CHAPTER FIVE

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Chapter V: Modern Contributions on the Issue

5.0. Introduction

In this chapter, we propose to examine the issue from the modern point of view reflected in the works of modern writers on the subject. There have been a number of proponents on both sides of the topic, the classical Brahmanic and the Buddhist side, which has been called ‘atheistic.’

In classical Brahmanic theories, there is the description of ‘self’ first as ‘puruša’ (man or person) and then as ‘ātman’ (soul). The Rgveda has been the first to refer to ‘puruša’. The other texts referred to ‘ātman’. The concept of ‘I’ has been described distinctly in Sanskrit texts such as Rgveda, Yajurveda, Sāmaveda, Atharvaveda, Brāhmaṇas, Āranyakas and Upaniṣads whereas the concept of ‘anattā’ has been described in Buddhist Suttapiṭaka.

The study of Buddhism in eastern and western worlds has led to widespread analysis of the teachings of the Buddha. In this chapter we shall look at the viewpoint of modern eastern and western scholars concerning the concept of ‘I’ in Sanskrit texts and that of ‘anattā’ in Buddhist Pāli texts.

The history of comparative studies of Buddhism and Vedic literature is fairly long. It starts with William Beidler, Deussen, Joshi, Max Müller and so on.

5.1. Puruṣa and Ātman

Beidler has explained the parts of ‘puruṣa’ and their symbolic relations as follows:

1. Mind (manas) . . Husband
2. Speech . . Wife
3. Life (prāṇa) . . Work (karma) – offspring
4. Eye . . Wealth

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According to Beidler the real meaning of \textit{Ātman} was ‘breath’ or ‘vital force’\textsuperscript{2} and he further states that \textit{Ātman} and \textit{Puruṣa} unite in the heart. Then, \textit{Ātman} travels either to \textit{susumnā}, where it achieves liberation or through one of the other senses, leading to other births. Departure through the eyes or the ears, for example, leads to various animal or human rebirths. It carries with it various impressions, which lead to rebirth accordingly, and is surrounded by the corporeal frame made of the gross elements, from past actions. Death is considered the moment when all of these are dropped as the \textit{Ātman} realizes its true nature (permanent and blissful).\textsuperscript{3}

Later in this volume, Beidler describes the concept of self as defined by \textit{Gītā}: ‘\textit{kṣara puruṣa}’, ‘\textit{aṅkṣara puruṣa}’ and ‘\textit{puruṣottama}’. Each was spoken of separately, although the first two are summed up under the third. The ‘\textit{kṣara puruṣa}’ was that concept of soul associated with the lower \textit{Prakṛti} and in a multiple-mutable state. The ‘\textit{aṅkṣara puruṣa}’ was the underlying and also aloof immutable self associated in the unitary \textit{Īśvara} with the higher nature. The ‘\textit{puruṣottama}’ was said to be both of these at the same time yet transcending such distinctions. Beidler analyses this description with due reservation: This formulation was presented largely in terms of contradictory categories while the mutable-immutable was spoken of in positive and negative categories, respectively. This contradiction was the terminus of the metaphysical discussion of the ‘\textit{Puruṣottama}’.\textsuperscript{4}

Beidler summarises that four concepts of self can be found in the \textit{Upaniṣads}, each a conclusion of various schools of thought. The first is the \textit{Puruṣa} as immediate egocentric self and \textit{Īśvara} as God the cosmic non-self. The second concept is the manifest \textit{Brahman-Ātman} as universal self. The third is the

\textsuperscript{1} William Beidler: \textit{The Vision Of Self In Early Vedānta}, p. 17
\textsuperscript{2} Ibid., p. 43
\textsuperscript{3} Ibid., p. 52
\textsuperscript{4} Ibid., p. 191
Unmanifest Brahman as supreme self. Lastly, transcendental Brahman as inclusive self.\(^5\)

From the Vedic viewpoint, one learns that the person has three separate births and that the third and last, after death, displays an underlying belief that some immaterial non-physical element (the soul) remains after the physical body disintegrates; in addition, the soul transmigrates from the last body to the next and the after life is a mere continuation of the former.

5.2. Ṛtman as described in Upaniṣads

Various Upaniṣads give a more detailed description of Ṛtman ranging from breath (prāṇa) to bliss (ananda). Among readings worth mentioning are the Kauṣṭaiki Upaniṣad, which describes Ṛtman as ‘prāṇa’ (principle of vitality).\(^6\) ‘Prāṇa’ is paramount over the body and sense organs. Thus, the soul becomes equated with the ‘principle of animation’—liveliness. In contrast, the Taittirīya Upaniṣad declares that ‘different from this, which consists of the essence of breath, is the other, the inner Self, which consists of mind. The former is filled by this.’\(^7\) It is after all the mind which elevates man above the other organisms in the world and the mind is the ‘differential and the substantial nature of mankind.’ Thus, soul and mind become synonymous.

But the Upaniṣads continue to argue that the mind is not the only thinking agent, and that above the mind is the ‘intellect.’ Mind is second to this, which differentiates and discriminates, weighs and balances, and determines right and wrong in the human life. Sound intellect is the home of morality and conscience. The Taittirīya Upaniṣad continues, however, to say that bliss is the highest or next highest state. This state is joyful and undefiled.

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\(^5\) Ibid., p. 104  
\(^6\) Kauṣṭaiki Up. 3. 3. Tr. Max Müller  
\(^7\) Taitt. Up. 2. 2. Tr. Max Müller
The Katha Upanishad describes the Ātman as follows: 'As the one fire, the one air, after it has entered the world, though one becomes different according to whatever it enters, thus the one Self within all things becomes different, according to whatever it enters, and exists also without.' In this passage is the underlying concept that the Ātman is one and basic but becomes many forms in the world. The Śvetāsvatara Upanishad has the longest account of 'soul' as follows:

"Whoever has qualities (guna, distinctions) is the doer of deeds that bring recompense;
And of such action surely he experiences the consequences.
Undergoing all forms, characterised by the three qualities, treading the three paths;
The individual Self roams about according to its deeds (karman).
He is of the measure of a thumb, of sunlike appearance,
When coupled with conception (sāmkalpa) and egoism (ahamkāra).
But with only the qualities of intellect and the Self,
The lower (Self) appears of the size of the point of an awl.
This living Self is to be known as a part of the hundredth part of the point of a hair – subdivided a hundredfold.
The soul is neither a male, nor a female, nor neuter.
The soul being attached to what it experiences, gets new births according to previous deeds.
The form and nature of the soul is determined from the qualities of the deeds of each soul."\(^9\)

This account describes both the Self and the lower self or ego. The three distinctions mentioned above are 'sattva', 'rajas' and 'tamas', respectively. The Taittirīya Upanishad further refers to Ātman in the following way: "When he finds

\(^8\) Katha Up. 2. 5. 9, 10. Tr. Max Müller
freedom from fear and rests in that which is invisible, incorporeal, undefined, unsupported, then he has obtained the fearless."  

10 The Chāndogya Upaniṣad makes a more direct allusion to Ātman: "Those who go hence without here having found the Soul (Ātman) and those real desires (satyakāma) – for them in all the worlds there is no freedom. But those who go hence having found here the Soul and those real desires – for them in all worlds, there is freedom."  

11 The Śvetāsvatara Upaniṣad in one passage describes how in a subtle form the Self exists in every thing of the world. The passage runs as follows:

“As oil in sesame seeds, as butter in cream,
As water in river-beds, and as fire in the friction-sticks,
So is the Soul (Ātman) apprehended in one’s on Soul,
If one looks for him with true austerily (tapas).
The Soul (Ātman) which pervades all things,
As butter is contained in cream,
Which is rooted in the Self-knowledge and austerity.”

12 Thus the Self is immanent not only in the human body but in every thing in the world. It is not apparently visible but has to be extracted out of the upper coverings by special labour in the form of severe penance and knowledge. As we do not obtain butter directly from the cream or oil directly from the sesame seed without crushing it, so also our Self, though it is always with us, and is latent in us, is not easily known the Self has no measurable magnitude because it is immaterial and subtle.

In conclusion, the Upaniṣads are copious about the attributes of ‘soul’ or ‘self’. A list of physical attributes such as ‘reflection in a mirror’ (a concept which influenced western literature), ‘shadow’, ‘person in dreams’, the body, food,
sense-organs, *prāṇa* (breath), *manas* (mind), and so on, have all been used but the real meaning or nature of ‘soul’ is still vague.

Deussen gave the classification of the various connotations of \( \text{Ātman} \) as follows:

1. The corporeal self, the body (usually called \( \text{Śarīra Ātman} \)).
2. The Individual Soul free from the body, which as knowing subject is contrasted with and is distinct from the object.
3. The supreme soul in which subject and object are no longer distinguished from one another.\(^\text{13}\)

He mentioned three aspects: the corporeal body, the subject, which is separated from the body and a supreme soul, which is supposedly both together. In death or deep sleep, the \( \text{Ātman} \) and the \( \text{Puruṣa} \) unite. The influence of \( \text{Ātman} \) is felt in the heart after dreams, and is thought to be the purest state of the \( \text{Puruṣa} \).

### 5.3. The Existence of Soul as described in Various Philosophies

Various other philosophies either agreed or disagreed with Buddhism on the existence of soul. Among them was \( \text{Cārvāka} \), or \( \text{Lokāyata} \) school of philosophy. This has been translated into English as ‘materialism.’ \( \text{Cārvākism} \) denied the existence of soul as something different of the living body and superior to it and refused to admit that the soul is an eternal and transmigrating entity. As a consequence of it, the existence of the life after death, heaven and rebirth is denied by \( \text{Cārvākism} \). According to \( \text{Cārvākism} \), the end of life is enjoyment, pure and simple as long one existed and the aim of life consisted in the highest bodily enjoyment of every sort and consciousness is a product of the body and that what exists as permanent substances are merely the four ultimate elements that consist

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\(^\text{13}\) P. Deussen: *Philosophy of the Upaniṣads*, p. 94
of earth, water, air and fire. Consciousness, which is an essential characteristic of
the soul is, according to the Cārvākas, a product of the living human body. Hence,
the body is formed out of the four elements and consciousness is produced from it
as its attribute. Kambaleśvātara, one of their teachers, claimed that consciousness
was due to the breath (prāṇa) combined with ‘bio-motor faculties’.\(^{14}\) Cārvākas did
not believe in anything like a soul, as distinct entity, different from the body.
Consciousness exists as long as the body exists. With the disappearance of the
living body consciousness also disappears. So the end of life is death. Nothing
continues to exist after death. Whatever one perceives and experiences here is true.
Nothing beyond the present life exists. Hence one must strive to make the best of
what he has here and now.

Śāṅkhyā philosophy agrees with Buddhism about the world and the
absence of God. The Śāṅkhyas do not fanatically oppose God for the sake of
denial of God but they refuse to admit God only for not having sufficient logical
grounds to accept him. As Max Müller says: “The Śāṅkhyā atheism has its own
peculiarity. The existence of God is denied not because God does not exist but
because of the difficulty of proving God’s existence.”\(^{15}\) Śāṅkhyā accounted for the
world existent without God’s interference and so it did not attack the idea of his
existence or non-existence. Śāṅkhyā was non-ritualistic and laid more emphasis
on the knowledge of Reality and realisation of the spirit than any kind of ritualism.

Joshi is of the opinion that the Śāṅkhyā philosophy believes in the absolute
dualism of Puruṣa and Prakṛti, the Spirit and Matter which are exclusive of each
other and collectively exhaust the sphere of Being. There cannot be anything in the
world, which is not either of the two. Whatever exists must be either of the two.
Puruṣa and Prakṛti are opposite of each other in nature and there cannot be
anything common between the two. The contrast between the two is complete and

\(^{14}\) G. N. Joshi: The Evolution of the concept of Ātman and Mokṣa in the different systems of Indian
philosophy, p. 103

\(^{15}\) Max Müller: Six Systems of Indian Philosophy, p. 365.
they are mutually irreducible to each other. The spirit or soul (Puruṣa) acts as the
source, substratum and ultimate resort of all the things that exist in the world with
the exception of consciousness. Everything that exists in nature arises out of the
original substance the Prakṛti, subsists in Prakṛti and, ultimately after destruction
returns to Prakṛti.\textsuperscript{16}

According to the Nyāya Vaiśeṣika systems matter and spirit are two entirely
different categories and there can be nothing common between them. They are
exclusive of each other and there is a complete antagonism between them. Body
and soul are peculiar by themselves, and hence, consciousness, which is a
characteristic of the soul, cannot be a property of the body. Had consciousness
been the essential nature of the body it would have been permanently in all bodies;
but it is a fact of experience that dead bodies are devoid of consciousness. So also
consciousness is absent in the states of deep or dreamless sleep. As consciousness
does not exist in some bodies, it cannot be called its essential nature.\textsuperscript{17}

The Nyāya Vaiśeṣika system believes in the existence of the soul as an
independent substance, unique in itself and different from others. Such a soul is no
doubt all-pervading, immortal and eternal. The Nyāya Vaiśeṣika system believes
in the two kind of ‘ātmā’ namely Supreme Self (paramātmā) and the individual
soul (jīvātmā). The Supreme Self or the ‘paramātmā’ is not only all-pervading
and eternal but his knowledge is all-pervading. He is omniscient; while the
individual soul is all-pervading and eternal but is one separately for each body.
The self is that which has knowledge. The supreme self is devoid of pleasure and
pain, which are characteristic features of the lower soul or the individual soul (the
jīvātmā).\textsuperscript{18} They also believe that the soul is the real doer of the actions and not
the sense organs or the body. Thus, it is made clear here that the ultimate does of
all actions is the soul. The soul is the final source of energy that is absolutely

\textsuperscript{16} G. N. Joshi: \textit{The Evolution of the Concept of Ātman and Mokṣa in the different systems of Indian
Philosophy}, p. 322 – 323

\textsuperscript{17} Ibid., p. 273 – 274

\textsuperscript{18} Ibid., p. 277 – 279

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necessary for an action. The sense of ‘I’ and ‘my’ is possessed only by intelligent beings and never by any thing, which is material and unintelligent.

How is the soul known by oneself? Is it known by us we know the objects of the world in the form of ‘this’ or ‘it’? The Naiyāyikas hold that the soul reveals itself to us in the form of our ego. It reveals itself to us as our ‘I’ or by our experience of ‘I-unity’ (ahampratyaya).\(^{19}\) Thus, the soul reveals itself to us as ‘I’ or the object of first person. We cannot know our soul as ‘this’ or ‘that’ object of the world, which reveals to us always in the third person. These two experiences are entirely different from each other and are also exclusive of each other. No other object except our own inner soul can reveal itself to us as ‘I’.

5.4. The Interpretations by the Scholars

Joshi\(^ {20}\) is of the opinion that the soul serves as the abode of our sense of ‘I-unity’ or ‘ego-unity’. The soul is thus, revealed to the knower himself as his ‘I’ and as explained above the souls of others can be known by inference of it from their activities that are similar to ours. The existence of the soul can be inferred from its activities indirectly. It is true that no other state of consciousness in our mind can ever assume the status of ego-consciousness or self-consciousness. It is unique. The ‘I’ consciousness in us is a persistent principle. Without this ‘I-sense’ no knowledge of objects by memory will be possible. For remembering things, I who remember must be the same who has perceived the same thing formerly sometime in the past. The ‘I’, therefore, must be the same identical entity in these varying experiences occurring even after considerably long intervals of time.

Concerning Buddhism, Joshi\(^ {21}\) explains that the Buddha and his philosophy do not admit any persisting entity known as the ‘Self’, which reduces to a series of momentary states of physical and psychological modes of consciousness but, for

\(^{19}\) Ibid., p. 283
\(^{20}\) Ibid., p. 284
\(^{21}\) Ibid., p. 169 - 170

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practice, Buddhism teaches that the ‘Self’ is the doer of actions and the enjoyer of their fruits. It holds the self-responsible for certain actions, and thus, one is compelled to experience their corresponding fruits. It is clearly stated in the Dhammapada by the Buddha:

By oneself, indeed, is evil done;  
By oneself is one defiled.  
By oneself is evil left undone;  
By oneself, indeed, is one purified.  
Purity and impurity depend on oneself.  
No one purifies another.²²

However, it is wise to mention at this time that whether ‘Self’ is with a capital ‘S’ or small ‘s’, it refers to common usage such as ‘oneself’ or ‘myself’. The ‘Self’ is only a reference to the mental aggregates like perception, feeling, emotion, consciousness, etc. Although the ‘Self’ does not really exist, Buddhism accepts it to mean these aggregates.

Hermann Oldenberg has a worthy description of Ātman as Self in his book, “Doctrine of the Upaniṣads and the Early Buddhism.” He discusses the Upaniṣadic idea of Ātman with ‘breath’ (prāṇa).²³ After some lengthy discourse, he turns his attention to the unification of Brahman and Ātman — “Thus everything was ready so that the great event could take place: the merging of the two entities already merged in the Self of the Brahmaṇa filled with Brahman, now that both had been elevated to a universal power: here of the old magic power of the sacred word and the sacred caste, and there of the idea of the ego, of Self.”²⁴

We find an echoing sentiment in William Beidler’s study. Here, in studying the concept of Self as Brahman, William Beidler concluded with a worthy concept

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²² Dh.p. 165. Tr. by Narada. p. 149
²³ Hermann Oldenberg: The Doctrine of the Upaniṣads and the Early Buddhism. p. 33
²⁴ Ibid., p. 35
of Brahman:

‘Brahman is the most general sense of self to be found in the Upaniṣads. Its use seems to include both the microcosm and the macrocosm as well as multiplicity and universality. Thus while Ātman, although transpersonal in its most generic sense is, nevertheless, reached through the microcosm of Puruṣa; manifest Brahman which is indeed also this transpersonal universal self, is reached on the other hand from the more generic standpoint of both macrocosm and microcosm.’

We can see then that Brahman is the ultimate reality, whether created or uncreated, personal or impersonal. While in its broadest usages it would include what we have termed Ātman and Puruṣa.

Surendra Dasgupta asserts that the Upaniṣads discovered the self to be ‘ānanda’ (bliss), indestructible and eternal and they considered that there were many experiences, which we often identify with self but those experiences are impermanent. The belief is found in the Upaniṣads that there was associated with these a permanent part as well and that it was this permanent essence, which was the true and unchangeable self, the blissful. They considered that this permanent self as pure bliss could not be defined as this, but could only be indicated as ‘not this’, ‘not this’ (neti neti).

The true self was with the Upaniṣads a matter of transcendental experience as it were, for they said that it could not be described in terms of anything, but could only be pointed out ‘there’, behind all the changing mental categories.

From the Buddhist point of view Dasgupta is of the opinion that we could suppose that early Buddhism tacitly presupposes some such idea and if we are allowed to make explicit what was implicit in early Buddhism we could conceive

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26 S. Dasgupta: A History of Indian Philosophy, Vol. 1, p. 109
27 Ibid., p. 110
28 Ibid., p. 110
it as holding that if there was self it must be bliss because it was eternal.  

Dasgupta further states that the Buddha never taught it to the audience anywhere, notwithstanding that he presupposed such idea and that the point on which Buddhism parted from the Upaniṣads lies in the experiences of the self. He goes on to say that the early Pāli scriptures hold that we could nowhere find out such a permanent essence, any constant self, in our changing experiences. But Buddhism holds that this immutable self of man is a delusion and false knowledge.

The Buddha knew and presupposed the Self being bliss and eternal. Moreover, if there is Self (ātman), it should be bliss and permanent. However, he recognised that such Self cannot be found. It can be said from Dasgupta’s statement that the word ‘ātā’ in the context of ‘anattā doctrine’ means the Self, which is bliss and eternal.

In the context of ‘anattā’ in Buddhism Mrs Rhys Davids is of the opinion that the Buddha did not teach ‘anattā theory’. She notes: “The words ‘self’ and ‘man’ at that time were equal terms in religion; the self or soul would be called man (puruṣa).” She further states that the Buddha opposed looking upon the self as figment, did not repudiate self (the very man), consented to higher religious teaching about Man as having in his very nature potential deity.

According to her the term ‘ātā’, at the time of Śākya, meant equally ‘puruṣa’, ‘man’ or ‘manussa’, the external visible man with inferencesable mind. She sometimes renders the word ‘ātā’ into various words such as Man, the Man himself, one in nature with Divine. The man is not something in/of/about the man. She states that the original teaching of the Buddha is to quest Self (= Attā,

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29 Ibid., pp. 109 - 110
30 Ibid., p. 110
31 Ibid., p. 111
32 Mrs Rhys David: Outline of Buddhism, p. 19
33 Mrs Rhys David: Śākya or Buddhist Origin, p. 200
34 Ibid., p. 201
35 Ibid., p. 193
36 Ibid., p. 205
Mrs Rhys Davids continues to assert that ‘anattā doctrine’ of Buddhism is a later development, which grew up slowly out of misinterpretation. She further explains that for us the important fact, the well-attested truth is, that this non-selfism, this ‘an-attā’, this disbelief in the ‘man’ as the subject, the valuer of the object, was not of the original Śākya, but was a growth, yes, and a growth in the sense we now call malignant.

According to her ‘anattā theory’ is a later monkish innovation under the impact of Śāṅkha analysis, the growth of a narrow world-outlook and hostility toward the Brahṇas. She explains the process of the later monkish innovation as follows: “We know that, in drifting apart from the mother-teacher, Brahmanism the immanence of God as in and of the man – early Buddhism first cut out deity from the term ‘attā’, then cut out the reality of the ‘attā’ himself, a decadent process covering centuries.” In brief, her view on ‘anattā’ is:

1. The Buddha does not teach ‘anattā doctrine’.
2. The doctrine known as ‘anattā’ is the later growth.
3. This later growth is, for her, monkish, frightful canker and malignant.
4. ‘Attā’ means the immanent deity in man, which made him a real self.
5. To quest for such ‘attā’ (Self, Man) is the original gospel of Buddha.

Her interpretation of ‘anattā’ has been criticised by some scholars. De Silva says: ‘She is alleged to have had spiritualistic leanings which are supposed to have influenced her thinking and she is accused of trying to read into Buddhism the dominant philosophy of the twentieth century represented by Bergson and Coue.’ Edward Conze notes: ‘To regard all later Buddhist history as record of the degeneration of an original gospel is like regarding an oak tree as a degeneration

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37 Mrs Rhys David: Wayfarer’s Words, p. 643
38 Mrs Rhys David: Śākya or Buddhist Origin, p. 208
39 Ibid., p. 364
40 Mrs Rhys David: Wayfarer’s Words, p. 656
41 Lynn A De Silva: The Problem of the Self in Buddhism and Christianity, p. 58
of an acorn."\(^{42}\) W. Rahula points out: "It is therefore curious that recently there should have been a vain attempt by a few scholars to smuggle the idea of self into the teaching of the Buddha, quite contrary to the spirit of Buddhism.\(^{43}\)

George Grimm's opinion on 'anattā doctrine' is notable. He believes that Buddhism has not overtly denied 'attā' but that the Buddha indirectly taught the true meaning of 'attā' by teaching what was 'anattā.' This seems to be a kind of deductive reasoning, as applied by modern detectives. One begins with a group and reduces it to one distinct possibility. In the same manner, Grimm supposed that the Buddha began with an amalgamation of very temporary and malleable things and labelled them 'anattā' (not-self), leaving aside the one thing, which could be a self. He says that the question of 'what is our true I' was so important that the Buddha placed the answer to it in the very heart of his doctrine. As an evidence for his statement, he quotes the Buddha's answer in the Mahāvagga given to thirty Brahmin youths who asked him as to the whereabouts of a runaway woman: "Which is of great importance, O youths, to search for this woman or to search for your I?"\(^{44}\)

This question: 'What is our true I' may be approached from two sides namely direct way and indirect way. Direct way is to try to answer positively as to what I am, while the indirect way is to try to answer by determining what I am not. According to Grimm, this indirect way is safer than direct way, so the Buddha preferred the safer indirect way.\(^{45}\)

Grimm is of the opinion that the indirect way of the Buddha is 'anattā method'. The Buddha has drawn this deciding line between 'attā' and 'anattā', between 'I' and 'Not-I' with great exactness. He explains briefly as follows:

"Further, like all Indians, the Buddha also had sought for the 'attā' in the indirect way, by taking away from the 'attā' everything that is not the 'attā'. And

\(^{42}\) Edward Conze: Buddhism – its Essence and Development, p. 27
\(^{43}\) W. Rahula: What the Buddha Taught, p. 55
\(^{44}\) George Grimm: The Doctrine of the Buddha – The Religion of Reason and Meditation, p. 114
\(^{45}\) Ibid., p. 114

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therefore he says: You teach the ‘attā’, but I teach what the ‘attā’ is not. You know the ‘attā’ but I only know what the ‘attā’ is not. Therefore you are always talking about the ‘attā’, but I only speak of ‘anattā’. In short, you have the ‘attā method’, the ‘attā-vada’, whereas I have the ‘anattā method’, the ‘anattā-vada’.

Further, how does Grimm illustrate our true I, ātman, which according to him, was sought by the Buddha through ‘anattā method’ or indirectly, but by the other Indian thinkers through ‘attā method’ or directly? This true I, according to him, is ‘entirely and absolutely incognisable’, ‘unknowable and unfathomable’, and ‘no arising and passing away’. It is also said that my true Self lies beyond all cognition and hence beyond the world as the sum of everything cognisable, that I myself am beyond the phenomenal world, and that I myself am beyond the impermanent, i.e. beyond space and time.

Grimm further states: What I perceive as originating and perishing cannot be assumed to be my Self, cannot be my ‘I’ because if the ‘I’ were identical with the disappearing object, then along with its disappearance, ‘I’ also should cease to exist. But there ‘I’ am; ‘I’ am still there after those things have gone. This presupposes something to exist that experiences this passing from the state of desired into the state of not desired, that therefore itself does not participate in this incessant change, but feels it as painful. And he concludes as follows:

“What I perceive to pass away within me, and in consequence of this passing away, cause suffering to me, cannot be my real essence. Now I perceive everything that is cognisable within me to pass away, and with the advent to this transience, brings me suffering; therefore nothing cognisable is my real essence.”

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46 Ibid., pp. 370 – 371
47 Ibid., p. 369
48 George Grimm: Buddhist Wisdom – The Mystery of the Self, p. 9
49 Ibid., p. 58
50 Ibid., p. 9
51 Ibid., p. 24
52 Ibid., p. 55
53 George Grimm: The Doctrine of the Buddha – The Religion of Reason and Meditation, p. 115
54 Ibid., p. 116
55 Ibid., p. 371
The main points of Grimm's interpretation are as follows:

[i] To know our true 'I' is an important doctrine of the Buddha.
[ii] There are two ways to know our true 'I', viz. direct and indirect ways.
[iii] The Buddha took the indirect way to know our true 'I'.
[iv] Our true 'I' is incognisable.
[v] Everything cognisable is not true 'I', that is 'anattā'.
[vi] 'Anattā teaching' is an indirect method to know our true 'I'.

Radhakrishnan also supposedly found a close relation of Buddhism to the thought of Upaniṣads. He began by declaring that early Buddhism was not absolutely an original doctrine nor a freak in the evolution of Indian thought and that it was a restatement of the thought of the Upaniṣads from a new standpoint.\[56\] He added that Buddhism appeared in India as a historical necessity.\[57\] The Buddha stood forth as a spokesman of the age.\[58\] However, he avers to distinctions too. “To develop his theory the Buddha had only to rid the Upaniṣads of their inconsistent compromises with Vedic polytheism and religion, set aside the transcendental aspect as being indemonstrable to thought and unnecessary to morals, and emphasize the ethical universalism of the Upaniṣads.”\[59\]

Radhakrirsnan is of the opinion that he does not find much difference in the idea of the self (ātman/attā) reflected in the literatures of Buddhism and Upaniṣads. Both the teachings represent different approach for the same aim. He says that the Buddha clearly tells us what the self is not, though he does not give any clear account of what it is. It is, however, wrong to think there is not self at all according to the Buddha.\[60\] He adds that the Buddha is never willing to admit that the soul is only a combination of elements, but he refuses to speculate on what else

\[56\] S. Radhakrishnan: Indian Philosophy, pp. 360 – 361
\[57\] Ibid., p. 359
\[58\] Ibid., p. 358
\[59\] Ibid., p. 360 - 61
\[60\] Ibid., p. 387
may be.  

Radhakrisnan goes on to say as follows: Though Buddhism and the *Upaniṣads* refuse to see ultimate reality of substance or being in the ever changing sequence, the difference at most is that while the *Upaniṣads* assert a reality beyond change or becoming, Buddhism adopts a suspense of judgement on this question. It is impossible to think that the Buddha recognised nothing permanent in this rush of the world, no resting place in the universal turmoil where man’s troubled heart can find peace. The *Upaniṣads* arrive at the ground of all things by stripping the self of veil after veil of contingency. At the end of the process they find the universal self which is none of these finite entities, though the ground of them all. The Buddha holds the same view, though he does not state it definitely.

Radhakrishnan admitted that the Buddha was silent on the issue of something behind the phenomena around us but declared that ‘nibbāṇa’ (*nirvāṇa*) was based on it. He quotes a phrase in the *Udāna*, VIII. 3. and his translation is: ‘There is an unborn, unoriginated, an unmade, an uncompounded; were there not, O mendicant, there would be no escape from the world of the born, the originated, the made and the compounded’.

Christmas Humphreys wrote an article on the existence of ‘soul’ in the *Ceylon Daily News Vesaka Annual*, which reads as follows: “Buddhism does not deny the existence of God or Soul, though it places its own meaning on those terms. By ‘God’ the Buddhist means THAT from which the universe was born, the Unborn of the *Udāna* and by ‘soul’ that factor in the thing called man which moves toward Enlightenment.”

In answer to this is the discourse from Surendranath Dasgupta who quotes

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61 Ibid., p. 388
62 Ibid., p. 379
63 Ibid., p. 388
64 Ibid., p. 389
65 Ibid., p. 379 – 380
66 Christmas Humphreys: *Soul or No Soul*, *Ceylon Daily News Vesaka Annual*, p. 13

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from *Upaniṣads* that ‘self is bliss, indestructible and eternal.’ 67 However, Dasgupta also states that the Buddha neither taught such an idea to anyone nor even presupposed it to be true. He points to the obvious departure from the former concerning experiences of the self: “The early Pāli scriptures hold that we could nowhere find out such a permanent essence, any constant self, in our changing experiences.” 68 But Buddhism holds this immutable self of man is a delusion and false knowledge. 69 So Dasgupta is of the opinion that the Buddha knew and presupposed the Self being bliss and eternal. Moreover, if there is Self (ātman), it must be bliss and permanent. He, however, recognised that such Self could not be found. It can be said from Dasgupta’s statement that the word attā in the context of anattā doctrine means the Self, which is bliss and eternal.

Lal Mani Joshi shares the belief that the two systems are different. Whereas the *Vedānta* view is that liberation consists in realizing and recovering the lost identity of the self with Ultimate Reality (*Brahman*), it is quite the opposite for Buddhist liberation or nirvāṇa that consists in realizing the unreality of self and eliminating every trace of individuality. He adds that if the Buddha borrowed anything from any source, it was from non-Vedic ascetic sages, *munis* and *śramaṇas*. 70

In his book, *Brahmanism, Buddhism and Hinduism*, Joshi quotes from Pande that anti-ritualistic tendencies existed even before the entrance of either Buddhism or Jainism. Pande believes that Jainism extended from pre-Vedic religion, which was supposedly the source of Buddhism, and therefore the relationship between the two. However, Jainism and Buddhism are not identical and the Buddha did not always agree with *Mahāvīra*. Furthermore, Pande feels that Buddhism is not a reformative religion as was Protestantism to Catholicism.

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68 Ibid., p.110
69 Ibid., p. 111
70 Lal Mani Joshi: *Discerning the Buddha – A Study of Buddhism and of the Brahmanical Hindu Attitude to It*. pp. 104 – 105

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The fashionable view of regarding Buddhism as a Protestant Vedicism and its birth as a Reformation appears to be based on a misreading of later Vedic history caused by the fascination of a historical analogy and the ignorance, or neglect of pre-Vedic civilization.\(^7\)

Monier Williams can be mentioned here, but for supposing that Buddhism was in imitation of earlier or contemporary Brahmanical systems, even in the arrangement of his community of monks. He describes the Buddha as a Hindu of the Hindus and remained a Hindu to the end. The Buddha never seriously thought of founding a new system in direct opposition to Brahmanism and caste, and even his order or fraternity of monks was a mere imitation of an institution already established in India.\(^2\)

Herein, Monier Williams supposedly draws his conclusion from data that the Buddha was not anti-Brahmanical but against some of the habits of Brahmans, such as animal sacrifices and so on. However, though the Buddha refuted this, it is hardly his main tenet. There are scholars who conclude that Buddhism was, at most, a sect of Brahmanism just as the founding order of Christ was a sect of Judaism. One may call into question the idea that no new religious teacher sought to deviate or separate from the original faith but merely sought to improve it. This last statement is the type we drew attention to above that Buddhism was old wine in a new bottle.

In analysing the studies of those researchers who claim that the Buddhism speaks of the concept of God or soul, we cannot be too harshly critical. To begin with, Western critics or researchers have come from a theistic Judaeo-Christian background and will certainly try to apply their ideas into it. However, as has been pointed out by native Indian critics, to try to apply the Upaniṣadic influence into Buddhism at least contradicts the basic tenet of ‘sabbe dhammā anatā’. Rahula contends: ‘If the Buddha had accepted these two ideas (God and Soul), so

\(^7\) Lal Mani Joshi: Brahmanism, Buddhism and Hinduism, p. 7
\(^2\) M. Williams: Buddhism – In its Connexion with Brahmanism and Hinduism, and in its Contrast with Christianity, p. 71

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important in all religion, he certainly would have declared them publicly, as he had spoken about other things.  

H. Von Glasenapp deserves mention in this thesis for being a proponent of the argument that Vedānta, Upaniṣads and Buddhism were dissimilar. It is worth adding that the concept of karma and rebirth is parallel in both doctrines, due to history and oneness of culture. Karma has been a salient feature of Buddhism as mentioned in Suttapiṭaka. Glasenapp based his theory on evidence that Ātmanavāda and Buddhism were in contrast to each other and concluded that they were also mutually exclusive.

In addition, he says that as far as he can see there is not a single passage in the Pāli Canon where the word ‘attā’ is used in the sense of Upaniṣadic Ātman.

This is the conclusion of a researcher who has truly read the scriptures from cover to cover. Furthermore, Glasenapp added that actual references to Upaniṣads were scanty:

“The number of passages in the Pāli Canon dealing with Upaniṣadic doctrines is very small. It is true that early Buddhism shared many doctrines with the Upaniṣads (karma, rebirth and liberation through insight) but these tenets were widely held in philosophical circles of those time that we can no longer regard the Upaniṣads as the direct source from which the Buddha had drawn.”

Vishwanath Prasad Varma shares this opinion. Whilst claiming that there had been Upaniṣadic influence upon the teachings, again from proximity and oneness of culture, Varma no less was aware of the ‘rupture’ between them. Varma notes the scholars who had searched for the similarity between the teaching of the Buddha and the doctrine of the Upaniṣads, such as Kumārila, Max Müller, Rhus Davids, Gauḍapāda, Sadānanda, Bloomfield, C.A.F. Rhys Davids, Stcherbatsky, Keith and B.M. Barua. Varma states after analysing their writings,

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73 W. Rahula: What the Buddha Taught, p. 56
74 H. Glasenapp: Vedanta and Buddhism – A Comparative Study, p. 8
75 Ibid., p. 10.6
76 V. P. Varma: Early Buddhism and Its Origin, p. 82

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that to believe that Buddhism is both extension and fulfilment of the *Upaniṣads* is both ‘gross exaggeration’ and mistake.\(^77\) One may notice that he used the word ‘gross.’ In modern English, it has the connotations of ‘serious’, ‘massive’ or ‘extensive’, ‘vast’ and so on.

Varma’s understanding on the *attā* and *anattā* in relation to the *Upaniṣadic* idea is as follows:

“The denial of the soul in the Buddhist philosophy of *anātmavāda* was a great break from the *Upaniṣadic* tradition. The very term *anātman* is deliberately designed to assert the great break from the *Upaniṣadic* tradition. There is no place for a soul in the teaching of the Buddha.”\(^78\) He further states that the Buddha refused to accept the concept of the soul as a spiritual monadic substance. The *Upaniṣadic* conception of the identification of the psychic self and cosmic transcendent self also failed to satisfy him.\(^79\)

He is of the opinion that it is not certain that the Buddha had any deep knowledge of the *Vedas* and *Upaniṣads*. In the six years, which he spent as a wanderer and seer, previous to his enlightenment, he does not confront any profound spokesman of idealistic wisdom. Some of his later biographies speak of him as being fully conversant with the school of metaphysical philosophy. But from a study of the *Tipīṭaka* literature this claim is not substantiated.\(^80\)

J. P. Remon felt that Buddha did not teach anything absolute concerning *anattā* and that his teachings were merely a coherent system of thought with general view similar to others teaching ‘the reality of self’, teach *attā* or its equivalent.\(^81\)

Buddhism was a contemporary philosophy of *Vedānta* and shared similar beliefs such as *karma* and rebirth; but, as mentioned above, that is due to culture

\(^77\) Ibid., pp. 109 – 110
\(^78\) Ibid., p. 84
\(^79\) Ibid., p. 37
\(^80\) Ibid., p. 79
\(^81\) J. P. Remon: *Self and Non-Self in Early Buddhism*, p. 149.
and history. Since the Buddha was perhaps aware of the Brahmanic traditions, and was only at variance with excesses, he viewed the concept of a ‘permanent, blissful Attā’ as heretical or imaginary idea.

The concept of greater self (Self), lesser self (self) and non-self in later Buddhism, particularly in Mahāyāna, has warranted examination through the work of A. K. Coomaraswamy and I. B. Horner. They both are of the opinion that the Buddha’s theory of anattā consists of the two Selves, namely the Great Self and the Little Self.82 They explain a phrase in Aṅguttara Nikāya – ‘attā pi attānām upavadati’ as ‘the Great Self upbraids the Little self when what should not be done is done.”83 They point out that in the whole of the Buddhist canonical literature it is nowhere stated that there is no Self; in fact the Self is both explicitly and implicitly asserted.84 According to them the Buddha did not deny a God, neither denied a Soul, nor denied Eternity,85 and the Buddhist point of view is the same as the Brahmanical one.86

Such action is the work of higher intuition, intelligence and morality equal to the ‘Higher Self’ of the New Age. The higher Self is, still, not a permanent or blissful being but rather an advanced state of mind, which has to be developed and sustained. The lesser self is ‘ego’ and is producer of ahaṅkāra, selfishness, deceit and other ills of existence.

However, Coomaraswamy has attached the concept of eternity and Godhood into Buddha–dhamma, by asserting that Buddha taught it or believed it.

Edward J. Thomas does not outwardly refute the Buddha’s teachings; instead, he claims “the soul which is denied is not the self of actual experience but the permanent nature of the soul, a reality held to be behind psychic phenomena.”87 He adds, ‘Not only the self but all things are analysed into the

83 Ibid., p. 36
84 Ibid., pp. 32 – 33.
85 Ibid., p. 33.
86 Ibid., 18.
87 Edward J. Thomas: The Life of Buddha as Legend and History, p. 88

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elements that may be perceived in them, ‘All things are without an ātman’, just as a chariot is nothing but the totality of chariot – pole, axle, wheels, frames and banner – pole.\(^88\)

He continues to assert that the connection between the Upaniṣads and the region in which the Buddha taught his teachings is not known. In referring to Ātman and Brahmān, he states that Buddhism did not speculate on the one reality or did not identify this concept as ātman.\(^89\)

G. C. Pande agrees with him and is of the opinion that many are the texts, which preach the doctrine of Anattā. The doctrine denies that there is in the physical or mental realms anything which may properly be called one’s ‘self’.\(^90\)

He further says that this is itself does not mean the denial of all ‘self’ whatever but only of the phenomenally of the ‘Self’. What is usually denied is that any of the khandhas may be the attā, not the existence of the attā as such.\(^91\)

Furthermore, there is the testament from Edward Conze: “in it score the mark of not-self is a simple corollary of the impermanence of everything. There can be no lasting individuality because the khandhas have neither permanence nor unity (piṇḍa). It should be noted that in this above basic formulas the absence of the self is confined to five khandhas and that nothing is said either way about its existence quite apart from them. The Buddha never taught that the self ‘is not’ but ‘only that it cannot be apprehended.’\(^92\)

In chapter 3 of his book, Conze explains in layman’s language that “all conditioned things share three marks (tilakkhana). They are (1) impermanence, (2) ill and (3) not-self. On simple reflection, this statement is bound to strike us as at least partly true. As the marks are better understood, some emotional resistance becomes inevitable, and complete conviction requires both mediation and

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\(^{89}\) Edward J. Thomas: The History of Buddhist Thought, p. 96.
\(^{91}\) Ibid., p. 499.
\(^{92}\) Edward Conze: Buddhist Thought in India – Three Phases of Buddhist Philosophy, p. 39.
philosophical reflection."\(^{93}\)

Concerning *impermanence*, Conze explains that this is irrefutable, i.e., anyone experiencing the changes in life cannot argue to the contrary. Conze elaborates on impermanence in sound scientific reasoning by mentioning three related terms: "(1) an analysis of the process of change, (2) the determination of the duration of an event, and (3) reviewing of the practical consequences which should be drawn from the fact of impermanence."\(^{94}\)

It is worth mentioning that in his succeeding work, *A Short History of Buddhism*, Conze acquiesces "It is a fundamental teaching of Buddhism that this word 'self' does not correspond to a real fact, that the self is fictions and that therefore by our self-seeking we sacrifice our true welfare to a mere fiction."\(^{95}\)

He explains the motive of the awakened ones (Buddhas) in teaching *anattā*, that "the Buddhas teach them the non-existence of a self so as to weaken their attachment to the false view of personality and to engender in them a desire for *nibbāna.*"\(^{96}\)

Another notable scholar on the subject is L. De La Vallee Poussin. Vallee Poussin has done some interesting study. On the subject of the 'self', he remarked "There is not a Self, a permanent substantial unity, but there is a person, to be described as 'a living continuous fluid complex' which does not remain quite the same for two consecutive moments, but which continues for an endless number of existences, bridging an endless number of deaths without becoming completely different from itself."\(^{97}\)

He continues with the following analysis: "There is no migration (*saṁkrama, saṁkrānti*), no passage of an individual from this life to another. When a man dies, the physical organism, which is the condition *sine qua non* of

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\(^{93}\) Ibid., p. 34.
\(^{94}\) Ibid., p. 34.
\(^{95}\) Edward Conze: *A Short History of Buddhism*, p. 22.
\(^{96}\) Edward Conze: *Buddhist Thought in India – Three Phases of Buddhist Philosophy*, p. 208.
\(^{97}\) L. De La Vallee Poussin: *The Way to Nirvāṇa, Six Lectures on Ancient Buddhism as a Discipline of Salvation*, p. 35.
physical life, dissolves, and the physical life therefore comes to an end. Consciousness is only an ‘intermittent series of psychic throbs’ associated with a living organism, beating out their coming-to-know through one brief span of life.”

Vallee Poussin describes the time of the Buddha as an epoch of spiritual effervescence. Ascetics such as Sākyamuni aimed at something that is beyond the worlds, and they were in the same class as regards the disciples of salvation. It is said that though they are in many respects widely different from one another, they are sisters born of the same parents, namely disgust with the life and love of mystery.

Walpola Rahula gives a similar description: “As there is no permanent, unchanging substance, nothing passes from one moment to the next. So quote obviously, nothing permanent or unchanging can pass or transmigrate from one life to the next. It is a series that continues unbroken, but changes every moment. The series is, really speaking, nothing but movement.”

Henry Clarke Warren echoes this in Buddhist in Translation by stating that, since there is no thing that can be considered as individual, Ego or self, then nothing is reborn or transmigrates. But his view or translation of karma is worth mentioning. Warren claims that karma is ‘character’. That it is based on interaction is established fact. Karma concerns not only the deed but also immediate and later effect and how it modifies the following character of the doer. The general opinion is that it continues into the next life.

Warren takes an exceptional example to illustrate, much as Edward Greenly used the rainbow to illustrate dependent causation. “Why cannot a swallow’s egg hatch out a lark? Or a lark’s (egg) a swallow? How is it that the egg of a lark will

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98 Ibid., p. 48.
99 Ibid., p. 8.
100 Ibid., p. 7.
101 Ibid., pp. 7 – 8.
102 W. Rahula: What the Buddha Taught, p. 34.
103 Henry Clarke Warren: Buddhist in Translation, p. 210

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never hatch out any other kind of bird than a lark, and that a swallow’s egg must always yield a swallow? A swallow’s egg cannot hatch out a lark because of the difference in heredity.” Warren’s conclusion is that Buddhist *karma* does not directly mean heredity in the sense of progenitors; but it means that *karma* is inherited from oneself from past actions. Writings compiled in the New Age (1980 until the present) remark that heredity and *karma* are related through DNA (dioxysribonucleic acid), which is in all living matter and is equated with God scientifically.

One noteworthy scholar on this topic, as well as of the main teaching of *dukkha*, is certainly Buddhadasa Bikkhu of Thailand. Although he was influenced by many modern ideas such as consumerism and globalisation, and had wide following among the educated middle class in Thailand, he insisted on the ‘purity of the *dhamma*.’ That is, he preferred to leave animistic ideas from the teachings.

Buddhadasa considers the Buddhist teachings about *paṭiccasamuppāda* (dependent origination, or conditioned genesis) to have long been misinterpreted because of the implicit acceptance of the notion of *attā*, that there is an individual self or soul. He maintains that the mistaken views that there is a self and an entitative continuity between one life and the next have been implicitly accepted in Theravada Buddhism since the Third Buddhist Council, which was held only three hundred years after the Buddha’s death. Furthermore, Buddhadasa believes that this was due to a conspiracy against the teachings.

He is worth mentioning both for his attempt to purify Buddhism in Thailand from animistic ideas and for his scholarship in Buddhism as a whole. He attributes only abstract existence to both ‘*devatā*’ and demons, or evil spirits. The Buddha acclaimed the existence of other worlds, or existences, such as ghosts, etc., but these have no physical or corporeal bodies (*arūpa*). They are at most states of mind; e.g., a person with a high mind and void of egoism is either a

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104 Ibid., p. 211.
105 Peter A. Jackson: *Buddhadasa: A Buddhist Thinker for the Modern World*, p. 132
devatā or an advanced learner of the dhamma, to those around him.

Another revered monk scholar worth mentioning is Saddhatissa. Saddhatissa recommended that attā and ātman should be separated, as they are dissimilar concepts. Ātman was profounder and more intricate than Attā. Attā, as a Pāli word, has different contextual use and so affects the concept of anattā. However, he does not refute that Buddha denied the permanent existence in any thing but he did not deny the concept of Ātman.

Concerning paṭiccaśamuppāda, in Facets of Buddhism, Saddhatissa says of the conventional term ‘life’ that it is ‘a vicious circle propelled by a sense of anxiety over its continuation’ as though, at the very moment it ceases, the organism would not know what would happen next. Consciousness and unconsciousness refer to awareness of one’s environment, conventionally.106

Saddhatissa continues with a very concise and comprehensible idea of the origin of human judgment, fluctuating between the pleasant, which is to be sustained, and the unpleasant, to be destroyed or changed, and indifference to either and dependent upon both the sense and sense object. The truly aware individual cannot help but admit to it.

Erich Frauwallner describes in his own terms his interpretation of Buddhist deliverance, which is worth noticing. He attributes it to a realization that the earthly existence is not the true self, or ātman. However, he continues by stating that this is Upaniṣadic: ‘The Upaniṣads tell the importance of knowing this true Self (ātman)’ and that this knowledge is required for one’s deliverance. He mentions specifically the doctrines of Yajñavalkya and highlights the similarity between Yajñavalkya and the Second Sermon — i.e., that ‘everything different from Ātman is sorrowful and that all that is sorrowful cannot be the true Self.’107

K.N. Upadhayaya also claimed that Buddha indicated that the aggregated or conditioned existence contained nothing permanent or blissful. Therefore, it would

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106 Hammaalawa Saddhatissa. Facets of Buddhism. p. 141.
be ignorance to assume that such a self actually exists. As mentioned earlier, the concept of a permanent or blissful self-abiding anywhere is *Upaniṣadic* and regarded as ‘*sakkayadiṭṭhi*’ or ‘*miccadiṭṭhi*’ (false or heretical doctrine). *Upadhyaya* continues to assert that any attempt to so read such influences into the Buddhist doctrine both contradicts the Buddha’s original words and failed to conform with the basic tenets of Buddhism.

Walpola Rahula stated that the Buddha viewed the idea of self (ātā) as “imaginary, false belief which has no corresponding reality, and it produces harmful thoughts of ‘me’ and ‘mine,’ selfish desires, craving, attachment, hatred, ill-will, conceit, pride, egoism and other defilement, impurities and problems. It is the source of all the troubles in the world from personal conflicts to wars between nations. In short, to this false view can be traced all the evil in the world”\(^{108}\) In conformity with anti-Upaniṣad argument among scholars, we find the opinion of Wijesekera in denial of any relationship between the two teachings. He declared that the Buddhist notion of *anattā* was unable to coexist with the doctrine of Ātman or Brahman. However, the main thrust of his opinion was on the point that the Buddha refused silently to answer metaphysical discourses as they were anathema to his objective of showing the way from suffering.\(^{109}\) It is worth mentioning that, even today, such questions are either partly answered or unanswered and the discussion and debate on them continues, a fact, which the Buddha was well aware of thousands of years before that.

Suresh Chandra Banerji describes the Buddha’s teachings as religious reformation and not a new teaching. He points to basic difference in the two (Upaniṣad and Buddhist doctrines), namely the theory of ‘self’ or ‘soul,’ and explains that in the former, the self is permanent and unchanging whereas in the latter, it is opposite and that Buddhism refutes a permanent reality.\(^{110}\)

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\(^{108}\) W. Rahula: *What the Buddha Taught*, p. 51


P. T. Raju prefers to depend upon interpretation of *nirvāṇa* from the *Vijñānavāda* sect of *Mahāyāna* Buddhism to establish his link between the *Upaniṣads* and early Buddhism. Raju declared that the words used by each were different but that the basic idea was identical. He continues to assert that Buddhism refused to call the ultimate principle *ātman*, but *nirvāṇa* was important in both systems of thought.111

In the conclusion of Chapter IV of *Concept of Man*, which describes the idea of man’s identity in Classical Indian philosophy, Raju states that as far back as *Rgveda*, the concept of ‘man as wayfarer or *mārgayāyin*’ was known but that it was popularised in the Buddha’s time by the Buddha’s doctrine of the Way—i.e., the Four Noble Truths concerning the existence of *dukkha* (suffering) and its extermination. Raju states that all the various schools taught this doctrine — that man is a wayfarer. The way, therefore, is the way from outward seeming reality to inner beingness. “Life is the inwardness which matter attains; and mind is the inwardness which life attains in the process of the world we observe.”112

As attested from Chapter III, the expounding of *pañcakṣaṇḍha* (five aggregates) in Buddhist doctrine is an example of scientific or proto-scientific resolution of existence. It is supposed that the Buddha intended to ground his *bhikkhus* in the “physical earthly reality” to show them out of human suffering.

G. N. Lewis uses his own interpretation of the concept of soullessness. He asks a question reminiscent of the Buddha’s interrogations of the *Saṅgha*, concerning the body, mind etc. ‘But have you power over your self? Can you make your body larger or smaller or let it be this or that as you desire?’113 He analyses that whatever has or is governed by its own laws and cannot be guided by our wishes is not ours. That the physical body is subjected to illness, alterations and decay, none of which we have any control over even in spite of modern

112 Ibid., p. 296
medicine, attests to the fact that it is not ‘ours’. People only egoistically believe that it is. Lewis continues to discuss each of the remaining aggregates in the same manner and analyses it in simple enough language.\(^{114}\)

This brings us to an equally fascinating account of anattā, that of Edward Greenly. In his topic, Physical and Biological Aspects of Anattā, Greenly begins by a scholarly criticism of the ‘failure to apprehend that central doctrine or principle of Buddhism that is summed up in the Pāli term Anattā.’ Whereas the Buddha certainly admonished his bhikkhus to surrender any concept of self, since no doctrine teaching it was void of suffering or impermanence, it cannot be said that it was the main doctrine or objective. Otherwise, the Buddha might have taught it first.

Greenly begins with his translation of anattā: ‘denial of a soul.’ But he asserts immediately thereafter that it is more or less than that. Greenly adds that anattā theory does not stipulate that ‘death ends all.’ Greenly begins with a scientific treatise on prismatics (light and its reflection) to prove impermanence:

“Consider such a phenomenon as the rainbow. To the unsophisticated mind, the rainbow is just as real as any other object, much more vivid and real than the faint and distant hills that lie beyond it.”\(^{115}\) He discusses that we discover the truth of the rainbow. This is his first example of anattā. Greenly discusses light, next. Today we know at least that light and sound are vibrations. But they require the sense related and, at least with vision, the object of that sense. The light has no more real an existence than the rainbow. So, light is used as the second instance. And so he discusses with water, which is the second property of the rainbow.\(^{116}\) To conclude, Greenly discusses the known reality that water is a compound, an aggregation of two dissimilar elements - hydrogen (H) and oxygen (O).

\(^{114}\) Ibid., pp. 10 – 11.
\(^{115}\) Ibid., pp. 15 – 17.
\(^{116}\) Ibid., pp. 18 – 19.
Without the aforementioned elements, water is non-existent as well. So it is used as the third instance of anattā. From this description, we can realize that all compounded things, such as that rainbow, tend to unite and separate and have no real existence.

The third riveting discourse is M. W. Padmasiri de Silva’s *The Spell of Narcissism and the Anattā Doctrine*. Narcissism is an intense love of oneself. In his own work, *The Heart of Man*, Eric Fromm remarked that “Narcissism is a passion the intensity of which in many individuals can only be compared with sexual desire and the desire to stay alive. In fact, many times it proves to be stronger than either.”

Narcissism entered the theory of modern psychology from Sigmund Freud. Freud, in turn, borrowed it from a man called Paul Nacke. It is discussed as follows: ‘a perversion where an adult lavishes upon his own body all the caresses expended only upon a sexual object other than himself.’ Freud discovered a separate category of patients other than two previous types namely ‘libido instinctual’ and ‘egoistic.’ *Libido* refers to sexual instinct. This third category could displace the attachment and sexual satisfaction of the first category with the ego.

De Silva continues to inform us that there were several sources responsible for this concept. Finally, there is a section concerning the concept of narcissism and Buddhism, in connection with Freud.

“The narcissistic relation to one’s body has its parallel in the doctrine of the Buddha, where he discusses the operation of personality beliefs (*atta-dittīhī*) in relation to corporeality. The majority of the people who are not skilled in the doctrine of the Buddha are subject to the ego-illusion associated with their body. This ego-illusion is described in the *Suttas*: ‘These people who are untrained in the doctrine of the Buddha regard body as the self, regard the self having a body, the

117 Ibid., p. 27.
body as being in the self, self as being in the body.’ ‘I am the body’, ‘the body is mine’ and are obsessed by this idea.”

David J. Kalupahana stipulates that the Buddha was directly critical of Brahmanical and Upaniṣadic doctrines and abandoned the search for ultimate objectivity as discussed by his contemporaries – Brahmān, Ājīvika, Cārvāka and even Ājīvika – as ‘too metaphysical.’

Kalupahana describes the theory of attā and anattā that, for the Buddha the most alarming metaphysical issue was ‘transcendental apperception of the rationalist, which was implied in the Upaniṣadic notion of self (ātman)’ and that the Buddha essayed to rid himself of it by analysing sensual experience – e.g., the twelve āyatana or spheres, the stream of thought and the five aggregates. Anattā is then in opposition to both the Upaniṣadic self and svabhāva.

Let us look at another interpretation, that of P. Lakshmi Narasu. He begins with the description of animism, “Brahmanism, Jainism, Christianity and Islam teach that a man’s personality is his soul (ātman, pudgala, pneuma, psyche), which enters his body at birth and quits it at death. It forms the invisible, immaterial ego, which, knowing itself as ‘I’, remains the same amidst all that is changeable.” Concerning the term ‘psyche’, we mentioned in Chapter III of our thesis that it originally meant ‘soul’ in Greek; it has come to mean ‘mind’ by modern psychology. Narasu continues after some further discourse that “the Blessed One teaches that this animistic view, this belief in a permanent self or soul, is the most harmful of errors, the most deceitful of illusions, which will irretrievably mislead its victims into the deepest pit of sorrow and suffering.”

Stephen Collins, whom we have mentioned briefly in Chapter III, has a further description of karma and individual in his Selfless Persons. He begins with

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120 D. J. Kalupahana: A History of Buddhist Philosophy – Continuities and Discontinuities. p. 53.
121 Ibid., p. 28.
122 Ibid., p. 184.
123 P. Lakshmi Narasu: The Essence of Buddhism. p. 163.
124 Ibid., p. 163.

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‘a collection of impersonal elements’ compelled by *karma*, which create the personality and its continuity. In reaction to this, Buddhism held as its main theme the concept of selflessness; but conventional terms, in conjunction with conventional truth, the knowledge of existence held by the layman in contrast with ultimate truth, such as ‘person’, ‘oneself’ were accepted in conventional use only. The Buddha obviously spoke to very common people in his time, which had very little knowledge of reality, and had to address such issues as ‘existence of soul’ and ‘transmigration.’

B. C. Law makes a reference to the term *puggala* or *pudgala* in Buddhist texts. We include it here for study. “*Puggala, attā, satta* and *jīva* are the four terms which occur in the Buddhist texts in connection with all discussions relating to individual, individuality, personality, self and soul. As a biological term, *puggala* is nowhere used to deny the existence of an individual being or a living person. When it is said, e.g., in the *Dhammapada*, that the self is lord of the self (*attā hi attano nathō*) or in the *Mahāparinibbāṇa Sutta*: “Be yourself your own lamp and your own refuge”, by the word *attā* or ‘self’ is meant the living individual to whom the advice is given.”125 This is no other than the conventional usage which the Buddha accepted to use with ordinary listeners.

Wijesekera is of the opinion that the Buddha did not deny an evolving, *saṁsāric* individual but rather denied an eternal and unchanging entity enjoying the nature of an eternal Being, which was understood to be reality in the *Upaniṣads*.126

K. N. Jayatilleke discusses the *Majjima Nikāya* (I. 232) concerning *anattā*. He compared the Buddha’s argument about *attā* with that of *Prajāpati*. Apparently, both men used very similar terms in their teachings, e.g., ‘*eso ahaṁ asmi*’ in *Pāli* and ‘*ayam ahaṁ asmi*’ in *Sanskrit* (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, 8.III.1.) To continue, Jayatilleke points to the main differences:

126 O. H. De. A. Wijesekera: *Buddhist and Vedic Studies*, p. 10.
‘Prajāpati assumes the existence of an ātman and, on failing to identify it with any of the states of the personality, continues to assume that it must exist within it and is not satisfied with the results of purely empirical investigation. The Buddha is an empiricist and makes use of the definition of the concept of the ātman without assuming its existence (or non-existence) and is satisfied with the empirical investigation which shows that no such ātman exists because there is no evidence for its existence.”127

“There is nowhere in the world indeed for hiding evil action
O man your self knows that it is true or false,
Indeed dear witness you scorn the good self,
You who hides the existing evil in yourself.”128

In the above passage, the Buddha more likely admonished against evil action rather than spoke of a self. The word ‘self” here is used as usual in the conventional sense. In yet another passage, the word citta, reference for the mind, is used as a synonym. But the passage refers more to the qualities of this mind rather than to any self, as perceived in the Upaniṣads. The self of this passage is a constructed thing but it is deemed to be the best of all. It has the qualities of a “higher self” – i.e., moral integrity, mindfulness, virtue and so on, but it is not a metaphysical entity. In similar manner, the Arahant or ‘one of developed self” (bhāvit atto) is described:

i) virtue, wisdom, the Path and the spiritual faculties are well ‘developed’;
ii) ‘body’ (kāya) is ‘developed’ and ‘steadfast’;
iii) citta is ‘developed’, ‘steadfast’, ‘well-released’ and without ill–will;
iv) he is ‘unlimited, great, deep, immeasurable, hard to fathom, with much treasure, arisen (like the) ocean’ (cf. MN. I. 486 – 87);

128 AN. I. 149-50
v) in the face of the six sense–objects, he has equanimity and is not confused; he sees only what is seen, hears only what is heard, etc. [i.e. does not project and elaborate on what is actually sensed], and he has no desire or attachment for such sense objects;
vi) the six senses are ‘controlled’ and ‘guarded’;
vii) he is ‘self–controlled (atta–danto)’, and ‘with a well–controlled self (attanā sudantena)’.\textsuperscript{129}

The remainder of this passage describes the attitude of the Arahant but there is no concrete reference to an Upaniṣadic self. The main theme of Buddhism has been and is always mental training and development, which is required to attain nirvāṇa.

Earlier in his book, Peter Harvey makes note of the fact that the only ‘self’ spoken of was an empirical type (body and mind). “It is clear that the ‘early Suttas’ often use the word ‘attā’ (literally ‘self’) in such a way that no metaphysical Self is implied, only a changing empirical self. One common usage of this type has ‘attā simply meaning ‘oneself’, ‘himself’ or ‘myself’, according to context.”\textsuperscript{130} He further describes the anattā theory as the “teaching of denial of some form of ‘attā’ belief.”\textsuperscript{131}

Harvey makes further note of atta-bhava, or selfhood. But the Buddha referred more to the results of a ‘harmful assumption of selfhood’ and the resultant meaning becomes ‘personality’. Finally, he points that the word attā becomes a synonym of citta. Citta is used to refer to mind, heart or thought and another reference regarding the ‘self’ can be seen in Dhammapada:

“Oneself, indeed, is one’s saviour (attā hi attano nātho)

For what other saviour there be? (ko hi nātho paro siyā)

\textsuperscript{129} Peter Harvey. The Selfless Mind: Personality, Consciousness and Nirvāṇa in Early Buddhism. p. 57–58.
\textsuperscript{130} Ibid., p. 19.
\textsuperscript{131} Ibid., p. 6.
With oneself well controlled (attanā’ va sudantena)
One obtains a saviour difficult to gain.” (nātham labhati dullabham)\(^{132}\)

The ‘self’ here, again, being an euphemism for mind, not a metaphysical, unchanging and permanent entity as assumed in Vedānta, the real meaning of this passage is to guard one’s mind against impurity and purify it when it is impure; again, this is Buddhist mental development.

This reflects that Buddhism declares that a deed is good or bad by intention; that is the rule of karma. When an action is unintended, there may be no real harm. The Buddha says, ‘It is will (cetanā), O monks, that I call karma; having willed, one performs an action through body, speech or mind.’\(^{133}\) Peter Harvey adds, ‘Willing is a conditioned process, but most of its conditions lie within a person, and some are simultaneous with it, such as mindful awareness. There is a sense, then, in which a person has control over the actions he performs.’\(^{134}\) In this juncture, it is worth mentioning that, in modern translations, the word ‘cetanā’ has come to mean ‘intention.’

In positing the mind and body duality of the human being as ‘person’ (pudgala), Alpana Chakraborty offers the following conclusion: first, that the question of whether the human mind survives bodily disintegration is irresolvable. She has relied upon many evidences as well as criticisms, she explains, but that none of them sufficed. At the onset are what she refers to as prime facie evidences of personal survival. “The first evidence is that of the identification of a person proceeds from the surviving spirits of the deceased persons concerned. But this attempt fails simply on the consideration that, if we consider only memory as a criteria of personal identity we face a lot of difficulties.”\(^{135}\) In his accounting, Stcherbatsky mentioned a dialogue with Reverend Vasubandhu in which memory

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\(^{132}\) Narada: The Dhammapada, p. 145.

\(^{133}\) AN. III 415

\(^{134}\) Peter Harvey: The Selfless Mind: Personality, Consciousness and Nirvāna in Early Buddhism, p. 67.

\(^{135}\) Alpana Chakraborty: Mind–Body Dualism: A Philosophy Investigation, p. 159
was discussed. Memory has its limits and is most capable only when the mind is not disturbed.

Later, Alpana Chakraborty posits that, on the basis of the theory of energy conservation, which stipulates that energy is both indestructible and renewable in various forms of matter, then by supposing the soul to be energy, it is both indestructible and undergoes reincarnation in new bodies. But she inserts a sentence that is worth mentioning: ‘if there is something like a soul’. If the case is true, then disembodied existence may be possible, she concludes. She quotes from many philosophers on this issue like Spinoza, Plato, etc.

Spinoza mentions the ‘stream of law and cause’ and that the mind is an eternal mode of thinking, which is determined by another mode of thinking, and this one by another and so on to infinity.\textsuperscript{136} Plato, on the other hand, claimed that human beings consist of two radically different kinds of substances of which one is called the ‘mind’ and the other is called the ‘body’. A human being therefore consists of two different things a mind and a body. The ‘mind is a thinking substance’, whereas, the body is an ‘extended substance’. The mind is not ‘subject to any kind of destruction’ whereas, the body is ‘subject to destruction’. He further says, ‘Though a human being consists of two radically different parts, yet a person is his soul and that he is identical with the thinking part of the soul, because only the mind or soul is immortal. Thus, a person is his soul (mind).'\textsuperscript{137}

Alpana Chakraborty explains that Descartes, the French philosopher, revived Plato’s theory later. Consciousness and mind are seemingly inseparable, which Buddhism may have assumed earlier, since consciousness is a ‘\textit{manokhandha}’.

In her succeeding chapter “\textit{Concept of Person}”, Alpana Chakraborty refers to Descartes. Descartes puzzled over identification with mind and body – “I do not yet know clearly enough what I am I who am certain that I am; so that I must

\textsuperscript{136} P. F. Strawson: \textit{Individuals}, University Paperback, Published by Methuen and Co. Ltd., New Felter Lane, London ECA. p. 104.
\textsuperscript{137} Alpana Chakraborty: \textit{Mind-Body Dualism: A Philosophy Investigation}, p. 169
take the greatest care from the start not carelessly to take something else for myself.”  

Descartes proceeded from that juncture to search for his real identity. He learns first that man is one who thinks; then, he senses, and so man must identify himself with his mind. Alpana Chakraborty adds, here, that “thus, it is a big mistake to bring the idea of God in order to solve the ‘real distinction’ between mind and body; there is another difficulty which is very crucial, i.e., since it is only by relying on the validity of clear and distinct ideas that he proves the existence of God, to rely on God for the validation of clear and distinct ideas he seems to be arguing in a circle.”

Swāmī Rāma Tīrtha, whose advent is not recorded, shares a few views in common with the Buddha. To begin, the author H. Maheshwari indicated that Swāmī Rāma Tīrtha admonished against the idea that the body is self – ‘You are neither the body nor bodily.’ But though he warns that it changes and that nothing belonging to it (a part or an experience) survives time, he insists that the ‘real self is permanent.’

‘There is something within you which remains the same when you are in swoon, which remains the same when you are bathing, when you are writing... Are you not something which remains the same under all circumstances, unchanging in its being, the same yesterday, today and for ever?’

From personal experience, one may agree that an internal element does not drastically change during the aforementioned states. The uninitiated would feel that the empirical self changes only slightly during one of them. In swoon, the consciousness is lost until the sooner revives. But change has nonetheless taken place. Furthermore, it remains to be proved that what remains the same is atman and not some part of the empirical self.

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138 Ibid., p. 170
139 Ibid., p. 175–176
140 H. Maheshwari: The Philosophy of Swāmī Rāma Tīrtha, p. 59
141 Ibid., p. 59.
However, later, Swāmī Rāma Tīrtha admonished that the notion that ‘the body has in it a self, termed as ‘soul’ and it appears as if the body is a container and the soul is contained in it’ is misleading. He replied to the question of the soul that ‘I am the soul and I have the body.’\textsuperscript{142} So, in this case, Swāmī Rāma Tīrtha is only denying that body is self. He declares in similar tone concerning the mind, and so on.

He maintains that the body, life, senses, mind and all that is ordinarily understood to constitute the human personality is termed as empirical self or the individual ego (ahānikār) is different from one’s real self. That self, he believes, is the essential base of the empirical self.

Concerning the empirical self, Swāmī Rāma Tīrtha has agreed with the views of the Vedānta that the empirical self is divided into three units: 1) gross or physical body or sthula, 2) subtle body or sukshma, and 3) causal body or kārama.\textsuperscript{143} The gross body has been discussed earlier. Swāmī Rāma Tīrtha continues to describe them as ‘veils’ of the real self and pure consciousness. Furthermore, all of these bodies are changeable and impermanent as are their experiences. Yet thereupon ends the similarity with Buddhism. Being a pro-Vedāntic thinker, Swāmī Rāma Tīrtha believes that the Ātman is the true and supreme self behind all of the abovementioned.

In conclusion, it can be noticed that the theories concerning ‘Ātman’ and ‘Attā’ are multifarious and provide interesting insight into the philosophies, which were in existence at the time. It is worth noting that the Upaniṣads were not consistent about the concept of self or soul; the concepts or definitions of the self in this period were many and varied. We have contributed to this study and the writers we have mentioned above in abundant details, have theories or insight worthy of deeper study. Particularly in the Buddhist doctrine of ‘anattā’ many scholars and researchers have contributed. Their findings mostly have been

\textsuperscript{142} Ibid., p. 62
\textsuperscript{143} Ibid., p. 67.
accurate and objective. There has been a plethora of writers who have been true to the real intention of the teachings, such as Vallee Poussin, Peter Harvey and the like. Those who have been reading into the doctrine whatever is not really there specifically the animistic concept of god or soul have been exposed and analysed for insight, without undue criticism.

Some ideas either influenced Western literature and philosophy in later centuries or were carried into Europe during the Aryan expansion. Or we suppose that similar ideas existed in Europe, in later centuries, particularly the concept of 'soul as shadow' or 'soul as reflection in mirror.' On this latter one, Western ghost literature has either paralleled or agreed with this idea, as 'a soulless creature casts no reflection.' But we know that it is merely the image of the physical body which, when the light strikes it, casts itself upon the surface of water or on the surface of mirrors.