consciousness focuses on

intellectual insight – a flash of understanding which comes from the higher mind

### Name Game

**Manas in general** ... fifth Principle ... the Principle of mind ... principle of self-consciousness ... a distinct entity, an “I” ... human soul

**Higher manas** ... Ego ... higher ego ... Individuality ... sentient reincarnating Principle in Man ... reincarnating ego ... the noetic Principle ... manifested God within each rational being ... “I am I” ... spiritual mind ... suprasensuous thought ... abstract mind

**Lower Manas** ... ego ... lower ego ... personal ... “I am John Smith” ... sense-thought ... concrete mind

**Dual monad** ... *ātma-buddhi*

**Triple monad** ... *ātma-buddhi-manas* ... higher *manas* at one with *buddhi* ... human monad ... divine Man

### Questions for Discussion

1. What is the first duality of *manas*? (p. 47)
2. When exploring *manas* as a Principle, *manas* is usually called what? (pp. 47-8)
3. Compare the use of the word “ego” – in modern use according to Freud; in modern spirituality; and in early Theosophical literature. (pp. 48-9)
4. What is the difference in the pronunciation of the higher and lower egos. (fn., p. xiii)
5. Diagram your rendition of the analogy Pablo uses about the sun (*ātman*) and the “magnifying glass” that represents *manas*. (p. 50)

6. During the early period of evolution, primitive humans remained devoid of understanding, why? (p. 51)
7. While *ātman* is \_\_\_\_\_ and *buddhi* is an \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, *manas* is the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ ... the sense of “I am I,” which gives us the ability to do what? (p. 52)
8. Animals have consciousness, but lack self-consciousness. What does this mean? Differentiate this with the self-consciousness of humans. (p. 52)
9. What is the result of the ray of *manas* entangling with the personal vehicles of consciousness? (p. 53)
10. What is the natural result of identification of the impersonal consciousness with the personal *vehicles* of consciousness? (p. 53)
11. What is the second quality of *manas*? (p. 55)
12. Discuss what “unconditionally omniscient on its own plane, and only potentially so in our terrestrial sphere” means. (p. 55)
13. How does inherent omniscience of the Ego differ from the spiritual intuition that comes from *buddhi*? (fn., p. 55)
14. Re-read the two quotes on page 56 – think of examples where the thinking from the lower mind caused a conflict or misunderstanding due to its inability to perceive past what the senses bring to thought.
15. “Our mind, although a powerful tool, is still quite limited” ... how can we better discover what is relatively true? (p. 56)
16. If the lower mind is not the source of that truer perception ... why is it needed? (p. 57)
17. What is the key characteristic of *manas*? (p. 57)
18. According to the Occult science, what is the real “brain”? (fn., p. 57)
19. Compare and contrast higher *manas* with lower *manas* – keeping in mind that although dual in nature, they are really a single Principle. (pp. 60)
20. What is one of the aims of the evolutionary journey for the higher ego? (p. 61)
21. In an enlightened being, what is the distinction between the lower mind and the lower ego? What is he or she identified and not identified with? (p. 61)
22. Discuss or think about the analogy of the car used on page 62 as an example of the difference between our higher and lower mind. (p. 62)

## 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?

“*Ātman* and *buddhi* are the two universal Principles shared by all living creatures, as well as ‘inanimate’ objects.” (p. 47)

“Let us remember that just as *ātman* is the reflection of the absolute reality (*parabrahman*), and *buddhi* that of the universal soul (*ālaya*), so is *manas* the expression of the universal mind (*mahat*) in human beings.” (p. 47)

“*Manas* is ... mysterious, protean, beyond any grasp, and almost shadowy in its correlations with the other Principles, that is most difficult to realize, and still more so to explain.” (*The Key to Theosophy*, p. 183 ... p. 47)

Ponder over the differentiations of the use of “ego” according to the Theosophical literature, use the table on page 49, and add the descriptions from the paragraphs above it. (p. 49)

“*Ātman* and *buddhi* are impersonal and universal Principles, interpenetrating everything. But once connected to *manas*, the dual monad becomes focalized into an Individuality.” (p. 49)

“The higher ego is far too spiritual to fully “descend” into the lower planes—the material personality being only able to express a very limited “fragment” of it. For this reason, it is said that the fifth Principle emanates just a “ray” of itself to incarnate.” (p. 51)

“Eventually, instead of the simple and undefined feeling of “I am I” we have “I am—*John Smith*.” It is through this process that the impersonal and pure *being-ness* of the higher ego, which is independent of any particular personality, becomes the personal self, frequently called in Theosophy the “lower ego.” (p. 53)

“The dual monad (*ātma-buddhi*), which is universal and beyond any sense of individuality, in descending to the manasic plane develops an impersonal spiritual *I-ness* (higher ego). Then, the latter, emanating a Ray into denser matter, produces the “mirage” of the personal ego.” (p. 54)

“We should not imagine, however, that this higher mind is completely out of touch with our daily life. As we work in a spiritual direction, even our regular thinking starts to be affected by the higher mind.” (p. 59)

## Exercises to Explore

In the article “Some Practical Suggestions for Daily Life” published by H. P. Blavatsky, we read:

*Strive, by concentrating the whole force of your soul, to shut the door of your mind to all stray thoughts, allowing none to enter but those calculated to reveal to you the unreality of sense-life, and the Peace of the Inner World. Ponder day and night over the unreality of all your surroundings and of yourself. ... Indifferent thoughts, however, serve merely to distract the attention and waste energy. The first great basic delusion you have to get over is the identification of yourself with the physical.* (Some Practical Suggestions for Daily Life, section VI)

*Spiritual culture is attained through concentration. It must be continued daily and every moment to be of use. Meditation has been defined as “the cessation of active external thought.” Concentration is the entire life-tendency to a given end. ... Hence the mystic obtains knowledge about any object of which he thinks constantly in fixed contemplation.* (Some Practical Suggestions for Daily Life, section V)

Throughout our day we should strive for constant vigilance over our thoughts while at the same time realizing how these thoughts condition our response to life.

- a) “Thought has a self-reproductive power,” an energy and a direction of its own. The first step is to become aware of this pace and motion. Notice the times in your day when your mind is on autopilot or picks up a touchstone from a memory and then continues to go down the rabbit hole. Realize how this then colors your moods, actions and sensations from this one particular pattern of thought.
- b) Once you become more aware of the thinking process and patterns of the conditioned mind, you can begin to move your thoughts in a different direction ... first by distraction of a benign nature—paying attention to something that moves you away from this lower state of mind and thereby creating the ground for reception of the higher. After this becomes more of a new habit or pattern of thinking, you can then use every moment possible to point your thoughts in the direction of the higher by means of where you focus your mind during the day, and then by the study of spiritual texts.

- c) Create something that reminds you throughout your day to reach for higher aspirations. For example, when the chimes of the clock ring in the hour; or an app set on your phone; or sticky notes with inspirational quotes; or a talisman that you see or touch often, etc.—something that catches your attention and reminds you to look towards that which is real, abstract and eternal.

## Seeds for Meditation

“*Buddhi* would remain only an impersonal spirit without this element which it borrows from the human soul [*manas*], which conditions and makes of it, in this illusive universe, *as if it were something separate* from the universal soul for the whole period of the cycle of incarnation.” (*Key to Theosophy*, pp. 59-60 ... p. 49)

“When the evolutionary process reaches the human stage, the universal monad is connected with *manas*, which “concentrates” the radiation of the former. This “individualized beam” becomes the reincarnating Individuality or Ego, the human soul.” (p. 50)

“In its own inherent nature, or essence, [the spiritual mind] is omniscient, for it is part of the divine mind. But once that it has been brought to reincarnate on earth, it takes up all the materiality and all the finite attributes, so to say, and the qualities of the personalities it incarnates in.” (*SD Commentaries*, pp. 578-9 ... p. 55)

“True intelligence, however, does not come from the accumulation of facts—it is the ability to see deeper and perceive holistic patterns and relationships that are not recognized by the superficial mind. Once the higher mind begins to awaken, it exerts far greater influence on the development of wisdom than any activity born in the womb of thought and memory.” (p. 57)

## Diagrams

Use the diagram on page 62, read the summary and mediate on both the horizontal and the vertical. Add your own words and expressions to the diagram. (p. 62)

## Further Reading

*The Seven Principles* by Annie Besant – **Principle V**, p. 11-26

## Resources for Research

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

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