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Dittham, Sutam, Mutam, Vinnātam

KAMALESWAR BHATTACHARYA

yassa n' atthi idam me ti paresam vā pi kiñcanam/ mamattam so asamvindam n' atthi me ti na socati// Suttanipāta 951

The $Alagadd[\bar{u}pama]$ -Sutta of the Majjhima-Nik $\bar{a}ya$ has the following passage:

cha-y-imāni, bhikkhave, diṭṭhiṭṭhānāni. katamāni cha? idha, bhikkhave, assutavā puthujjano ariyānam adassāvī ariyadhammassa akovido ariyadhamme avinīto sappurisānam adassāvī sappurisadhammassa akovido sappurisadhamme avinīto rūpam "etam mama, eso 'ham asmi, eso me attā" ti samanupassati; vedanam "etam mama, eso 'ham asmi, eso me attā" ti samanupassati; saññam "etam mama, eso 'ham asmi, eso me attā" ti samanupassati; yamp'idam diṭṭham sutam mutam viññātam pattam pariyesitam anuvicaritam manasā tam pi "etam mama, eso 'ham asmi, eso me attā" ti samanupassati; yam p'idam diṭṭhiṭṭhānam: so loko so attā so pecca bhavissāmi nicco dhuvo sassato avipariṇāmadhammo, sassatisamam tath' eva ṭhassāmīti, tam pi "etam mama, eso 'ham asmi, eso me attā" ti samanupassati.

sutavā ca kho, bhikkhave, ariyasāvako ariyānam dassāvī ariyadhammassa kovido ariyadhamme suvinīto sappurisānam dassāvī sappurisadhammassa kovido sappurisadhamme suvinīto rūpam "n' etam mama, n' eso 'ham asmi, na m' eso attā" ti samanupassati; vedanam "n' etam mama, n' eso 'ham asmi, na m' eso attā" ti samanupassati; samkhāre "n' etam mama, n' eso 'ham asmi, na m' eso attā" ti samanupassati; yam p' idam diṭṭham sutam mutam viññātam pattam pariyesitam anuvicaritam manasā tam pi "n' etam mama, n' eso 'ham asmi, na m' eso attā" ti samanupassati; yam p' idam diṭṭhiṭṭhānam: so loko so attā so pecca bhavissāmi nicco dhuvo sassato avipariṇāmadhammo, sassatisamam tath' eva ṭhassāmiti, tam pi "n' etam mama, n' eso 'ham asmi, na m' eso attā" ti samanupassati.¹

The first five wrong theories about the Ātman/Attan, mentioned in this passage, concern an Ātman belonging to this world, while the sixth theory concerns an other-worldly Ātman which ignorant people aspire to attain after their death. All these theories are false because they make of the Ātman an 'object', while the Ātman, the Absolute, the Being in itself, can never be an object.² The wise people, therefore, reject them.

The first four theories wrongly identify the Ātman with the first four 'aggregates' (khandha). The fifth theory does not directly identify the Ātman

with the viññāṇakkhandha — as we are generally told in the Pāli Canon but rather with the 'objects' of different 'consciousnesses.'3 Now the three words, dittham, sutam, mutam, are repeatedly used in that old text, the Suttanipāta. The word viññātam (as in the text quoted above) is sometimes added. The words ditthi-, suti-, muti- or ñāṇa- also are used. 4The four words, dittham, sutam, mutam, viññātam, to which is sometimes added (as in the Majjhima text quoted above) pattam pariyesitam anuvicaritam manasā, are also found elsewhere. 5 They are explained in Samyutta-Nikāya XXXV, 95, which was, no doubt, the starting point of the traditional interpretation.6 Dittham, of course, is explained as that which is 'seen' by the eye (cakkhunā dittham, or rūpāyatanam), sutam as that which is 'heard' by the ear (sotena sutam, or saddāyatanam), and viñnātam as that which is 'known' by the mind (manasā viññātam); but, surprisingly, mutam is said to be that which is 'smelt' by the nose, 'tasted' by the tongue, and 'touched' by the body (ghānena ghāyitam, jivhāya sāyitam, kāyena phuttham, or gandhāyatanam, rasāyatanam, photthabbāyatanam) — an interpretation that will later be worked out in detail by Buddhaghosa in his different commentaries as well as in the Visuddhimagga. The four words are thus understood to comprise the experiences brought about by all the six 'faculties.' 8 Theragāthā 1216 (= Samyutta-Nikāya I, p. 186) adds between dittha-sute and mute paţighe, which has been differently interpreted by Buddhaghosa and by Dhammapāla. While for Buddhaghosa patigha- means that which is smelt and tasted, and muta- that which is touched, Dhammapala, who quotes the Sāratthappakāsinī in this connection, says just the reverse: paţighe ti ghaţţaniye photthabbe, mute ti vuttāvasese mute; gandharasesū 'ti vuttam hoti. Sāratthappakāsiniyaņi (cf. PTS edition, Vol. I, p. 270) "paţigha-saddena gandharasā gahitā, muta-saddena photthabbam gahitan'' ti vuttam.9

Be that as it may, I have the impression that *muta*- originally meant 'thought of', 'known' (cf. the parallelism between *muta*- or *muti*- and *ñāṇa*-: Suttanipāta 839-40 and 846, 1078 and 1082). But this is not the point that I wanted to make here. Before I come to my point I should like to draw attention to the fact that the empirical means of knowledge indicated by the four terms under consideration — let us say, 'seeing', 'hearing' 'thinking', 'understanding' — are regarded as useful in that they help us in attaining the Truth by paving the way for it; but, in the ultimate analysis, they are false and hence to be abandoned:

na diţihiyā na sutiyā na ñāṇena
Māgandiyā 'ti Bhagavā
sīlabbatenāpi na suddhim āha|
adiţihiyā assutiyā aññāṇā
asīlatā abbatā no pi tena|
ete ca nissajja anuggahāya
santo anissāya bhavaṃ na jappe|| (Suttanipāta 839). — sambhārā ime

dhammā honti ajjhattasantim pāpuņitum adhigantum phusitum sacchikātum, Mahāniddesa, p. 189.

Dr K. N. Jayatilleke, who discusses some of the passages quoted above in his remarkable work, Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge (London, 1963), observes (p. 60, § 72) that they 'criticise' 'Upanisadic doctrines of the ātman'. In the preceding paragraph Dr Jayatilleke cites quite a number of Upanisadic passages in which the doctrines in question occur. Speaking of the famous passage of the Brhadāranyaka-Upaniṣad (II, 4, 5; IV, 5, 6): ātmā vā are drastavyah śrotavyo mantavyo nididhyāsitavyah, he writes: 'It is said that 'the atman should be perceived (drastavyah), learnt of (śrotavyah), conceived of (mantavyah) and rationally understood (nididhyasitavyah)' (Brh. 2.4.5, 4.5.6). This is put in the mouth of Yājñavalkya, who is soon going to prove by rational arguments that the atman cannot be apprehended by any of these standard ways of knowing (Brh. 2.4.14, 4.5.15), but if we consider this passage in the light of other passages bearing on it in this stratum of thought, we see that there were thinkers at this time who believed that the atman could be known by all these usual ways of knowing. The ātman could be seen or empirically perceived if it was a matter of seeing your figure in a pan of water (Ch. 8.8.1) or of perceiving the warmth of the body (Ch. 3.13.8). It could be heard or heard of, if it was a case of hearing the sound as of a fire blazing on closing one's ears (Ch. 3.13.8) or of hearing about it from a teacher when 'what was not heard of' (asrutam) presumably in the sacred scriptures becomes heard (śrutam bhavati) (Ch. 6.1.3). It could likewise be metaphysically conceived of and rationally understood by thinking (e.g. vijajñau, Ch. 6.16.3). It is significant that even Sankara's comment on 'mantavyo nididhyāsitavyaḥ' (Brh. 4.5.6) is that it can be known through 'argument and reasoning' (tarkenopapattya). This was the atman of the Early Upanisads, that could be known by the then accepted ways of knowing, that is by perceiving empirical instances, by instruction, or by metaphysical reasoning or rationally demonstrated to be unknowable in these ways'.10

Let us examine, first, the Brhadāranyaka passage. It is difficult. But the most sensible interpretation seems to be that given by the Indian tradition itself. 11 Thus Sankara, commenting on the sentence, ātmā vā are draṣṭavy a śrotavyo mantavyo nididhyāsitavyaḥ, writes (Commentary on II, 4, 5): śrotavyaḥ pūrvam ācāryata āgamataś ca. paścān mantavyas tarkataḥ. tato nididhyāsitavyo niścayena dhyātavyaḥ. evaṃ hy asau dṛṣṭo bhavati śravaṇamanananididhyāsanasādhanair nirvartitaiḥ. yadaikatvam etāny upagatāni tadā samyagdarśanam brahmaikatvaviṣayam prasīdati, nānyathā śravaṇamātreṇa. In his comment on IV, 5, 6 (which is essentially identical with II, 4, 5), Śankara interprets the next sentence, ātmani dṛṣṭe śrute mate vijñāta idam sarvaṃ viditam, as follows: kathaṃ dṛṣṭa ātmanīti? ucyate: pūrvam ācāryāgamābhyāṃ śrute punas tarkeṇopapattyā mate vicārite, — śravaṇaṃ

tv āgamamātreņa, — mata upapattyā paścād vijñāta evam etan nānyatheti nirdhārite. 11 kim bhavatīti? ucyate: idam viditam bhavati. idam sarvam iti yad ātmano 'nyat. ātmavyatirekenābhāvāt.

As will be seen, in the last passage, Sankara's gloss tarkenopapattyā refers only to mate. nididhyāsitavyaḥ is glossed in his comment on II, 4, 5: niścayena dhyātavyaḥ.

According to this interpretation, this passage of the Bṛhadāraṇyaka refers to the four stages of spiritual knowledge: śravaṇa-, i.e. 'hearing' from the teacher or from the scriptures, manana-, i.e. 'reflection' by reasoning, nididhyāsana-, i.e. continuous meditation, 12 and darśana- 'vision'. As Śaṅkara says in his comment on Bṛhadāraṇyaka II, 4, 5, it is only when the first three steps have been accomplished as one (yadaikatvam etāny upaga-tāni) that the 'right vision having for its object the unity of the brahman-(= ātman-) shines forth' (tadā samyagdarśanam brahmaikatvaviṣayaṃ prasīdati); this 'vision' cannot be attained by 'hearing' alone (nānyathā śravaṇamātreṇa).

This interpretation, therefore, suggests that the term drastavyah, in the series drastavyah śrotavyo mantavyo nididhyāsitavyah, represents not the beginning but rather the end of the process. The 'vision' is the goal to which lead the three preliminary stages of 'hearing', etc., conceived as one.

Now, as Dr Jayatilleke himself shows (pp. 431-2, § 742), 'If we take the words for 'seeing' we find that they are used in the Nikāyas to denote normal as well as extrasensory perception.' And stages of spiritual knowledge, similar to those just spoken of, are also mentioned in the Nikāyas. Thus in the Caṅkī-Sutta we read:

... dhammam suṇāti, sutvā dhammam dhāreti, dhāritānam dhammānam attham upaparikkhati, attham upaparikkhato dhammā nijjhānam khamanti, dhammanijjhānakkhantiyā sati chando jāyati, chandajāto ussahati, ussahitvā tuleti, tulayitvā padahati, pahitatto samāno kāyena c' eva paramasaccam sacchikaroti paññāya ca tam ativijjha passati. 13

The 'Vision' of which Yājñavalkya speaks in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* is not an ordinary vision, but the Vision of the Truth, which is beyond the subject-object split, which, therefore, cannot even be properly called a 'vision'.¹⁴ There is thus no contradiction between this statement and the one that follows, namely that the Ātman cannot be objectively 'known'.¹⁵ Our ordinary 'seeing', 'hearing', 'reasoning', 'understanding', and so on, operate only in the empirical world of subjects and objects; but when this apparent duality (dvaitam iva) is transcended, these no longer exist:

yatra hi dvaitam iva bhavati . . . tad itara itaram paśyati, tad itara itaram śrnoti . . . tad itara itaram manute, tad itara itaram vijānāti. yatra vā asya sarvam ātmaivābhūt . . . tat kena kam paśyet, tat kena kam śrnuyāt . . . tat kena kam manvīta, tat kena kam vijānīyāt? 16

The three preliminary stages of spiritual knowledge, also, are transcended in the ultimate Vision, where there is neither a seeing subject nor an object to be seen.

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From all this, therefore, we can conclude: The Pali Canon admits an ultimate 'Vision' of Truth and denies an ultimate value to our empirical 'seeing', 'hearing', 'reasoning', 'understanding', just as Yājñavalkya does. In other words, there is not the slightest opposition between the Pali Canon and the great Upanisadic thinker so far as this point is concerned.

Now about the other Upanişadic passages quoted by Dr Jayatilleke. No importance should evidently be attached to the Chāndogya passage, VIII, 8, 1; for the 'seeing' of the Atman, mentioned in that passage, is rejected later as false, in the course of Prajapati's higher and higher instruction to Indra. Nor should we, it seems to me, attach any importance to that figurative passage, Chāndogya III, 13, 8. Chāndogya VI, 1,3: yenāśrutam śrutam bhavaty amatam matam avijñātam vijñātam, does not say anything about the 'hearing', 'reasoning' and 'understanding' in relation to the Atman: it only means to say that when the Atman — the One — is realised, even those things which lie beyond the realm of these ordinary 'ways of knowing' become in a way 'heard', 'thought of', 'understood' — because there is nothing apart from the Atman, the One: ātmavyatirekeṇābhāvāt.17

Finally, the sentence (Chāndogya VI, 16, 3) that brings to a close the famous discourse on tat tvam asi: ... aitadātmyam idam sarvam, tat satyam, sa ātmā, tat tvam asi, Švetaketo iti tad dhāsya vijajñāv iti vijajñāv iti, only means that Svetaketu 'understood' the teaching of his father.

I shall be the last person to say that the Pali Canon only restates the teachings of the Upanisads; but it seems to me that the difference between the two has too often been exaggerated. 18

NOTES

1 Majjhima-Nikāya (PTS edition) I, pp. 135-6.

2 Cf. K. Bhattacharya, L'Atman-Brahman dans le Bouddhisme ancien, Paris 1973 (Publications de l'École française d Extrême-Orient, vol. XC). - The theory, so loko so attā..., criticized here (cf. also Samyutta-Nikāya III, pp. 98, 182), has been discussed by the Venerable Rāhula in his wonderful book, What the Buddha Taught (second edition, Bedford 1967), p. 59 & n. 1. Cf. also L'Ātman-Brahman..., p. 9, n. 4; p. 14, n. 7; p. 15, n. 1; p. 67, n. 3. "La doctrine critiquée... nous fait plutôt penser à la fameuse doctrine de Śāṇdilya, où l'on a reconnu l'influence des anciennes représentations citualitate the fitted." ations ritualistes-théistes"

3 Cf. Papañcasūdani II, p. 110: desanāvilāsena h' ettha diţţhādiārammaṇavasena viññā-

4 See Suttanipāta (ed. by D. Andersen and H. Smith, PTS), vv. 250, 778, 790, 793, 797, 798, 802, 812, 813, 839-40, 846, 887, 897, 901, 914, 1078ff., 1086, 1122.

198, 802, 812, 813, 839-40, 840, 881, 891, 901, 914, 101811., 1080, 1122.
5 Here are some references, which may not be exhaustive: Digha-Nikāya III, p. 232 (= Anguttara II, p. 246; cf. IV, p. 307); Majihima I, p. 3; III, pp. 29-30, 261; Samyutta III, pp. 203ff.; Anguttara II, pp. 23-4 (= Itivuttaka, p. 121), 25; Udāna, p. 8.
6 Cf. Cullaniddesa 298 (on Suttanipāta 1086); Suttavibhanga, Pācittiya, I, 2, 1 (Vinaya, ed. Oldenberg, Vol. IV, p. 2); Dhammasangaņi 961; Vibhanga, p. 429.
7 XIV, 76; cf. 46 (ed. Warren-Kosambi, Harvard Oriental Series 41).

8 Cf. the discussion on this point in Abhidharmakośa IV, pp. 160ff. (La Vallée Poussin's translation). The Sanskrit original of the Abhidharmakośabhāşya, published in Patna, is not available to me, but the relevant portion is reproduced by P. S. Jaini in his edition of the Abhidharmadīpa with Vibhāṣāprabhāvṛtti (= Tibetan Sanskrit Works Series, Vol. IV), Patna 1959, p. 161, n. 3. See also Abhidharmadipa with Vibhāṣāprabhāvṛtti, pp. 161-2, where the Vaibhāsika point of view is set forth. — In the Astasāhasrikā Praiñāpāramitā the dharmānām dharmatā is said to be na drstasrutamatavijnātā, where Haribhadra explains: ghrāņajihvākāyavijñānair anubhūtatvān matā (Astasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā with Abhisamayālamkārāloka, edited by P. L. Vaidya, Darbhanga

1960, pp. 95 & 407).

9 Dhammapāla, Paramatthadīpanī: Theragāthā-Aṭṭhakathā, Vol. III, p. 190.

10 It is also found outside Vedānta, Cf. Gangeśa, Tattvacintāmani, Muktivāda, in Gādādharī (Varanasi, Chowkhamba, 1970), p. 2055.

11 In his commentary on the *Bhagavadgitā* (III, 41, etc.), Sankara interprets jñāna- as general theoretical knowledge, obtained from the scriptures and from the teacher (sāstrata āgamatas cātmādīnām avabodhah), and vijñāna- as 'particular experience' (visesatas tadanubhavaḥ). But here, as well as in his comment on Chāndogya-Upanişad VI, 1, 3 (discussed below), where Sankara glosses avijñātam vijñātam by aniścitam niścitam bhavati, it does not seem to me that he understands vijñāta- in the sense of niścitam bhavati, it does not seem to me that he understands vijňāta- in the sense of 'une intuition simple et indifférenciée' (O. Lacombe, 'Jñānam savijñānam', in Mélanges d'indianisme à la mémoire de Louis Renou, Paris 1968, pp. 439-43). Vijñāna- in these Upanişadic passages means for Śańkara — so far as I can see — 'rational understanding' and nothing else (differently L'Ātman-Brahman . . ., p. 32 & n. 2, p. 33). Of course, this 'rational understanding' has to be transcended in the ultimate Vision (darśana-). I do not think that in the Brhadāranyaka passages II, 4, 5 and IV, 5, 6, vijñāna-/vijñāta-'correspond à nididhyāsitavya et vise, sinon l'intuition suprême, du moins ce qui s'en rapproche le plus, par-delà tout discours analytique' (Lacombe, loc cit., p. 442). It is true that Swāmī Mādhavānanda also, in his translation of the Brhadāranyakopanişad-bhāṣya (fourth edition, Calcutta 1965), renders vijñāna- in II, 4, 5 by 'meditation', and vijñāta- in IV, 5, 6 by 'meditated upon'. This may repose on some tradition of which I am not aware (Ānandajñāna, in his Tīkā, says nothing on this point, and no other commentary is available to me at this moment).

12 'Anhaltende Meditation', O. Böhtlingk's translation of Sadānanda, Vedāntasāra § 207 (Sanskrit-Chrestomathie³ reprint: 1967, p. 320). — Nididhyāsana- (from the Desiderative ni-didhyāsate) does not seem to be the same as Pāli nijjhāna- in diṭthior dhamma-nijjhānakhanti- (Jayatilleke, p. 275, § 440).

13 Majjhima-Nikāya II, p. 173 (cf. I, p. 480). Cf. L'Ātman-Brahman . . . , p. 120, n. 2. I have suggested that kāyena paramasaccam sacchikaroti, in this series, corresponds to nididhyāsana-, which has been defined, e.g., as mananopabṛmhitavākyārthaviṣaye sthiribhāvaḥ (Padmapāda, Pañcapādikā, p. 353 [Madras Government Oriental Series No. CLV, Madras 1958]).

14 Cf. Plotinus, Ēmead, V, 5, 6. 'une intuition simple et indifférenciée' (O. Lacombe, 'Jñānam savijñānam', in Mélanges

14 Cf. Plotinus, Ennead, V, 5, 6.
15 Cf. on this passage L'Atman-Brahman. .., p. 52.
16 Brhadāranyaka-Upaniṣad II, 4, 14 (cf. IV, 5, 15). Cf. Chāndogya VII, 24, 1.
17 Saṅkara, quoted p. 13 above. Cf. also Mundaka-Upaniṣad I, 1, 3. na tuyham adittham asutam-mutam vā

atho aviññātam kiñcanam atthi loke / Suttanipāta 1122.

18 Professor Jaini also, in his edition of the Abhidharmadipa (cf. p. 15, n. 8 above), p. 162, n. 2, cites in connection with drstam, śrutam, matam, vijñātam, the Brhadāranyaka passage, <u>atmā vā are drastavyah</u>..., apparently to indicate an opposition between the Upanişad and Buddhism. He refers to P. V. Bapat: <u>Arthapada-sūtra</u>, Introduction, pp. 4-6— a book which, unfortunately, is not available to me.

There are other works which I have not been able to consult. In the <u>Abhidharmasam-tortory</u>

uccava of Asanga (translated by the Venerable Rāhula) I find only a brief mention of drsta-śruta-mata-vijñāta-(samjñā nānādharmapratibimbodgrahanasvabhāvā, yayā drstaśrutamatavijñātān arthān vyavaharati, p. 2 in Pradhan's edition).

Note June 1979: In the Abhidharmasamuccayabhāsya (p. 2), published in Patna in 1976, matam and vijňātam are thus interpreted - against the tradition recorded above-: matam yat svayam abhyūhitam evam caivam ca bhavitavyam iti, vijñātam yat pratyātmam anubhūtam iti.