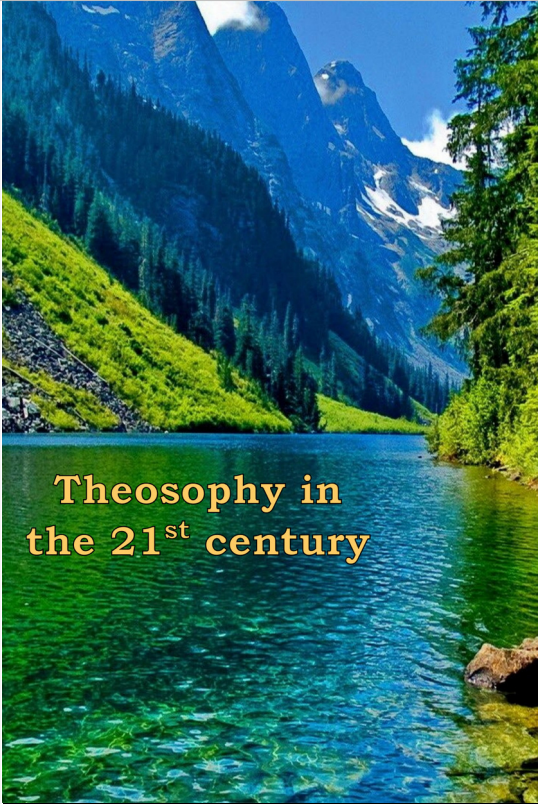




Theosophy in
the 21st century

5 Who are we?

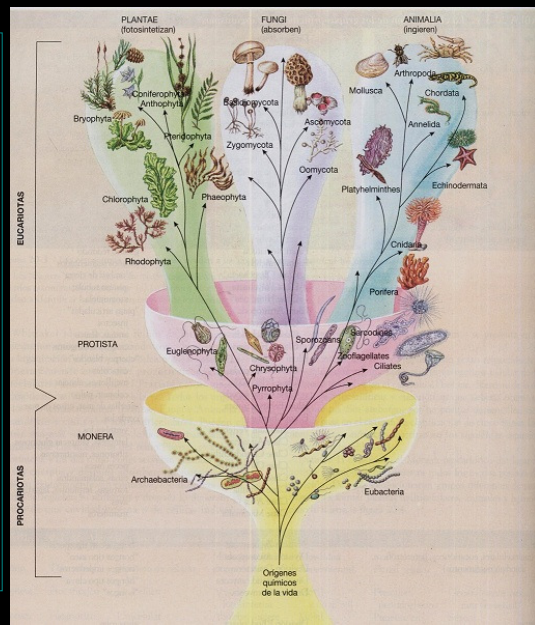
Course created by
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SOCIEDAD TEOSÓFICA ESPAÑOLA

2018

The human being according to Biology

- Biology has discovered that all living beings have evolved from simpler to more complex forms.
- Biological evolution is produced by genetic changes and inheritance
- It is not known how or why life arose (3,500 M years)
- Mammals descend from an ancestor that appeared 280 M years ago.
- Man does not descend from the monkey, but both have a common ancestor

Phylogenetic tree of living beings



As we saw in the previous chapter, Biology has shown us the existence of the Evolution of the species, according to which all living beings belong to the same phylogenetic tree in which some species derive from others thanks to specializations, mutations and changes in general.

According to the archaeological remains found, the oldest life on Earth dates from about 3,500 million years ago and corresponds to a bacterium that lived without oxygen. From this primitive bacteria, increasingly complex forms of life were derived, with eukaryotic cells appearing first, those with a nucleus, as an improvement achieved by the symbiosis of two or more bacterial cells, and thus enabling the appearance of organisms multicellular increasingly complex. In this way plants, fungi and animals appeared.

Mammals descend from an ancestor that appeared 280 M years ago. However, the great expansion of mammals occurred 65 M years ago when the Yucatan meteorite caused a great extinction with the consequent disappearance of the great dinosaurs.

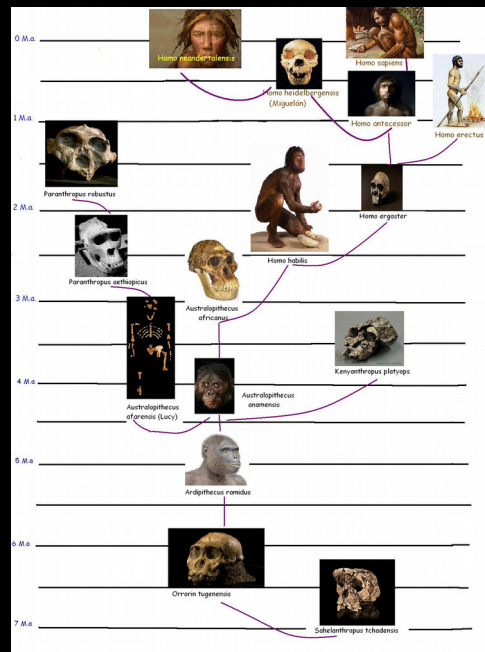
We also know thanks to genetics that man does not descend from the monkey, but that both have a common ancestor and that they are differentiated branches of the phylogenetic tree of the species.

The evolution of hominids

- Hominids appeared at least 7 M years ago
- The current human species is **Homo Sapiens** that appeared about 400,000 years ago in Africa
- It is a social, intelligent species, capable of learning, uses tools



Probable phylogenetic tree of hominids



As discovered by Anthropology along with Biology through the fossil remains found, the current human being is biologically a species originated in Africa about 400,000 years ago, which has been transforming to this day.

Compared with other species, the human being is social and intelligent. The enhancement of the attributes of intelligence as the ability to learn and create, allowed him to develop tools, adapt and transform their habitat.

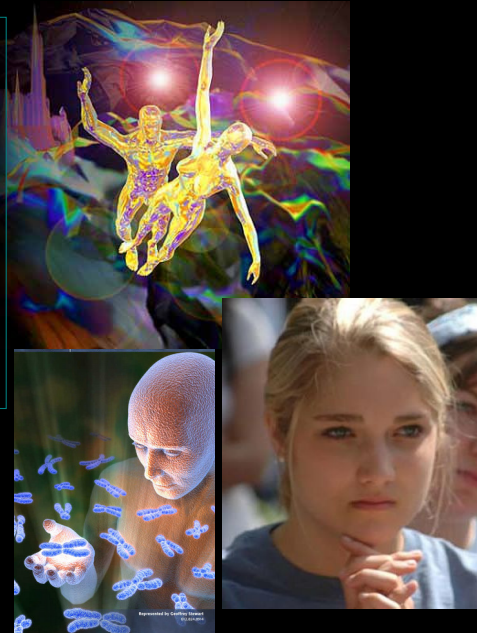
But in this, the human being has not been totally unique. It is known that there are other species of animals that are also capable of using tools, and species such as dolphins have created complex communication languages between them.

Researchers in the field of Anthropology and Biology develop a hominid tree, which tracks our biological ancestors until almost 7 million years ago. This tree is not unique, there are several versions with certain differences because it tries to reconstruct the evolutionary history from the fossil remains found as if it were a puzzle. When a new finding is made, it may fit into the tree or may indicate that it needs to be modified.

The evolutionary scheme gives us an idea of the struggle of the hominid species to survive and adapt to the changing conditions of the planet in that period, which included glaciations and interglacial periods, until reaching our human species, the **Homo Sapiens** that is currently the dominant species on the planet.

We are complex beings

- In addition to our body and our senses, we have emotions, thoughts, fears, joys, pain, hope, affection, ...
- All are subjective aspects of what we call **consciousness**
- Since ancient times man has intuited that his body is only a part of himself



It is evident that we are complex beings. Not only do we have a complex, highly organized body, as Biology shows, but there are other factors of our nature that are difficult to understand.

Our senses allow us to receive impressions of the world and ourselves, but in our interior reactions and very diverse phenomena occur that we find difficult to observe with precision. We feel pleasure and disgust, and diverse emotions such as joy and happiness, but we also feel pain, fear, anguish or despair. Our life is full of thoughts, ideas, memories, desires, affections and endless contents of conscience.

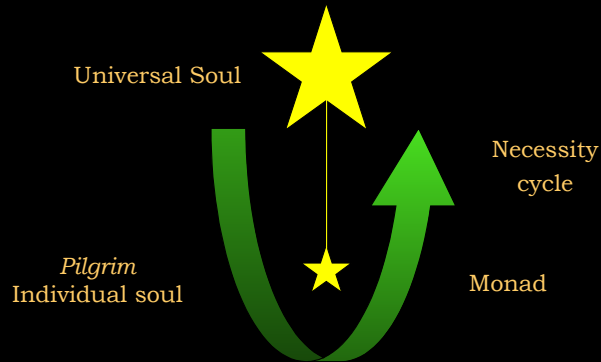
Since ancient times thinkers who tried to understand themselves realized that we are complex beings and that the body and physical nature are only the envelope, the part that we all see. But if we really want to know ourselves it is necessary to go beyond the outer shell.

Our essence

III. The fundamental identity of all Souls with the Universal Over-Soul, the latter being itself an aspect of the Unknown Root; and the obligatory pilgrimage for every Soul — a spark of the former — through the Cycle of Incarnation (or "Necessity") in accordance with Cyclic and Karmic law, during the whole term.

Helena Blavatsky, The Secret Doctrine, Proem

- Esoteric Philosophy tells us that we are an emanation of the Manifested One
- We are in essence a Monad, Spirit, a "spark" not detached from the evolving fire



As we have seen previously, many philosophers and thinkers have maintained since time immemorial that the human being is a fragment of the manifested One, an unattached spark of the cosmic fire that is the manifested Unity and has been given names like Spirit, Monad, Atman, etc.

As we saw in the holographic model, our essence is a reflection of the One and therefore has all its attributes in latency, as expressed by the hermetic axiom of the Emerald Tablet: "*As it is above, it is below*".

Esoteric Philosophy tells us that the Monad is emanated by the One to develop its latent attributes just as a seed develops into a functionally complete plant.

This identity and development through the evolution process of the Monad is what Helena Blavatsky tells us in the third proposition of the Secret Doctrine when it refers to the identity of the Universal Soul with the individual Soul and its evolution through the so-called "*cycle of necessity*".

In the East the great cycle of the Individual Soul from its emanation as a seed until its development as an entity that has developed its potential and has experienced the path of Life through innumerable stages is called a cycle of necessity. The word "necessity" shows that this process is essential for the unfolding of the latent power that exists in the soul and only through experience and learning does the seed become a complete tree.

What's in between?

- We know from our own experience that we are complex beings, so what is there between the physical body and the spirit?
- Consciousness expresses itself in different ways within us
- It is not as objective as when we study the organs and cells of the body
- Every philosopher or thinker from the most remote antiquity has asked himself who we are, what is our nature



So if on the one hand we have a very evolved and complex physical nature, and on the other hand we are Spirits that reflect the Universal Spirit or One manifested, what is there between them? What is conscience?

The conscience expresses itself in different modalities in our interior: emotions, thoughts, feelings, ideas, joys, dislikes, fears, etc. We need to identify these aspects to understand what we are.

The task is difficult because as thinkers we are both subjects and objects of study. The phenomena of consciousness are subjective, they can not be seen or detected from outside completely. There may be physical signs such as facial expressions or brain images, and these thoughts and emotions may also determine a behavior, but we can not really know what is happening in the conscience of another human being.

This has been the same problem that has faced philosophers, scientists and thinkers of all kinds who have tried to discover what is the nature of the human being.

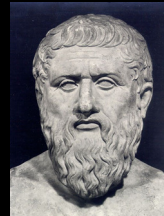
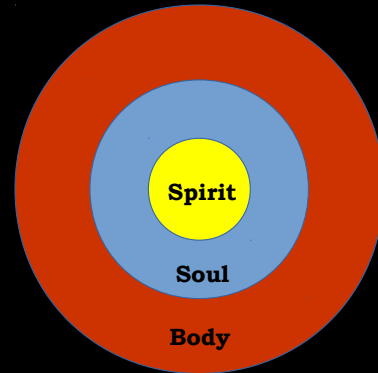
The triune classification

▪ Plato and many ancient philosophers considered the triune man:

▪ **Spirit:** The immortal, the essential spark, the *heart*

▪ **Soul:** *Psyche*, our psychological identity. Intellect, emotions, inspirations. It can be divided into animal soul and spiritual soul

▪ **Body:** The material instrument for perception and action



Plato
(-427 to -347)

There are many criteria that have been used to describe man from an integral point of view.

The best known and simplest is that used by the ancient philosophers such as Plato and Pythagoras in which man is considered as a being made up of three major components:

- An immortal part, the essential spark of life or the **Spirit**.
- The **Soul** or psyche, seat of the mind and emotions.
- The **physical body** or material vehicle of the whole human being, the organ of the senses and of the action.

To be more precise some have had to consider two aspects of the Soul:

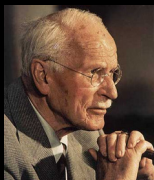
The **animal soul**: the psyche associated with the body and with the activities and material needs. It is personal in nature and self-centered.

The **spiritual soul**, associated with the spirit and transcendent needs. It is universal and integrative in nature.

However, this classification is too simple when we try to clarify the deepest aspects of our conscience, our behavior, our aspirations and conflicts.

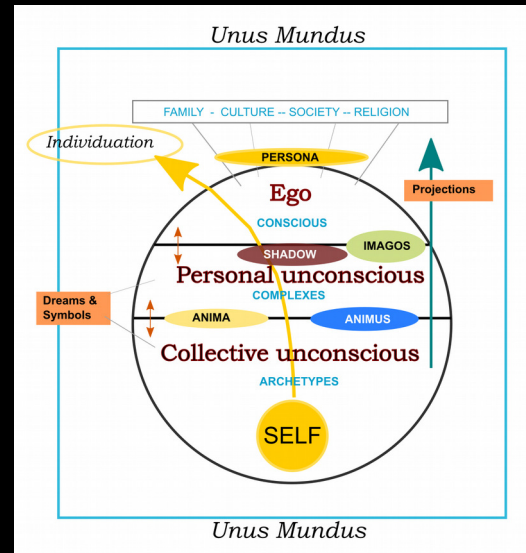
What does Psychology tell us?

- Psychology is the science that tries to understand mental functions, perception, thought, emotions, cognitive processes, behavior, social behavior.
- There are many currents that have evolved
- Jung's model includes personal and trans-personal structures and archetypes



Carl Gustav Jung
(1875 - 1961)

Jungian model of the psyche (Dr. Daniel Wilhelm)



Psychology is the branch of Science that studies the mental processes, thought, emotions, sensations, perceptions, cognitive processes and behavior of the human being, in relation to the physical and social environment.

There are several currents within psychology and there is no single model of conscience or of the psyche of the human being. Some psychologists did not settle for limited approaches drawn mainly from clinical practice. One of the psychologists who have been broader in trying to understand human nature has been the Swiss Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961).

Jung presents the psyche of the human being integrated by different elements and structures. We can mention very briefly:

- The *conscience*. It is the part of the psyche that we are aware of and that we are forming with experiences and interaction with the environment throughout life.
- The *ego* or personal self is the center of our individual psyche.
- The personal *unconscious* whose contents are complex. An important part of it is the *shadow*, those aspects of our psyche that we do not want and that we deny. The contents of the personal unconscious and of the shadow tend to manifest themselves in consciousness as dreams and symbols.
- The *mask* is the public aspect that we show to the outside assuming a role and that therefore it hides a part of our psyche leaving it in the intimate field.
- The *collective unconscious* that contains the universal inheritance of the human species or of a people. It is the cause of innate tendencies. Its contents are archetypes or models that try to manifest themselves in consciousness through inspirations, dreams and symbols.
- The *Self* is the Being, the transcendent Self, the goal of life.
- The *Unus Mundus* is the unified underlying Reality from which everything arises and to which everything returns. It is the One Life to which we have referred previously.

The Theosophical Ideas

- Man is an emanation of the One Reality, manifested in **7 principles**
- A principle is a functional aspect or differentiated expression of consciousness
- The principles relate to each other and act together as a whole
- The body is the physical vehicle of the entire structure
- The human being is a Microcosm
- There are many classifications



Theosophical ideas about the nature of the human being have highlighted the great complexity that it contains. Both the ancient scriptures and the Vedas, the initiatory traditions of Egypt and the Orient, the classical philosophers, the Neoplatonic philosophers, the Kabalists and the Hermeticists tried to find an explanation for the complex nature of the human being.

Many of these schemes tell us that we are essentially a differentiated and unattached emanation of the One Reality, a **Monad** or **Atman** as it is called in the Vedas, which manifests or expresses itself through 7 principles. The **principles** are expressions or functions of consciousness, differentiated aspects of the One Reality that manifest as capabilities or attributes of consciousness.

The principles can be seen as fundamental aspects of the human being, centers or manifestations of their activity, which implement the complex functionality of consciousness. We must bear in mind that the principles *are not individual parts or components of the human being*, but even though they reflect different aspects, they act together to form a system, as a whole.

The whole structure of the human being has its seat in the physical body, which is the material support, the envelope or vehicle of consciousness. The principles of the human being are the reflection in the Microcosm (human scope) of the Universal Principles of the Macrocosm (universal scope).

There are many classifications of the principles, from the simplified one of the ancient philosophers consisting of Spirit, Soul and Body, to more sophisticated classifications as those exposed by H. P. Blavatsky that speaks to us of 7 principles. The Vedantists consider 5 principles, and it is common to find differences according to the point of view adopted.

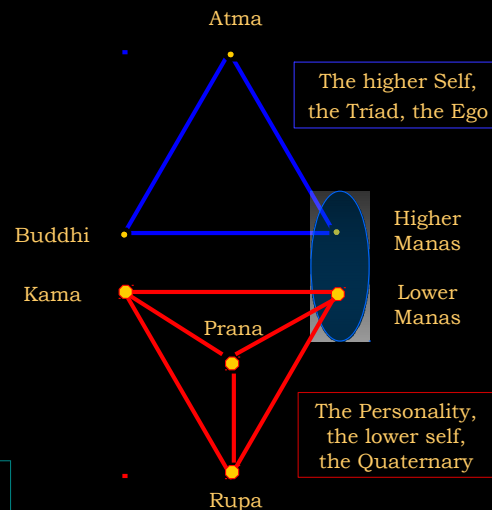
Despite the complexity of the classifications, we must not lose sight of the human being as a complete reality and beyond the names and symbols we need to approach with an open mind and inner inspiration the knowledge of ourselves. As we have already said, one difficulty of this task is that we pretend to know the knower. The subject and the object of knowledge are the same, so it is necessary to deepen more and be broader.

The principles of the human being

- **Atma:** The spirit, the Monad or Individuality
- **Buddhi:** Intuition, the light of conscience
- **Higher Manas:** The abstract mind, the thinker
- **Lower Manas:** The concrete mind, the reasoning
- **Kama:** Desire, emotions, motivations
- **Prana:** The vital energy
- **Rupa:** The physical, the action, the material support of the entire structure

Associations:

- Buddhi-Manas:** The spiritual soul
- Kama-Manas:** The animal soul



The following is a classification of the principles of the human being from a functional point of view, based on the ideas of Helena Blavatsky and the tradition of Vedanta:

Atma: The spirit, the Monad or Individuality.

Buddhi: Intuition, the light of conscience.

Higher Manas: The abstract mind, the thinker.

Lower Manas: The concrete mind, the reasoning.

Kama: The desire, the emotions, the motivations.

Prana: The vital energy.

Rupa: The physical, the action, the material support of the whole structure

We can identify two large groups:

- The **higher Self**, the Triad or also called the **Ego** (spiritual, not to be confused with the ego of the psychology that is the center of the personal self). It is composed of Atma, Buddhi and higher Manas and is the most permanent part of human nature.

- The **personality**, the Quaternary or the lower self, which is composed of the Lower Manas, Kama, Prana and the physical. It is the most transient part of human nature.

Observe that the mind is represented by two principles: the Lower Manas that comprises the functions of perception and reasoning, and the Higher Manas that refers to higher cognitive functions such as abstraction and discernment. This expresses the duality of the mind, capable of expressing the most sublime and the most perverse.

In addition the principles are associated with each other, as in the case of the dual mind or Manas, which works closely associated with other principles and thus we have:

Buddhi-Manas: It is called the spiritual soul and the enlightened mind.

Kama-Manas: It is the psychic soul. The frequent combination of thought and desire.

The constitution of the human being has also had presentations with different schemes in the history of modern Theosophy. HPB itself has used different schemes in its works or in different periods of its life as the following table shows, elaborated by William Doss McDavid in his work *An Introduction to Esoteric Principles*.

Divisions of the Human Constitution Used by H.P. Blavatsky

Isis Unveiled (1877)	Mahatma Letters Esoteric Buddhism (1880-83)	Secret Doctrine Key to Theosophy (1888 & 89)	H.P.B.'s Private "Papers" (1889-91)	Dialogues Between Two Editors (1888)
Spirit	Atma	Atma	Atma	Atma
Soul	Buddhi	Buddhi	Auric Egg	Causal Body
			Buddhi	
		Manas a) higher b) lower	Manas EGO	
	Manas		Kama Manas or Lower Manas	Mayavi Rupa
	Kama Rupa	Kama Rupa	Kama-Prana	
	Linga Sarira	Prana	Linga Sarira	Protean Double
	Prana	Linga Sarira		
Body	Body	Body	Living Body in Prana or Animal Life	Body

Extracted from:
An Introduction to Esoteric Principles
by William Doss McDavid

Later authors to HPB as Annie Besant and Charles Leadbeater used another classification more oriented to the description of "subtle bodies", invisible bodies that would be formed by matter of worlds more subtle than the physical one. Every aspect of consciousness in a subtle world is expressed through a specialized body. But as this last classification is based on psychic observations, it is more subjective and by focusing on vehicles or material bodies leaves little room for student research and experimentation.

The functional scheme based on Principles on the other hand is more philosophical, and as it is centered on the *functions* of the human being rather than on its material expression or vehicles, it leaves more possibilities for research and application in practical life. Most of us are not aware of our emotional body or astral body but we are aware of our emotions and feelings and therefore we can investigate and experiment with the Kamas principle without having to imagine an emotional vehicle or body.

In any case, this shows that the human being is complex and that any scheme we make is just a model designed to study it with a certain correspondence with reality, but that is not reality itself.

Let's see how HPB presents the principles in *The Key to Theosophy*:

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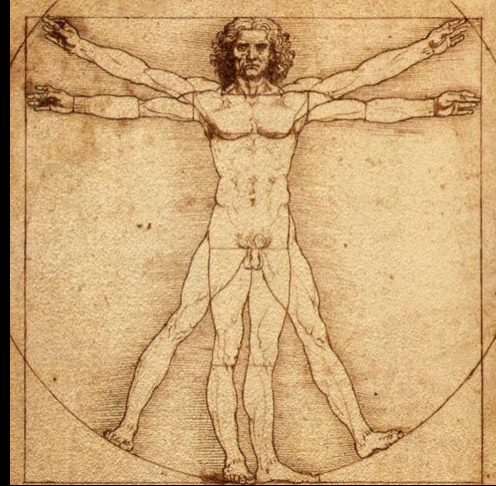
THEOSOPHICAL DIVISION.

LOWER QUATERNARY.	SANSKRIT TERMS.	EXOTERIC MEANING.	EXPLANATORY.
	(a) Rupa, or Sthula-Sarira.	(a) Physical body.	(a) Is the vehicle of all the other "principles" during life.
	(b) Prana.	(b) Life, or Vital principle.	(b) Necessary only to <i>a</i> , <i>c</i> , <i>d</i> , and the functions of the lower <i>Manas</i> , which embrace all those limited to the (<i>physical</i>) brain.
	(c) Linga Sharira.	(c) Astral body.	(c) The <i>Double</i> , the phantom body.
	(d) Kama rupa.	(d) The seat of animal desires and passions.	(d) This is the centre of the animal man, where lies the line of demarcation which separates the mortal man from the immortal entity.

THE UPPER IMPERISHABLE TRIAD.	SANSKRIT TERMS.	EXOTERIC MEANING.	EXPLANATORY.
	(e) <i>Manas</i> — a dual principle in its functions.	(e) Mind, Intelligence : which is the higher human mind, whose light, or radiation links the MONAD, for the lifetime, to the mortal man.	(e) The future state and the Karmic destiny of man depend on whether <i>Manas</i> gravitates more downward to <i>Kama rupa</i> , the seat of the animal passions, or upwards to <i>Buddhi</i> , the Spiritual <i>Ego</i> . In the latter case, the higher consciousness of the individual Spiritual aspirations of <i>mind</i> (<i>Manas</i>), assimilating <i>Buddhi</i> , are absorbed by it and form the <i>Ego</i> , which goes into Devachanic bliss.*
	(f) <i>Buddhi</i> .	(f) The Spiritual Soul.	(f) The vehicle of pure universal spirit.
	(g) <i>Atma</i> .	(g) Spirit.	(g) One with the Absolute, as its radiation.

Rupa: the physical body

- It is the material seat of the entire structure of the human being
- Through him we interact with the outside:
 - Organs of the senses
 - Organs of action
- It has a huge complexity and many systems:
 - Muscular
 - Respiratory
 - Circulatory
 - Hormonal
 - ...
- It's care and health is very important for the activity of conscience



Rupa, which in Sanskrit means form, vehicle, is the principle corresponding to the expression of consciousness in the physical world through the material body that we all perceive. It is the seat of the complete structure of the human being.

Through the body we interact with the outside. The Vedas indicate that there are the organs of knowledge, the senses that allow us to perceive the external world, and the organs of action, the dynamic system of skeleton, muscles, tendons, nerves and auxiliary systems that allow us to act on the external world.

The physical body has enormous complexity as anatomy teaches us and it can be considered as composed of multiple coordinated systems: the skeleton, the muscles, the respiratory system, the circulatory system, the lymphatic system, the hormonal system, the nervous system, etc.

It is a paradox that we do not usually know our body thoroughly, nor the food that it needs and its care. The lack of any mineral or any vitamin alters the functioning of the psyche even temporarily. For example, a lack of iron can cause fatigue and asthenia blocking the intentions of performing a desired task. A magnesium deficiency can cause irritability and anxiety. Low blood pressure can cause poor irrigation in the brain and markedly decrease the ability to think clearly.

We should pay more attention to the care and health of our body because if it is not in good shape it can inhibit the expression of other faculties of consciousness.

Prana, vitality

- **Prana** is a Sanskrit word that literally means breathing, but in this context it refers to the *breath of life*.
- According to HPB Prana is a part of **Jiva**, the Universal Life, which animates every living being.
- Prana is vitality, a kind of energy that makes the body function as a unit.
- “When the body dies Prana returns to the ocean of cosmic life” [HPB]



Prana is a Sanskrit word that literally means breathing, but that in the context of the constitution of man means something more: the vital breath, the energy of life.

According to HPB Prana is life, the active power that produces all vital phenomena.

HPB also states that Prana is a part of *Jiva*, the Universal Life, associated with a particular individual.

Prana is often spoken of as an energy or force. We are not talking about an energy from the physical point of view, but something more mysterious whose understanding is currently escaping us. Prana causes the body to function as a coordinated system, as a unit and not simply as a set of cells and organs.

This material envelope that is sustained by food [the physical body] seems to have a life of its own, but this is only because it is interpenetrated by the wrapping Prana (life force) and is governed by the five centers of the brain (Indriyas) that they control the activities of speech, hands, legs, organs of reproduction and excretion.

Shankara, *Viveka Chudamani*

According to this tradition when Prana is removed from the body, physical death ensues. The person stops breathing, their vital functions cease and the organism begins to disintegrate.

The emotions

- **Kama** is the desire, the emotion, the force that motivates the human being based on attraction and repulsion.
- Love, hate, joy, sadness, security, fear, admiration, resentment, benevolence, cruelty, ...
- Emotions play an important role in practical life and in decision-making (I like or dislike).



The **Kama** principle is essentially desire, the root of emotions. Desire is an instinctive force of attraction or repulsion that manifests itself in to like or to dislike for something that is the object of desire and that leads us to seek or avoid that object.

The **emotion** [Latin: *emovere*, *emotum*] is the impulse that induces us to action, it is Kama in essence, and it is what motivates us the most. Emotions largely determine our behavior and we express them through gestures and physical signs.

There is a great range of emotions originated by the desire for attraction or repulsion depending on how we consider the object of desire or how we relate to it. Thus we find the variety of conflicting emotions such as love and hate, joy and sadness, security and fear, admiration and resentment, benevolence and cruelty, and so we can continue with the list. Kama is responsible, together with the mind, for the construction of the personal self in its multiple aspects.

Emotions have appeared throughout the evolution of organisms as a mechanism of rapid response to cope with danger, before the thought starts and reaches some conclusion. In modern civilization many of the dangers for which we are biologically "prepared" do not exist and often the emotions activate our defenses in excess in front of situations that we consider hostile originating the situation that we know by *stress*.

Desire and emotions are not bad in themselves as some believe. Kama is a principle of Nature that has its use if we take advantage of it.

Kama is the driving or impelling force in the human constitution; per se it is colorless, neither good nor bad, and is only such as the mind and soul direct its use. It is the seat of the living electric impulses, desires, aspirations, considered in their energetic aspect. Usually however, although there is a divine kama as well as an infernal one, this word is restricted, and wrongly so, to evil desire almost exclusively.

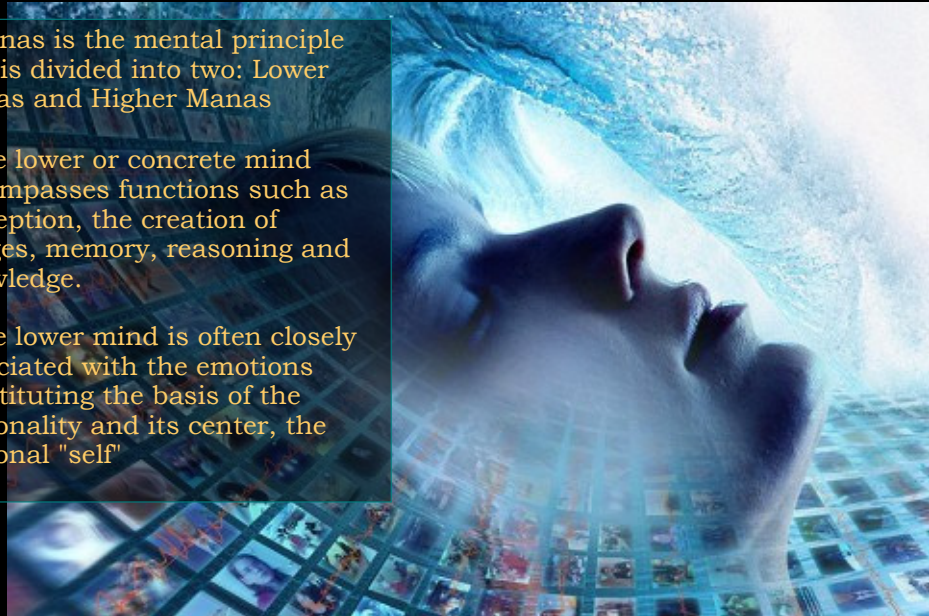
G. de Purucker, *Occult Glossary*

The lower mind

- Manas is the mental principle that is divided into two: Lower Manas and Higher Manas

- The lower or concrete mind encompasses functions such as perception, the creation of images, memory, reasoning and knowledge.

- The lower mind is often closely associated with the emotions constituting the basis of the personality and its center, the personal "self"



In the expositions of the Esoteric Philosophy about the constitution of the human being the function of the mind or **Manas** (which in Sanskrit literally means "the thinker") is presented as dual: the lower Manas or concrete mind and the higher Manas or abstract mind .

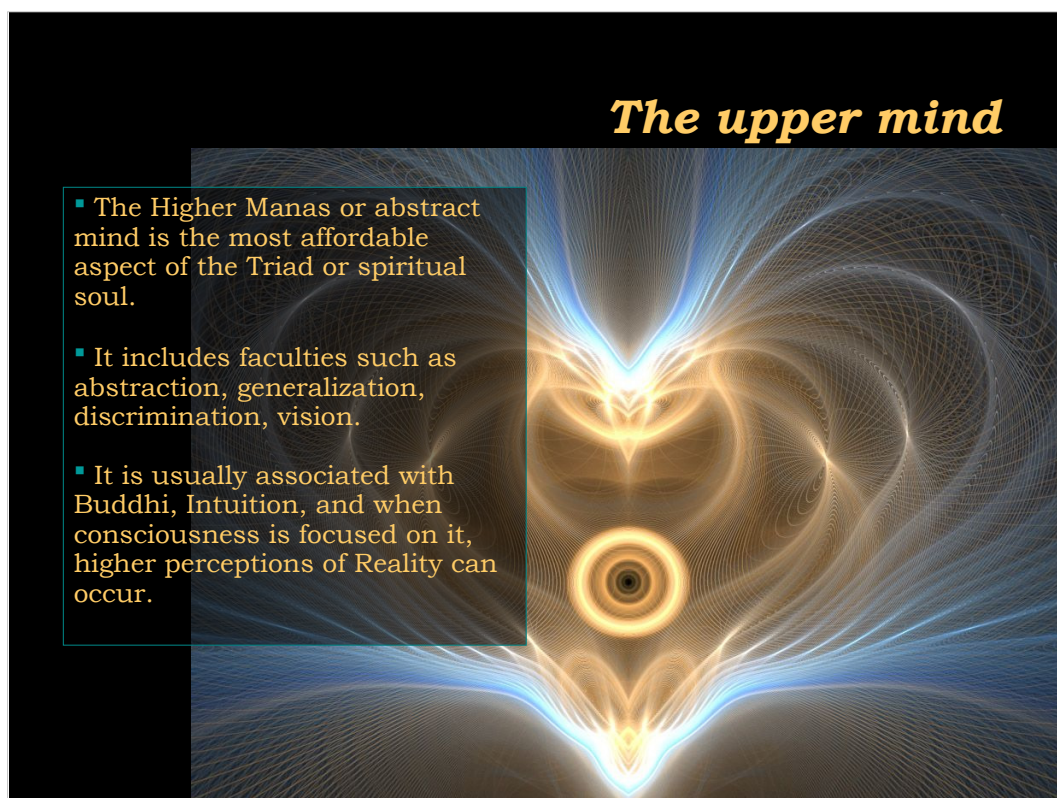
The lower mind is what groups the basic functions of the intellect:

- *Perception.* The ability to convert the impulses of the senses into images and recognize their origin in the outside world.
- *Creation of images.* The ability to create conceptual images, not only visual, from the senses and memory.
- *Memory.* The ability to structure memory in a useful way and integrated by associations, according to the impact, frequency of use, etc.
- *Reasoning:* The ability to establish relationships between ideas and deduce new ideas and rules.
- *Knowledge:* The ability to develop models and conjectures about the outside world. It is the coronation of intelligence based on the other faculties.

In another chapter of this course we will go deeper into the mind.

It is important to repeat that the lower mind is usually associated with the emotions around the center of the personality that is the **personal self**. We develop our psychic activities of desires and thoughts around our self: I want, I need, I remember, I think, I wait, etc. Memory and the anticipation of possible satisfaction are frequently in the genesis of desire. We remember something that pleased us in the past, we try to repeat the satisfaction, and that desire conditions our mental activity and our perceptions of reality.

The concrete mind is comparative, classifying and analytical. It points out the differences between two objects, whether physical or immaterial.



The higher **Manas** or abstract mind is the most affordable aspect of the upper Triad or spiritual Soul in our current state of evolution.

The higher mind comprises the advanced functions of intelligence:

- *Abstraction.* It is the ability to handle symbols in language and communications or to find common patterns in different events. It is the possibility of seeing the forest more than the individual trees.
- *Generalization.* It is the ability to abstract applied to the resolution of problems, finding the way to solve similar problems with the same solution.
- *Discrimination.* It is the ability to discriminate the real from the illusory, the true from the false, the important from the accessory.
- *Vision.* It is the ability to plan at a higher level, to anticipate the effects of an action or a decision, to see beyond the apparent.

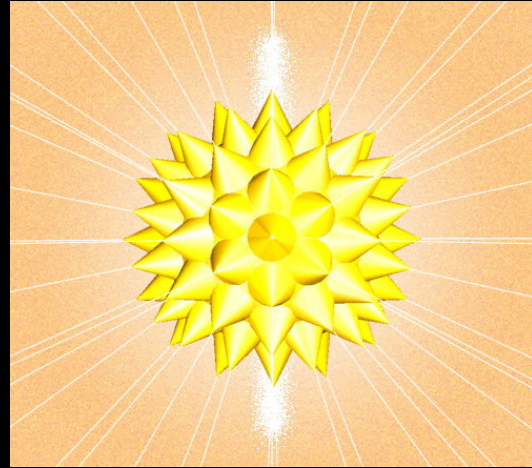
According to I.K. Taimni in his work "The Knowledge of Himself" the faculties of the higher mind are possible because they are a reflection of the Intuition since without it we would be impossible to understand.

When we read a book there are several levels in which we can understand it. Going from the most concrete to the most abstract we have: the alphabet used, the words that belong to a language, the sentences that express an idea, the paragraphs that link the ideas, the chapter that develops a concept or an argument, the message of the book in general and finally the message of the author with his diverse works as a whole.

Therefore we see that we use the higher mind on a daily basis, with greater or lesser depth, without becoming aware of it. When the focus of attention is more on *Buddhi-Manas* than on the ups and downs of the personal self, we can get a clearer and deeper view of Reality.

Buddhi, the intuition

- **Buddhi** is the Intuition, the light of wisdom.
- Intuition is not "gut feeling" that could be an emotion.
- It is compared to a light by its characteristic of "illuminating" the thinker who otherwise blinds
- The kingdom of Buddhi is of consciousness of the Unity of Life
- It allows us to find unsuspected relationships.



Buddhi is a Sanskrit word that means the light of conscience, deep understanding or wisdom, intuition, being awake. Many times this principle is mentioned as intuition, but the popular use of this word to designate a vague impulse, a hunch that may simply be an emotion, makes us prefer the use of the Sanskrit term Buddhi.

To get an idea of Buddhi we can use the metaphor of light. If we enter in a room that is completely dark we can only know what is in it by groping, by touch, sequentially. We touch an object, we go through it and we see that it is a table. We touch another object and we perceive that it is a chair. But if we turn on the light and look, we will instantly see the entire contents of the room. For this reason Buddhi is integrative and its influence is like a flash of lucidity.

According to I.K. Taimni in the aforementioned work the main functions of Buddhi are:

- *Understanding.* Buddhi is reflected in the higher mind giving it the ability to understand.
- *Wisdom.* It is the superior intelligence relative to the essential things of life.
- *Discernment (Viveka).* It is the ability to distinguish the real from the illusory

Buddhi is connected with both the higher mind and the emotions. Mystical experience or aesthetics are examples. If, when contemplating a painting or listening to a musical work, we feel transported and inspired, it is because consciousness connects with Buddhi.

Buddhi can influence decision-making if we are thoughtful. When we have to make a decision we try to analyze the pros and cons of the different options, but as it is generally impossible to know all the detail, our emotions complete the picture and the pleasure or disgust for something usually make us decide. But if we are open and calm, Buddhi can provide us with a broad and integrating perspective to decide wisely, especially as regards the important issues of life.

The kingdom of Buddhi is the one of the consciousness of the Unity of the Life and for that reason Buddhi is the deep root of the Compassion towards all living being and the Love towards all the Universe.

Atma, the will

- **Atma** means the Spirit, the essence of our being that is an unattached spark of the One.
- There is no such thing as "my Atma". It is one.
- It is the subtle force that silently drives us in search of our destiny.
- It manifests as the true Will in the field of conscience.



The innermost or essential principle is **Atma** or **Atman** (Atma in Sanskrit is the singular of Atman), which means the Spirit, the Monad, the essence of our Being, the breath, the unattached spark of the One manifested.

We must bear in mind that at this level we can not speak of *an* Atma separated from others. The Atman is one even if it is singular for each being. Buddhism affirms that there is no such thing as an eternal Atman because like all the manifested Universe is subject to the cycles of manifestation and of unmanifestation.

Atma manifests as the spiritual Will, the subtle force that drives us in our life in search of our destiny. Atma is the Will in the field of internal conscience but we must differentiate it from what we often understand by will as a feature of the personality that makes us authoritarian, vehement, energetic and even hasty.

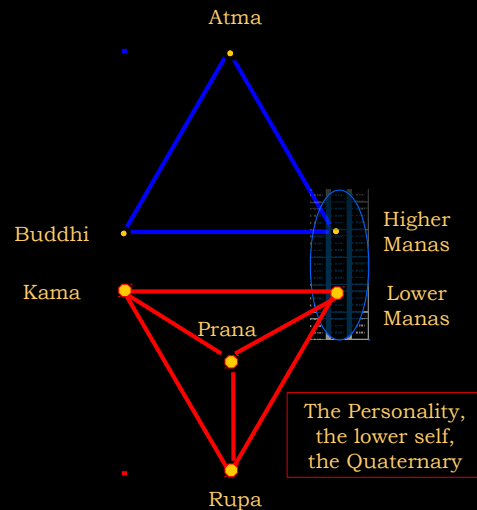
Action and understanding are united in the Will. An act of will that does not involve understanding is not will at all.

In the spiritual Will there is no coercion of a self lacking in will because the Will is one and moves as a whole.

N. Sri Ram, *Thoughts for Aspirants*

The personality

- It is the set of lower Manas, Kama, Prana and Rupa.
- It is temporary, it is born and it dies.
- It is the seat of the self, its desires, memories, thoughts, fears, conditioning, etc.
- The focus of attention is usually centered on this psychic structure.



The **personality** is the structure composed of the 4 lower principles: lower Manas, Kama, Prana and Rupa or said in our language: the lower mind, emotions, vitality and the physical body.

The word personality comes from "*person*", and this one from "*character*", the mask used by the actors in the classical theater (*personare* = to make the voice sound through the mask). This gives us the idea of an envelope or means of expression of something more internal as the actor is about the character he plays.

The personality is temporary. The esoteric tradition says that when vitality is withdrawn and the physical body dies the emotions and the lower mind gradually cease to function and life retreats to the Spiritual Soul.

Personality is the seat of the self. In reality, the I is a center of attraction around which the activity of the personality is articulated ("I think", "I want"). We have built the self during our physical life and we have loaded it with conditioning, fears, desires, memories, frustrations, prejudices and preferences. It is so charged that it acts like a colored and dense glass that prevents us from seeing reality as it is because it distorts our perception.

Another characteristic of the personality is that the same ability to act routinely and react that makes life easier in many aspects (we do not have to decide how we go to work each day) makes it difficult for us to be creative and improve or adapt when circumstances change (there is a traffic jam in our usual route). When we want to direct consciousness to the most essential levels we find the conditionings of the personality. We need to discover them, observe them and understand their origin in order to be able to transcend them.

The 3 brains in one

- **Paleoencephalon** (reptile)
 - Brain stem, basal ganglia, reticle
 - Automatic functions
 - → **Physical body**
- **Mesocephalus** (mammal)
 - Limbic system: amygdala, thalamus, hypothalamus, olfactory bulbs, septal region, ...
 - → **Emotions**
- **Telencephalon** (human)
 - Neocortex
 - Higher intellectual functions: analysis, synthesis, language, ...
 - → **Mind**



They have been developed and differentiated through biological evolution

According to neurology, in the human being there are 3 brains in one, giving rise to what the neurobiologist Paul MacLean described as the **triune brain**. It is about 3 structures that have been developed at different times during biological evolution.

The oldest and most primitive brain is the **paleoencephalon**, composed of the brainstem, the basal ganglia and the reticular system. It is estimated that it has developed 500 million years ago and is present in reptiles. It deals with the basic functions of survival of the body, its automatic and instinctive functions.

The **mesocephalus** is another more modern system, implemented by the limbic system and includes the thalamus, amygdala, hypothalamus, olfactory bulbs, septal region and hippocampus. It is related to emotions, pleasure and pain, joy, depression, etc. It is incipient in birds and fully developed in mammals.

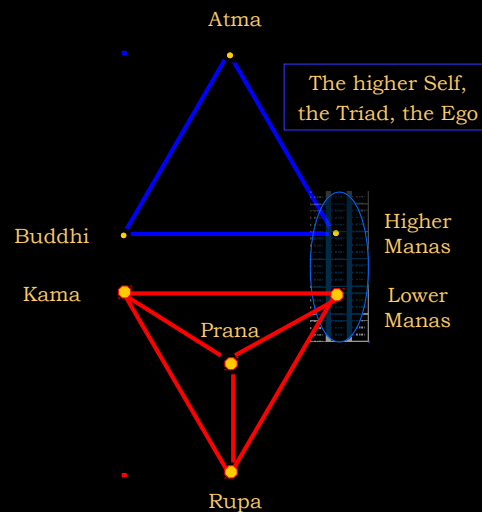
The third system, called **telencephalon** is the most modern layer in evolution. It is estimated that it appeared about 40 million years ago and is present in higher mammals, such as cetaceans and primates and also in humans. It is composed of the most peripheral area of the brain, the neocortex, and is related to higher intellectual functions such as analysis, synthesis, language functions, and the ability to relate the past-present and future, among others.

Notice that these 3 brain systems correspond to 3 principles of personality postulated by Theosophy: the brainstem with the physical, the limbic system with Kama or emotions and the neocortex with Manas or thought.

The mainstream within biology is *reductionism*, which assumes that consciousness is the product of biological activity. In a later chapter we will see that there are other positions and certainly the perennial wisdom affirms something different: that the brain is the vehicle of consciousness and that both work together but that consciousness can not be reduced to a product of matter.

The upper triad

- It is the set of Atma, Buddhi and higher Manas
- It is the relatively permanent structure of the human being, the final repository of learning
- In theosophical literature is usually mentioned as Ego, but in reality in his kingdom the self vanishes
- The relationship between higher mind and lower mind is called *Antakarana* and is like a bridge between the upper triad and the personality

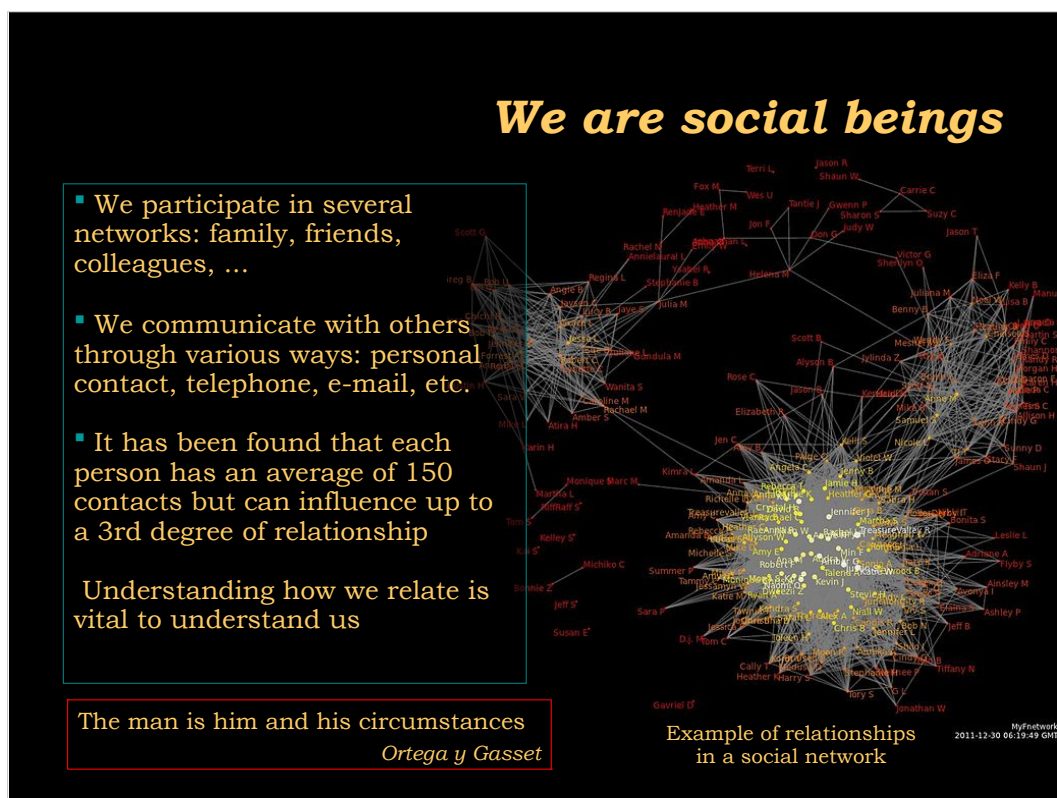


The triad composed of Atma, Buddhi and Upper Manas is known in Theosophy as the spiritual Soul, the higher Self or the spiritual Ego or with their Sanskrit names as Atma-Buddhi-Manas.

It is the relatively permanent structure of the human being, the final repository of learning and the experiences of life. The spiritual soul does not act directly in the external world but through the personality.

In theosophical literature the triad is usually called the "Ego", clarifying that it is not the "personal self" of psychology. Even so, the name is unfortunate because it reinforces the idea of a separate self when in fact the principles of Buddhi and Atma act with awareness of the Unity of Life. The upper triad is our most permanent singular expression, with a style or color that depends on the experiences lived in multiple incarnations as we will see later.

In the scheme the superior principles are "reflected" in the lower ones according to vertical lines. This means that there is a special relationship between higher Manas and lower Manas, which is easy to understand because they are the dual aspects of the mind. This relationship between them is called "the *Antakarana* bridge". There is also a relationship between Buddhi and emotions and between Will and Rupa, the physical body.



We can not understand ourselves if we do not also understand how we relate to others. The human being, like almost all beings in nature, is a sociable being that establishes relationships with its environment and especially with its peers.

Modernly we try to understand these relationships through the study of **social networks**, the networks of natural relationships that we establish with other people. We participate in several networks or better yet we would say that our network is made up of diverse areas: family, friends, work or study colleagues, our neighbors, clients, etc.

We communicate with other members of the network through different means: personally, by phone, by email or by social networking platforms on the Internet such as Facebook, LinkedIn, WhatsApps or Twitter. We should not confuse the social network with the platform we use to communicate, although it has become popular to call these Internet platforms with the name of social networks.

Social networks have a great influence on us and we on it. On average, a person has about 150 contacts that change over time. Not only the number of contacts, but also the topology of the network, that is, its structure. We are happier when our network is more interconnected, that is, if our friends are also friends with each other.

James Fowler, a social media specialist at the University of California, San Diego, United States, has drawn some conclusions from his studies:

- Our personal brand influences our environment. We influence up to a third degree of connection (friends of friends of our friends). Examples have been found with obesity and smoking cessation.
- We are influenced by the structure of our network. If two of our friends are not friends with each other, we are overwhelmed.
- Only 30% of people are married to people who did not show them.

So, in order to understand ourselves, we also need to know how we relate to each other since, as the Spanish philosopher Ortega y Gasset said: "*Man is him and his circumstances*".

Who am I?

- The important thing is to know ourselves
- Only each of us can discover it for himself
- We must find out by discarding:
 - Preconceived ideas
 - Beliefs
 - Inclinationes compulsivas
 - Contradictions
- It is the task of self-discovery and transformation



All the above suggests that in us there is a reality, an activity of conscience, which can not be reduced to being merely the byproduct of the material. The material seems to be the necessary support of consciousness, but both are like the obverse and the reverse side of a coin.

So, who are we? This question can only be answered by each one of us individually. We can study about the biological reality of the human being, we can study about his psychology, we can know his works, his art, his history. But to discover ourselves we need something different, an introspection, to try to see and to listen inside ourselves, and outside, which is our reflection. The scheme of the Principles is only a scheme, a framework for study, but to really understand ourselves we must go further.

In order to achieve this goal we need to create the right conditions, clarifying our own instrument of knowledge, opening our mind and emotions towards that internal reality. For this we must discover and discard those things in our psychological nature that become obstacles because they deeply distort our vision of reality, such as preconceived ideas, beliefs, inclinations or compulsive tendencies, contradictions, and in short, everything that prevents us from being whole beings.

An inscription in the temple of Delphi said: "*Know yourself*". And this is as valid at that time as it is now.

We will talk about this introspection about the end of the course, when we have a broader idea of the foundations of the theosophical philosophy.

To think



Watch, think, investigate, inquire ...
Make the following questions or thoughts suggestions
But don't stay here, ask yourself and find out.

- 1- How would you differentiate your biological part from your psychological part? How they relate?
- 2- Why is a difference made between the spiritual soul and the animal soul?
- 3- Are the Principles attributes of the mind such as memory?
- 4- Why is the mind divided into superior and inferior?
- 5- Bring examples of concrete thoughts and abstract thoughts.
- 6- Try to express what ideas the expression "Buddhi is the light of conscience" suggests.