

Manasadharma

Definitional Essay

Theosophy Trust

Manasadharma is the dharma of *Manas*: the intrinsic law, duty, and spiritual vocation of self-conscious mind. It is not merely “mental duty,” nor a moral rule imposed on human nature from outside. In Professor Iyer’s *Gupta Vidya* usage, *Manasadharma* names the living identity of human ideals and human nature, as both act and essence. The highest ideals of truth, fearlessness, sacrifice, selfless service, and universal responsibility are not imported into humanity; they are awakened from within it.

Manas is mind, but not merely thought in the ordinary intellectual sense. In Theosophical psychology, *Manas* is the self-conscious human principle, the power by which a human being can say “I,” choose, remember, compare, aspire, and become morally responsible. Dharma is law, duty, nature, right action, and intrinsic vocation. *Manasadharma* therefore means the law of mind as self-conscious soul, the duty of human intelligence to become transparent to its spiritual source.

H.P. Blavatsky’s teaching on dual *Manas* gives the architecture. *Manas* is in affinity both with *Atma-Buddhi* and with the lower four principles. It can follow *Atma-Buddhi* toward spiritual continuity, or it can be captured by *Kama*, desire, name, form, and self-image. This duality is the drama of human life. Mind can become a bridge upward or an instrument of bondage downward.

Manasadharma is the law of the upward turning of *Manas*. Every effort toward spiritual self-regeneration depends upon strengthening awareness of the shining thread that connects *Atma-Buddhi* to *Manas* and, by reflection, *Atma-Buddhi-Manas* to the lower quaternary. If that thread is not nurtured in meditation, consciousness fragments. Moral continuity weakens. The mind becomes forgetful, distracted, anxious, and identified with name and form.

Professor Iyer’s “Manasadharma” essay begins with *Hamsa*, following Blavatsky’s esoteric reading as *Aham-sa*, “I am he,” and *So-ham*, “He is I.” The reading points to the identity of human essence with divine essence. This is the metaphysical root of *Manasadharma*. Human ideals arise because the deepest essence of the human being is consubstantial with the divine.

This does not flatter the personality. It means that beneath personality and changing vestures there is a spiritual foundation capable of selfless action and sacrifice. Professor Iyer states that the fundamental presupposition of *Gupta Vidya* is that every human being has an innate capacity for *anasakti* and *yajna*, non-attachment and sacrifice. This capacity is often obscured by

attachment to name and form, yet it is the continuous exercise of this capacity that holds together the fabric of human society.

This is a compassionate view of humanity. It recognizes fear, self-image, passivity, and confusion, but refuses to make them final. Every human soul carries a vast capital acquired in other lives and a tremendous capacity to transcend fear. *Manasadharma* is exact hope: it sees in human beings an inexhaustible possibility rooted in the immortal soul.

The release of that possibility depends upon ideals. Professor Iyer says ideals are not vague remote possibilities, but living forces rooted on a plane consubstantial with the immortal soul. Once a person is surcharged with an ideal, its force invokes spiritual will. Ideals are not decorations for thought. When truly touched, they lend dignity and meaning to each day and each responsibility.

This is why the master key to spiritual will is the recognition that one's immediate duty is supremely important. *Manasadharma* does not wait for a grand stage. It begins with what is nearest: the task, conversation, relationship, act of restraint, and opportunity to serve that stands immediately before the soul. A modest duty performed with wholeheartedness may release more spiritual will than a grand intention left unincarnated.

Fragmentation is one of the obstacles. Many have never learned to be wholehearted or single-minded. They act through fragmented vestures, experiencing lack of moral continuity, inability to concentrate, forgetfulness, or unstable rhythms. When *Manas* is divided, life becomes scattered. When *Manasadharma* awakens, thought, feeling, will, and action begin to gather around a living ideal.

Fearlessness is one sign of this gathering. Fearlessness is not recklessness, but freedom from anxiety about name, form, result, reputation, and the opinions of others. Even evolved human beings may become trapped in self-image. *Manasadharma* asks the mind to shift its center from personality to ideal, from self-image to service.

This courage can be cultivated without waiting for fear to disappear. The student notices an anxious motive, remembers the ideal that deserves allegiance, and performs the next useful action as steadily as possible. Repeated choices gradually strengthen moral continuity. An ideal becomes effective through this modest fidelity in changing circumstances.

Yajna, sacrifice, is central. The fusion of sacrifice on behalf of ideals with the performance of dharma is the hallmark of the highest spiritual confidence. Action becomes sacrificial when performed for the sake of truth, humanity, and the good of all, rather than private reinforcement. The more the mind releases attachment to fruits, the more spiritual will can flow through action.

Professor Iyer's luminous statement is that human ideals and human nature, *Manasadharma*, as both act and essence, are one. As essence, the ideal is latent in the spiritual constitution of humanity. As act, it must be embodied through duty, sacrifice, and courageous service. Essence without act remains hidden. Act without essence becomes restless activism. *Manasadharma* unites them.

Professor Iyer draws from the *Stanzas of Dzyan* the image of germinal light at the manvantaric dawn, present within every human soul. The teaching places ordinary moral effort within a vast account of cosmic awakening. Its practical force lies in the possibility that a sincere ideal can call forth capacities which self-image leaves unused. To contemplate that possibility is to give the mind a nobler centre around which to gather its scattered energies.

Manasadharma supports Human Solidarity because the capacity for selfless action is shared. Professor Iyer likens the quickening effect of lofty ideals to rainfall upon the soil. Quiet heroism can refresh others without requiring their attention to its author. The image invites a generous view of human possibility: beneath outward confusion, something may still be ready to respond to courage, truthfulness, and care.

An experienced craftsperson notices an apprentice concealing a mistake from fear of ridicule. There is a choice between displaying superiority and awakening responsibility. By explaining the fault accurately, helping with the repair, and leaving the apprentice room to do the work, the teacher joins skill to an ideal of human dignity. The apprentice receives more than a technique. A different standard of strength becomes imaginable. The teacher also learns, because impatience and pride must yield to the purpose of teaching.

It also corrects spiritual melodrama. True aspirants begin by renouncing melodrama in the spiritual life. They steadily strengthen the release of spiritual will within themselves from benevolence directed toward all. *Manasadharma* is the talisman of a life of ideals rooted in selfless service. It prefers authentic beginnings to fanciful dreams of fulfilment. Drawing a Larger Circle of Conception means seeing beyond the immediate success of a task to the qualities it awakens in everyone concerned. The mind's vocation includes responsibility for that wider consequence.

Manasadharma thus joins the spiritual essence of mind to the work immediately at hand. *Manas* learns to draw upon *Atma-Buddhi* through sustained ideals, discerning duty and releasing attachment to its personal reward. Like rain that disappears into the ground while making growth possible, a wholehearted action may leave its deepest effect in another person's renewed courage. The soul serves its own law by helping the common life to flourish.

Glossary

Aham — I; used in Blavatsky's esoteric explanation of the symbolic formula associated with *Hamsa*.

Aham-sa — I am he; the symbolic reading of *Hamsa* discussed in the quotation.

Anasakti — Non-attachment in action; selfless effort without a personal claim upon its fruits.

Atma-Buddhi — The spiritual Self and its vehicle of spiritual intuition, considered together.

Atma-Buddhi-Manas — The higher triad of spiritual Self, spiritual intuition, and higher mind.

Dharma — Sustaining law, duty, or right relation; the precise meaning depends upon the context.

Gupta Vidya — Sacred or esoteric wisdom; also the title of Professor Iyer's collected Theosophical writings.

Hamsa — The symbolic swan; in the cited esoteric reading, a sign of the identity of human and divine essence.

Kama — Desire; the principle associated with personal craving and the psychic use of mind.

Manas — Mind; the human principle of self-conscious thought and moral choice.

Manasadharma — The intrinsic duty and spiritual vocation of self-conscious mind; ideals embodied through action.

Oeao hoo — The sacred name presented in the quoted passage as a seven-vowelled symbol of the Logos.

Sah — He; used in the symbolic reading of the formula *So-ham*.

So-ham — He is I; the symbolic formula contemplated as expressing identity with spiritual essence.

Yajna — Sacrifice or consecrated offering; also written *yagna*.

Quotes for Meditation and Self Study

1. H.P. Blavatsky — *The Secret Doctrine*, Volume I — p. 78

“*Hamsa* is equal to *a-ham-sa*, three words meaning ‘I am he’ (in English), while divided in still another way it will read ‘*So-ham*,’ ‘he (is) I’ — *Soham* being equal to *Sah*, ‘he,’ and *aham*, ‘I,’ or ‘I am he.’ In this alone is contained the universal mystery, the doctrine of the identity of man’s essence with god-essence, for him who understands the language of wisdom.”

Meditation thought: Hold this esoteric reading of *Hamsa* as an invitation to contemplate shared spiritual essence. Let its ethical meaning appear in your treatment of another.

2. R.N. Iyer — *The Gupta Vidya*, Volume I — “Manasadharma” — p. 357

“The fundamental presupposition of *Gupta Vidya* is that every human being has an innate capacity for selfless action and sacrifice, *anasakti* and *yajna*. Ordinarily, this capacity lies dormant, obscured and unfocussed due to lives of habitual attachment to name and form. Yet, it is the continuous exercise of this capacity that holds together the fabric of human society. Throughout history heroic men and women committed to the service of the spiritually, morally and materially impoverished learnt how to release the Akashic energies implicit in human solidarity.”

Meditation thought: Consider selfless action as a capacity already present in humanity. Recall an instance of quiet service and the possibilities it awakened.

3. R.N. Iyer — *The Gupta Vidya*, Volume I — “Manasadharma” — p. 357

“By becoming fearless and selfless, they called forth the strength of the ideal from all those around them. This fearlessness is the prerogative of the immortal soul. It is the identifying mark of those who have merged their being with an ideal, thus gaining the strength that belongs to the ideal and blessing all their actions with its elevating influence. Such ideals are not just vague apprehensions of remote, rarefied possibilities, but living forces rooted on a plane consubstantial with the immortal soul.”

Meditation thought: Choose an ideal worthy of allegiance. How might its strength become available through one action undertaken without concern for display?

4. R.N. Iyer — *The Gupta Vidya*, Volume I — “Manasadharma” — p. 357

“During incarnation the powers of human understanding and action necessarily inhere in complex situations. Through an internal slavery to anticipation, even evolved human beings who have given years to meditation and self-discipline may yet be trapped in their own self-image. They may at critical points become fearful, paralysed by a fear of what others are thinking and saying about them on the level of personality.”

Meditation thought: Notice the moment when anticipation of another’s opinion interrupts a useful action. Return attention to the purpose that deserves to be served.

5. R.N. Iyer — *The Gupta Vidya*, Volume I — “Manasadharma” — p. 358

“Once this true basis of ideals is touched, it becomes a potent force in the realm of action, lending immense meaning and richness, dignity and significance, to each and every day and to each responsibility, however modest. The master key to the release of the spiritual will is the recognition that one’s immediate duty is supremely important. To it must be brought all one’s energies.”

Meditation thought: Give the nearest real duty wholehearted attention. A modest responsibility can become a place where spiritual resolve takes form.

6. R.N. Iyer — *The Gupta Vidya*, Volume I — “Manasadharma” — p. 358

“Because so many human beings have never really learnt to be whole-hearted or single-minded, they find that they have to act through vestures which are fragmented. This may be experienced as a lack of moral continuity, an inability to concentrate, a liability to forgetfulness, or an appearance of luck or any one of a number of ups and downs. All these, however, reflect only a fundamental misunderstanding of the external and internal state of the soul.”

Meditation thought: Reflect upon a break in continuity without making it a verdict on yourself. What simple rhythm could help renew steadiness?

7. R.N. Iyer — *The Gupta Vidya*, Volume I — “Manasadharma” — p. 358

“Individuals whose entire lives revolve around potent ideas and high ideals can bring total commitment, boundless zeal, complete fearlessness into their every action. Through the performance of their immediate duties, they act upon and touch the spiritual will in others. This fusion of sacrifice (*yajna*) on behalf of ideals with the performance of dharma is the hallmark of the highest spiritual confidence.”

Meditation thought: Consider how dedication affects those who share a task. The quality of one person’s commitment may awaken another’s willingness to contribute.

8. R.N. Iyer — *The Gupta Vidya*, Volume I — “Manasadharma” — p. 359

“The basis of the sustained release of the spiritual will is the recognition that human ideals and human nature, *Manasadharma*, as both act and essence, are one. This proposition is the fundamental axiom of all initiations in the Mystery Schools of *Gupta Vidya*, the Secret Science which is only secret to minds captivated by the projections of the personality.”

Meditation thought: Let the relation between essence and action remain present. What ideal seeks expression through the particular circumstances of your life?

9. R.N. Iyer — *The Gupta Vidya*, Volume I — “Manasadharma” — p. 359

“The *Stanzas of Dzyan* teach that the germinal light of the manvantaric dawn of the cosmos is fully present in the lamp of every human soul, and that the spirit of that flame is the highest cosmic foundation of self-existence. This vibrant identity of essence is intimated in the mysterious term *Hamsa*, translated for symbolic purposes as ‘the swan’, but anagrammatically transformed into *A-ham-sa* and *So-ham*, meaning ‘I am he’ and ‘He is I’.”

Meditation thought: Contemplate the dawn within the soul as a symbol of latent spiritual possibility. How might that possibility illuminate an ordinary responsibility?

10. R.N. Iyer — *The Gupta Vidya*, Volume I — “Manasadharma” — p. 359

“The human being can self-consciously curb identification with all the vestures that keep souls apart. This is the result of deep meditation, and of the action that becomes sacrificial and magical through meditation. The wisdom unfolded by this sacrificial science far transcends the unself-conscious release of heroism by ordinary men and women that leavens the flow of daily human life. Yet, given the confusion and passivity that humanity is now encountering, the Bodhisattvas are truly grateful for every instance of quiet heroism and fearlessness.”

Meditation thought: Remember a quiet act of courage that asked for no recognition. Let gratitude for such acts strengthen your own readiness to serve.

11. R.N. Iyer — *The Gupta Vidya*, Volume I — “Manasadharma” — p. 361

“The Logos is itself the seven-vowelled sign, the Great Breath crystallized into the WORD. It is *OEAHOHO*, the Father-Mother of the gods, the single, triple and septenary root from which all proceeds. To credit man as the living septenary symbol of the Logos is to become ready to use the reverberation of *OEAHOHO*, meditating upon it, becoming one with it and understanding its threefold pronunciations. Those who use so powerful an energy, force, sound and idea in their daily lives can translate metaphysics into magic.”

Meditation thought: Receive the sacred sound symbolism as a contemplation of unity. Let its practical implication be a less divided and more benevolent use of thought.

12. R.N. Iyer — *The Gupta Vidya*, Volume I — “Manasadharma” — p. 364

“True aspirants to the service of ideals, true compassionators of their impoverished brothers and sisters, will begin by renouncing melodrama in the spiritual life. If they wish to contribute to peace on earth, they know that they must steadily strengthen, day by day, the release of spiritual will within themselves out of a benevolence directed towards all men and women. Cherishing authentic beginnings beyond all fanciful dreams of fulfilment, they will treasure *Manasadharma* as the talisman of a life of ideals rooted in selfless service.”

Meditation thought: Treasure an authentic beginning. What small, sustained act of goodwill would give an ideal a firmer place in your life?