

Manasaputras

Definitional Essay

Theosophy Trust

Manasaputras means Sons of Mind. In Theosophical teaching the name concerns the spiritual intelligences through whom self-conscious mind is awakened in humanity. Their work is associated with the kindling of *Manas*, the principle that makes reflection, deliberate choice and moral responsibility possible. The term therefore belongs both to an account of cosmic and human origins and to the inward question of how intelligence should be used. It places the human power to think within a tradition of sacrifice and spiritual inheritance.

Professor Iyer distinguishes this awakening from the preparation of the instruments through which it acts. The Lunar *Pitris* are associated with the building of astral and bodily vestures. The Solar or *Manasa Dhyanis* bestow the fire of self-conscious intelligence upon incipient humanity. Both streams belong to a wider evolutionary unity, yet their functions differ. A prepared form and its capacity for sensation do not, within this account, exhaust the meaning of the reflective human thinker.

An unlit wick touched by flame offers a useful image. The wick has been prepared, but the kindling brings a new possibility into activity. The *Manasaputras* do not introduce a principle without any root in the human constitution. They awaken what is latent within the spiritual pilgrimage. The image is limited: it cannot describe every relation between a cosmic hierarchy and an incarnating individuality. It can nevertheless preserve the central distinction between preparing an instrument and awakening the self-conscious capacity expressed through it.

Mahat, cosmic intelligence, provides the larger setting. Professor Iyer relates the *Manasaputras* to the subjective manifestation of that intelligence, following its degrees of differentiation toward incarnating Egos. The same terms can be used at different levels, and their context matters. A spiritual hierarchy, the awakening of higher *Manas* and the individual thinker are closely related in this teaching. They should not be collapsed into a simple story of outside beings taking control of otherwise unrelated people.

The historical esoteric narrative places the awakening within the Third Root Race and a long succession of planetary Rounds. It is an account of spiritual evolution, not an established scientific chronology of human origins. Its racial classifications also require historical scrutiny. They cannot provide a sound basis for ranking living peoples or deciding whose humanity deserves respect. The practical teaching developed here concerns a spiritual inheritance attributed to all human beings and the responsibility accompanying its expression.

The plural name also preserves the teaching's concern with many degrees and functions of consciousness. A common spiritual source does not mean that every expression has the same range of awareness. Professor Iyer follows an ordered differentiation from cosmic forces toward individual thinkers. The human application is a respect for relationship: unity can be contemplated without erasing differences, and differences can be studied without forgetting the life to which they belong.

In "Evolution and Karma," Professor Iyer calls the awakening a Great Sacrifice. Self-conscious individuality makes possible an intelligent reflection of Universal Mind. This gives gratitude a serious direction. The mind is received as a trust, and its development asks more than the accumulation of information. It can become increasingly capable of understanding consequences, examining motives and choosing a purpose beyond immediate appetite. What is received through sacrifice finds a fitting response when intelligence becomes willing to serve.

The gift also introduces difficulty. *Manas* may join itself to *kama*, desire, and use argument to defend what desire has already chosen. The same capacity can turn toward *Buddhi*, spiritual discernment and compassion. These are directions within the life of the mind, rather than two unrelated occupants of the head. The *Manasaputra* teaching concerns the awakening of a possibility whose responsible development remains human work. No sacred ancestry excuses deception, cruelty or the refusal to examine a convenient belief.

Professor Iyer's discussion of the Fifth Hierarchy in "The Scope of Self-Consciousness" gives individuality a universal purpose. The *Manasaputras* are linked with *Makara* and the fivefold symbolism of the human being. More immediately, the essay asks how an individual can contemplate the whole and return with greater strength to a particular duty. The member of an orchestra has a distinct part, yet listens to a music larger than that part. Difference becomes a means of cooperation when attention includes the shared work.

Human Solidarity is present in this use of individuality. The awakening of an I does not require the hardening of every boundary around me and mine. It makes a more conscious participation possible. A person can take responsibility for a mistake, keep a promise when applause is absent, or help someone else understand a difficult idea. These ordinary acts employ freedom in a direction that strengthens relationships. They give the doctrine an ethical meaning recognizable without a claim to perceive invisible hierarchies.

Education offers a particularly clear illustration. A learner may repeat the teacher's conclusion accurately while remaining unable to think through the question. Patient teaching asks the learner to explain a reason, notice a contradiction and attempt a correction. The teacher lends support while leaving room for the learner's own discovery. In this modest sense, education can

follow the image of kindling a flame. Its success is seen in a growing capacity to understand and act responsibly, not merely in faithful imitation.

Drawing a Larger Circle of Conception asks what would help that awakening beyond the classroom. A family can make honest questions welcome. A workplace can allow a junior colleague to identify an error without fear of humiliation. A public discussion can represent an opposing view accurately enough for understanding to become possible. These conditions do not guarantee wisdom, but they make the use of reflective intelligence more practicable. The circle includes both the person learning and the people affected by what is learned.

The same responsibility belongs to self-study. We can notice when a remembered injury supplies the interpretation of every new event, or when imagination has become a rehearsal for fear. The task is not to abolish memory or imagination. It is to restore their capacity to serve understanding. A pause before repeating an accusation may allow evidence to be checked. A return to a neglected obligation may give aspiration a dependable form. The flame is tended through specific acts of direction.

In “Self-Transformation,” Professor Iyer speaks of consecrating the day to the *Manasaputras* and strengthening a centre of silence. This is joined to the fusion of thought, will and feeling for the sake of the larger whole. A brief recollection of purpose can begin such work, while the day tests its reality. The recollection becomes more substantial when it survives inconvenience, correction and the small demands through which others depend upon us.

The doctrine remains hopeful because the awakening of mind is a beginning whose possibilities are not exhausted by present performance. Compassion can accompany the recognition of immaturity, while accountability protects those affected by it. We need not pretend that every motive is pure before making a truthful correction. The mind entrusted to us can learn through the effort, and its growing steadiness can become useful to others.

The *Manasaputras* thus return us to the flame with which the inquiry began. Intelligence has a spiritual origin in this teaching, and a human task in its daily expression. To honor the kindling is to make thought clearer, speech more faithful and action more responsive to shared life. The lamp is cared for so that its light may travel beyond the small circle of its keeper, helping another being see a next step.

Glossary

Agnishvatta Pitris — Solar or spiritual progenitors associated with the awakening of self-conscious mind. The sources also use *Agnishwatta* and *Agnishwatha*.

Ah-hi — Spiritual intelligences that contain and reflect universal ideation in the cited cosmology.

Amitabha — The *Buddha* of boundless light in Buddhist symbolism; Professor Iyer invokes the name in contemplating the spiritual ground and purpose of evolution.

Androgynous — Combining male and female characteristics; androgyne is the related noun. The quoted historical account applies this to early forms, while Father-Mother uses complementary creative symbolism.

Astral — Pertaining to a subtle plane or vehicle, particularly the formative pattern underlying physical embodiment.

Atlantean — Pertaining to Atlantis and the Fourth Root Race in the historical Theosophical account of human evolution.

Atman — The universal spiritual Self; *Atma* is another form, and Atmic means pertaining to this principle.

Avalokiteshvara — A figure of compassionate spiritual regard, the lord who looks down upon beings; *Avalokiteshwara* is the spelling in the quotation.

Barhishad Pitris — Lunar progenitors associated with the formation of astral prototypes and the lower instruments of embodiment; *Barhishad* is the glossary entry form.

Bodhisattva — An awakened being devoted to the welfare and liberation of beings; a central ideal of compassionate service.

Brahma — The creative deity in Hindu cosmological symbolism; distinguish *Brahma* from *Brahman*, the universal spiritual Reality.

Brahma Vach — The sacred Word; Professor Iyer's expression emphasizing the living relation of wisdom, thought, silence and speech.

Buddhi — The spiritual soul or faculty of intuitive discernment; Buddhic means pertaining to it.

Dhyanis — Meditative spiritual intelligences; *Dhyani* is the singular. *Dhyani Chohans* is a related designation of spiritual hierarchies.

Differentiation — The emergence of distinct forms, functions or levels from a less divided condition.

Drawing a Larger Circle of Conception — Widening understanding to include more relationships, consequences and the needs of others.

Ego — In the cited higher usage, the enduring spiritual individuality; distinguish it from the changing personality and ordinary vanity.

Emanation — An unfolding or radiation from a source, distinguished in the teaching from manufacture by an external maker.

Esoteric — Pertaining to an inward or occult interpretation of a teaching, distinguished from its outward formulation.

Father-Mother — A symbolic expression for complementary spiritual and substantial powers held together in a primordial unity; also written Mother-Father.

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

Hermes-Budha — A symbolic designation relating Hermes, divine wisdom and the awakening of self-conscious mind.

Hierarchy — An ordering of functions or levels in the Theosophical account of life and consciousness.

Human Solidarity — The shared dignity and interdependence of human beings, expressed through responsibility for one another's welfare.

Ideation — The activity of thought or the expression of ideal patterns; Divine Ideation concerns cosmic intelligence in the cited teaching.

Incarnation — The embodiment of an enduring principle or individuality in a particular life.

Incipient — Beginning to arise or develop.

Individuality — The enduring spiritual Ego in Theosophical usage, distinguished from the temporary personality of a particular life.

Ineffable — Beyond adequate expression in words.

Kama — Desire or appetite; its association with mind is called *Kama-Manas*.

Karma — The continuity of action, cause and consequence; karmic law gives moral responsibility a wider field of relations.

Lanoo — A disciple or spiritual learner; *Lanoos* is the plural in the quotation.

Lemurian — Pertaining to the Third Root Race and its associated continent in Theosophical esoteric history.

Lunar Pitris — The ancestral builders associated with astral prototypes and the lower instruments of human embodiment in Theosophical cosmology.

Maha Chohan — A great spiritual chief or teacher; the title appears in Professor Iyer's account of the Brotherhood's work.

Mahat — Cosmic intelligence or Divine Ideation in manifestation; its precise level of meaning depends upon the source context.

Makara — A Sanskrit name associated with Capricorn and crocodile or dragon symbolism; related in the cited teaching to the Fifth Hierarchy.

Manas — The self-conscious thinking principle; in its higher sense, the reincarnating individuality. Manasic means pertaining to this principle.

Manasa Dhyanis — Spiritual intelligences associated with the kindling of self-conscious human mind; a related designation of the *Manasaputras*.

Manasaputras — Sons of Mind; spiritual intelligences associated with the awakening of *Manas* in humanity. *Manasaputra* is the singular.

Manifestation — The expression of differentiated existence from a subtler or unmanifest condition.

Manvantara — A period of manifestation and activity, contrasted with *pralaya*; manvantaric means pertaining to such a period.

Metaphysics — Inquiry into the fundamental nature and principles of reality, including consciousness, causation and the relation of unity to multiplicity.

Monad — The spiritual unit or pilgrim, commonly related to *Atma-Buddhi*; its essential unity is distinguished from the changing vehicles through which evolution proceeds.

Mysteries — Sacred spiritual teachings and disciplines, distinguished in the essays from the ceremonies that symbolize them.

Noetic — Pertaining to the higher mind and spiritual cognition, distinguished from merely personal or reactive mental activity.

Pitris — Fathers or progenitors; the sources distinguish classes and functions, including lunar and solar lines.

Pralaya — A period of dissolution or rest between cycles of manifested activity.

Primordial — Belonging to an original or pre-differentiated condition.

Pristine — Original or primordial; also conveying purity in the quoted descriptions of spiritual principles.

Root Race — A stage in the historical Theosophical account of human evolution; its classifications require historical scrutiny and do not establish a hierarchy of human worth.

Round — A cycle of a life-wave through the globes of a planetary chain in Theosophical cosmology.

Rupa — Form; *rupas* is the plural and *arupa* means formless.

Self-consciousness — The capacity to reflect upon one's own experience, intention and action; the sources distinguish personal and more universal degrees.

Subjective — Belonging to a state of consciousness or inward experience; not by itself a claim that the experience lacks spiritual significance.

Tanka — A Tibetan religious painting or sacred image; *tankas* is the plural in the comparison used by Professor Iyer.

Tetraktys — The sacred four in Pythagorean and Theosophical symbolism; also written *Tetractys*.

Universal Mind — The spiritual source or field of cosmic ideation; its relation to *Mahat* varies with the standpoint being discussed.

Vach — Sacred speech or Voice, related to the creative expression of spiritual ideation.

Vesture — A sheath, vehicle or instrument through which consciousness is expressed; vestures is the plural.

Quotes for Meditation and Self Study

1. R.N. Iyer — "Evolution and Karma", *The Gupta Vidya*, Vol. I, p. 131.

"Hence, in the metaphysics of *The Secret Doctrine* there is a fundamental distinction between the hosts of solar and lunar Monads, the *Agnishwatha* and *Barhishad Pitris*. Within the stream of intellectual evolution, and associated with the Solar or *Manasa Dhyanis*, are to be found the exalted bestowers of self-conscious intelligence upon incipient humanity. Within the stream of physical evolution and associated with the building of the mortal vestures of man are to be found the hosts of the lunar *Pitris*. Whilst it is possible to distinguish the ancestry and attributes of the various principles of sevenfold man, ultimately there is only One Principle – the *Atman*."

Meditation thought: The gift of self-conscious mind is distinguished from the formation of its bodily instruments.

2. R.N. Iyer — “Evolution and Karma”, *The Gupta Vidya*, Vol. I, p. 134.

“Whilst the development of the inner astral man was the result of the sacrifice of the lunar *Dhyanis* through the early Rounds, the development of self-conscious individuality was the result of the Great Sacrifice of the *Manasa Dhyanis*, who lit up in every incipient human Monad the power of choice, the potency of intelligent conscious reflection in the human mind of the Universal Mind.”

Meditation thought: Gratitude for intelligence can become responsibility for the choices it makes possible.

3. R.N. Iyer — “The Descent of Manas”, *The Gupta Vidya*, Vol. I, p. 170.

“Every authentic effort counts. It is not so important to take a constant inventory of where one comes out; what is vital is the refusal to give up on the effort and the steadfast will to maintain a strong line of courageous conviction, inserting oneself into a larger and larger perspective.”

Meditation thought: A steadfast direction matters even when its full result cannot yet be measured.

4. R.N. Iyer — “The Scope of Self-Consciousness”, *The Gupta Vidya*, Vol. I, p. 275.

“Employing the powers of individuality for the sake of universal unity depends on the *Manasaputras*, the fifth hierarchy, which preside over the constellation *Makara*. It is the unique capacity of the exalted beings of this hierarchy to be able to function at the highest metaphysical level while at the same time incarnating on and commanding the terrestrial plane, thus self-consciously bridging the celestial and the terrestrial.”

Meditation thought: Individuality receives a universal purpose when it can bridge inward understanding and outward responsibility.

5. R.N. Iyer — “The Scope of Self-Consciousness”, *The Gupta Vidya*, Vol. I, p. 275.

“Thus, whilst all human beings participate to some extent in a vague sense of solidarity, some become such effortless exemplars of cosmic solidarity that they release a potent force for human brotherhood. This capacity derives from meditation and altruism over many previous lives. The more lives devoted through meditation to heightening the power of *Manas*, the more lives devoted through renunciation to suffusing *Manas* with Buddhist compassion, the greater the degree of noetic discernment. The deeper this discernment, the stronger the sense of duty in the world, and the willingness in finite time to summon one's best and highest energies.”

Meditation thought: The capacity to contemplate the whole should strengthen the willingness to perform a particular duty.

6. R.N. Iyer — “The Golden Thread”, *The Gupta Vidya*, Vol. II, p. 78.

“When we consider the efforts of sincere Theosophists to apply this philosophy to their lives, in accordance with the third object of the Theosophical Society, we must think of those moments which are the first concern of any person of any age seeking to find meaning within the flux of experiences: the moment of birth and the moment of death. We can also think of the line that threads these moments. Each of us discovers this entirely for oneself, exercising the supreme prerogative of a human being, the privilege of self-reflective consciousness, the gift of the gods, the *Dhyanis* and *Manasaputras*, seeking out what in one's whole life was most quintessentially sacred. We live in a society wherein fragmentation of consciousness is widespread and confusion prevails. In such times of trouble, students of *Theosophia* or *Brahma Vach* are wise in following the advice given by Merlin to Arthur: ‘Go back to the original moment.’”

Meditation thought: Seek the thread of meaning within experience, allowing reflection to deepen its significance.

7. R.N. Iyer — “The Golden Thread”, *The Gupta Vidya*, Vol. II, p. 78.

“They work in perfect harmony through willing and cheerful obedience to the *Maha Chohan*, who wanted a Brotherhood of Humanity to be initiated and knew that it would not happen at once, but that the line must and would be kept unbroken. In all theosophical assemblies and associations there are those self-determining agents who are self-elected to serve as the compassionate custodians of the living tradition of the primordial teaching of *Gupta Vidya* for the sake of all.”

Meditation thought: A received teaching becomes a trust to preserve and convey for the benefit of others.

8. R.N. Iyer — “Self-Transformation”, *The Gupta Vidya*, Vol. II, p. 294.

“To move self-consciously in this direction of depth perception is the willing contribution of the true pilgrim who enters the Path and takes vows for lives, vows that involve the ceaseless process of self-transformation for the sake of universal enlightenment. True disciples will consecrate each day to *Hermes-Budha*, to the *Manasaputras*, the descending luminous beings that make human self-consciousness possible. All *Lanoos* will strengthen the centre of silence within themselves until it can be used for the calm release of a new current of energy, a new line of life's meditation, which fuses thought, will and feeling in daily life for the sake of the larger whole.”

Meditation thought: A daily resolve may help thought, feeling and will gather around a shared purpose.

9. R.N. Iyer — “Aquarian Civilization”, *The Gupta Vidya*, Vol. III, p. 33.

“Then, in the Third Race, with the lighting-up of *Manas* and the incarnation of the *Manasaputras* into human form, humanity underwent an evolution which passed through several stages. Beginning with the androgynous and bisexual, it proceeded through the protracted dual-sexed epoch of the human race. There was the legendary era of great heroes and giants. The seven divine dynasties were thereafter to be found in the Third Race and again in the Fourth Race, the Lemurian and Atlantean periods. Instructing humanity in diverse arts and sciences, they laid the primeval foundations of human culture and civilization around the globe.”

Meditation thought: The historical esoteric narrative places culture within a wider account of the awakening of mind.

10. R.N. Iyer — “Spectator and Participant”, *The Gupta Vidya*, Vol. III, p. 315.

“Here speaks the voice of the primordial Mysteries, the voice of all the self-shining Initiates who speak by thinking and think by ideating. Arrayed around a common ineffable centre, like the *Buddhas* and *Bodhisattvas* in Tibetan *tankas*, they are ceaselessly engaged in fathomless meditation. Through their adoration and compassion they continually point to *Amitabha*, to *Avalokiteshwara*, the one Source and the primordial Flame. This is the divine *Tetraktys*, the sacred four, the eternal self-existent One called the concealed Lord and also known as the androgyne Father-Mother, the direct emanation from the primordial Flame. From this emanate the primordial seven, the highest *Ah-Hi*, the divine breaths; from those emanate the *Manasaputras* as well as the builders of form. The primordial seven, the highest beings on the scale of existence, latent during *pralaya* and active during *manvantara*, constitute the ray of the *Tetraktys*, which is eternal in essence and periodic in manifestation.”

Meditation thought: Sacred hierarchies are presented as related expressions of a common spiritual source.

11. H.P. Blavatsky — *The Secret Doctrine*, Vol. II, p. 525, note.

“The monad of the animal is as immortal as that of man, yet the brute knows nothing of this; it lives an animal life of sensation just as the first human would have lived, when attaining physical development in the Third Race, had it not been for the *Agnishwatta* and the *Manasa Pitris*.”

Meditation thought: Immortality and conscious awareness of it are distinguished in this account of the human threshold.

12. R.N. Iyer — “Mahat, Manu and the Avatar”, *The Gupta Vidya*, Vol. I, p. 375.

“Thus, by analogy, Universal Mind may be said to radiate the *Ah-Hi*, its pristine faculty of conscious ideation, through *Mahat*, the cosmic mind which acts as the brain of Universal Mind. Yet the *Ah-Hi* on the highest plane, the primordial containers of Universal Ideation, are *arupa* (formless) breaths. On the second plane they approach to *arupa* nature, and on the third they become the *Manasaputra*, the subjective aspect of the manifestation of *Mahat*. Essentially, they are cosmic forces, not human beings, and in their later differentiations they become the planetary, solar, lunar and finally incarnating Egos.”

Meditation thought: Follow the changes of level carefully as the source relates cosmic intelligence to incarnating individuality.