PERSONAL IDENTITY IN THE UPANIṢADS AND BUDDHISM

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Important issues in philosophical and religious thought often enter popular awareness in a simplified if not simplistic form and sometimes they petrify into *clichés* which do not serve any informative purpose and may even distort the picture and create confusion. One such *cliché* is the often repeated view that Hinduism believes in a transmigrating soul while Buddhism denies it.[1]

In Western thinking there is a deeply ingrained notion of soul which stems from Christianity and survives also in secular thinking. Therefore the doctrines of soul and no-soul are often demonstrated using Christianity and Buddism as two contrasting systems. In John Hick's formulation "... whereas Christianity has traditionally taught the existence and the immortal life of the individual soul, Buddhism has traditionally taught that there is no permanent soul."[2]

As a result of wrongly identifying the Christian notion of soul or at least closely relating it with the Upaniṣadic concept of *ātman*, the apparent dichotomy between the Hindu and Buddhist conceptions of personality has been overemphasized and largely distorted. The use of the term "soul" for *ātman* in translating the Upaniṣads (R.H. Hume, Radhakrishnan, and others before and after them) has spread this distortion widely and resulted in confused interpretations of the Hindu understanding of the transmigrating personality. The situation has not been helped by further importation of Christian type notions, such as Parrinder's "indestructible souls".[3]

We should be acutely aware that there is no Indian equivalent of the Western notion of "soul" as an immortal part of man as a person. The notion of man as a combination of an immortal soul and a mortal body is, in any event, a simplistic concept within religious thought. It was widespread in 19th century Europe and its application to the Indian situation was wrong and should not be perpetuated.

It is the purpose of this paper to examine the early understanding of the human personality as it was developed in the early Upaniṣads and early Buddhism, since all subsequent elaborations of the problem depend on these early conceptions.

The history of the Indian understanding of human personality can be traced back to the Vedas and as with most other crucial issues of Indian philosophical and religious thought it is necessary to state that even the problem of human personality and personal identity was implicitly, if not quite explicitly, solved already in the Vedas and bits of information concerning this solution are scattered throughout the hymns, particularly in the Ṛg Veda and also the Atharva Veda.

In the first place we can say that there is no expression in the Vedas which would lend itself to the interpretation which the Upaniṣadic *ātman* was subjected to, namely an individual soul. The atman of the Ṛg Veda is still quite clearly a universal force of life whose presence in living beings is manifested in breathing and as such it is comparable to other universal forces of which beings are composed.

What is quite clear from the Vedic texts is that the Vedic man experienced himself as a rather complex being. He felt that he was a collection of elemental

and dynamic forces of the universe (endowed with intrinsic intelligence) which somehow combined to produce his individual being. This is, in a way, a very modern conception. We can easily see that our physiological organism is composed of elements and forces — biological, chemical and physical — which temporarily form a structural functioning unit. The intrinsic intelligence is represented by our notion of self-regulatory systems within our organism controlled and coordinated by our central nervous system, the brain. And even as our organism as a structural functioning unit functions, its universal components are being constantly rebuilt by materials and energies (or dynamic forces) entering it from outside while spent materials are constantly leaving it in order to join the "universal pool". The constant interchange between the individual and the universal and the dependence of the individual on the universal is thus clearly illustrated.

The big question, of course, is: what makes the universal elements combine into an individual structure? This is probably a perennial problem of philosophy. The platonic type of philosophy is one attempt at an answer found also in India, in the Vijñānavāda system. A German psychologist of the 1930s, Hans Driesch, borrowed the Aristotelian term *entelekheia* in his attempt to account for the fact of a structural unity of the human psychophysical organism.

Though not offering clear answers, the Vedic texts provide some interesting hints which were hardly ever improved upon by subsequent developments.

The elemental and dynamic forces of the universe which make up a person are called *devatās* in the Vedas. (The term implies their intrinsic dimension of intelligence.) They seem to operate on two distinct levels, one subtle and one gross. Then there is a force behind the scene which is mysterious and transcendent and is probably responsible for keeping it all going.

We in our objectively impartial way have to admit that we simply do not know why and how we exist in the way we do, namely as self-regulating or self-regulated structural units of impersonal constituent elements and forces making up a bodily organism and a mental personality which feels one with it while using it as its tool and being, at the same time, self-conscious and on occasions unconscious, yet surviving it, or even ecstatically superconscious and surviving even that.

The explanation the Vedas afford is philosophical and mystical as are all the subsequent Indian explanations. There are three tiers to the personality structure:

1. *The transcendental tier* is the unborn (*aja*) which is the creative and supporting force of the universe or of reality as a whole (RV 10, 16, 4; 10, 82, 6; 1, 67, 5; 1, 164, 6; 8, 41, 10) and as such corresponds to the later Upaniṣadic concept *brahman*, although it appears under this name also in the Atharva Veda (11, 8, 32). The unborn, being the supporting force of reality, supports also individual things and beings and is therefore the inner essence of man like the Upaniṣadic ātman. This unborn force holds together the elements and forces which make up the human personality, but remains totally hidden or transcendental even though, being the inner essence, it has to be regarded as immanent to man, to all individual things and to reality as a whole.

Although the unborn is responsible for holding together individual personality structures and is their indwelling inner core, it cannot be regarded as their personal soul, or indeed, as the universal soul. It remains totally outside any conceptual grasp and any spacio-temporal configuration. It has, however, to be viewed as harbouring intrinsic intelligence like all other universal forces.

2. *The subtle tier* is represented by the specifically Vedic concept *tanū*. It is often translated as "body" and in some instances it is an adequate rendering. On many occasions, however, it is inadequate. Gods as well as deceased humans possess

tanū. It corresponds more to the expression rūpa rather then śarīra. Its true meaning, however, is more accurately expressed by the word "likeness" rather than form. According to the Vedas it exists, for an infinitesimal fraction of time, on its own when a person dies, having left the material organism behind and lost all its mental faculties as well, since on death they dissolve and return into their cosmic abodes (mind to the moon, hearing into space, seeing into the sun etc. RV10, 16, 3).

In this disembodied and "disensouled" or "dementalised" form it is just an empty structure or shadow of a person (comparable to the Cheshire cat's smile left behind in the sky on the disappearance of the cat in Alice's *Adventures in Wonderland*). In that state it is presumably supported by, and linked to, the unborn alone and so it should be possible to encounter the unborn directly; hence perhaps the later speculations on the possibility of instant enlightenment immediately after death if someone manages to take advantage of this extremely brief moment (Cf. *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*).

This shadow is, however, immediately filled again by the cosmic elements and forces which make up a reconstituted or reborn personality. This virtually accomplishes the reconstitution of his *tanū* in the new surroundings. I think that *tanū* corresponds, on the mental level, to what we call man's character or to the popular meaning given to the word "personality" (he's got "personality"). It gives the specific individual imprint to the universal forces which constitute the subtle tier of a person and which are: mentality (*manas*), animating power (*asu*), life-force (*prāṇa*) and various mental faculties, such as understanding, hearing, seeing etc. I think that we can regard *tanū* simply as the "phenomenal self" which passes from life to life, not as an unchanging soul, but as a structural continuum of ever changing configurations of elements and forces (mental characteristics, faculties, talents and capacities). As such it is superior to the third tier.

3. *The third tier* is clearly, in our context, our physical body called *sárīra*, our physiological organism made up of the four elemental forces (*māhabhūtas* in later terminology) which combine into its organs and are given structural unity and outward shape and likeness by *tanū*.

No doubt, *tanū* is the most important concept for our understanding of man and his personal identity. It is that which is at all times unmistakably perceptible and identifiable as one particular person despite the fact that all the factors involved are never the same and are constantly in flux. When we say that we know a person, we mean his *tanū* or the way it has imprinted itself on his mental structure, known to us as his character, and on his bodily likeness in which, of course, his character is also in a way reflected.[4]

When we now turn to the Upaniṣadic view of human personality, we face first the problem of *ātman*, frequently translated as soul and therefore regarded as indestructible and somehow assigned by many Western interpretations the role of the transmigrating core of the individual, even though it is usually recognised that *ātman* is also the inmost essence of man linked to or identical with the cosmic source of all reality, *brahman*, with which it is therefore in a mysterious way one.[5]

This is certainly not the correct interpretation of the Upaniṣadic experience of *ātman*. *Ātman* is indeed the ultimate reality identical with *brahman* and the way to it is indeed through the inner recesses of man's mind. But once the inner core is reached, there is no trace of the individual in it, even though the mystical experience itself of the hidden *ātman* is an individual experience accessible at the moment of its duration just to that one particular person. The knowledge of the ultimate reality, *ātman*, is not the same as the knowledge of the self, *ātmajñāna*, a later expression, although it is through self-knowledge that one penetrates beyond onself to the ultimate experience.

When exploring the nature of *ātman* in the ultimate sense, we have to leave aside the usages of the word on the phenomenal level — as a reflexive pronoun and as referring to the phenomenal self as a whole or to its parts like the body or the mind. When the true nature of *ātman* is being explored in the Upaniṣads it is found to be "not this and not that" (*neti . . . neti*), ungraspable (*agṛhya*), unattached (*asaṅga* — see BU 3, 9, 26). The true relation of *ātman* to the things of the phenomenal world, including human personalities, is described in the Upaniṣad by the word *antaryami*, the inner controller (BU 3, 7, 1-23) of all things and beings. Thus the *ātman* controls and holds together the elements and forces which make up individual things and beings in the same way as the Vedic *aja*, without himself being these individual things and beings and without being subject to the changes they have to undergo in space and time. Therefore the *ātman* himself does not transmigrate from life to life and is not the bearer of personal identity through a person's progress from one life into another.

Even when the Upaniṣad says: "just as a goldsmith, having taken a piece of gold, produces another, newer, more beautiful shape, so, verily, this *ātman*, having discarded this body, removed ignorance, makes another, newer, more beautiful shape, like one of fathers, spirits, gods, Prajāpati or Brahmā or of other beings" (BU 4, 4, 4), it does not mean that the *ātman* migrates into the new form, just as it does not mean that the goldsmith migrates from one statue into another. The *ātman* remains the supreme transcendent as well as immanent subject on whom all the changing forms depend, but who is unaffected by their transitoriness and changeability. The *ātman*, like the Vedic *aja* (*ātman*, of course, is unborn anyway) holds together but does not himself provide any distinctive marks for the phenomenal personality even though he dwells within it.

The personal identity of an individual is preserved by the continuity of the distinctive marks of his personality, i.e. by the specific configuration of the functional constituents filling his structure. This configuration is what was called *tanū* in the Vedas and what the Upaniṣad refers to as savijñāna, "that which has consciousness", perhaps "mentality" (or dare we translate "linking consciousness"?), the mental framework which is made out of constituents which form the person, namely the degree of his knowledge (*vidyā*), his actions or volitional tendencies (karmāṇi) and the sum-total of his previous experiences (pūrva prajña) which thus becomes a kind of inborn intelligence for him (BU 4, 4, 2).[6]

The driving force of this phenomenal personality is desire (kāma) on which depend his volitions (kratu) and actions (karma — BU 4, 4, 5). These determine his future abodes. The expression used a little further on for the transmigrating personality, perhaps for the first time in Indian sources, is the word *liṅga* (BU 4, 4, 6), "mark", which in later Vedantic philosophy became the *terminus technicus* for the subtle body (*liṅga śarīra*) which survives the physical body and carries within itself the personal characteristics and future destiny shaped by past deeds of the deceased individual. In popular literature it is often called the causal or karmic body. It certainly cannot be regarded as the equivalent of the Western notion of soul, because it is compound and undergoes changes. But it sufficiently demonstrates the thesis that it is not the *ātman* in the absolute sense, but a lower order entity that represents and preserves personal identity, or perhaps better to say, personal continuity, throughout successive lives.

The terminology did not, of course, develop any degree of consistency or unification in the time of the early Upaniṣads. Sometimes it seems to be the mind (*manas*) which denotes the personal configuration or represents the identity of the person within the structure of *liṅga* (as in BU 4, 4, 6), but often it is also *nāma* (BU 3, 2, 12), a word which is linguistically identical with the English word "name",

but clearly designates the whole character structure of man, perhaps because in ancient and archaic thought the name of a person magically incorporated its bearer's personality. In older times in our history names often did express some characteristic of their bearers and in our time some nicknames still fulfil this function. So when Yājñavalkya answers the question about what stays with the person after death by saying: "Name, for name is without end, without end are all the gods", he means the character or the personality of the individual which is, as previously described, all composed of universal elements and forces (*devas, devatās*). Therefore its duration, albeit not in unchangeable or unchanging form, is as unlimited within the confines of the manifested world as are all its other entities or forces and intelligences all of which are, in some way, dependent upon the unborn or transcendental *ātman*.

It should not be difficult to see, even without detailed analysis, that subsequent Hindu systems are only elaborations and variations of the Upaniṣadic conception of the phenomenal transmigrating personality structure whose controlling core does not represent its personal identity. Advaita Vedānta is the most obvious case in point, since it regards phenomenal personality and its self identity as illusory and ascribes reality only to the universal *brahman-ātman*. On the phenomenal (or "illusory") level, however, it presents an elaborate teaching of personality as a complex structure of layers or sheaths (*kośas*) forming various bodies of which the subtle body (*sūksma śarīra*, also called the *linga śarīra* and made of three sheaths, namely *prāna-, mano-* and *vijñānamaya kośas*) is the one which transmigrates and preserves personal identity from life to life.

But it might, perhaps, be regarded as understandable if the Sāṅkhya system with its plurality of *puruṣas* were to be seen as providing a theory of individual souls which preserve the personal identity in the full sense of the word (not just continuity) in successive incarnations. And yet this is not so.

Leaving aside the problem of popular Sāṅkhya trends which use Sāṅkhya terminology but twist its meaning in a Vedāntic way, in classical Sāṅkhya *puruṣa* is a pure transcendental spirit whose nature is pure consciousness and he does not carry within himself any distinctive marks of the phenomenal personality. All the constituents which form the empirical personality are evolutes of *prakṛti* or "nature" via its principle of individuation (*ahaṅkāra*). These constituents are of dual nature. The sattvic set comprises the mind (*manas*), cognitive capacities (*budhindriyas*) and capacities for action (*karma-indriyas*), while the tamasic set furnishes the material framework.

There is nothing one can say about the *puruṣa* except that it is his "illuminating power" which gives the individual phenomenal or prakṛtic personality structure the capacity to function and to be conscious of things and of itself. So the *puruṣa* acts practically in the same way as *ātman* does in controlling the changing temporary configuration of elements and forces which form the transmigrating personality.

It is possibly only Rāmānuja's Viśiṣṭādvaita and Madhva's Dvaita which might be seen as positing the existence of something that might lend itself to the interpretation of an indestructible individual soul. In Rāmānuja's system individual souls are attributes of God, although also beings in their own right, and in Madhva's system they are thought to be separate individual selves entirely different from, though totally dependent on, God. Since the positions of these two teachers are based more or less on authoritative assertions derived from a religious attitude of faith, they are largely outside the scope of philosophical analysis proper. In the general context of Hinduism their specific views have made little impact.

The early Buddhist approach to the problem of personality is highly pragmatic serving, as virtually all other expositions of topics in the Pali Canon, the primary

purpose of final liberation from the round of births and deaths. In keeping with this aim the Buddha undertook an analysis of the human personality into constituents which are readily accessible to everybody's immediate experience through self-examination. They are the five groups or "bundles" (*khandhas*), namely (I) the bundle of form (*rūpa khandha*) representing corporeality, though nothing is said about its actual nature — whether it does or does not have a material substratum, (2) the bundle of feelings (*vedanā khandha*) classified as pleasant, unpleasant and neutral, (3) the bundle of perceptions (*saññā khandha*) of sixfold kind (seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching and "mentating"), (4) the bundle of volitional processes (*saṅkhāra khandha*) and (5) the bundle of consciousness (*viññāna khandha*).

It is no more possible to speak about these constituents in terms of cosmic elements and forces as in the Vedic tradition, but it may be nevertheless regarded as quite obvious that individually they are impersonal phenomena which are, broadly speaking, the same in everybody's experience: a pleasant feeling, a heard sound, a desire to eat — these are generally occurring processes which are individualised as personal experiences only as a result of a willed conscious act of self-observation either at the time of the experience or in retrospect. We are so used to self-awareness and self-observation that we automatically regard all processes within ourselves as personal or even unique experiences.

But this again raises the question of personality as a coherent self-regulatory structure and, naturally, of the way in which it is referred to in early Buddhism.

The most obvious expression which covers the notion of the whole mental framework of the personality is *nāma*, frequently occurring in the compound *nāmarūpa* (sometimes also *nāmakāya*), and therefore regarded as standing for the four mental bundles (*arūpino khandhā*)[7]. This quite clearly testifies to the acceptance, by the Buddha or the early Buddhism of the Sutta Piṭaka, of the existence of the individual as a personality structure as a fact of experience on the phenomenal level of reality, i.e. within *saṁsāra*.

On specific occasions one has the impression that other terms are used when a special coordinating factor is indicated which circumvents all mental processes, gives them structured character and thereby presents them all together as a personality. It happens when the texts mention the mind (*manas*, *mano*, or *mana*). *Manas* is the sixth sense within the bundle of perceptions and as such it is called the mind-organ (*manindriya*), the mind-sphere (*manāyatana*) or mind-element (*manodhātu*). Its objects are conceptual cognizables (*dhammā*) which are derived by mental abstraction from the perceptions of the other five senses. Thus, as the PTS Dictionary puts it, "*manas* is the *sensus communis* which recognises the world as a *mundus sensibilis* (*dhammā*)". The other senses being subordinate to it, *manas* appears to be the personal controlling factor.[8]

Sometimes the term *viññāna*, normally designating consciousness or cognition, appears to have a wider meaning synonymous to that of *manas* (S, PTS ed. II, 95). Also, being the necessary condition of *nāmarūpa* in the chain of dependent origination (*paticcasamuppāda*), it appears to be the underlying factor of the personality structure, permeating all the other five senses (S, PTS ed. II, 4; III, 61). It is in turn conditioned by *saṅkhāras*, the configuration of volitional tendencies, and thus it becomes the carrier of the individuality of a person.

This is where *citta* comes in, too. The terminology of the Sutta Piṭaka is by no means fully systematic and consistent and *citta* appears to be sometimes synonymous with *viññāna* or *manas*. But mostly it refers to the inner make up of a person which we sometimes figuratively call the heart. Indeed, it is often used in connection with the word *hadaya*, the heart. The best clue to its meaning and

function in the texts of the Sutta Piṭaka is the maxim: "Whatever one ponders and reflects on much, that way turns the inclination of his heart." (M 19; PTS ed. I, 115). This is the way inclinations, habits and features of character (*saṅkhāras*) are formed and ingrained. *Citta* thus appears to be the sum-total of a person's characteristics, in fact his "personality" or character (again like *tanū* in the Vedas) as it is in varying degrees known to those who know that person more or less closely. It goes without saying that *citta*, a person's heart or character, is not immutable, but changes by shedding old and developing new characteristics, strengthening some and weakening others, however slowly such changes may be occurring.

Thus the combination of expressions *nāma*, *manas*, *viññāna* and *citta* leave us in no doubt that there is, in early Buddhist understanding, a well-developed notion of a personality structure whose concrete contents may not be entirely identical in two consecutive moments, but whose identity is preserved by its continuity which carries on beyond physical death, i.e. the loss of a particular *rūpa*, to appear as a discarnate spirit ready to get hold of another *rūpa* in the physical world (provided it does not reappear as a *deva* or some other being in a different existential sphere), in which case he is referred to also as a *gandhabba*. Three conditions are mentioned as necessary for a birth in our world to take place: (1) a couple engaged in sexual intercourse, (2) the woman must have "her time" and (3) a *gandhabba* seeking rebirth must be around (M 38; PTS ed. I. 266).

The expression *gandhabba* is apparently a convenient conventional term used to avoid conceptual complications or confusion if a more technical expression like those discussed above were employed, but it serves us well to illustrate and confirm, in the early Buddhist context, our thesis that there is a transmigrating structural unit which, it is true, is not granted any ultimate status but has the capacity to carry on as a configuration, albeit a changing one, through successive lives.[9]

Technically speaking, the *gandhabba* must carry the whole mental equipment of a particular person from his previous life, namely *viññāna*, since Paṭisaṁbhidāmagga called "linking consciousness" (*patisandhi viññāna* — PTS ed. I. 52), the accompanying force of past actions (*kamma*) and the sum-total of his volitional drives, inclinations and tendencies (*saṅkhāras*) which was also expressed by the term *citta* and which we have often called character.

One cannot escape the feeling that there should be one particular expression available which would suitably designate the mental being undergoing all those changes, transformations and rebirths. *Citta* would appear a good candidate, particularly because it figures in the early texts also in connection with a person who has acquired a highly purified state of *citta* (Dh 42, 43; also M 7). We also find the expression *cittekaggata*, the unified heart or mind. And it is even said that the Buddha has a cultivated and liberated heart/mind *samādhi-subhāvitam cittam ca vimuttam*, S 1, 38; PTS ed. 1, 28). Johansson tried to make a case for *citta* in this sense, though not very successfully.[10]

Historically, the Pudgalavāda school attempted to give expression to the desire to pinpoint the carrier of personal identity and posited the existence of a pudgala/puggala, a person, not only as a phenomenal, saṁsāric being, but also in the ultimate sense. It seems thus that the Pudgalavādins asserted the full reality of the structural unity called the person which was not fully defined by the five *khandhas*, but could not be described as existing outside them either. It was undefinable and fully known only to the Buddhas.

This was, of course, heresy in that it went too obviously beyond the accepted authentic pronouncements of the Buddha on the topic. No other subsequent school dared to take it up again and the sources on Pudgalavāda are very meagre.[11]

It is most unlikely that any other attempt to formulate a fully fledged philosophical theory of personality within Buddhism can ever succeed. Neither can any Hindu theory be regarded as such, for that matter. Have we one in the West?

This brings us back to the comparison of the teachings on personality in the two main Indian traditions, the Hindu and the Buddhist. We have seen that there is no essential difference between the Upaniṣadic and the subsequent Hindu systems' conceptions of the transmigrating personality on the one hand and the Buddhist ones on the other. In both traditions there is a notion of a personality structure whose constituents, variously termed but basically referring to the same or similar functions such as consciousness, sensory perceptions, volitional processes and a physiological organism, vary as a result of changes in volitional drives and in accordance with the law of karmic causation, both during the person's present lifetime and in the course of the long sequence of his lives.

The most conspicuous difference between the two traditions is the assertion of the Upaniṣadic *ātman* (which is, in its peculiar way, parallelled by *puruṣa* in Sāṅkhya) as the transcendental agent, presumably of universal nature, who is responsible for the structural unity of the phenomenal personalities as their inner controller, while the Buddhist tradition keeps silent about any such transcendental influence. It does not, however, expressly deny it, contrary to the assertions advocated by the Theravāda interpreters. The so called doctrine of *anattā* is a postcanonical elaboration or, in any event, is not contained in the texts of Sutta Piṭaka, which is our main source of the early Buddhist teachings whose formulations may be regarded as predating sectarian developments, while many passages of Vinaya Piṭaka and the whole of Abhidhamma Piṭaka originated within Theravāda after the onset of sectarian splits.

The Sutta Piṭaka uses the concept of *attā* in connection with the analysis of the phenomenal personality into the five groups of constituents each of which is denied the status of *attā* on account of being impermanent and subject to suffering. This implies the tacit maxim that if there is an *attā* it must be free from those impediments which obtain in *saṁsāra* only. This is also how *ātman* is viewed in the Upaniṣads. But there is no statement in the Sutta Piṭaka about the ultimate existence or non-existence of *ātta*, completely in keeping with the exclusion of metaphysical propositions which cannot be verified by everybody's experience from the practical set of instructions aiming at the final or ultimate experience of liberation which is what the doctrine of early Buddhism is all about.[12]

But since, as we have seen, the *ātman* of the Upaniṣads (and the puruṣa of the Sāṅkhya system) is not the individual transmigrating kernel of the human personality, his inclusion in or omission from the theory of personality does not make any difference whatsoever to the notion of personal identity or continuity from life to life. Neither Hinduism nor Buddhism posits an abiding, unchanging, purely individual soul inhabiting the personality structure and therefore the Upaniṣadic assertion of the *ātman* and the Buddhist arguable negation of the *attā* do not justify or substantiate the often repeated view that Hinduism believes in a transmigrating soul while Buddhism denies it.

END NOTES

1. This point is more often made by protagonists of Buddhism than by Hindus, e.g. in the booklets of the Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy: "... the personality, in which other systems of thought imagine the presence of a permanent spiritual principle, a self or soul (*attā*), is, from the point of view of the Buddha, only a bundle of elements or forces (*saṅkhāra*) ... The individual is entirely phenomenal ... without any extra-phenomenal self or soul within him." G.P. Malalasekera, *The Truth of Anattā*, BPS Kandy 1966 (Wheel 94), p.16.

V.C. Mutsuddi speaks in his lecture *Outlines of Buddhism and how it differs from Hinduism*, delivered at a meeting of the East and West Fraternity, Chittagong, on 25.8.1945, of "transmigration of souls, regarded by Hindu thinkers as the necessary complement of a belief in the essential sameness of all souls ... and in their ultimate reunion with the Parameshvara, the Supreme Soul ...", while "According to Buddhism there is no permanent Ego, and the soul is not transmigrating from body to body." See pp.18 and 22 of the published version of his talk, BPS Kandy (no date of publication given).

2. See the Foreword to: Lynn A. de Silva, *The Problem of the Self in Buddhism and Christianity*, Macmillan, London 1979 (first Colombo 1975), p.IX.

3. Geoffrey Parrinder, *The Indestructible Soul. The Nature of Man and Life after Death in Indian Thought*, Allen & Unwin, London 1973. This book summarises views of several Indian systems, but fails to clarify the issue of soul, basically because it does not attempt to define it while using the term throughout with different shades of meaning and in different contexts and because it does not analyse sufficiently the individual and universal connotations in which both the core and the phenomenal components of the personality structure appear.

4. More details and references are available in my article "The Vedic Concept of the Human Personality and its Destiny", *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, vol. 5, (The Hague 1978), pp.275-289.

5. Cf. Radhakrishnan, Introduction to *The Principal Upanisads*, Allen & Unwin, London 1953, pp.73-75.

6. When a person dies, i.e. when *ātman* departs from him in the sense that it stops controlling his organism, and life (*prāna*) and all other vital forces depart too, "he becomes (*bhavati*) (a being) with consciousness (*savijñāno* — a masculine adjectival form standing for a noun); that which is with consciousness (*savijñānam* — a noun, neuter) or that which is of mental nature follows; knowledge, actions and previous experience envelop him (*tam samanvārabhete*). All this suggests the idea of a mental body, further down referred to as *liṅga*. There is another expression used later to designate the individual personality while still preserving the connotation of universality from which it stems, viz. *jivātman*. Its, perhaps first, appearance in ChU (6, 3, 2-3) is in the context of the creation of individual beings (*nāmārupe*) by the deity with the help of the living self (*jīvenā'tmanā*). To pursue this line would be outside the scope of this paper and would not change its basic thesis, but it would be an interesting topic in itself, particularly also in connection with the use of the term *jīva* in Buddhist texts.

7. Sometimes *nāmakāya* does not appear to be the equivalent of *nāmarūpa*, i.e. of the whole psychophysical structure, but seems to mean what is sometimes called the "mental body" corresponding to the four *arūpino khandhā*. Its counterpart then is *rūpakāya*, the material body. See D 15. Alex Wayman wrote an exhaustive paper on the theme of *nāmarūpa*: "A Study of the Vedāntic and Buddhist Theory of Nāma-rūpa", *Indological and Buddhist Studies. Volume in Honour of Professor J.W. de Jong on his Sixtieth Birthday*. Ed. I.A. Hercus, F.B.J. Kuiper, T. Rajapatirana, E.R. Skrzypczak. Faculty of Asian Studies (The Australian National University), Canberra 1982, pp. 617-642. He concludes that *nāma* came to indicate individuality in the human case, and individual things in the case of external entities (p. 617). For *rūpa*, which he says is matter or its appearance, he suggests the rendering "formation" (p.620) when it occurs as a part of the compound *nāmarūpa*. He also lists later definitions of the two terms in contrast (*nāmakāya* as against *rūpakāya* p.621). In connection with his discussion of what he calls "two kinds of *nāmarūpa*" Wayman makes a speculative suggestion when he says at the end of his paper: "A rather exciting outcome of these researches is that in the Brahmanical as well as in the Buddhist portrayal of *nāmarūpa*, this constitutes a kind of dividing line between our commonplace world and the superior world of the gods or of yoga-success." (p.634) I confess that it is not entirely clear to me what Wayman means by this remark, since it seems too vague. But I do accept that there is likely to be an issue behind it which would merit a careful philosophical analysis.

8. See PTS Dictionary where references can be found.

9. There is a precedent for the term *gandhabba* meaning a spirit departed from the human world in the Upanisads. TU (2, 8, 1) mentions, among other categories of beings enumerated in an ascending hierarchical order, human spirits (*mānusya gandharvas*) and divine spirits (*deva gandharvas*), followed by fathers in their "long enduring worlds" and several categories of gods above them etc. In a similar enumeration in BU (4, 3, 33) both the categories of *gandharvas* are missing. One can regard human and divine *gandharvas* as spirits of those who have departed from the human and the *deva* world, respectively, now living in a kind of intermediary existence before proceeding further into another world.

10. R. Johansson, *The Psychology of Nirvana*, Allen & Unwin, London 1963.

11. Cf. E. Conze, *Buddhist Thought in India*, Allen & Unwin, London 1962, pp.122-132.

12. The problem of the status of *ātta* in the teachings of early Buddhism as it can be ascertained mainly in the Sutta Piṭaka has not been fully and properly researched yet. The existing expositions of the so called *anattā* doctrine are based on the interpretation of the *sutta* passages in the light of Abhidhamma materials, Theravāda commentaries and postcanonical Theravāda works such as Milinda Paṅha and Visuddhi Magga. Thus Lynn A. de Silva, *op. cit.* (see note 2) or S. Collins, *Selfless Persons*, Cambridge U. P. 1982.

Nyanaponika Thera in his booklet *Anattā and Nibbāna*, Wheel Publications 11, BPS Kandy 1952 (p. 20), tried to show that there is a direct denial of *attā* in M 22 (PTS ed. M I, 138) in a passage which I.B. Horner translated in a way that asserts the existence of *atta* (*The Middle Length Sayings*, PTS I, 77). Both are wrong. The passage goes as follows:

Attani vā bhikkave sati attaniyam-me ti assāta. — Evam-bhante. — Attaniye vā bhikkhave sati attā me ti assāti. — Evam-bhante. — Attani ca bhikkhave attaniye ca saccato thetato anupalabbhamāne yam-p' idam diṭṭhiṭṭhanaṁ: so loko so attā, so pecca bhavissāmi nicco dhuvo sassato aviparināmadhammo, sassatisamaṁ tath' eva ṭhassāmiti, nanāyaṁ bhikkhave kevalo paripūro bāladhammo ti. —

Nyanaponika translates: "If, bhikkhus, there is a self, will there also be something belonging to a self?" —"Certainly, Lord". — "If there is something belonging to a self, will there also be (the view) 'My self'?" —"Certainly, Lord". — "But since, bhikkhus, a self and anything belonging to a self cannot truly and really be found, is it not a perfectly foolish doctrine to hold the point of view 'This is the world. This is the self. Impermanent (*sic!* It should read *permanent*), abiding, eternal and immutable shall I be after death, in eternal identity shall I persist'?"

I.B. Horner translates: "If monks, there were Self, could it be said: 'It belongs to my self'?" "Yes, Lord." "Or, monks, if there were what belongs to Self, could it be said: 'It is my self'?" "Yes, Lord." "But if Self, monks, and what belongs to Self, although actually existing, are incomprehensible, is not the view and the causal relation that: 'This is the world, this is the self, after dying I will become permanent, lasting, eternal, not liable to change, I will stand fast like unto the eternal' — is not this, monks, absolute complete folly?"

I would translate: "Were there, monks, a self, could one say: 'There is something selflike in me.'?" — "Just so, Lord." — "Were there something selflike in me, could one say: 'My self.'?" — "Just so Lord." — "As self and something selflike cannot be truly and reliably made out, is not the point of view: 'This is the world, this is the self: that, having passed away, I shall be, permanent, stable, eternal, a changeless entity; I shall stand the same in eternity', monks, a wholly and completely foolish doctrine?" The passage is to be understood in relation to the well known analysis of the personality into five *khandhas*, none of which can be pinpointed as being the self, my self or selflike or belonging to self or to my self. Therefore the self (*attā*) and what belongs to self or is self-like (*attaniya*) cannot be made out, got at, found or known (*anupalabbhamāna*). One cannot draw the conclusion from the passage that self (*attā*) does not exist since that would amount to an ontological proposition about the ultimate existence or non-existence which the Buddha in the Sutta Piṭaka never does. He similarly refuses to make such a statement about the *tathāgata*. Nyānaponika himself quotes such a passage later on (p.22): "... the Perfect One, Anurādha, cannot truly and really be found ..." (*tathāgate anupalabbhyamāne* — S, PTS IV, 384; similarly in III, 118).

All that it amounts to is that ontological questions of ultimate significance cannot be "truly and really" made out from man's everyday, limited (i.e. saṁsāric) position and any belief or view about them is futile or foolish, i.e. unprofitable or detrimental with respect to the actual attainment of the ultimate goal. The problem of the existence of the *ātman/attā* in the Upanisads and the early Buddhism may be, after all, only a question of semantics. It can certainly be regarded as an important or at least interesting philosophical question worthy of a thorough re-examination. Here, however, I can only state again that it does not have any bearing on the thesis advocated in this paper.

Abbreviations:

BPS Buddhist Publication Society
BU Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad
ChU Chāndogya Upaniṣad
M Majjhima Nikāya
PTS Pali Text Society
RV Ṛg Veda
S Saṁyutta Nikāya
TU Taittirīya Upaniṣad