

Chapter 7

EVOLUTION OF THE HIGHER EGO



Words to Know

omniscience – the state of knowing everything

inherent omniscience – the ability to know anything that one chooses to know. In the case of the higher ego, its inherent omniscience is limited to its own plane—the Intellectual realm or the higher mental plane.

universal AUM – the sacred syllable; the triple-lettered unit; hence the trinity in one; it is an invocation, a benediction, an affirmation and a promise

involution – the monad “descending” through the different planes, falling into matter; from unity to multiplicity

evolution – the “re-ascent” back from the more material planes to the spiritual planes; from diversity to unity

devachan – a blissful post-mortem state between two earth-lives into which the higher ego enters after its separation from the *kāma-rūpa*. It is a period of rest, reward for spiritual efforts, and assimilation of the experience gained during life.

Adept – one in whom the union of *manas* with *buddhi* is permanent

buddhi – source of wisdom, germ of enlightenment present in every human being from the beginning

divine spark – monad, *ātma-buddhi*, because it is too spiritual to be able to affect directly the consciousness of the lower personality, this wisdom remains latent in most people

reason – important tool of consciousness in the material world, inadequate when it comes to the perception of spiritual realities. It distinguishes and defines; it works within the domain of arguments and dialectics.

spiritual intuition – the expression of *buddhi* through the mind, a faculty higher than our reason, can always conceive the abstract idea; that which is never perceived by the senses

sense-thought – what we normally call “thinking,” operating from our lower mind; thinking based on what we come to know through our senses

supersensuous thought – a transcendental form of thinking from the higher ego, not based on information gathered by means of the senses

divine wisdom – beyond supersensuous thought, operates from the buddhic plane; no-thinking as a process to realize truth but an immediate perception of truth, which is trans-mental

Name Game

Antahkarana ... helps the personality by providing a means for spiritual influence from the higher nature ... not only the source of “all good and noble aspirations” expressing through the lower nature, but also the bridge to transfer any valuable personal experience to the higher ego ... represents “the upward energies of the lower *manas*, the energies and the tendencies which become it devachanic experiences.

Devachan ... in it, all of the unselfish and spiritual memories and qualities of a particular incarnation are integrated into the developing monad ... they become part of what we could call “the evolutionary experience” of the Ego ... survive the oblivion into which all that was purely personal inevitably falls

Questions for Discussion

1. When talking about the *inherent omniscience* of the higher ego, what is the first thing to keep in mind? (p. 93)
2. Why are the spiritual faculties of the higher ego said to be dormant? (p. 93)
3. What is the second goal of the Ego? With this development, what does the Ego realize? (p. 94)
4. The Egos (divine beings), in order to become one with the whole, need to purify themselves. For this, they must experience the differentiated universe on two levels, what are those two levels? (p. 94)
5. How does the higher ego awaken to self-consciousness in the Psychic and Physical realms? (p.95)
6. Most spiritual teachings have to do with moving beyond the lower ego; Blavatsky points out, there is also ... what? (p. 95)
7. What is the “real life” for the *real* Ego? (p. 96)
8. What is the aim of this stage of evolution [the Individual aspect of the Ego’s evolution taking place on the higher planes]? (p. 96)
9. What are the aspects of our daily life that will help the evolution of the Ego? What activities are irrelevant for the Ego? (p. 98)
10. What is the effect of the assimilation in the monad during devachan? What is assimilated? (p. 100)
And what becomes conscious? (p. 101)
11. Once an incarnation is finished, what becomes sorted out and discarded? And what becomes self-conscious? (p. 101)
12. As *buddhi* develops a spiritual sense of *I-ness*, what happens? (p. 101)
13. The last stage in the process of unfoldment consists of what? (p. 102)
14. What is the ultimate purpose of the human stage of evolution? (p. 102)
15. The self-consciousness of higher *manas* is a pure sense of being, which is not personal or selfish. However, what is it still? (p. 105)
16. What is the difference between “accumulation of information about spiritual matters” and “growth in spiritual knowledge”? (p. 106)

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?

“At the beginning of its evolution, the Ego is like an infant born in the Intellectual realm. Being endowed only with the seed of individual consciousness, it is neither aware of the higher nor of the lower planes. In the course of evolution, it begins to awaken to the realities of its own realm, but a long time passes before the Ego comes out of its passive state and becomes able to act in relation to the lower planes.” (p. 93)

“The higher ego is highly spiritual, and is linked very closely with the higher Principles, *buddhi* and *atman*. These higher Principles are entirely inactive on our plane, and the higher ego (*manas*) itself is more or less dormant during the waking of the physical Man.” (CW, v10, p249) - p. 93

“Little by little, the experience gathered through lower *manas* awakens the Ego to the existence of the lower planes. In time, it begins to learn about them and gradually becomes able to assert its influence on the personality through the *antahkarana*.” (p. 94)

“The divine egos, in order to re-become the One Essence, or be indrawn again to the universal AUM, have to purify themselves in the fire of suffering and individual experience.” (CW, v12, p630) - p. 94

Use the diagram on page 96 to understand the aim of human evolution. (p. 96)

“Day-to-day affairs, when lived with a mundane attitude, are of little use to the Ego. However, if they are approached with a spiritual intent, they become the path to the higher.” (p. 99)

“*Manas* is spiritual self-consciousness, in itself, and divine consciousness when united with *buddhi*.” (SD, v2, p231, fn.) - p. 104

“Blavatsky pointed out ... ‘the contrast between the laboriously acquired knowledge of the senses and mind (*manas*), and the intuitive omniscience of the spiritual divine soul—*buddhi*.’” (SD, v1, p279) - p. 107

The Masters

“The ‘gestation’ of the spiritual ego comes gradually, incarnation after incarnation, through the assimilation that occurs in the womb of devachan. Eventually, the spiritual ego is born, in what is sometimes described as the ‘second birth.’ At this point there is no need for devachan any longer. In order to acquire absolute wisdom, the union of these two principles [*buddhi-manas*] has to be expressed while the Adept is incarnated in the physical body.” (p. 102)

“Although Adepts are able to raise their consciousness higher than the buddhic plane, they still retain the spiritual ego as a vehicle of consciousness. If they were to drop it and merely dwell in the ātmic vehicle they enter into *nirvāṇa* and lose their ability to express themselves on the lower planes.” (p. 103)

“In order to be able to help humanity, the Masters of Wisdom refuse to take the rightful prize of their efforts—the unalloyed bliss of *nirvāṇa* on the ātmic plane, but instead make of *buddhi* the home of their enlightened consciousness. When *buddhi* evolves to become a seat of consciousness, it reflects the power of *ātman*, but now with the element of pure self-awareness added. The spiritual ego is thus a self-conscious vehicle of *ātman*, the real in us, and the latter becomes the higher self of that Individuality.” (p. 103)

Exercises to Explore

In his book *Las Siete Dimensiones del Ser*, Pablo gives us an approach to awakening the abstract mind:

This exercise involves a systematic practice of the study of abstract spiritual literature as a means of elevating our consciousness. Dr. Besant explained it in the following manner:

If, studying man in his present stage of evolution, we seek to know the seat of this Self-consciousness, we find that in most of us its throne is the lower mind. ... From this life of the lower mind, in which sensations still play so large a part, man rises to the life of the intellect [higher mind], and the lower mind becomes his instrument, ceasing to be himself. From the life of the intellect he must rise to the life of the Spirit, and know himself as the One. The seat of Self-consciousness is moved from the lower mind to the higher by strenuous thinking, by the intellectual travail of the student, the philosopher, the man of science—if the latter turn his thoughts from objects to principles, from phenomena to laws. (Annie Besant, “The Reality of the Invisible and the Actuality of the Unseen Worlds”, pp. 13-16)

The intellect (in the philosophical sense that Dr. Besant uses this word) is a higher aspect of our mind, sometimes called “the abstract mind,” and has interests that are not related to the material world. Thus, our first step is to elevate the focus of self-consciousness from the concrete mind to the abstract, that is, to discover that life is much more than the concrete and material, and thus to begin experiencing this subtler

dimension of our consciousness. Dr. Besant says that this is attained by adopting a philosophical attitude toward life, that is to say, trying to grasp the abstract principles and laws which govern our existence. Through such effort, the mind becomes refined and prepared to perceive the formless world of spirit. This, and not merely the accumulation of information, is one of the main objectives of the study of Theosophy.

So we must be aware of two things: First, that spiritual study must not become a mere exercise of gaining information and repeating it. Only the true effort to reach something which is beyond our conception tends to activate the abstract mind. When we simply repeat something that we have learned, the effect on the abstract mind is practically nil. Theosophical literature is so profound that, if one tries, one can always discover more subtle and spiritual aspects, even in topics previously examined many times. In addition to this effort, for the study not to become a mere intellectual activity, it must be accompanied by a genuine effort to live according to what has been learned.

When there is a sincere effort to live in accordance with what has been studied, we are stimulating the development of *manas-antahkaraṇa*, which connects us with higher *manas*.

Seeds for Meditation

“Try to imagine a ‘spirit,’ a celestial being, whether we call it by one name or another, divine in its essential nature, yet not pure enough to be *one with the ALL*, and having, in order to achieve this, to so purify its nature as to finally gain that goal. It can do so only by passing *Individually* and *personally, i.e.*, spiritually and physically, through every experience and feeling that exists in the manifold or differentiated universe.” (*KT*, p. 183) - p. 94

“The mission of the higher ego is to shoot out a Ray to be a soul in a child. Only thus can the higher ego manifest, for thus it manifests through [personal] attributes. Only thus also can it gather experience; and the meaning of the passage in the *Upanishads*, where it says that the Gods feed upon men, is that the higher ego obtains its Earth experience through the lower.” (*CW*, vol. 12, p. 709) - p. 97

“Does it seem to you a small thing that the past year has been spent only in your “family duties”? Nay, but what better cause for reward, what better discipline, than the daily and hourly performance of duty? Believe me my “pupil,” the man or woman who is placed by Karma in the midst of small plain duties and sacrifices and loving-kindnesses, will through these faithfully fulfilled rise to the larger measure of Duty, Sacrifice and Charity to all humanity—what better path towards the enlightenment you are striving after than the daily conquest of Self, the perseverance in spite of want of visible psychic progress, the bearing of ill-fortune with the serene fortitude which turns it to spiritual advantage.” (*cML*, no. 123, p. 419) - p. 99

Diagrams

Review the journey of the **monad** ... beginning on the bottom of page 94, use the following statements to build your own diagram.

universal monad, source of all consciousness ... to “develop” individual consciousness, it has to limit itself and separate ... becoming many sparks within the one fire ... (remember consciousness requires differentiation) ... monad evolves through all the lower kingdoms of nature ... gradually awakening to the external environment ... self-consciousness (human kingdom) belong to the mental Principle in the cosmos ... universal monad is “Individualized” as a higher ego (“I am I”) ... a sharper sense of separation is needed ... expressing itself on the lower planes as a separate personality ... begins to get in touch with the illusory feeling “I am John Smith” ... separate and distinct ... brings the monad out of its natural unity into a realization of its own individuality

Further Reading

The Causal Body and the Ego by A.E. Powell (chapter 18, “Development and Faculties of the Causal Body”)

Self-Culture by I.K. Taimni (chapter 11, “Development of the Higher Mind”)

Resources for Research

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

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