

नवोन्मेषः
NAVONMEṢA

महामहोपाध्याय गोपनाथ कविराज स्मृतिग्रन्थः
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PREFACE

We are happy to present this commemoration volume to the general public on the occasion of the 100th birth anniversary of Mahāmahopādhyāya Padma-vibhūṣaṇa Pandit Gopi Nath Kaviraj. It was the decision of the Centenary Celebration Committee to bring out the volume in four different sections, in each of the four languages in which Kavirajji wrote. Originally, the late Dr. Jaideva Singh was assigned the responsibility of preparing the English section. The sudden death of this discerning scholar dealt a severe blow to the activities of the board of editors.

“*Navonmeṣa*”, the name given to this volume, is indeed very significant. The articles contained herein aim at *nava-unmeṣa*, revealing new aspects of the topics selected. Kavirajji helped to develop the insight of the enquirers who approached him. Seekers of the Truth flocked to him not only from the whole of India, but also from foreign lands. He helped them all with his supernormal range of learning and wisdom. These articles have been collected to serve as a floral tribute of *vāk* to the genius of the great savant.

We wish to put on record our deep sense of gratitude to the contributors, all of whom are eminent scholars in their fields. The ready response of veteran scholars such as Thakur Jaideva Singh, Andre Padoux, B. N. Pandit, A. N. Jani, J. Gonda, Kamaleshwar Bhattacharya, Sisir Kumar Ghosh and Shibjiban Bhattacharya, to name only a few, has been extremely rewarding. The contributions made by them have justified the idea of *navonmeṣa*. Herein, the seeker of knowledge will find expositions of *spanda*, the various aspects of Kashmir Saivism, the role of *bhāvanā* in the worship of Tripurasundarī, the significance of Mahākālī, the concept of *āyuh* and mysticism in Indian philosophy.

The volume is dedicated to the commemoration of one of the greatest mystic *sādhakas* of our era, whose dearest subjects were Tantra, Āgama and Yoga, and who attained enlightenment through incessant *sādhanā*. A seer of the truth, Kavirajji was free from sectarian bias and appreciated the value of all sects and schools. In his vision, all paths lead to Ultimate Reality and all conflicts are resolved in a fundamental unity. Some learned contributors have given exposition to this insight of the great *Ācārya*. The articles by Arlene M. Breuinin and Navjivan Rastogi respectively present Kavirajji's concept of *Akhaṇḍamahāyoga* and his exemplary interpretation of Kashmir Saivism.

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THE ANĀTMAN CONCEPT IN BUDDHISM

KAMALESWAR BHATTACHARYA

It is admitted by all—ancient Masters (with the exception of some heretics) as well as modern scholars—that the Buddha denied *ātman*—a denial which is well known, through the Pali expression, as the doctrine of *anattā*. And this doctrine is rightly understood to be a basic tenet of Buddhism. However, both the ancient Masters and the modern scholars are divided on the issue of whether this denial concerns *ātman* in general or, rather, a particular view or particular views of *ātman* (for a while I will leave the term *ātman* untranslated; for in different contexts it has different meanings—which will become clear as we proceed). The present paper is an attempt to clarify this issue—a vital issue, indeed, as on its clarification will depend the solution of many of the metaphysical problems that the modern studies of Buddhism have given rise to.

Naturally, we shall have to turn first to the words of the Buddha himself—or, at least, to what tradition has recorded as such. And these words, fortunately, are quite illuminating. Nowhere is the Buddha reported to have stated : “There is no Ātman”. On the contrary, in hundreds of places spread over the Pali Canon, we hear him say, speaking of the five *khandhas* (*skandha*) in Sanskrit) “aggregates” that constitute the psycho-physical individual : “This is not mine, I am not this, This is not my *ātman*” (*n' etaṃ mama, n' eso 'ham asmi, na m' eso attā*).

What is denied, therefore, is the individuality of the individual, and nothing more. And the reason for this denial is also clearly indicated, e.g. : “Those leaders in religious life who conceive of the *ātman* in so many ways have all in view the five aggregates which are the object of grasping (*upādānakkhandha*), or some one among them”.¹ Indeed, we know from the Pali Canon, as well as from the Upaniṣads (which preceded the Buddha), that the common people of those times conceived the psycho-physical complex as the *ātman*—in other words, as the essence of the individual. The superior people, however, while rejecting the gross body, saw the essence of the individual in a subtle element—e.g., consciousness. The

1. *Samyutta Nikāya* (Pali Text Society's Edition), Vol. III, p. 46.

Upaniṣadic doctrine of the *ātman*—We shall see in a while what it exactly was—was proclaimed against this background.²

Now, so far as the words of the Buddha are concerned, a penetrating logical analysis of them was given, in ancient times, by the non-Buddhist logician Uddyotakara (6th-7th centuries). In his polemic against the Buddhists who contended that the Buddha had denied *ātman* in a general way, he pointed out that this position was untenable because the Buddha's words contained no negation such as "I am not, You are not" (*nāham asmi, na tvam asi*). The Buddha merely said: "I am not the five aggregates, You are not the five aggregates". It is a particular negation (*viśeṣapratīṣedha*), not a universal negation (*sāmānyapratīṣedha*). And a particular negation invariably implies a corresponding affirmation: when I say "I do not see with the left eye", I do not mean to say that I see with the right eye (*vāmenākṣṇā nā paśyāmiti yunkte gamyata eva dakṣiṇeṇa paśyāmiti*)³.

Despite the biased criticism of Uddyotakara by two great Buddhist Masters, Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla,⁴ it should be admitted that there is a great deal of logic in his reasoning. In other words, the Buddha's denial of a particular view or particular views of *ātman* cannot be logically interpreted as a general negation of *ātman*; on the contrary, this "particular negation" implies his acceptance of some other view of *ātman*—which, as we shall see later, is not really a "view", because it is a matter of immediate spiritual realization.

Quite recently, a new interpretation of the *anattā* doctrine from the logical standpoint was attempted by a professor of Philosophy at the Sorbonne, Paris. Professor Guy Bugault writes:

"... well before Russell... the Buddha had already put forth a three-valued logic (albeit implicitly and in practice). Besides true and false, this logic would admit a third possibility: nonsense, absurdity, or incongruity".⁵

This position, unfortunately, is not worth paying attention to. My esteemed friend and colleague Hans Herzberger, Professor of Logic at the University of Toronto, Canada, has been kind enough to send me a long comment on an important part of Professor Bugault's article, and on the question under consideration he writes:

2. Cf. K. Bhattacharya, *L'Ātman-Brahman dans le Bouddhisme ancien*, Paris, 1973 (*Publications de l'Ecole française d'Extrême-Orient* XC), p. 13.

3. *Nyāyavārttika*: cf. *ibid.*, pp. 64-65.

4. *Tattvasaṃgraha* 349 and *Pañjikā* thereon.

5. "Logic and Dialectics in the *Madhyamakakārikās*", *Journal of Indian Philosophy* (Dordrecht, Holland), Vol. 11, No. 1, March 1983, p. 28.

"I find considerable confusion about" 'three-valued logic' in the text. Thus:

'... well before Russell... the Buddha had already put forth a three-valued logic (albeit implicitly and in practice)' (P. 28).

If so, what are the rules of inference and ('implicit') truth-tables of this logic? While it is true that denying (i) ["At least one of any pair (A, —A) of propositions is true"] leads in the direction of three-valued logic, this is not ineluctable, and Russell is a good test case. Russell certainly brought PB (= Principle of Bivalence) into doubt, but his own logic was *strictly 'bivalent'*—like Wittgenstein and others he restricted the application of logic to propositions which satisfied PB. So it's one thing to challenge PB and quite another thing to 'put forth a three-valued logic'. Russell knew about three-valued logics (first developed in the 1920's) and *rejected* them. It's safe to say that Buddha didn't know about them, didn't put one forth, and neither accepted ('implicitly') nor rejected them".

To return to Uddyotakara, according to his interpretation the Buddha's denial of the five aggregates as *ātman* implies his acceptance of some kind of *ātman*. Now, what is that *ātman*? Naturally, following his own school—the Nyāya—Uddyotakara concludes that the *ātman* admitted by the Buddha is the "object of the notion of the Ego" (*ahamkāra (ahampratyaaya)—viśaya*), distinct from the aggregates.⁶ Here, however, Uddyotakara is rash: for nowhere in the texts is the Buddha found to admit such an *ātman*; on the contrary, it is the *pudgala* of the Buddhist heretics which is similar to this *ātman*—an individual soul which is an agent and the enjoyer of the fruits of its actions, good or bad and which transmigrates from one existence to another. This similarity was also pointed out by the two Buddhist Masters mentioned earlier, Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla.⁷

It may also be noted that, just like the believers in the *pudgala*, Uddyotakara appeals to the *Bhāraḥāra-Sutta* of the *Samyutta-Nikāya*.⁸ In this text, however, the Buddha, taking his stand on the popular belief, describes the five aggregates as the "burden" (*bhāra*) and the *pudgala* as the "burden-bearer" (*bhāra-hāra*): he does not support the ontological substantiality of the *pudgala*.⁹

Furthermore, an *ātman*-view similar to that of the Nyāya is found to be refuted by the Buddha in the *Mahānidāna-Sutta* of the *Dīgha-Nikāya*.¹⁰ First it is said that *ātman* is not sensation (*vedanā*)—one of the five aggregates: sensation is

6. *Nyāyavārttika*: cf. *L'Ātman-Brahman*..., p. 66.

7. *Tattvasaṃgraha* 336 and *Pañjikā* thereon; cf. *L'Ātman-Brahman*..., p. 59.

8. *Nyāyavārttika*: cf. *L'Ātman-Brahman*..., p. 59, n. 4.

9. Cf. *L'Ātman-Brahman*..., pp. 55-56.

10. Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 65-66.

subject to the vicissitudes peculiar to all empirical things : one does not find in it an invariable self. Is then *ātman* something apart from sensation ? No, for, when there is no sensation, can I say “I am” (*asmi*) ? At this point, someone propounds a theory which is akin to the Nyāya theory of later times : True, *ātman* is not sensation; but it is not devoid of sensation, it has sensation as its attribute (*vedanā-dhamma*). The Buddha, however, rejects this theory as well : When all sensations have come to an end, can I still say “I am” ? One may compare here David Hume, who also said :

“For my part, when I enter most intimately into what I call *myself*, I always stumble on some particular perception or other, of heat or cold, light or shade, love or hatred, pain or pleasure. I never can catch *myself* at any time without a perception, and never can observe any thing but the preception. When perceptions are remov’d for any time, as by sound sleep; so long am I insensible of *myself*, and may truly be said not to exist. And were all my perceptions remov’d by death, and cou’d I neither think, nor feel, nor see, nor love, nor hate after the dissolution of my body, I shou’d be entirely annihilated, nor do I conceive what is farther requisite to make me a perfect non-entity. If any one, upon serious and unprejudic’d reflection, thinks he has a different notion of *himself*, I must confess I can reason no longer with him. All I can allow him is, that he may be in the right as well as I, and that we are essentially different in this particular. He may, perhaps, perceive something simple and continu’d, which he calls *himself*; tho’ I am certain there is no such principle in me.

“But setting aside some metaphysicians of this kind, I may venture to affirm of the rest of mankind, that they are nothing but a bundle or collection of different perceptions, which succeed each other with an inconceivable rapidity, and are in a perpetual flux and movement.”¹¹

Thus, from whatever angle it may be envisioned, there is for the Buddha no individual *ātman*—a self or a soul.

There was not indeed, in ancient India, one theory of *ātman*. But, while the majority of the schools regard *ātman* as an individual substance, for the Upaniṣads it is the universal Being (*brahman*), one and the same in all beings. This point was already emphasized, in ancient times, by the great Vedānta philosopher, Śaṅkara, in *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya* I, 1, 4.¹² : *na hy ahaṃpratyaya viśayakartṛtvavyatirekeṇa tatsākṣī sarvabhūtasthaḥ sama ekaḥ kūṭasthanityaḥ puruṣo vidhikūṇḍe tarkasamaye vā kenacid adhigataḥ sarvasyātma*.

11. *A treatise on Human Nature*, edited with preliminary dissertations and notes, by T.H. Green and T.H. Grose, London, 1874, Vol. I, p. 534.

12. *The Brahmasūtra Śaṅkara Bhāṣya with the Commentaries Bhāmati, Kalpataru and Parimala*, edited by Anantaśāstri, Nirṇaya Sāgar Press, Bombay : Second Edition, 1938, pp. 134-135.

This being so, the *ātman* whose existence is indicated by the Buddha when he denies the five aggregates as *ātman* is, I believe, the Upaniṣadic *ātman*. And this view finds support from the numerous passages of the Pali Canon which identify, indeed, *ātman*, Dharma, Nirvāṇa or Buddha with *brahman* (neuter).

All these texts were studied in detail by the great Pali scholar Wilhelm Geiger in two works, *Pali Dhamma* (1920) and *Dhamma und Brahman* (1921), and recently by myself.¹³

Geiger wanted to prove the following. It was with a view to substituting for *brahman*, connoting permanence, *dharma* (*dhamma* in Pali), that the Buddha frequently used the two words as synonyms. *Dharma*, however, connotes impermanence. True, the word is found used in the Upaniṣads themselves as a synonym of *brahman*; but, for the Buddha, it was but a venerable receptacle—so Geiger put it—that he filled up with new content (....) *das ehrwürdige Gefäß, das er mit neuem Inhalt füllte*. Consequently the word *brahman* itself, used in the Pali Canon as a synonym of *dhamma*, acquires “a peculiar coloration, a new illumination” (*eine besondere Färbung, eine neue Beleuchtung*). In the place of *ātman*, of course, thought Geiger, the Buddha professed *anātman* (*anattan* in Pali; Nominative Singular *anattā*), that is, the negation of *ātman*.¹⁴

Unfortunately, these ideas—which betray the influence of those generally received—cannot be substantiated from the Canon.

It is true that the Buddha, steering between the two extreme standpoints, eternalism (*sassatavāda*) on the one hand and nihilism (*ucchedavāda*) on the other,—in other words, taking his stand upon the well-known Middle Path,—condemned eternalism. But what is meant by “eternity” in this context ? As several canonical texts show, it is nothing but a supposedly endless duration in time, either in this world or in a higher world. To explain : according to the Buddha, all that is born must die, and all that is thus impermanent (*anitya/anicca*) because of being in time is painful (*duḥkha/dukkha*). The timeless—the Absolute—alone is permanent, and thus happiness (*sukha*), because it is not born and, consequently, neither decays nor dies. We find, indeed, in the Pali Canon numerous expressions for Nirvāṇa (Pali Nibbāna) which signify “permanent” and “happiness.”¹⁵ And the great

13. Cf. *L’Ātman-Brahman*..., especially Chapter II; “Brahman in the Pali Canon and in the Pali Commentaries”, *P. V. Bapat Felicitation Volume* (to appear).

14. M. & W. Geiger, *Pāli Dhamma*, München, 1920 (*Abhandlungen der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften : Philosophisch-philologische und historische Klasse, XXXI. Band, 1. Abhandlung*), p. 7; W. Geiger, *Dhamma und Brahman*, München-Neubiberg, 1921 (*Untersuchungen zur Geschichte des Buddhismus II*), p. 4.

15. Cf. *Pali Text Society’s Pali-English Dictionary*, p. 346 a-b.

Theravāda writer Buddhaghosa also says in his *Visuddhimagga* that Nirvāṇa, not having an origination in time, does not decay, nor dies, and that, not being subject to birth, decay and death, it is permanent (*nicca*).¹⁶ Statements of this kind are common in the Upaniṣads. For instance : The *ātman* “is never born ; nor does he die at any time. He sprang from nothing and nothing sprang from him. He is unborn, abiding, primeval. He is not slain when the body is slain” (*Kaṭha-Upaniṣad* II, 18) ; “All that is different from the timeless *ātman* is painful” (*ato 'nyad ārtam : Brhadāraṇyaka* III, 4, 2 ; 5, 1 ; 7, 23) ; “The Infinite is happiness. There is no happiness in anything small (finite). Only the Infinite is happiness Verily, the Infinite is the same as the Immortal, the finite is the same as the mortal” (*Chāndogya* VII, 23-24). It is self-contradictory to say that the temporal is eternal : this doctrine is also manifest in the Upaniṣads.

And we have seen that one who says *anātman* does not necessarily deny *ātman*. I shall return to the question in a little while.

Just as the *ātman-brahman* is described in negative terms in the Upaniṣads—we shall see later why,—so also the Nirvāṇa is described in negative terms in the Pali Canon.¹⁷

Not only that : just as the *ātman-brahman* is called “Consciousness” (*viññāna*) in the Upaniṣads, so also, in two Pali texts, the Nirvāṇa is called “Consciousness” (*viññāṇa*). It is not, of course, our individual, finite consciousness—one of the five aggregates,—but a consciousness in which the ordinary consciousness ceases to exist—a consciousness, universal and absolute, in which there is no phenomenon, no dichotomy of the empirical world, no individuality :

*viññāṇaṃ anidassanaṃ anantaṃ sabbatopabhaṃ
ettha āpo ca paṭhavi tejo vāyo na gādhati |
ettha diḡhaṇ ca rassaṇ ca aṇuṃ thūlaṃ subhūsubhaṃ
ettha nāmaṇ ca rūpaṇ ca asesam uparujjhati
viññāṇassa nirodhena etth' etaṃ uparujjhati ||*¹⁸

This passage is an echo of Upaniṣadic teachings, especially of the teaching of the great thinker Yājñavalkya to his wife Maitreyī in *Brhadāraṇyaka* II, 4, 12-13, and IV, 5, 13-15. There, after having stated that the *ātman* is “a homogeneous mass of consciousness, without inside, without outside” (*anantaro 'bāhyaḥ kṛtsnaḥ prajñānaghana [viññānaghana] eva*), he said : “After emancipation (i.e., from our contingent finitude, due to ignorance), there is no more consciousness”; and then, in order to dispel Maitreyī's fear of the destruction of *ātman*—the true Self—which she identified with our finite consciousness, he taught :

16. *Visuddhimagga* : cf. *L'Ātman-Brahman*...., p. 14, n. 7.

17. Cf. *L'Ātman-Brahman*...., p. 101.

18. *Digha-Nikāya* (Pali Text Society's Edition), Vol. I, p. 223. Cf. *Mājjhima-Nikāya*, Vol. I, pp. 329-330.—*L'Ātman-Brahman*...., pp. 53-54.

“Where there is a semblance of duality (*dvaitam iva*), there... one knows another. But when everything has become one's self, then... by what and whom should one know ? By what should one know that by which one knows all this ? By what, my dear, should one know all this ? By what, my dear, should one know the knower ?”—a passage to which I will have to return soon.¹⁹

The Pali passage just quoted, and the similar one, have, naturally, embarrassed the majority of the interpreters in modern times. Even the great Theravāda writer, Buddhaghosa, who recognizes that *viññāṇa* is a “name for Nirvāṇa” (*nibbānassa nāmaṇ*) and that the consciousness which ceases there is the phenomenal consciousness, refuses to admit that Nirvāṇa is Consciousness and gives a fanciful etymology of the word *viññāṇa*. But the modern scholars, the great V. Trenckner and I. B. Horner included, have gone a step further : they attribute the words of the Buddha to his adversary and thus make the Omniscient appear as incapable of giving a proper answer !²⁰

The idea of the “Consciousness without consciousness” will occur again, in later times, in Mahāyāna : not only in Vijñānavāda, but in the *Prajñāpāramitā-Sūtras* as well—where the Absolute is so described (*cittam acittam, cittaṃ cittavinirmuktam*).²¹

In Mahāyāna texts, the Upaniṣadic *ātman* is clearly recognised. Thus in the *Suvikrāntavikrāmapariṣcchā-Prajñāpāramitāsūtra* the “non-dual *ātman*” (*advaya ātmā*) is said to be the ground of our authentic knowledge of all things in all spheres of existence.²²

By “non-dual” (*advaya*) in this context is meant “beyond the subject-object split” (*grāhya-grāhakabhedātita*). It is, indeed, through such a knowledge, where the subject coincides with the object, that all things are known as they are. Our empirical knowledge, characterized by the subject-object split, is imperfect; it is otherwise called “ignorance” (*avidyā*).

Now the *ātman*—the self—by its very nature is beyond the subject-object split. The self cannot be both subject and object of the same act of knowledge, any more than fire can burn itself or the eye can see itself.²³ And the Upaniṣadic *ātman* is—as we have seen—universal. Therefore, when the *ātman* is known, everything is known. This is the Upaniṣadic doctrine, so brilliantly expressed by Yājñavalkya in the passage quoted a while ago :

“Where there is semblance of duality, there....one knows another. But when everything has become one's self (*yatra tv asya sarvam ātmaivābhūt*), then....by what

19. Cf. *L'Ātman-Brahman*...., p. 52.

20. See *ibid.*, p. 54, n. 2.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 54, n. 1.

22. *Ibid.*, p. 33, n. 4.

23. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 52, n. 7.

and whom should one know? By what should one know that by which one knows all this? By what, my dear, should one know the knower (*viññātāram are kena vijānīyāt*)?"

As it is beyond the subject-object split, the *ātman* can never, indeed, be known as an object. This is the reason why in two Pali texts the *ātman* or the Buddha is said to be "beyond apprehension" (*anupalabbhamāna/anupalabbhiyamāna*).²⁴

Similarly, a later text, the *Saptaśatikā Prajñāpāramitā*,—which, like one of these two Pali texts, identifies *ātman* and Buddha, says: Just as the *ātman* does not exist at all, is not apprehended (*atyantatayā na samvidyate nopalabhyate*), so the Buddha also does not exist at all, is not apprehended.²⁵

What is meant?

First, in the Buddha is not to be seen a psychophysical individual, but the Absolute, called by various names, *brahman*, *ātman*, *dharma*, *dharmāṇaṃ dharmatā* ("essential nature of things"), and so on. This is, of course, true of every individual; but the Buddha is the one who has realized this truth, who has made it "actual", by becoming what he really is. So, already in the Pali Canon, he is reported to have said: "The following are the Buddha's names: 'One who has the Dhamma as his body' (*Dhammakāya*), or 'One who has the *brahman* as his body' (*brahmakāya*); 'One who has become the Dhamma' (*Dhammabhūta*), or 'One who has become the *brahman*' (*brahmabhūta*).²⁶ And further: "What do you gain by seeing this foul body? He who sees the Dhamma sees me, and he who sees me sees the Dhamma".²⁷

Now the Absolute can never become an object for anybody. As the *Vajracchedikā Prajñāpāramitā* puts it, "One should see the Buddha as the Dharma. The essential nature of things—*dharmatā*—however cannot be known" (*dharmatā ca na vijñeyā nasā śakyā vijānitum*).²⁸ In like manner, Nāgārjuna also says: "You are not said to be seen when one has seen your bodily form. You are well seen when the Dharma is seen. But the essential nature of things—*dharmatā*—is not seen" (*dharme dṛṣṭe sudṛṣṭo'si dharmatā na ca dṛśyate*).²⁹

And this "non-apprehension" only indicates the non-existence of the *ātman* or the Buddha—if we view it from the empirical standpoint. From the standpoint of

the absolute Truth, however, it is this non-existence which is its highest ("metaphysical") existence, it is this non-apprehension which is its highest apprehension:

yāvidyamānatā saiva paramā vidyamānatā |
sarvathānupalambhaś ca upalambhaḥ paro mataḥ ||
(*Mahāyāna-Sūtrālaṃkāra* IX, 78).³⁰

Surely the *ātman* is apprehended, but not as an object. Indeed, if the *ātman*—the self—could become an object, it would turn out to be an *anātman*—not-self. Therefore, he who thinks: "I have apprehended the *ātman* objectively" has not really apprehended it. The *ātman* is apprehended, beyond the subject-object split which governs our empirical thought, in the immediate consciousness "It is" (*astīty evopalabdhavyaḥ*; *Kaṭha-Upaniṣad* VI, 12-13). But, from the empirical standpoint, again, this apprehension is nothing but a non-apprehension, being devoid of an object and hence ineffable. So the *Kena-Upaniṣad* (II, 3) says: "Only to him who does not know it is it known; to him who knows it, is not known" (*aviññātam vijānatām viññātam avijānatām*). In the same vein, the *Bhāgavadgītā* (II, 69) says: "What is night for all beings is the time of waking for the disciplined soul; and what is the time of waking for all beings is night for the sage who sees"—

yā niśā sarvabhūtānām tasyām jāgati samyamī |
yasyām jāgrati bhūtāni sā niśā paśyato muneḥ ||

True, the non-existence of *pudgala* is sought to be proved on the same ground of non-apprehension.³¹ But one thing is the non-apprehension of *pudgala*, and quite another thing the non-apprehension of *ātman*. If the so-called *pudgala*—an individual substance—really existed, it would be an object of thought and hence apprehended.³² But, from whatever side it may be envisaged, it is never apprehended and remains wholly unintelligible. It is, therefore, concluded that it does not exist. The *ātman*, on the other hand, can never be an object of thought, as we have seen. Thus, by its very nature it is "beyond apprehension."³³

Furthermore, in many Mahāyāna texts, the Absolute is said to be "beyond apprehension" (*anupalambha*). The Vedāntin Gauḍapāda, deeply influenced by Buddhist ideas, said the same thing.³⁴

We may, therefore, not follow Pali scholasticism (*Abhidhamma*), or those great scholars of modern times, such as Louis de La Vallée Poussin, whose thoughts were shaped under its influence, when they assert that, just as the non-apprehension of *pudgala* proves its non-existence, so the non-apprehension of the *ātman* proves the latter's non-existence.³⁵

24. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 9, n. 4.

25. *Ibid.*, p. 68.

26. *Ibid.*, p. 82.

27. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 61-62.

28. See *ibid.*, p. 124, n. 3.

29. *Ibid.*, p. 124, n. 3.

30. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 68.

31. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 67, n. 3.

32. On "apprehension" (*upalabdhi*) cf. *ibid.*, p. 68.

33. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 68.

34. See *ibid.*, p. 67, n. 3.

35. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 67 n. 3.

It is precisely because the *ātman* cannot be an object of thought that the Buddha rejected all “theories” (*vāda*) about *ātman*. The Upaniṣads also had stated—e.g.—“Whence words return along with thought, not having reached it” (*yato vāco nivartante aprāpya manasā saha : Taittirīya-Upaniṣad* II, 4 & 9). It is, further, because the *ātman* cannot be apprehended as an object that the Upaniṣadic thinkers mostly indicate it in negative terms, by saying what it is not, rather than what it is. And the *Saptaśatikā Prajñāpāramitā*—already mentioned before—says the same about the *ātman* or the Buddha (the two are identified in this text, as we have seen): “Just as the *ātman* cannot be expressed by any empirical reality, so the Buddha also cannot be expressed by any empirical reality. Where there is no name, that is called the Buddha” (*yatra na kūcit saṃkhyā sa ucyate Buddha iti*). “It is the name of one who is beyond words (*apada*).”³⁶

Thus from the rejection of the theories about *ātman* it does not follow that the Buddha denied *ātman* as some modern scholars have thought.³⁷ “A theory about the *ātman* is not itself the *ātman*” (*nātmadṛṣṭiḥ svayam ātmalakṣaṇā*), says the *Mahāyāna-Sūtrālaṃkāra*.³⁸

The *Mahāyāna-Sūtrālaṃkāra*, of course, clearly recognizes *ātman*. And this *ātman* called by various names, “Great Ātman” (*mahātman*), “Supreme Ātman” (*paramātman*), “Suchness” (*tathatā*), “Void” (*śūnya*), “being devoid of self” (*nairātmya*), is nothing else than the Upaniṣadic *ātman*. The *Ratnagotravibhāga-Mahāyānottaratantraśāstra* also has the same doctrine.³⁹

Indeed, already in the *Taittirīya-Upaniṣad* (II, 7) the term *anātmya* is applied to the *brahman*. Later, in the *Maitri-Upaniṣad*, the *ātman* will be described as “Void” (*śūnya*), “without” *ātman* (*nirātman*, *nirātmaka*).⁴⁰

Of these, the term “void” (*śūnya*) indicates that the *ātman* is beyond all objective determinations—like the *neti neti* “Not so, not so....” of Yājñavalkya.⁴¹ And, by describing the *ātman* as “devoid of *ātman*” (*anātmya*, etc.), the Upaniṣadic thinkers convey the idea that the *ātman*—the self—is distinct from the psycho-physical complex and thus deny the false identification of the self with this complex.

By the term *tathatā* “Suchness” is meant not being subject to change, to becoming in time—as the great Buddhist Masters, Vasubandhu, Candrakīrti and others, made it clear.⁴²

36. *Ibid.*, p. 68.

37. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 17 and n. 2.

38. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 17, n. 2.

39. See *ibid.*, pp. 3-7.

40. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 7 and 69-70.

41. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 96, n. 5.

42. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 4, n. 3.

Likewise, the *Saptaśatikā Prajñāpāramitā* calls the *ātman* or the Buddha *anutpāda* “non-origination.”⁴³

Thus, for the Upaniṣads,—which in ancient India represent a great moment of metaphysical speculation,—the *ātman*—the self—is neither the psycho-physical complex, nor a privileged part of it (e.g., consciousness), nor any other kind of individual entity, “object of the notion of the Ego.” It is the Being in itself, one, all-encompassing, absolute. From the objective standpoint, as we have seen, it is a non-being. But it is this non-being which is the authentic Being, the ground of all beings.⁴⁴

The Upaniṣads, when they affirm this Being, do deny that psycho-physical being which people, in general, consider to be the self.⁴⁵ Hence the apparently paradoxical expression “*ātman* devoid of *ātman*”. The paradox is resolved if we translate: “Self devoid of a self”. Conversely, it has appeared to us that the Buddha, when he denies this psycho-physical being as a self, does affirm the Being in itself as the Self.

The difference is merely a difference of accent. The Buddha’s aim, like that of the Upaniṣadic thinkers, was to lead mankind to emancipation—an emancipation from its contingent finitude due to ignorance, which is achieved through knowledge, or, rather, which is knowledge. But, unlike the Upaniṣadic thinkers, he did not so much speculate on the Goal: he showed the Way. His purpose was to be a saviour, not a philosopher. At the same time, however, he was philosophically aware of the danger run by speculation on Being—the danger of making the All-Encompassing an object, standing in relation, on the one hand, to the thinking subject, and on the other, to other objects. The Upaniṣadic philosophers themselves had not escaped that danger. More consistently, therefore, the Buddha followed the “negative way”. He explained what is *not* the *ātman*, in order that his hearers, by getting rid of all false notions of the *ātman*, might get an immediate knowledge of the *ātman*.⁴⁶

The same, indeed, will be said, centuries later, by the great Vedānta philosopher, Śaṅkara.

In Vedānta, the psycho-physical complex is called—as in Buddhism—“not-self” (*anātman*). The false conception of that non-self as the self (*ātman*) is said to be “ignorance” (*avidyā*). And, when this ignorance has at last come to an end, thanks to the intellectual and moral discipline pursued, it is through the negation of the *ātman* falsely conceived by ignorance that the true *ātman* is realized, in an

43. *Ibid.*, p. 124, n. 3.

44. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 96.

45. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 71-72.

46. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 75 and 138-140.

immediate experience. It is never apprehended as an object, as we have seen. Indeed, those who strive to apprehend the *ātman* objectively will not attain it. So Śaṅkara says, at the end of a discussion on the *ātman*'s "character of not being an object" (*aviśayatva*), in his commentary on *Bhagavadgītā* XVIII, 50 : "One must not exert oneself to know the *ātman*, but solely to make cease the notion of *ātman* in what is not the *ātman*"—*jñāne yatno na kartavyaḥ kiṃ tv anātmāny ātmabuddhinivṛttāu eva*.

I shall conclude with a statement of the great Buddhist Master Vasubandhu, author of the *Viṃśatikā* with an auto-commentary, which perfectly elucidates the so-called "negation of *ātman*" in Buddhism :

*yo bālair dharmāṇāṃ svabhāvo grāhyagrāhākādīḥ parikalpitas tena kalpitena ātmanā teṣāṃ nairātmyaṃ na tv anabhilāpyanātmanā yo buddhānāṃ viśayaḥ.*⁴⁷ "It is by virtue of that nature of things, consisting in subject and object, which the ignorant imagine, that the things are devoid of self, not by virtue of that ineffable Self which is the domain of the Enlightened Ones".

47. *ibid.*, p. 66.

THE JAINA CONCEPT OF SELF

GOVINDAGOPAL MUKHOPADHYAYA

The search of philosophy, especially in India, is a search for the self or soul. Self or soul denotes consciousness and it is this wondrous phenomenon of consciousness that has engaged the attention of all thinking beings since the dawn of human civilisation. In India it was known as the *Ātmavidyā*, the science of the self, which was considered as the *Parāvidyā*, the supreme science or highest knowledge as distinguished from *Aparāvidyā*, which was concerned with the knowledge of other material things.

Some may object that the search for the self was not universally accepted in India as the supreme object of enquiry as is evident from the existence of such systems as the Cārvāka, Bauddha, Jaina etc., which are branded as heterodox as opposed to the orthodox systems, which had their roots in the Vedas. But we forget that even the Cārvāka, who are known as materialists, are engaged in explaining the fact of consciousness and this they do only in terms of the material body. They are only *dehātamavādins*. The Buddhists, who are called nihilists because they do not admit the existence of anything permanent, much less of a permanent self, have still to engage themselves in finding out the nature of consciousness, which they ultimately consider to be of a fleeting nature. The flow of consciousness has still to be admitted by them and so there are *viññānātamavādins*. Even in reducing all existence to a zero or a void, they have to do it on the strength of the analysis of the fact of consciousness alone, which the Buddhists claim, proves the void to the hilt. The position of the Jains in this matter stands on a unique footing. They not only affirm the existence of the self or soul but show its infinite varieties, which no other system of Indian philosophy has done with such details. The Jaina system of philosophy is, therefore, *ātmavādin* to the core and its entire interest centres round this one concept of self or soul. It will be, therefore, fruitful to take note of this concept from the Jaina point of view.

Every philosophical system has some fundamental categories through which they have tried to explain the world of experience. The Jains consider them to be nine in number (*nava tattva*) and the very first of them is *jīva*, the soul, which shows that it occupies the very first and most important position among the *tattvas*