

Gloss 17. Every spiritual Ego is a ray of a Planetary Spirit, according to esoteric teaching.

The esoteric teaching referred to here is doubtless that of the cosmic seven Rays; each of us is a ray of one of those Rays. Ultimately we are all rays of the one eternal central Sun. Or, as verse 138 puts it, our temporary personalities are shadows of that one light. Shadows come and go, being impermanent:

Gloss 18. “Personalities” or physical bodies are called “shadows” as they are evanescent.

It is notable that our personality is here equated with our physical body, in and through which our personality develops. A physical body with its personality is of one lifetime only; neither survives that lifetime. What survives and is permanent (or as permanent as anything in a world that is always changing) is the individuality, which is encapsulated in the principle of pure (or higher) mind within us. That principle is the faculty by which we know what really is and especially who we are. It is also what we know, both the means and the object of knowledge:

Gloss 19. Mind (*manas*), the thinking Principle or Ego in man, is referred to as Knowledge itself, because the human Egos are called *Mānasa-putras*, the sons of (universal) Mind.

One of the characteristic features of Theosophical thought is its teaching that our individuality, expressed through the principle of *manas* or mind, will never cease to be. Some forms of Indic thought emphasize that, since we are expressions of the Ultimate Reality (whether it is called Brahman or Nirvāna or something else), any separate identity is mere illusion. Hence everything about us, including our individuality, is unreal.

A typical Theosophical response is that, although in truth only one ultimate Reality exists (Parabrahm or whatever we call it), the ultimate One is unknowable but manifests in the relative world in a multitude of forms, some of which are evanescent and some of which (namely the individual expressions of the monad) abide throughout manifestation and indeed even across the periods of cosmic rest called “pralayas” that separate one period of manifestation from another. Thus, practically speaking, our individuality (*atma-buddhi-manas*) never ceases to be, but is our inner Self “that was, that is, and