

What *is* the mind, that has to be dealt with so severely by the aspirant? Patanjali speaks of it when he defines yoga practice as *chitta-vritti-nirodha*, which means restraint (*nirodha*) of the whirlpools (*vritti*) of the mind (*chitta*). Among the Vedantins, or in Shri Shankaracharya's school, the term *antahkarana* is not used as we generally employ it, but indicates the mind in its fullest sense. It means with them literally the entire internal organ or instrument between the innermost Self and the outer world, and is always described as of four parts: the "I-maker" (*ahamkara*); insight, intuition or pure reason (*buddhi*); thought (*manas*) and discrimination of objects (*chitta*). It is these last two that the Western man usually calls his mind, with its powers of abstract and concrete thought; when he thinks of the other processes he imagines them to be something above the mind.

The Theosophist ought to recognize in these four Vedantic divisions his own familiar *atma*, *buddhi*, *manas* and the lower mind. Madame Blavatsky called the last *kama-manas*, because it is the part of *manas* that works with desire and is therefore interested in material objects. *Kama* is to be taken not only as relating to low desires and passions, but also to any sort of desire or interest in the external world for its own sake. The whole of the triple higher self is from this point of view nothing but the *antahkarana* (or internal agency) between the monad and the lower self. It has become a tetrad, because *manas* is dual in incarnation.

The three parts of the higher self are considered as three aspects of a great consciousness or mind; they are all modes of cognition. *Atma* is not the Self, but is this consciousness knowing the Self; *buddhi* is this consciousness knowing the life in the forms by its own direct perception; *manas* is the same consciousness looking out upon the world of objects, and *kama-manas* is a portion of the last immersed in that world and affected by it. The true self is the Monad, whose life is something greater than consciousness, which is the life of this complete mind, the Higher Self. Therefore Patanjali and Shankara are quite in agreement; it is the *chitta*, the *kama-manas*, the lower mind, which is the slayer of the real, and has to be slain.

Much that is now called the astral body by Theosophists must be included in the Indian idea of *kama-manas* or *chitta*. Madame Blavatsky also speaks of four divisions of the mind. First there is *manas-taijasi*, the resplendent or illuminated *manas*, which is really *buddhi*, or at least that state of man when his *manas* has

become merged in buddhi, having no separate will of its own. Then there is manas proper, the higher manas, the abstract thinking mind. Then there is the antahkarana, a term used by Madame Blavatsky merely to indicate the link or channel or bridge between higher manas and kama-manas during incarnation. Finally there is kama-manas, which is on this theory the personality.

Sometimes she calls manas the deva-ego, or the divine as distinguished from the personal self. Higher manas is divine because it has positive thought, which is *hriya-shahti*, the power of doing things. Really all our work is done by thought-power; the sculptor's hand does not do the work, but thought-power directing that hand does it. The higher manas is divine because it is a positive thinker, using the quality of its own life, which shines from within it; that is what is meant by the word divine, from *div*, to shine. But the lower mind is only a reflector; like all other material things, it has no light of its own; it is something through which the light comes, or through which the sound comes—merely *persona*, a mask.

The antahkarana is usually considered in the Theosophical works as the link between the higher self or the divine ego, and the lower self or personal ego. The *chitta* in that lower self puts it at the mercy of things, so that our life down here may be compared to the experience of a man struggling to swim in a maelstrom. But this will be followed sooner or later after death by a period in the heaven-world. The man has been whirled about; he has seen many things; he has not dwelt upon them, however, with a calm, steady mind, but with kama-manas; therefore he has not understood their significance for the soul. But in the heaven-world the ego can widen out the antahkarana, because all is now calm; no new experiences are to be gathered. The old ones can be quietly turned over and dwelt upon, and their essence taken up, as it were, into the deva ego, as being of interest to him. So, very often, the *ego* really begins his personal life-cycle with the entry into the heaven-world, and pays a minimum of attention to the personality during its period of collecting materials.

In that case the aspect of mind that is antahkarana (in Madame Blavatsky's classification) functions but little before the period of the heaven-life. But if a man is to become expert on the astral and mental planes during the life of the physical body, he must bring the positive powers of the higher self down through that channel, by the practice of dharana or concentration, and so make himself entire master of his personality. In other words he must clear out the astral and

mental whirlpools. A man who is genius on some line may find it easy to apply tremendous concentration to his particular kind of work, but when he relaxes from that, his ordinary life may quite possibly be still full of these whirlpools. That is not what we want; we are aiming at nothing less than the complete destruction of the whirlpools, so as to comb out the lower mind and make it the calm and obedient servant of the higher self at all times.

These whirlpools may and do constantly crystallize into permanent prejudices, and make actual congestions of matter closely resembling warts upon the mental body. Then if the man tries to look out through that particular part of that body he cannot see clearly; everything is distorted, for at that point the mental matter is no longer living and flowing, but stagnant and rotten. The way to cure it is to acquire more knowledge, to get the matter into motion again, and then one by one the prejudices will be washed away and dissolved.

It is in this way that the mind is the great slayer of the real, for through it we do not see any object as it really is. We see only the images which we are able to make of it, and everything is necessarily coloured for us by these thought-forms of our own creation. Notice how two persons with preconceived ideas, seeing the same set of circumstances, and agreeing as to the actual happenings, will yet make two totally different stories from them. Exactly this sort of thing is going on all the time with every ordinary man, and we do not realize how absurdly we distort things. The disciple *must* conquer this; he must “slay the slayer”. He must not of course destroy his mind, for he cannot get along without it, but he must dominate it; it is *his*, but it is not *he*, though it tries to make him think so. The best way to overcome its wandering is to use the will; its efforts are just like those of the astral body, which is always trying to persuade you that its desires are yours; you must deal with them both in a precisely similar manner.

Even when the whirlpools that fill the mind with prejudice and error are gone, much illusion still remains. The translation of the Sanskrit word *avidya* as ignorance is perhaps not very fortunate, though it is universally accepted. So often in Sanskrit there are delicate shades of meaning which it is difficult to convey in English. In this case perhaps what is intended is not so much ignorance as unwisdom. A man may have vast stores of knowledge, and yet be unwise, for knowledge is concerned with objects and their relations in space and time, whereas wisdom is concerned with the soul or consciousness embodied in those things. The wise politician understands the people’s minds; the wise

mother understands her children's minds. However much one may know about material things, if one has only the matter-sight and not the life-sight, one has in reality only unwisdom or avidya. It is at the expense of wisdom that intellect generally lives," said Madame Blavatsky. Then, out of that unwisdom or ignorance spring four other great obstacles to spiritual progress, making five altogether, which are called the *kleshas*.

If avidya be the first obstacle the second is *asmita*, the notion that "I am this" or what a Master once called "self-personality". The personality is developed through life into quite a definite thing, with decided physical, astral and mental form, occupation and habits; and there is no objection to that if it be a good specimen. But if the indwelling life can be persuaded to think that he *is* that personality, he will begin to serve its interests, instead of using it merely as a tool for his spiritual purposes.

In consequence of this second error men seek inordinate wealth and power and fame. When a man looks over his country houses and his town houses, his yachts and cars, his farms and factories, he swells with pride, thinking himself great because he is called the owner of these things; or he hears his name on everybody's lips, and feels that thousands of people are thinking of him with praise (or even with condemnation, for notoriety is often pleasing to men who cannot attain fame) and he thinks himself a very great person indeed. That is "self-personality", one of the greatest superstitions in the world, and a great source of trouble for one and all. The spiritual man, on the other hand, counts himself fortunate if he can be the master of his own hand and brain, and he wishes to hold the images of thousands of others in his own mind that he may help them, rather than to rejoice in the thought that his image is multiplied and magnified in *their* minds. Hence self-personality is the greatest obstacle to the use of the personality by the higher self, and so to spiritual progress.

The third and fourth obstacles may be taken together. They are *raga* and *dwesha*, liking and disliking, or attraction and repulsion. These too spring from this same self-personality. That it should show its likes is inappropriate; it is as though a motor-car should have a voice of its own, and should raise it in great discontent when its master drives over a broken road, or in a purr of delight when he goes over a good road. The road may be a bad one for the car, but from the point of view of the driver it is a good thing that there is a road at all, because he wants to get somewhere, which would be a difficult matter without a road. It

is nice to have our armchairs and fires and electric light and steam heat, but he who would make progress has to go over new country, sometimes materially, and always in thought and feeling. People like the things that consort with their settled conveniences and habits; anything that disturbs those is “bad”; anything that fits in with them and enhances them is “good”. Such an outlook upon life does not harmonize with spiritual progress; we do not refuse comfort when it comes, but we must learn to be indifferent to it, and to take things as they come; this emphasis upon liking and disliking must go, and the calm judgment of the higher self as to what is good and what is bad must take its place.

The fifth obstacle is *abhinivesha*, the outcome of the last, the state of being fixed, settled in, attached to a form or mode of life, or to the personality. From this arises fear of old age and of death—events which can never exist for the man himself, but must come in due course to the personality. A veritable death in life may arise but this fifth trouble; people waste their youth in preparation for comfort and safety in age, and then waste their age in seeking for their lost youth, or are afraid to use their bodies, lest they should wear out. They are like a man who buys a beautiful motor-car, and sits in his garage, enjoying his new possession, but unable to bring himself to run it out on the road, lest it should be spoiled. Our business is to do what the higher self wants, and to be utterly willing to die in his service if need be.

All the whirlpools arise from these five obstacles. Concentration and meditation are the means to dispel them completely. When the kama-manas no longer gravitates downwards, the manas can turn upwards, to become *manas-taijasi*.

Another Sanskrit word connected with this self-personality is *ntana*, sometimes translated pride, but perhaps better rendered by conceit. This root appears in the word *nirmanakaya*, which means a being who is beyond this illusion—*nirmana*. Madame Blavatsky said that there were three kinds or modes of incarnation; first, that of the *avataras*, those who descend from higher spheres, having reached them in a cycle of evolution prior to ours; secondly, those of an ordinary kind, when a person passes through the astral and mental worlds and then takes up a new body; and thirdly, that of *nirmanakayas*, who incarnate again without interlude, sometimes perhaps after only a few days. In *The Secret Doctrine* she cites the Cardinal de Cusa as an instance of this, he having been born again quickly, as Copernicus; and she says that such rapid

rebirth is not an uncommon thing. She speaks of such people as adepts, not using the word quite as we employ it now, but meaning that they are adept or expert on the astral and lower mental planes; she says that they sometimes act as spirits at seances, and that they are particularly opposed by the Brothers of the Shadow, presumably because of the progress that they are making for themselves and also for mankind in general.

She explains that there are two kinds of *nirnianakayas*: those who have renounced the heaven-world, as above explained, and those who at a later and higher stage renounce what she calls absolute Nirvana, in order to remain to help the progress of the world. Modern Theosophical literature confines the term to this latter class, but here we are concerned with the lower class. The man who has slain the slayer has largely destroyed the five obstacles, and has become the servant of the higher self, with nothing in him but what is favourable to its purposes. He has his *antahkarana* widened out so that during his bodily life he is in full touch with the higher self, and all the time that self is taking what it needs; the bee can visit the flower when he will, for there is no storm raging; and when the physical body is dead, the subtle part of the personality can be used again in the next incarnation, because it is not full of whirlpools which represent fixed desires and rigid opinions, and selfish habits of feeling and thought.