

DEFINING AND MASTERING THE MIND

INTRODUCTION.

From a purely evolutionary point of view the mind may be regarded as man's greatest instrument when it is rightly used, or an annoying hindrance when it is not under his control. In this paper I will endeavor to define the mind in its three aspects. I also will give an overview and description of the different levels of the mind, and I will add some possible ways to become its master and to learn to use it in the right way.

DEFINING THE MIND

Defining the mind is not a simple thing because it depends on which level you look at it. The mind, also called manas, is found on the mental plane which is the fifth plane of man (see the chart below of the Constitution of Man). On this mental plane we find three aspects of the mind:

1. ***The lower concrete mind***: the reasoning principle; the receptive mind; common sense; the mind as the object of research by the psychologists; the form-building faculty ('thoughts are things'); the highest aspect of the lower self or the personality.
2. ***The Son of Mind***: the Ego or Soul; the individualized mind; the intelligence principle, which is called by many names in the esoteric literature, such as the Solar Angel or the Christ principle.
3. ***The higher abstract mind***: the custodian of ideas; the illuminating mind; the pattern-building faculty, or the mind that works with the blue prints upon which the forms are modeled.

This summation is a compilation from remarks about the three aspects in the following books of Alice Bailey: *"Education in the New Age"* (ENA, p. 5, 36); *"Treatise of White Magic"* (TWM, p. 365) and *"Esoteric Psychology II"* (EP II, p. 76).

In one of her other books *"Initiation, Human and Solar"* (IHS, p. 218) the principle of mind is defined as:

"That faculty in man which is the intelligent thinking principle, and which differentiates man from the animals."

One could say that intelligent thinking is the central principle of the mind, or of the mental man, which can be specified and subdivided in the mentioned three aspects of the lower concrete, reasoning, receptive mind; the individualized, intelligent Son of Mind or Soul; and the higher abstract, illuminating, idea-generating mind.

LEVELS OF THE MIND

The above-mentioned aspects of the mind can be elaborated with two more levels. In this way we can distinguish five different levels of development of the mind.

1. Kama-manas

This is the lowest level that is entangled with emotions. Kama means emotions and manas stands for mind. So, Kama-manas is the desire-mind body, or the emotional or astral body from where sensitive feelings and desires originate. It is the emotional thinking from the personality which only can be overcome when man controls his personality and his personal desires. All the activity in the lower psychic nature is the result of Kama-manas. Here the problem of glamour, or the illusion on the astral plane, is produced and found.

2. The Concrete Mind

This is the faculty of thought, or of concrete thinking. Thoughts are things and they build forms. A strong development of the concrete mind is necessary but has to be balanced in the end with abstract reasoning. By a too intense activity it can hinder the flowing down of higher inspiration. It must not become the master of man, but it has to become his instrument. Therefore it has to be stabilized by concentration, meditation and contemplation.

3. The “Son of Mind”

This is the Soul, the Higher Self, the Ego, the Solar Angel, or the Silent Watcher. It is the aspect of the One Life which is characterized by pure mind, pure reason, pure love, and pure will. It expresses intelligence, both abstractly and concretely, and it is the point of unification. It brings the Divine Plan into activity in the three worlds of men (physical-etheric, astral/emotional and mental) through dedicated and devoted service

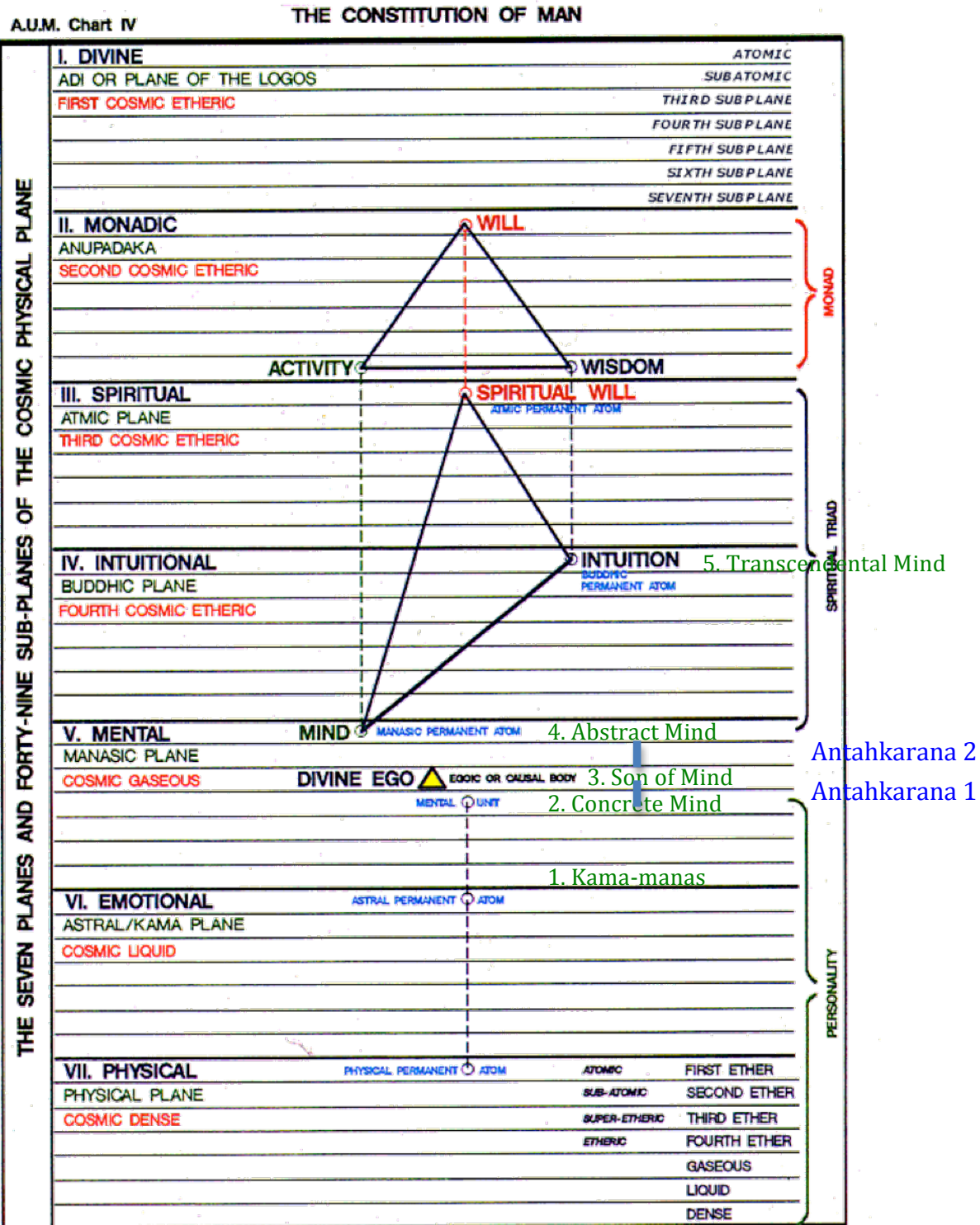
4. The Abstract Mind

This is the highest of the three aspects of the mind (concrete mind, Son of Mind, abstract mind), and the lowest aspect of the Spiritual Triad which is used by the Spiritual Hierarchy to reach the mind of disciples. It is brought into conscious functioning through the building of the Antahkarana.

5. The “Transcendental Mind” associated with the buddhic plane.

This is the intuition, or pure reason, which eventually supersedes the lower or concrete mind. Its nature is love-wisdom. Its zones of activity lie in the higher head centres, existing in etheric matter. It is a blend of the two divine qualities of buddhi-manas, or intuitive spiritual understanding and the higher abstract mind, which is essentially the power to comprehend what is not concrete or tangible.

These levels are added in green in the following chart (from *‘Initiation, Human and Solar’* of Alice Bailey).



Steps to master

Each of the mentioned five levels of the mind are steps to be mastered on the way to self-realization and liberation:

1. Kama-manas: here the lower self, or the personality, is to **overcome emotions**, glamour and emotional thinking.
2. Concrete mind: in this highest level of the lower self one has to learn to use the mind for **concrete thinking**.
3. Son of Mind: here one has to learn to be still and to **contact the Higher Self**, the Soul or the Egoic or Causal Body. Through the stage of experience acquired between levels 2 and 3 the first part of the Antahkarana ('Antahkarana 1') is built, as indicated in the chart with the lower short blue vertical line.
4. Abstract mind: in this step one has to build the second part of the Antahkarana ('Antahkarana 2'), shown as the upper short blue vertical line in the chart, and make it into a **receiving channel for the Hierarchy**.
5. Transcendental mind: in this last level the **intuition**, pure reason and love-wisdom has to be developed.

BUILDING THE ANTAHKARANA

The gap between the lower concrete mind and the soul (the Son of Mind), as well as the one between the soul and the higher abstract mind has to be bridged. The bridge between these three aspects of the mind is called the Antahkarana, also called the 'consciousness thread' or the 'bridge of light'.

The building of this bridge is done through **right living and aspiration** and by intelligent (occult) **meditation**.

According to DK Humanity has always realised this necessity of the bridging of the gaps. This can be seen in the attempts of humanity to achieve oneness or unity. In ENA (p. 5) he says:

"... the gap between the lower mind and the soul has to be bridged, and curiously enough humanity has always realised this and has talked therefore in terms of "achieving unity" or "making the at-one-ment" or "attaining alignment." These are all attempts to express this intuitively realised truth."

MASTERING THE MIND

As long as the lower self, or the personality, is in charge the mind is more the master of man than its serving instrument. Fired by his desires (kama) the personality often suffers from emotional, compulsive, repetitive and aimless thinking, which it cannot control. Mastering the mind is an important step in the development of man's spiritual consciousness. DK says in TWM (p. 365):

"The goal of all the work of an aspirant is to understand those aspects of the mind with which he has to learn to work."

On the pages 365-366 he sums up **the work that has to be done by the aspirant**. Of this summation I give here the most important points (with author's emphasis in bold):

*"1. He **has to learn to think**; to discover that he has an apparatus which is called the mind and to uncover its faculties and powers. (...)*

*"2. He has to learn to get back of his thought processes and form building propensities and **discover the ideas which underlie the divine thought-form**, the world process, and so **learn to work in collaboration with the plan** and subordinate his own thought-form building to these ideas. (...)*

*"3. From that developed idealism, he must progress even deeper still, until he **enters the realm of pure intuition**. He can then tap truth at its source. He enters into the mind of God Himself. (...)*

*"4. Then follows the work of **conscious thought-form building**, based upon these divine ideas, emanating as intuitions from the Universal Mind. This goes forward **through meditation**."*

DK proceeds on page 366 with (again with the bold parts being the author's emphasis):

*"Every true student knows that this involves **concentration** in order to focus or orient the lower mind to the higher. Temporarily the normal thought-form building tendencies are inhibited. Through **meditation**, which is the mind's power to hold itself in the light, and in that light become aware of the plan, he learns to "bring through" the needed ideas. Through **contemplation** he finds himself able to enter into that silence which will enable him to tap the divine mind, wrest God's thought out of the divine consciousness and to know. This is the work before each aspirant and **hence the necessity of his understanding the nature of his mental problem, the tools with which he must perforce work, and the use he must make of what he learns and gains through right use of the mental apparatus**."*

Here DK mentions the importance of working on controlling and mastering the mind by concentration, meditation and contemplation. In other parts of some of the books of Alice Bailey he also mentions Raja Yoga.

Concentration

Concentration is the ability to **focus the mind on an object or thought**. This is a necessary prerequisite for every form of mental work. One needs to train the mind to think in a stable and focused way, and to prevent it to jump back and forth or to lose energy on distracting thoughts. For this frequent and regular exercise is necessary. Concentration is not a goal on its own but a mean to train the mind into an effective and powerful instrument for directing thoughts in a conscious way.

Meditation

Meditation is moving from attention to activity regarding an object or thought. This means pondering on an object or thought from different perspectives to **pierce its deeper meaning** and to receive new intuitive insights around it. It is the art of piercing into the **life** in an object, rather than in its form! In this way the mind is trained in reaching a fundamental understanding of the **essence** and **deeper meaning** of the object.

Regular meditation is essential for spiritual development and mind control. What food is for the physical life of the body, meditation is for the spiritual life of mind and soul. A concentrated intellect and the power to withdraw from the whirlwind of the external world leads to a more focused application of energy and control and right use of the mind.

Contemplation

Contemplation is actively keeping the consciousness on the object or thought, while setting aside the lower activities of the consciousness. This leads to **unification** of the object/thought with the consciousness, making us ONE with the object of our thought. Where we discover with meditation the deeper meaning of an object or thought we are going to **experience ourselves as one with the object**. We **merge or fuse** with the object; we **become** the object in realizing that the object and us consist of the same consciousness.

Raja Yoga

A science for achieving control of the mind is Raja Yoga, which is also called the 'Kingly Science of the Soul'. Its main exponent is Patanjali who founded the Raja Yoga School. There is controversy as to date and time he did this. Occidental authorities speak about somewhere between 820 BC and 300 BC while Hindu authorities go much further back till 10.000 BC. (See '*The Light of the Soul*' of Alice Bailey, p. xv).

Anyhow, Patanjali created the Raja Yoga System which is written down in four books. The goal of this system is the **replacement of the lower impulses of Kama-manas, or the desire mind, by the considered intelligent action of the Son of Mind** (the soul or spiritual man). The basic tenet of this system is that '**energy follows thought**'.

Key to success

The key to success in every step in concentration, meditation, contemplation and Raja Yoga lies in **resisting lower activities**, wishes and thoughts of Kama-manas and holding on to the full flow of conscious energy from our **one-pointed attention**.

CONCLUSION

As long as the mind is the master of man instead of his servant or instrument it can

be a torturous hindrance through emotionally driven, compulsive and uncontrolled thinking. This is the case in the first level of the mind, Kama-manas, or the desire-mind, and here man has to overcome emotions, glamour and emotional thinking. This is the first step to be mastered on the way to self-realization and liberation.

The other levels of the mind, and next steps to be mastered are: the concrete mind, the Son of Mind, the abstract mind and the transcendental mind. An important part of this mastering process is the building of the Antahkarana, which is the two-fold bridge between the lower concrete mind and the Son of Mind, or Soul, and between the Son of Mind and the higher abstract mind.

The Antahkarana is the tool to reach the higher levels of clear thinking, to master the mind and obtain the control of its right use. For this the methods of regular and disciplined concentration, meditation and contemplation, and the science of Raja Yoga are important practices.

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