

Higher Self and Higher Ego



**Higher Self is Universal Mind in its macrocosmic aspect.
Higher Ego or Manas is Individualised Mind in its microcosmic aspect.
Lower Manas or “self” is ray from the Higher Ego and its alter Ego.
The brain is the vehicle of Lower Manas enthroned in Kama-Rupa.**

Abstract and train of thoughts

Foreword the Series Editor

Self versus Ego	4
Christos versus Chrēstos	4

What is the difference between Higher Self and Higher Ego?

An occult name for Higher Ego is Archaeus or Ancient, i.e., Divine Wisdom or Buddhi-Manas.	5
Higher Ego is the sole bearer of all its alter Egos on earth and their sole representative in the subjectivity of Devachan.	6
Imperishable Higher Ego, or Nous, is our true Individuality, that keeps reincarnating and clothing itself in a new personality at every new birth.	6
Yet that noble and lofty Noetic Entity, that allows us to think and enjoy the boon of self-consciousness, is not ours. It belongs to Divine Entities from higher and earlier worlds and planets, whose Karma had not been exhausted when their world went into Pralaya. By quickening the human mind they purify themselves in the fire of suffering and individual experience in order to re-become the One Essence.	6
And so can we, Their terrestrial reflection, if by purity of thought and deed we rise to Their plane and partake of Their divine essence.	6
Beware! Personal immortality is conditional. Those who consistently ignore the behests of their Higher Ego run the risk losing their soul.	7
When Odysseus was forced by the Southern wind towards the rocks of Scylla and Charybdis, he found safety by clinging to a wild fig tree that grew on its summit for it provided “best refuge to the soul struggling with the billows of base perturbations.” That wild tree is the Higher Ego, a Holy Isle within every man.	8
Philosophically, Higher Ego is the apex of a triangle. He is “crucified” between two Opposing Forces: the personal ray dragged down by impure, selfish desires on the left side, and the uplifting purity of thought and deed on the right. Higher Ego is Chrishna-Christos, the true Christ of the churches, our personal “god.” On the plane of matter, Chrēstos is Christos’ lower but aspiring counterpart — an uninitiated adept or higher chela about to be admitted into Gupta-Vidya, i.e., Occultism’s Greater Mysteries.	8
Therefore, there are two Christs: one above and one below.	8
Higher Ego is the only divine Entity upon which act and react all the deeds of the terrestrial personality, the Lower Ego. But, in order to understand the Lower one, has to grasp its relationship with the Higher. The latter is an immense globe of Divine Light; the	

CONFUSING WORDS SERIES
HIGHER SELF AND HIGHER EGO

former, rays projected into the perception of lower minds, i.e., humanity at large, in the same manner that a single candle lights up a thousand candles without its flame being in any way diminished, as Lord Buddha pointed out. 9

Why? Because the Higher needs the Lower as much as the Lower needs the Higher, for “gods feed on men.” 9

Some Theosophists got into the habit of using “Self” and “Ego” as synonymous, of associating “Self” with only man’s higher individual or even personal self or ego, whereas “Self” ought never to be applied except to the One Universal Self. 10

Even those pledged to the Higher Self by solemn vows, and who were personally instructed by H.P. Blavatsky, did not seem to understand the indissoluble link connecting their “Higher Egos” with the One Universal Self. 12

When their knowledge was examined, most could not explain the difference between the Higher and the Lower Self and scarcely any avoided a confusion between Higher Self and Higher Ego! 12



Foreword the Series Editor

Self versus Ego

Exoterically, Self and Ego predicate a mind separate from other minds and beings. Many view these words as broadly synonymous, others attribute to them many different senses thus causing perpetual confusion. The aim of this compilation is to highlight the esoteric meanings ascribed to Higher Self and Higher Ego by H.P. Blavatsky, for these two terms are prerequisite for understanding man's inner constitution.

Christos versus Chrēstos

Christos and Chrēstos is a typical example of paronomasia that has caused an abundance of confusion among Christians and Christian Theologians.¹ Paronomasia is a situation where two or more words that have a seemingly trifling difference in spelling, either impart different meanings to those who understand their etymology, or are treated as synonymous by those who don't.

One example of paronomasia, introduced by H.P. Blavatsky, is Kosmos and Cosmos: briefly, the former spelling denotes Manvantaric manifestation as a whole; the latter, our Solar System.²

Another example of malicious and cruel paronomasia is that of the Brāhmanas, who cunningly suffixed a letter to a single word of the *Rig-Veda*,³ and therefore changed the meaning of *yonim agre* (within the altar) to *yonim agneh* (within the fire) in order to justify murdering those they were vowed to guide and enlighten.⁴ And all that for mere lucre and the greed of gain.



¹ See "Crucified between two thieves" and drawings 2-4 in our Buddhas and Initiates Series. — ED. PHIL.

² See "Kosmos and Cosmos" in the same Series. — ED. PHIL.

³ X, 18, 7

⁴ See "Blavatsky on Hindu widow-burning" in our Blavatsky Speaks Series. — ED. PHIL.

What is the difference between Higher Self and Higher Ego?

It is not difficult for a Theosophist to recognize in this “God”:

- The UNIVERSAL MIND in its cosmic aspect; and
- The Higher Ego in man in its microcosmic.

For, as Plato says, He is not the truth nor the intelligence, “but the Father of it”; *i.e.*, the “Father” of the Lower Manas, our personal “brain-mind,” which depends for its manifestations on the organs of sense. Though this eternal essence of things may not be perceptible by our physical senses, it may be apprehended by the mind of those who are not wilfully obtuse. . . . This “God” is the Universal Mind, Alaya, the source from which the “God” in each one of us has emanated.¹

An occult name for Higher Ego is Archaus or Ancient, *i.e.*, Divine Wisdom or Buddhi-Manas.

But the Eastern Occultist employs the mystic term [“Ancient”]² only when referring to the reincarnating higher Ego. For, divine Wisdom being diffused throughout the infinite Universe, and our impersonal HIGHER SELF being an integral part of it, the *ātmic* light of the latter can be centred only in that which though eternal is still individualized — *i.e.*, the noëtic Principle, the manifested God within each rational being, or our Higher *Manas* at one with *Buddhi*. It is this collective light which is the “Wisdom that is from above,” and which whenever it descends on the personal Ego, is found “pure, peaceable, gentle.” Hence, Job’s assertion that “Wisdom is with the Ancient,” or *Buddhi-Manas*. For the Divine Spiritual “I” is alone eternal, and the same throughout all births; whereas the “personalities” it informs in succession are evanescent, changing like the shadows of a kaleidoscopic series of forms in a magic lantern. It is the “Ancient,” because, whether it be called Sophia, Krishna, Buddhi-Manas or Christos, it is ever the “first-born” of *Alaya-Mahat*, the Universal Soul and the Intelligence of the Universe. Esoterically then, Job’s statement must read: “With the Ancient (man’s Higher Ego) is Wisdom, and in the length of days (or the number of its reincarnations) is understanding.” No man can learn true and final Wisdom in one birth; and every new rebirth, whether we be reincarnated for weal or for woe, is one more lesson we receive at the hands of the stern yet ever just schoolmaster — KARMIC LIFE.³

¹ *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (OLD PHILOSOPHERS AND MODERN CRITICS) VI p. 203 & *fn.*

² [Cf. *Job* xii, 12. Also cf. With Plato “ . . . the lower types were but the concrete images of the higher abstract ones. The soul, which is immortal, has an arithmetical, as the body has a geometrical, beginning. This beginning, as the reflection of the great universal ARCHÆUS [*Liquor Vitæ*], is self-moving, and from the centre diffuses itself over the whole body of the microcosm.” *Isis Unveiled*, I p. 14.]

³ *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (THE DUAL ASPECT OF WISDOM) XII pp. 313-14

Higher Ego is the sole bearer of all its alter Egos on earth and their sole representative in the subjectivity of Devachan.

There is no distinct or separate immortality for the men of earth outside of the EGO which informed them. That Higher Ego is the sole Bearer of all its *alter Egos* on earth and their sole representative in the mental state called Devachan. As the last disembodied personality, however, has a right to its own special state of bliss, unalloyed and free from the memories of all others, it is the *last life only which is fully realistically vivid*. Devachan is often compared to the happiest day in a series of many thousands of other “days” in the life of a person. The intensity of its happiness makes the man forget entirely all others, his past becomes obliterated.¹

Imperishable Higher Ego, or Nous, is our true Individuality, that keeps reincarnating and clothing itself in a new personality at every new birth.

The teachings of Occultism divide man into three aspects — the *divine*, the *thinking* or rational, and the *irrational* or animal man. For metaphysical purposes also he is considered under a septenary division, or, as it is agreed to express it in theosophy, he is composed of seven “principles,” three of which constitute the Higher *Triad*, and the remaining four the lower *Quaternary*. It is in the latter that dwells the *Personality* which embraces all the characteristics, including memory and consciousness, of each physical life in turn. The *Individuality* is the Higher Ego (Manas) of the Triad considered as a Unity. In other words the Individuality is our imperishable *Ego* which reincarnates and clothes itself in *a new Personality* at every new birth.²

Yet that noble and lofty Noetic Entity, that allows us to think and enjoy the boon of self-consciousness, is not ours. It belongs to Divine Entities from higher and earlier worlds and planets, whose Karma had not been exhausted when their world went into Pralaya. By quickening the human mind they purify themselves in the fire of suffering and individual experience in order to re-become the One Essence.

And so can we, Their terrestrial reflection, if by purity of thought and deed we rise to Their plane and partake of Their divine essence.

He who has read *The Secret Doctrine* with any degree of attention, must know the origin of the human Egos, called generically Monads, and what they were before they were forced to incarnate in the human animal. The divine beings whom Karma led to act in the drama of Manvantaric life, are entities from higher and earlier worlds and planets, whose Karma had not been exhausted when their world went into Pralaya. Such is the teaching; but whether it is so or not, the Higher Egos are — as compared to such forms of transitory, terrestrial mud as ourselves — Divine Beings, Gods, immortal throughout the Mahāmanvantara, or the 311,040,000,000,000 years during which the Age of Brahmā lasts. And as the Divine Egos, in order to re-become the One Essence, or be indrawn again into the Universal AUM, have to purify themselves

¹ *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (E.S. INSTRUCTION No. III) XII p. 627

² *Key to Theosophy*, (GLOSSARY) “Personality,” p. 359

in the fire of suffering and individual experience, so also have the terrestrial Egos, the personalities, to do likewise, if they would partake of the immortality of the Higher Egos. This they can achieve by crushing in themselves all that benefits the lower personal nature of their “selves” and by aspiring to transfuse their thinking Kāmic principle into that of the Higher Ego. We (*i.e.*, our personalities) become immortal by the mere fact of our thinking, moral nature, being grafted on our divine triune Monad (Ātma-Buddhi-Manas), the three in one and one in three (aspects). For the Monad manifested on earth by the incarnating Ego is that which is called the Tree of Life Eternal, that can only be approached by eating the fruit of Knowledge, the Knowledge of Good and Evil, or of GNÖSIS, Divine Wisdom.

In the exoteric teachings, this Ego is the fifth principle in man. But the student who has read and understood the first two *Instructions*, knows something more. He is aware that the seventh is not a human, but a universal principle in which Man participates; but so does equally every physical and subjective atom, and also every blade of grass and everything that lives or is in Space, whether it is sensible of it or not. He knows, moreover, that if man is more closely connected with it, and assimilates it with a hundredfold more power, it is simply because he is endowed with the highest consciousness on this earth;¹ that man, in short, may become a Spirit, a Deva or a God in his next transformation, whereas neither a stone nor a vegetable, nor an animal can do so before they become men in their proper turn.

Now what are the functions of Buddhi? On this plane it has none, unless it is united with Manas, the Conscious Ego. Buddhi stands to the divine Root-Essence in the same relation as Mūlaprakriti to Parabrahman, in the Vedānta School; or as Alaya, the Universal Soul, to the One Eternal Spirit, or that which is beyond Spirit. It is its human vehicle, one remove from that Absolute which can have no relation whatever to the finite and the conditioned.²

Beware! Personal immortality is conditional. Those who consistently ignore the behests of their Higher Ego run the risk losing their soul.³

What is the good of knowing all about the occult relations between the forces of nature and the human principles if, by remaining deliberately ignorant of SELF, we remain thereby as ignorant of what does or what does *not* affect each distinct principle? Are you aware that by starving, so to speak, one principle or even centre, at the expense of another principle or centre, we may lose the former and injure hopelessly the latter? That by forcing our Higher *Ego* (not Self, mind you) to remain inactive and silent, which is easily achieved by overfeeding the lower *Manas* ever gravitating down to *Kāma-rūpa*, we risk utter annihilation of our present personality?⁴

¹ [Though many degrees lower than that of initiated adepts. — ED. PHIL.]

² *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (E.S. INSTRUCTION No. III) XII pp. 629-30

³ [See “Woe for the living dead” in our Constitution of Man Series. — ED. PHIL.]

⁴ *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (E.S. INSTRUCTION No. III) XII p. 598

When Odysseus was forced by the Southern wind towards the rocks of Scylla and Charybdis, he found safety by clinging to a wild fig tree that grew on its summit for it provided “best refuge to the soul struggling with the billows of base perturbations.”¹ That wild tree is the Higher Ego, a Holy Isle within every man.²

Philosophically, Higher Ego is the apex of a triangle. He is “crucified” between two Opposing Forces: the personal ray dragged down by impure, selfish desires on the left side, and the uplifting purity of thought and deed on the right. Higher Ego is Chrishna-Christos, the true Christ of the churches, our personal “god.” On the plane of matter, Chrēstos is Christos’ lower but aspiring counterpart — an uninitiated adept³ or higher chela about to be admitted into Gupta-Vidya, i.e., Occultism’s Greater Mysteries.

Special attention should be paid to the triangle with its apex in the Mānasic state and its base in the Kāma-Mānasic state.⁴ The apex is Manas, the Higher Ego, the Christos. This, on sending out its Ray, becomes “crucified between two thieves.”⁵ For the personal Ray is partly pure, partly impure, dragged down by Kāma on the one side and reaching up towards the Higher Manas on the other. It is the double-faced entity. One “thief,” the pure part of the Lower Manas, repents and goes with the Christos to Paradise, i.e., becomes the aroma of the personality, the consciousness of the Devachanic entity. The other, the impure part, clings to Kāma, and is dissipated with it in Kāma-Loka. Thus the reincarnating Ray may be separated, for convenience, into two portions; the lower Kāmic Ego is dissipated in Kāma-Loka; the Mānasic part accomplishes its cycle and returns to the Higher Ego. It is, in reality, this Higher Ego which is, so to speak, punished, which suffers, and this is the true crucifixion of the Christos, the most abstruse, but yet the most important mystery of Occultism, whereof more will be said hereafter.⁶

Therefore, there are two Christs: one above and one below.

The “spirit” with the Gnostics was a female potency exoterically, it was the ray proceeding from the Higher Manas, the *Ego*, and that which the Esotericists refer to as the *Kāma-Manas* or the lower personal *Ego*, which is radiated in every human entity by the Higher Ego or *Christos*, the god within us. Therefore, they were right in saying: “there is not one Christ, but one above and the other below.” Every student of Occultism will understand this, and also that Gabriel-or “the might one of God” — is one with the Higher Ego.⁷

The “Higher Ego” cannot act directly on the body, as its consciousness belongs to quite another plane and planes of ideation: the “lower” *Self* does: and its action and

¹ See “Taylor on the Wanderings of Ulysses” in our Hellenic and Hellenistic Papers. — ED. PHIL.]

² Cf. *Voice of the Silence*, frag. III vs. 258 & fn., p. 59

³ See “Every Initiate must be an adept in Occultism” in our Buddhas and Initiates Series. — ED. PHIL.]

⁴ [Referring to Diagram IV, Figure C, Microcosmic or Human States of Consciousness. See “Drawing 1 - Forces and States of Consciousness” in our Buddhas and Initiates Series. — ED. PHIL.]

⁵ [Consult study notes and drawings in our Buddhas and Initiates Series. — ED. PHIL.]

⁶ *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (E.S. INSTRUCTION No. IV) XII pp. 659-60

⁷ *Theosophical Glossary*: Gabriel. See *Isis Unveiled*.

behaviour *depend on its free will and choice* as to whether it will gravitate more towards its parent (“the Father in Heaven”) or the “animal” which it informs, the man of flesh. The “Higher Ego,” as part of the essence of the UNIVERSAL MIND, is unconditionally omniscient on its own plane, and only potentially so in our terrestrial sphere, as it has to act solely through its *alter ego* — the Personal Self. NOW, although the former is the vehicle of all knowledge of the past, the present, and the future, and although it is from this fountainhead that its “double” catches occasional glimpses of that which is beyond the senses of man, and transmits them to certain brain cells (unknown to science in their functions), thus making of man a *Seer*, a soothsayer, and a prophet; yet the memory of bygone events — especially of the earth, earthy — has its seat in the Personal Ego alone. No memory of a purely daily-life function, of a physical, egotistical, or of a lower mental nature — such as, *e.g.*, eating and drinking, enjoying personal sensual pleasures, transacting business to the detriment of one’s neighbour, *etc.*, *etc.*, has aught to do with the “Higher” Mind or Ego. Nor has it any direct dealings on this physical plane with either our brain or our heart — for these two are the organs of a power higher than the *Personality* — but only with our passional organs, such as the liver, the stomach, the spleen, *etc.* Thus it only stands to reason that the memory of such-like events must be first awakened in that organ which was the first to induce the action remembered afterwards, and conveyed it to our “sense-thought,” which is entirely *distinct from the “supersensuous” thought*. It is only the higher forms of the latter, the *superconscious* mental experiences, that can correlate with the cerebral and cardiac centres. The memories of physical and *selfish* (or personal) deeds, on the other hand, together with the mental experiences of a terrestrial nature, and of earthly biological functions, can, of necessity, only be correlated with the molecular constitution of various *Kāmic* organs, and the “dynamical association” of the elements of the nervous system in each particular organ.¹

Higher Ego is the only divine Entity upon which act and react all the deeds of the terrestrial personality,² the Lower Ego.³ But, in order to understand the Lower one, has to grasp its relationship with the Higher. The latter is an immense globe of Divine Light; the former, rays projected into the perception of lower minds, i.e., humanity at large, in the same manner that a single candle lights up a thousand candles without its flame being in any way diminished, as Lord Buddha pointed out.

Why? Because the Higher needs the Lower as much as the Lower needs the Higher, for “gods feed on men.”

The Lower Manas is, in many respects, most difficult to understand. There are enormous mysteries connected with it. We shall here consider it as a Principle, taking later the workings of Consciousness in the Quaternary, and in each member of it.

The important point to grasp is its relationship to the Higher Manas.

¹ *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (PSYCHIC AND NOETIC ACTION) XII pp. 366-67

² *i.e.*, the false individuality of the common man who identifies with the personal and the transient.

³ *Cf. ibid.*, (THE LETTERS OF JOHANN CASPAR LAVATER) XII pp. 210-11

Manas is, as it were, a globe of pure, Divine Light, a Ray from the World Soul, a unit from a higher sphere, in which is no differentiation. Descending to a plane of differentiation it emanates a Ray which is itself, which it can only manifest through the personality already differentiated. This Ray is the Lower Manas, while the globe of Divine Light, a Kumāra on its own plane, is the Higher Ego, or Higher Manas, Manas proper. But it must never be forgotten that the Lower Manas is the same in its essence as the Higher.

This Higher Ego, at incarnation, shoots out the Ray, the Lower Ego. At every incarnation a new Ray is emitted, and yet in essence it is the same Ray, for the essence is always one, the same in you and in me and in everybody. Thus the Higher Ego incarnates in a thousand bodies. The Flame is eternal. From the Flame of the Higher Ego the Lower is lighted, and from this a lower vehicle, and so on. For this Ray can manifest on this Earth, sending out its Māyāvi-Rūpa. The Higher Ego is the Sun, we may say, and the personal Manases are its Rays; 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 its 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.¹

Some Theosophists got into the habit of using “Self” and “Ego” as synonymous, of associating “Self” with only man’s higher individual or even personal self or ego, whereas “Self” ought never to be applied except to the One Universal Self.

This “Higher Self” is ATMA, and of course it is “non-materializable,” as Mr. Sinnett says. Even more, it can never be “objective” under any circumstances, even to the highest spiritual perception. For *Atman* or the “Higher Self” is really Brahma, the ABSOLUTE, and indistinguishable from it. In hours of *Samadhi*, the higher spiritual consciousness of the Initiate is entirely absorbed in the ONE essence, which is Atman, and therefore, being one with the whole, there can be nothing objective for it. Now some of our Theosophists have got into the habit of using the words “Self” and “Ego” as synonymous, of associating the term “Self” with only man’s higher individual or even personal “Self” or *Ego*, whereas this term ought never to be applied except to *the One universal Self*. Hence the confusion. Speaking of Manas, the “causal body,” we may call it — when connecting it with the Buddhic radiance — the “HIGHER EGO,” never the “Higher Self.” For even Buddhi, the “Spiritual Soul,” is not the SELF, but the vehicle only of SELF. All the other “Selves” — such as the “Individual” self and “personal” self — ought never to be spoken or written off without their qualifying and characteristic adjectives.

Thus in this most excellent essay on the “Higher Self,”² this term is applied to the *sixth principle* or *Buddhi* (of course in conjunction with Manas, as without such union there would be no *thinking* principle or element in the spiritual soul); and has in consequence given rise to just such misunderstandings. The statement that “a child does not acquire its *sixth principle* — or become a morally responsible being capable

¹ *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (E.S. INSTRUCTION No. V) XII p. 709

² [by A.P. Sinnett]

of generating Karma — until seven years old,” proves what is meant therein by the HIGHER SELF. Therefore, the able author is quite justified in explaining that after the “Higher Self” has passed into the human being and saturated the personality — in some of the finer organizations only — with its consciousness “people with psychic faculties may indeed perceive this Higher Self through their finer senses from time to time.” But so are those, who limit the term “Higher Self” to the Universal Divine Principle, “justified” in misunderstanding him. For, when we read, without being prepared for this shifting of metaphysical terms,¹ that while “fully manifesting on the physical plane . . . the Higher Self still remains a conscious spiritual Ego on the corresponding plane of Nature” — we are apt to see in the “Higher Self” of this sentence, “Ātma,” and in the spiritual Ego, “Manas,” or rather *Buddhi-Manas*, and forthwith to criticise the whole thing as incorrect.

To avoid henceforth such misapprehensions, I propose to translate literally from the Occult Eastern terms their equivalents in English, and offer these for future use.

THE HIGHER SELF is Ātma the inseparable ray of the Universal and ONE SELF. It is the God *above*, more than within, us. Happy the man who succeeds in saturating his *inner Ego* with it!

THE SPIRITUAL *divine* EGO is the Spiritual soul or *Buddhi*, in close union with *Manas*, the mind-principle, without which it is no EGO at all, but only the Ātmic *Vehicle*.

THE INNER, or HIGHER “EGO” is *Manas*, the “Fifth” Principle, so called, independently of *Buddhi*. The Mind-Principle is only the Spiritual Ego when merged *into one* with *Buddhi*, — no materialist being supposed to have in him *such* an Ego, however great his intellectual capacities. It is the permanent *Individuality* or the “Re-incarnating Ego.”

THE LOWER, or PERSONAL “EGO” is the physical man in conjunction with his *lower* Self, *i.e.*, animal instincts, passions, desires, *etc.* It is called the “false personality,” and consists of the *lower Manas* combined with *Kama-rūpa*, and operating through the Physical body and its phantom or “double.”

The remaining “Principle” is, strictly speaking, the radiating force or Energy “*Prāna*,” or “Life,” of Ātma — as the Universal Life and the ONE SELF, — ITS lower or rather (in its effects) more physical, because manifesting, aspect. *Prāna* or Life permeates the whole being of the objective Universe; and is called a “principle” only because it is an indispensable factor and the *deus ex*

¹ “Shifting of *Metaphysical terms*” applies here only to the shifting of their translated equivalents from the Eastern expressions; for to this day there never existed any such terms in English, every Theosophist having to coin his own terms to render his thought. It is nigh time, then, to settle on some definite nomenclature.

machina of the living man.¹

Even those pledged to the Higher Self by solemn vows, and who were personally instructed by H.P. Blavatsky, did not seem to understand the indissoluble link connecting their “Higher Egos” with the One Universal Self.

The ancient occult axiom, “Know Thyself,” must be familiar to every member of this School; but few if any have apprehended the real meaning of this wise exhortation of the Delphic Oracle. You all know your earthly pedigree, but who of you has ever traced all the links of heredity, astral, psychic, and spiritual, which go to make you what you are? Many have written and expressed their desire to unite themselves with their Higher Ego, yet none seem to know the indissoluble link connecting their “Higher Egos” with the One Universal SELF.²

When their knowledge was examined, most could not explain the difference between the Higher and the Lower Self and scarcely any avoided a confusion between Higher Self and Higher Ego!

The Higher Self is a spark of the Universal Spirit, Ātma, manifesting in man through Buddhi as its vehicle. It must not be confounded with the Higher Ego, the Individuality, the reincarnating Ego — all terms for the Mānasic Entity. The latter only becomes part of the Higher Self by rising to it, and assimilating with it, and thus completing the Trinity, which yet is the One. Ātma-Buddhi is universal, eternal, but senseless *on this plane*. Manas is the self-consciousness. Buddhi passes on from mahā-manvantara to mahā-manvantara. Manas is limited to one mahā-manvantara.

The Lower Self is the personal Ego, Kāma-Manas, the impermanent personality, the root of “I-am-ship,” and therefore of separateness. It is the animal soul, “of the earth, earthy,” the continual enemy of spiritual progress, the tempter, the centre of selfish desires and personal ambitions. The Kāmic element is the lowest point of materiality, correlative to the fourth Round and the fourth Globe, the turning-point of the arc, the furthest descent of spirit into matter. The Mānasic element, the Lower Manas in union with Kāma, is the beginning of the reascent: hence Kāma-Manas is the battleground of this stage of earth-life.

NOTE — Scarcely any avoided a confusion between the Higher Self and the Higher Ego. Some fell into the most hopeless blunders, showing that they had no clear ideas of the septenary constitution of man. Serious mistakes were also made as to the meaning of the “Lower Self”; one wild guess identifying it with the Auric Egg. Yet every Esotericist has invoked the Higher Self, and ought surely to have taken the trouble to make clear to himself what it was he invoked.³



¹ *Key to Theosophy*, § IX (ON KAMA-LOKA AND DEVACHAN) pp. 174-76

² *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (E.S. INSTRUCTION No. I) XII pp. 515-16

³ Excerpted from: D. Eklund (Comp.) *Echoes of the Orient: The Writings of William Quan Judge*. 2nd ed. Pasadena: Theosophical University Press, 2009-11 [4 Vols.]. Vol. III, 2010, E.S.T.S., Criticism and Remarks by the Head of the Section Concerning Answers to Examination Paper No. 1, Question 3: *What is the difference between the Higher and the Lower Self?*; pp. 296-97.