II. The concept of person in pre-Buddhist Indian philosophy

1. The period of the Sāṁhitās

The earliest form of literature handed down to us in Indian subcontinent is what is known as the ‘Veda’. This ‘Veda’ or ‘Vedic literature’ consists of three different classes of literary works: 1. Sāṁhitās, or ‘collections’ of the four Vedas, viz. Rgveda, Sāmaveda, Yajurveda and Atharvaveda; 2. Brāhmaṇas, or ‘books dealing with prayer’ comprised of mainly theological treatises on the science of sacrifice; 3. Āranyakas and Upaniṣads, or ‘forest texts’ and ‘secret teachings’, the former included in the later portions of Brāhmaṇas, specifically meant for the study in the solitude of the forest, the latter the earliest of which belongs to the latest stage of Brāhmaṇas, rich in philosophy based on meditative speculation. It is generally accepted that the oldest of these is placed more than three thousand years back, though the date cannot be fixed precisely. In the early Vedic literature, the speculation on gods or supernatural phenomena is prevalent. The obedience to the powerful being has been emphasized. Therefore, regarding the concept of person, no clear indication of individuality or subjectivity can be found here. Even in the latest Rgveda (henceforth: RV), i.e. the maṇḍala (circle; book) X, in which not only ritualistic observation but also philosophical contemplation started to

21 Ibid. p.47. See also Medonell (1900), p.24. “Many shrewd guesses have been offered, but none of them can be proved to be incontestably true. Max Müller supposed the date to be 1200 B.C., Haug 2400 B.C. and Bāl Gaṅgādhār Tilak 4000 B.C.” Dasgupta (1922), p.10.
take place, and to which belongs the famous Hymn of Man, Puruṣa Sūkta (henceforth: PS), the thought did not proceed to that point of view.

In the case of the RV, the idea of person is neither about an existential, individual being nor about the very nature of him. It is about a person as an ‘Ultimate Reality’, 22 which is based on mythological way of thinking. This kind of speculation of person was as a result of the cosmological contemplation that had taken place prior to the insight on the individual being. This tendency is in accordance with the development of the thought of religion. We can see this feature clearly from the PS:

1. Puruṣa, who has a thousand heads, a thousand eyes, a thousand feet, investing the earth in all directions, exceeds (it by a space) measuring ten fingers.

2. Puruṣa is verily all this (visible world), all that is, and all that is to be; he is also the lord of immortality; for he mounts beyond (his own condition) for the food (of living beings).

3. Such is his greatness; and Puruṣa is greater even than this; all beings are one-fourth of him; his other three-fourths, (being) immortal, (abide) in heaven.

4. Three-fourths of Puruṣa ascended; the other fourth that remained in this world proceeds repeatedly, and, diversified in various forms went to all animate and inanimate creation.

5. From him was born Virāt and from Virāt Puruṣa; he, as soon as born, became manifested, and afterwards (created) the earth (and) then corporeal forms.

6. When the gods performed the sacrifice with Puruṣa as the offering, then Spring was its ghee, Summer the fuel, and Autumn the oblation.

22 “In the Rgveda, again, we notice a word Puruṣa which is used there to denote the ‘Ultimate Reality’ as is clear from the mantra: ...” Sharma (1972), p.22. Much has been referred to this book in this chapter. “The creation of the universe is here conceived as the self-limitation of a transcendent Person, who, without a name or identification representing Ultimate Reality, manifests himself in the realm of our experience.” Gonda (1989), p.61.
7. They immolated as the victim upon the sacred grass Puruṣa, born before (creation); with him the deities who were Sādhyas and those who were Rṣis sacrificed.

8. From that victim, in whom the universal oblation was offered, the mixture of curds and butter was produced, (then) he made those animals over whom Vāyu presides, those that are wild, and those that are tame.

9. From the victim, in whom the universal oblation was offered, the Rcas and Sāmans were produced; from him the metres were born; from him the Yājuṣ was born.

10. From him were born horses and whatsoever animals have two rows of teeth; yea, cows were born from him; from him were born goats and sheep.

11. When they immolated Puruṣa, into how many portions did they divide him? What was his mouth called, what his arms, what his thighs, what were his feet called?

12. His mouth became the Brāhmaṇa, his arms became the Rājanya, his thighs became the Vaiśya; the Śūdra was born from his feet.

13. The moon was born from his mind; the sun was born from his eyes; Indra and Agni were born from his mouth, Vāyu from his breath.

14. From his navel came the firmament, from his head the heaven was produced, the earth from his feet, the quarters of space from his ear, so they constituted the world.

15. Seven were the enclosures of the sacrifice, thrice seven logs of fuel were prepared, when the gods, celebrating the rite, bound Puruṣa as the victim.

16. By sacrifice the gods worshipped (him who is also) the sacrifice; those were the first duties. Those great ones became partakers of the heaven where the ancient deities the Sādhyas abide.23

The PS is made up of two parts: the first consists of descriptions regarding the origin of Puruṣa (man, person) and his greatness; the second, descriptions regarding the sacrifice. While, the nature of Puruṣa and the universe is described in the former, each part of the Puruṣa, in accordance with the sacrifice, is paralleled to the different constituent of the universe in the latter.

According to the PS, Puruṣa is all-pervasive principle. Its one-fourth represents all things animate and inanimate, i.e. the manifested world; and its three-fourths represent what is beyond the universe, i.e. the heaven or the immortal world. It shows the ancient Indians’ view of the Ultimate Reality and their mystic religious tendency. The idea of the PS, that all of the phenomenal world – even the hierarchy of human society – come out of Puruṣa is peculiar. Puruṣa is garbed in a human form here. It is, therefore, understood as the ‘Supreme Cosmic Person’.²⁴ It can be said that the PS contains anthropocentric idea, but the Puruṣa of PS cannot be directly related to the concept of ‘individual person’ that requires subject-centred observation.

When we analyze PS, we can find that there are two different Puruṣas. The first one is the all-pervasive principle as well as the creator with anthropomorphic feature. Out of him arose Virāj²⁵ (the shining one), and from Virāj Puruṣa was born again. This second one is offered as the oblation for the sacrifice by the devas, sādhyas and ṛṣis. From him all animals, the Vedas, four castes, Sūrya, Candramas, Indra, Agni and Vāyu came out. And each part of his body is related to the creation. If someone wishes some kind of corporeal reward from the sacrifice, the corporeal oblation may also be needed. For the manifestation of this world, some substantial victim might have been required for the cosmogonical sacrifice. For that purpose, Virāj, as an intermediate, was born from the first Puruṣa and from Virāj the second Puruṣa. So, we can

²⁵ According to Śāṅkara’s commentary, virāj is explained as vividhānte rājante vastūni atra iti virāṭ. (Various (vi-) things shine (rāj-) here, therefore, virāj-) Rgveda-Saṁhitā, p.616. Gonda states that Virāj is “a feminine term denoting the idea of expansion of the One, of the universe conceived as a developing, expanding and creative whole”. Gonda (1989), p.61. Interestingly, in Bhādarānyaka Upaniṣad 4.2.2-3, Virāj is that which is in the form of a person in the left eye; it is regarded as the wife of Indra, or Indra, who is in the form a person in the right eye.
interpret it as that the Transcendental Puruśa became the Substantial Puruśa for the creation of the world. It shows how it is possible for the Puruśa to become both the material and efficient cause of the universe.

According to Śāyāna’s commentary, the first Puruśa called Ādi-Puruśa is Paramātman; he created Virāj as his body having the form of Brahma-aṇḍa (the Brahman Egg) and entered into it in the form of Jīva to become the Jīva (devatātman).26 Since the Jīva is translated as ‘the Ultimate Reality in an individual’, 27 understanding the second Puruśa as Jīva appears quite reasonable. The idea that one-fourth of the Puruśa changes into all creatures indicates his immanence in all manifested world. Another three-fourths, which remain unfolded, makes it possible for him to be a transcendental being beyond the world. Therefore, the claim that this is the first idea of the immanence and transcendence of the Ultimate Reality in the history of Indian philosophy is appropriate.28

As we have seen above, we cannot expect the word puruśa to mean actual, empirical and individual person in the PS. Here, the individual person is merged into the wider concept of the world, and therefore, it does not occupy a significant position. On this point we can ask a question: why did the author then use the word puruśa among other synonyms? In stead, he could have used the word ātman, which means mainly ‘self’, but which can also denote

26 Ṛgveda-Sānhiṭā, p.616.
27 “Jīva is another word which occurs in the Ṛgveda in various senses such as ‘life’, ‘living being in general’, ‘children’. Besides, the term occurs twice in the sense of ‘Individual soul or the Ultimate Reality in an individual’. It is not difficult to find this word in all these senses, more particularly in the last sense of “Ultimate Reality” in an individual which is, more frequently, used in later Vedic and classical Sanskrit literature. Thus, for example, Śankara frequently uses this word in the sense of ‘Ultimate Reality in an individual’.” Sharma (1972) p.19-20.
28 Ibid. p.49.
It can be roughly answered that the author of the PS wanted to emphasize the anthropomorphized form of the Ultimate Reality. He could have found out that the Ultimate Reality is essentially to be understood through the feature of a person. In this case, however, it is not the individual person identified with the Ultimate Reality that the author wanted to stress and point out, but the Ultimate Reality rendered as the ‘cosmic person’ or ‘primordial person’ having the feature of a person.

In the Yajurveda (henceforth: YV) most of the hymns are merely repetition of those of the RV. As we can see from the word yajur itself, the importance of sacrificial rite has been emphasized. Therefore, detailed and accurate performance of sacrificial rite has been demanded accordingly. However, there are some hymns philosophically important. YV 31 consists of verbatim repetition of the PS. When we examine it, the first 16 mantras are almost the same with the PS – only slight change of order is there in the middle – and the rest 6 mantras are the addition that belongs to YV where Prajāpati has become important. Prajāpati is described as great, possessing luster like the sun and beyond the reach of darkness. The knower of Him is said to have left death behind him. He being unborn, manifests himself variously and moves in the

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29 According to Narahari, the word ātman occurs about thirty times in the RV. Narahari (1944), p.43. This ātman implies various meanings. Sharma states that even in RV, “it denoted about as half a dozen meanings such as i) Wind (Ātman vātah), ii) Breath (Prāpa), iii) Oneself (Svayam), as standing for reflexive pronoun, iv) Body (Śarīra), v) Essence (Śāra), vi) Controller (Dhārayitr or Śūrātman), vii) Eternal and Intelligent Principle (Cetanātman).” Sharma (1972), p.11. Renou’s assertion is also noteworthy: “Since the Rgveda the word ātman denotes something which is at the base of the ‘animated’ character of living beings ... ātman is marked off by being a masculine; so that from the beginning it was capable of designating the ‘person’. Renou (1952), p.151.
womb. This implies that Prajāpati is material as well as efficient cause of
the universe, like Puruṣa in the PS.

While it is sacrificial rite that has been emphasized in the YV, it is
‘knowing’ that has become more important in the Atharvaveda (henceforth:
AV). In the AV, we can also see the etymology of the word puruṣa for the
first time:

Was he now created upward (ūrdhva) [or] was he now created crosswise?
Did man grow unto (ā-bhū) all the quarters? – He who knoweth the Brahman's
stronghold, from which man is [so] called.

Whoever indeed knoweth that Brahman's stronghold, covered with amrta
unto him both the Brahman and the Brahmans have given sight, breath,
progeny.

Him verily sight doth not desert nor breath, before old age, who knoweth
the Brahman's stronghold (pur) from which man (puruṣa) is [so] called.

According to this, Puruṣa was named from pur (stronghold, city, body),
since that person is the stronghold of Brahman. Elsewhere, it is also said that
the Brahman, which is the sūtra (string; the basis for all), dwells in a person.

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30 YV 31.19, Sharma (1972), p.73.
31 Ibid. pp.72-73.
32 Atharvaveda means ‘the knowledge of the magic spells’ and is also known as
‘Atharvāṅgiras’. This Veda was not regarded sacred as much as other three Vedas for a long
time due to the character of this Veda, the purpose of which is ‘to appease, to bless and to curse’
Its date is said to be later than other three Vedas. Winternitz asserts: hymns of the Atharvaveda
which contain theosophical and cosmological speculations indicate a later time. In these hymns
we find already a considerably well developed philosophical terminology and a pantheism of the
33 ārdhvo nu sṛṣṭi stīryaṁ nu sṛṣṭaṁ sarvā diśāṁ puruṣa a babhūvāṁ,
puṁsaṁ yo brahmaṇo veda yasyāṁ puruṣa ucyate.
yo vai tāṁ brahmaṇaṁ vedāṃśevarīṁ puraṁ,
tasmai brahma ca brahmaṇaṁ ca sṛṣṭaṁ prajāṁ prajāṁ dadvā,
na vai tāṁ ca sṛṣṭiḥ na prāṇo jaraṁ pruṁ,
pūrṇaṁ yo brahmaṇo veda yasyāṁ puruṣa ucyate. AV X.2.28-30.
34 yo vidyō sūtraṁ viśaraṁ yasminno taṁ prajāṁ imāṁ,
This Brahman, according to Hopkins, is the basic principle which let the universe be as it is.\textsuperscript{35} It is also said to be a principle which makes our life to be so. In this respect the following mantras are significant:

What waters (there are), and what deities, what virāj with Brahman, Brahman entered the body, on (adhi) the body (is) Prajāpati.\textsuperscript{36}

Therefore, indeed, one who knows Puruṣa thinks ‘this is Brahman’, for all deities are seated in him as cows in a cow-stall.\textsuperscript{37}

These mantras, in the same way, tell us that Brahman dwells in the person, and shows why Puruṣa is also sometimes called as Brahman. This Brahman, with all the cosmic forces, is said to have entered the body as Prajāpati. The equation of Puruṣa, Brahman and Parajāpati is made here.

The significant change we notice in the hymns of AV is that while in the YV the Puruṣa has been maintained as in the PS, in the AV the Brahman has come forward to partake the role of Puruṣa. It is not only the Brahman; numerous other concepts are introduced for the similar role. Sharma, while explaining the term ucchiṣṭa (residuum in general) says: \textit{The concept of Ucchiṣṭa is not different from that of Puruṣa or Viśvakarman or Brahman or Skambha or Jyeṣṭha Brahman. All these terms are actually synonyms}.\textsuperscript{38} What was done by a single term has been carried out by different terms resulting a

\textit{sūtraṁ sūtrasya yo vidyāśa vidyād brāhmaṇaṁ mahat}. AV X.8.37.
(Whose may know the stretched out string in which these off spring are woven in, whose may know the string of the string he may know the great brāhmaṇa.)

\textsuperscript{35} Hopkins (1971), p.38.
\textsuperscript{36} AV XI. 8.30.
\textsuperscript{37} AV XI. 8.32.
\textsuperscript{38} Sharma (1972), p.84.
clearer distinction between transcendental and immanent aspects of the Ultimate Principle. Or, vice versa: the tendency to make clearer distinction between transcendental and immanent aspects of the Ultimate Principle may have led people to search for a more adequate term fitting to that purpose. This, again, has made some change regarding those terms. We see certain terms showing preference to either of the two aspects. Terms like puruṣa, ātmā and yakṣa appear more often to indicate the latter aspect:

The lotus flower of nine doors, covered with three strands (gūpa), the Yakṣa as Ātmā is within it, that the Brahman-knowers know.

Free from desire, wise (dhīra), immortal, self-existent, satisfied with sap, not deficient in any respect knowing that wise, un-aging Ātmā, one is not afraid of death.\textsuperscript{39}

Nevertheless, we can see that the identification of the two aspects is still maintained as the basic assumption. Keith asserts that these mantras identify Ātmā with Brahman probably for the first time in the Veda.\textsuperscript{40} As Sharma states, they underline two important conclusions: 'the identity of Brahman and Ātmā' and 'the unity of microcosm and macrocosm'.\textsuperscript{41} The identifying statement as such in the AV seems to be a natural consequence, since the differentiation, which was not so obvious in earlier period, became very much distinct. It appears that this differentiation has caused two different, but related, prominent features connected with the Ultimate Reality in the

\textsuperscript{39} AV X.8.43-44.
\textsuperscript{40} Keith (1925), p.450. See also Whitney (1962) in his commentary on AV X.7, where he cites the same assertion made by Deussen. Similar content is seen in AV X.2.32.
\textsuperscript{41} Sharma (1972), p.87.
following period. One is that people started to pay much attention to an individual person; another is that personal and impersonal aspects of the Ultimate Reality became an important, controversial issue.\textsuperscript{42}

2. \textit{Brāhmaṇic period}

The Brāhmaṇa is made up of applications of \textit{mantras} and explanations of sacrifices. Its main theme is sacrificial rites, and other topics are subservient to that. In this period, the sacrifice was so much influential that it dominated all the people’s mind. It was important in the Veda as well, but here it is up to the extreme level. What we have seen in the PS of RV, that is, the ritualistic speculation, gained firm ground thereafter to be deeply rooted in the plains of Brāhmaṇa. Conceiving of the universe as coming into existence through \textit{yajñā} (rite) and as being sustained by it became unquestionable. In this period, the Ultimate Reality, which was called Puruṣa, Viśvakarman, Brahman etc. in the period of the Samhitā, came to be expressed more often by Prajāpati. The sacrifice was identified with him and he was considered to be the visible form of the incorporeal reality.\textsuperscript{43} It is just like the Prajāpati in the YV, which shows the overlapping aspect of the Sarinhitās and the Brāhmaṇas. The following statement must have come out on the basis of these aspects: \textit{The choosing of Prajāpati as the symbol of the unity of the world of diversity is one of the most

\textsuperscript{42} The latter requires further investigation that cannot be covered in this study. Consideration will be made focused on the first only.

\textsuperscript{43} Sharma (1972), p.95.
striking proofs of the great influence of the Rigveda upon the period of the Brāhmaṇas.\textsuperscript{44}

In addition to the equation of Puruṣa, Brahman and Prajāpati shown in the AV, we can see Puruṣa, Prajāpati and Agni being regarded as equal in the Brāhmaṇa:

That same Person became Prajāpati. And that Person which became Prajāpati is this very Agni, who is now (to be) built.\textsuperscript{45}

The Agni, which has longer history than Prajāpati, came to be an Ultimate Reality by becoming identical with Prajāpati. There, Agni (the fire and fire-altar) is identified with universe, and the creation and maintaining of universe depend on performing correct sacrificial rite. We can also see Puruṣa being identified with Agni Vaiśvānara:

This Agni Vaiśvānara is no other than the Puruṣa; and, verily, whosoever thus knows that Agni Vaiśvānara as Puruṣa-like, as established within the Puruṣa, repels death, and attains all life; and, verily, Vaiśvānara does no harm to him that speaks of him.\textsuperscript{46}

\textsuperscript{44} Keith (1925), p.442-3.
\textsuperscript{45} sa eva puruṣaḥ prajāpatirabhavat, sa yah sa puruṣaḥ prajāpatirabhavaṇāyameva sa yo'yaṁagniścīyate. Satapatha Brāhmaṇa (henceforth: SB) 6.1.1.5.
\textsuperscript{46} SB 10.6.1.11. In Brhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad (henceforth: BU) 1.1.1, the open mouth of the sacrificial horse is identified with the Agni Vaiśvānara; in 5.9.1, Agni Vaiśvānara is explained as the fire within a person (Puruṣa). In Chāṇḍogya Upaniṣad (henceforth: CU) 5.11, Atrman Vaiśvānara is explained instead of Agni Vaiśvānara.
Agni-Vaiśvānara in ŚB represents a common factor immanent in all things in the universe. The etymology of puruṣa is also seen in the Brāhmaṇa:

The stronghold (pur) doubtless is these worlds and the Puruṣa is he that blows here (the wind), he bides (ś) in this stronghold (pur): hence, he is the Puruṣa.\(^{47}\)

In some cases, the explanation of the person is made in different way. Elements of the physical constitution of a person are enumerated. In ŚB, it is said:

And, again, why there are seventeen, — Puruṣa is seventeen-fold — there are ten vital airs, four limbs, the body the fifteenth, the neck-joints the sixteenth, and the head the seventeenth. \(^{48}\)

In Aitareya Brāhmaṇa (henceforth: AB) also, but little differently:

... Man (Puruṣa) is composed of five parts, viz. hairs, skin, flesh, bones, and marrow.\(^{49}\)

The same thing is seen in the Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa (henceforth: TB) where only marrow has been substituted with muscle.\(^{50}\) Although these passages appear quite different from the general description of the person, they are, in

\(^{47}\) ŚB 13.6.2.1.  
\(^{48}\) ŚB 6.2.2.9.  
\(^{49}\) AB 2.14.  
\(^{50}\) TB 1.5.9.7.
fact, not detached from the main context, i.e. the ritual-based speculation. Considering the paraphernalia of rituals and the parallelism between person and ritual, the analysis of constituents of a person including bodily aspect seems to be quite natural.

There is a significant description about the person in the Brāhmaṇa. The person is specifically mentioned as being related to the inner part. What was understood by the expression such as 'Brahman entered the body' in the AV is directly stated here. The person is now expressed as that of inner Ātman:

... or the smallest granule of millet, so is the golden Puruṣa of inner Ātman; even as a smokeless lights, it is greater than the sky, greater than the ether, greater than the earth, greater than all existing things; — that Ātman (self) of the Prāṇa (breath) is my Ātman (self): on passing away from thence I shall obtain that Ātman (self). Verily, whosoever has this trust, for him there is no uncertainty. Thus spake Śaṅḍilya, and so it is.51

A very similar content ascribed to the same Śaṅḍilya is found in CU 3.14. There, instead of the expression 'Puruṣa of inner Ātman' (antarātmanpuruṣa), 'This is my Ātman within the heart' (esa ma ātmāntar hṛdaye) is used, which is more specific. Another point that attracts our attention is that we cannot see the direct identification of Brahman with Ātman in the above quotation as can be seen in the CU. They are separately mentioned.

The person is also identified with Mṛtyu (Death). One who knows this becomes the Ātman and achieves the immortal after the death:

51 ŚB 10.6.3.1-2.
Now, that Man (Puruṣa) in yonder orb (of the sun) and this Man in the right eye, are no other than Death (Mrtyu); and he becomes the Âtman of him who knows this. Whenever he who knows departs this world he passes into that Âtman, and becomes immortal, for Death is his own Âtman.\textsuperscript{52}

One of the two prominent features related to the Ultimate Reality in the Brähmanic period mentioned above, that people started to pay much attention to an individual person, is shown in the last two cases. Since the PS of the RV, the concept of person has been mythological and cosmological. But, starting from the AV and more evidently in the Brähmaṇa, people were awakening to realize their subjective identity. Although they did not have detailed idea of individuality, they believed that the person in the right eye or that of inner Âtman is always related with the Universal Self (Âtman) which is to be understood as identical with Brahman indirectly.

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3. Early Upaniṣadic period
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\textsuperscript{52} ŚB 10.5.2.23.
In the early Upaniṣadic period, we see an important development concerning the Ultimate Reality. In these days, the main themes of philosophy were Puruṣa, Brahman and Ātman. It is said that if we know the three concepts and the relation between them, we become to understand the philosophy of the Upaniṣads. Generally, while the Brähmaṇa is characterized as ritualistic the Upaniṣad is described as speculative. By this, we are apt to think more of the discontinuous aspect between them. However, we have to bear in mind that many teachers introduced in the early Upaniṣads appear in the Brähmaṇas as well, which makes evident that there is considerable overlap of Brähmaṇical ritual-based speculation and Upaniṣadic speculation tending to free itself from any ritual connection. We have already seen examples of the speculative aspect of the Brähmaṇa that appear similar to the Upaniṣadic speculation. Therefore, while examining the three main concepts and the relation between them for the understanding of the philosophy of the Upaniṣads, consideration should be made with respect to three different aspects: the inherited aspect, the changed aspect and the

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53 Here, only the Upaniṣads believed to be earlier than or contemporary to the time of the Buddha will be dealt with. Deussen classified Upaniṣads into four groups according to chronological order: 1. The ancient prose Upaniṣads; Bhadārāγyaka, Chāndogya, Taittirīya, Aitareya, Kaushāṭaki and Kena. 2. The metrical Upaniṣads; Kāthaka, Āṣa, Śvetāśvatara, Maṇḍukya and Mahānārāyana. 3. The later prose Upaniṣads; Praśna, Maṇḍūkya, Maṇḍākya. 4. The later Atharvā Upaniṣads. Deussen (1966), pp.23-26. Meanwhile, Radhakrishnan asserts: "Modern criticism is generally agreed that the ancient prose Upaniṣads, Aitareya, Kaushāṭaki, Chāndogya, Kena, Taittirīya and Bhadārāγyaka, together with Āṣa and Kāthā belong to the eighth and seventh centuries B.C. They are all pre-Buddhisic." Radhakrishnan (1953), p.22. Olivelle also mentions about the chronology of Upaniṣads: "The scholarly consensus, well founded I think, is that the Bhadārāγyaka and Chāndogya are two earliest Upaniṣads. We have seen, however, that they are edited texts, some of whose sources are much older than others. The two texts as we have them are, in all likelihood, pre-Buddhist; placing them in the seventh to sixth centuries BCE may be reasonable, give or take a century or so. The three other early prose Upaniṣads—Taittirīya, Aitareya, and Kaushāṭaki—come next; all are probably pre-Buddhist and can be assigned to the sixth to fifth centuries BCE." Olivelle (1996), xxxvi.

distinct aspect. We can quote the following two passages from CU and BU for the examination in this regard:

Of this Universal Self (ātmano vaiśvānarasya), the head indeed is the good light, the eye is the universal form, breath is (the air) of varied courses, the body is the full, the bladder is wealth, the feet are the earth, the chest indeed is the sacrificial area, the hair is the sacred grass, the heart is the gārhapatya fire, the mind is the anvāhārya-pacana fire and the mouth is the āhavanīya fire.\(^{55}\)

... Gārgya said: 'The person here who is in the self (ātman), on him, indeed, do I meditate as Brahman.' Ajātaśatru said: 'Please do not talk to me about him. I meditate on him, verily, as self-possessed. He who meditates on him as such he becomes self-possessed. His offspring becomes self-possessed.' Gārgya became silent.\(^{56}\)

The first passage shows a clear influence of the PS of the RV. As Sharma states, the Puruṣa Śākta contributed a lot to the Upaniṣadic concept of Ātman. So much so that the Rgvedic Puruṣa, along with the word Ātman, is still used in the Upaniṣads to denote the sense of the Ultimate Cause of the Universe.\(^{57}\)

Therefore, the theory of macrocosm and microcosm is maintained here. What we also see is modification, the differently applied aspect. Here, it is not that different things of a certain category are evolved from different parts of the one source, but that they are identified with the latter. This kind of thought can be seen in many places in the early Upaniṣads. The second passage

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\(^{55}\) CU 5.18.2.

\(^{56}\) BU 2.1.2-13.

\(^{57}\) Sharma (1972), p.51.
appears to be more related to the changed and distinct aspects, though the inherited aspect is basically there. It shows the speculation being led toward the subjective side of the person. The person (puruṣa) in each object, viz. sun, moon, lightening, ether, air, fire, and so on, is treated to be identical with Brahman. Then, in the final stage, it is said: “The person (puruṣa) here who is in the self (ātman), on him, indeed, do I meditate as Brahman.”

As we could see, Puruṣa has been identified with Brahman in connection with Ātman. In the Upaniṣads, while we generally see that Ātman is identified with Brahman directly, we hardly find any example of Puruṣa being so in early Upaniṣads.\(^{58}\) Puruṣa has been related to Brahman only when it is qualified by something. Especially, the Puruṣa connected with Ātman implies the autonomous subject as the basis of perception of the external world. It would not be wrong to say that the significant meaning of Upaniṣadic approach to the person is that the speculation on the matter goes further more to the subjective aspect of individuality. In order to know the progress of this tendency in details, we should investigate the inter-relationship between Ātman and Puruṣa. Besides this point of subjectivity there is another point to be added: as mentioned above when dealing with Śāṇḍilya’s statement in the ŚB, the direct identification seems to be a new development in the period of early Upaniṣads.

We can make out the characteristic of Puruṣa in the Upaniṣads roughly, in comparison with Ātman. Sharma, regarding various words having the sense of Ātman, states as follows:

\(^{58}\) There is one case in Altareya Upaniṣad 1.3.13. 
\textit{sa etam eva puruṣasāṁ brahma tatam apāśyant, idam adarśam iti.}
In the Śāṁhitās, like the word Brahman, which is equated with Ātman, the words: Puruṣa, Hariṣa, Suparṣa, Ajobhāga, Prāpa. Jiva, Satya, Viśvakarman, Brhaspati, Prajāpati and Hiranyagarbha, and so on, also denote the sense of Ātman. In the Upaniṣads, however, only a few words such as Brahman, Puruṣa, Hariṣa and, very rarely, Suparṣa, Jiva, Prāpa and Satya are used interchangeably for Ātman. Other words are dropped. They are no longer used as equivalents to Ātman. This was, perhaps, more due to inter alia, to the semantic changes in the course of historical development of words.⁵⁹

As he points out, the terms frequently used to indicate the Ultimate Reality in the Śāṁhitās no longer appeared on the stage of the Upaniṣads.⁶⁰ And, this reflects, naturally, the historical development of ideas of this period.

As mentioned above, the case where Ātman and Puruṣa are identified directly with each other is not seen in the early Upaniṣads. In case when they are identified, they are always seen with the modifier either on one side or on both sides. For example, in BU and CU, it is said:

‘Which is the self (ātman)?’ ‘The person (puruṣa) here who consists of knowledge in the breaths (prāpa), the light within the heart. ...’⁶¹

Even so that serene one (= ātman) when he rises up from this body and reaches the highest light appears in his own form. Such a person is the Supreme Person.⁶²

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⁶⁰ Ibid.
⁶¹ katra ātmeti yo’yaṁ viññānānusayaḥ prāpaśu hiṣaṃantaryatiḥ puruṣah... BU 4.3.7.
⁶² evam eva saṃprasādo smācchārīrān samuñthāya paraṁ jyotirūpasampadaṁ svanā rūpepacchīnī spadyate, sa uttamaḥ puruṣah... CU 8.12.3.
There are many similar cases in the early Upaniṣads.⁶³ Even though Ātman and Puruṣa are described separately, the portrayed characters of them are shared with each other in most of the cases.⁶⁴ Moreover, the two are having the same fate of being identified with Brahman. The Puruṣa mentioned in early Upaniṣads can be classified as the following:

i) Puruṣa as related to body (śarīra) ; BU 2.5.1; 3.9.10 etc.

ii) Puruṣa as related to heart ; BU 3.9.11, 16, 17; 4.3.7; 5.6.1; CU 3.13.7; TU 1.6 etc.

iii) Puruṣa as related to eye ; BU 2.3.4, 5, 5.5; 3.9.12, 15; 4.2.2; 5.5.2; CU 1.7.5; 4.15.1 etc.

iv) Puruṣa as defined as manas or vijñāna ; BU 2.1.16, 17; 3.9.10-17; 4.3.7; 5.6.1; TU 1.6.1 etc.

v) Puruṣa as related to Vaiśvānara ; BU 5.9.1

vi) Puruṣa as related to light or something shining: BU 2.5.1-14; BU 3.9.10-17; 4.3.2-7; 5.6.1. 4.3.2-5

vii) It is related to sun: BU 2.3.3, 5.5; 3.9.12; 4.3.2.

When we examine these seven kinds, we find that i), ii) and iii) are actually in the same category; and, ii), iii), iv) and vi) are seen together frequently. For example, in the case of Puruṣa, it is said:

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⁶³ Cf. BU 3.9.26; 4.2.4; 8.3.4; CU 4.15.1; 8.7.4 etc. See also BU 5.9.1.

⁶⁴ So far, I did not come across with the Ātman being related to the eye, unlike the Puruṣa in early Upaniṣads.
This person who consists of mind is of the nature of light, is within the heart.\textsuperscript{65}

When Ātman and Puruṣa are related to light, sun and heart, we can often find manas and vijnāna also coming together. The idea that something shining and bright is associated with Puruṣa\textsuperscript{66} has long tradition. For example, Puruṣa is represented by lightening in Taittirīya Āraṇyaka.\textsuperscript{67} We can trace it even to the PS of RV.\textsuperscript{68} Rhys Davids said that Puruṣa who is the new outlook on the Ātman is often referred to under the aspect of light (jyoti, bhāsa); he becomes self-light; and the Ātman is light in the heart of the Puruṣa.\textsuperscript{69} The statement of Radhakrishnan that Puruṣa is the subjective light of consciousness that is reflected in all beings\textsuperscript{70} is also relevant to this idea of Puruṣa of the Upaniṣads.

In BU, it is said that Agni which dwells in Puruṣa is the Vaiśvānara.\textsuperscript{71} This Agni-Vaiśvānara, as seen earlier, first appears in ŚB; and in CU, Agni has been substituted by Ātman.\textsuperscript{72} This reflects the change of the philosophical atmosphere, that is, from the ritualistic to the anthropocentric. In TU\textsuperscript{73}, Puruṣa is also explained as five kośas, or sheaths, in which it is manifested as an individual person (or the Jīvātman). So-called pañcakośa is a kind of five

\textsuperscript{65} manomayo'yaṁ puruṣaḥ bhāh satyaḥ tasminn antar-hādaye yathā vṛihir vā yāvo vā. BU 5.6.1. We can see similar statement in BU 4.3.7, katuṁa āmeti yo'yaṁ vijnānaṁ yaṁ prāpeṣu hyavantariyottih puruṣaḥ. See also BU 3.9.11.
\textsuperscript{66} Cf. BU 5.9.1.
\textsuperscript{67} Taittirīya Āraṇyaka 10.1.2-4.
\textsuperscript{68} We can remind us of the Virāj in PS of RV. Its meaning is related to 'shining'.
\textsuperscript{69} Rhys Davids (1978), p.42.
\textsuperscript{70} Radhakrishnan (1953), p.91.
\textsuperscript{71} ayam aṁgir vaiśvānaro yo'yaṁ antaṁ pruruṣe. BU 5.9.1. See also footnote 45.
\textsuperscript{72} See footnote 45.
\textsuperscript{73} TU 2.2-5.
different layers of self which might be speculated through the empirical approach: the self made of the essence of food (annarasamaya), the self made of breath (prāṇamaya), the self made of the mind (manomaya), the self made of perception (vijñānamaya), and the self made of bliss (ānandamaya).

In Upaniṣads, discovering Ātman is a sort of transcendental experience, and it cannot be thoroughly explored with theory. They thought that this Ātman could only be described as ‘not this’ ‘not this’ (neti neti). We can find significant passage at the end of this verse:

It is said that he can see, but he can’t be seen; he hears, but he can’t be heard; he thinks, but he can’t be thought of; he perceives, but he can’t be perceived. Besides him, there is no one who perceives. It is this Ātman of yours who is the inner controller, the immortal. All besides this is grief. Thereupon, Uddālaka Āruṇi fell silent.⁷⁴

Many scholars pointed out that this teaching of Yajñavalkya is very much similar with the teaching of the Buddha. In fact, we come across with strikingly similar passage in Udāna:

There is only seeing when it is seen, there is only hearing when it is heard, there is only thinking when it is thought, there is only perceiving when it is perceived.⁷⁵

And, this is how Frauwallner concludes on this matter:

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⁷⁴ adṛṣṭo draṣṭā, aśrutaḥ śrotā, amato mantā, avijñāto vijñātā. nāmyo ‘to ‘sti draṣṭā, nāmyo ‘to ‘sti śrotā, nāmyo ‘to ‘sti mantā, nāmyo ‘to ‘sti vijñātā. esa ta ātmānyāyāmamityaḥ. aśi ‘nyad ārtam. tato hoddālaka āruṇir uparārāma. BU 3.7.23.

⁷⁵ ditthe ditthamattam bhavissati, sute sutamattam bhavissati, mute mutamattam bhavissati, viṃśiṃśatattam bhavissati‘tī. Udāna 10.
It will be now clear, at the first glance, that the Buddhistic interpretation of the Soul belongs to the same stream of development which had its origin in the Upanišads. Thus arises the decisive definition of the Soul as incomprehensible and inexpressible.\textsuperscript{76}

Then, what is the difference between Yajñavalkya and the Buddha? It is the attitude toward what they are seeking. While the former stands only for epoche (suspension of judgement), the latter is another positive way for seeking the truth with certain moral value.

We have seen that understanding the three main concepts, i.e. Puruṣa, Brahman and Ātman, and their relation is essential in having clear idea on the figuring out the concept of person in the early Upaniṣads. We have also seen that although there is common agreement in broad sense concerning Puruṣa, Brahman and Ātman in the early Upaniṣads there also exists difference in detailed aspect depending on the branch, and according to the teacher – even in the same text. As Olivelle points out, these documents were composed over several centuries and in various regions, and it is futile to try to discover a single doctrine or philosophy in them.\textsuperscript{77} We need to be more cautious to discriminate some of the minute, but significant, differences among the similars. The concept of person in the early Upaniṣads is neither governed by the cosmological contemplation of the Saṁhitā augmented with ritualistic view nor the ritualistic speculation of the Brāhmaṇa. It is dominated by the

\textsuperscript{76} Frauwallner (1973), p.184.
\textsuperscript{77} Olivelle (1996), xxiv.
superimpositional identification based on the meditative speculation developed on the ground of the former two.

4. Kaṭha Upaniṣad

Most of the scholars agreed that the ancient prose Upaniṣads like Brhadāraṇyaka, Chāndogya, Aitareya, Taittiriya and Kaู่śṭaki are probably pre-Buddhistic and can be assigned to the seventh to fifth centuries BCE. According to Radhakrishnan, Kaṭha Upaniṣad (also called Kāṭhaka Upaniṣad; henceforth: KaU) is also included in this group, which belongs to the eighth and seventh centuries BCE. He concludes that they are all pre-Buddhistic.  

Keith, however, doubted the claim that the KaU predates the time of the Buddha. He criticized that acceptance of an earlier date must rest merely on individual fancy.  

Deussen did not attempt to compare the date of Upaniṣads with that of the Buddha, but he classified Upaniṣads into four successive periods. According to him, KaU occupies the first half of the second period called the metrical Upaniṣads.  

Olivelle mentions that the content of KaU has two different layers of chronology. Among the six sections constituting two chapters the first two that contain the episode of Naciketas and King Yama provide the old context of the Upaniṣad, and are considered to be originally part of Kāṭhaka Brāhmaṇa – though at present we see only in TB (3.11.8.1-6). The remaining four sections, especially the last three with repetitive refrain etad vai tat (this, verily, is that) are believed to be an

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78 See footnote 53.
79 Keith (1925), p.552.
80 See footnote 53.
Considering all the statements above, we can place the KaU very close to the time of the Buddha – whether earlier or later.

There are few interesting points in KaU. It may be is because of the significant period in which it is placed. Among them, the intention-revealing hierarchical arrangement of the principles, according to which Puruṣa occupies the highest position, obviously draws our interest. The more interesting thing is the unique idea of an individual person introduced here, which is eventually to be identified with the Puruṣa place on top. KaU refers the person of the size of a thumb (aṅgusta-mātraḥ puruṣaḥ) who dwells in the midst of the body. BU also refers the Puruṣa which is like a grain of rice or of barley within the heart. And, CU refers the Ātman as the measure of the span (prādeśa-mātra). But, this aṅgusta-mātra puruṣa is not found in any other Upaniṣads before KaU. The term aṅgusta-mātra puruṣa appears three times in KaU:

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82 Oldenberg concludes that its first half-belong to the pre-Buddhistic period. “I can, of course, say without any doubt that the Kāṭhaka Upaniṣad – at least its first half – belongs to the pre-Buddhistic period.” Oldenberg (1991) p.189. Olivelle seems to support this idea: “In some manuscripts the KaU is actually divided into two sections, the first comprising the first three chapters (valaṅ), and the second, the last three. ... The first two chapters, containing the dialogue between Naciketas and Yama, provide the old context of the Upaniṣad, which seeks to provide an Upaniṣadic twist to the three wishes of Naciketas. The last chapters, especially sections 4-6 with the repetitive refrain, ‘So indeed, is that (etiḥ vaiśvad), are probably an appendix superimposed on that examination of the three wishes.’ He also mentions that the episode, which, in all likelihood, was originally part of the Kāṭhaka Brāhmaṇa, is now found in TB 3.11.8.1-6. Olivelle (1996), p.231.
83 KaU 2.1.15.
84 BU 5.6.
85 CU 5.18.1.
86 Interestingly, referring to the aṅgusta-mātraḥ puruṣaḥ of KaU, Varma points out that the Buddhist doctrine of anātman is not so much against the metaphysical notions of the self as formulated in the Upaniṣads, but is against the primitive animistic views prevalent in popular circles. Varma (1973), p.146.
The person of the size of a thumb resides in the midst of the body; the lord of the past and the future, one does not hide himself.87

The person of the size of a thumb, like flame without smoke. He is the lord of the past and the future. He is the same today and the same tomorrow.88

The person of the size of a thumb in the body, always resides within the hearts of men. One should draw him out of the body with determination, like a reed from the grass sheath.89

KaU develops the idea of individual self, which is endowed with the faculty of perception, in a unique way. This individual person is an inner self as small as a thumb in height within the heart. It is regarded as the subject of transmigration. In KaU, Puruṣa is distinguishable from Ātman: while Ātman, which is identified with Brahman, is more comprehensive, Puruṣa, which does act and enjoy its fruits, is vital and concrete.

It is said that ancient Indians had a tendency to believe that mentality of the human being is located in the heart. According to Deussen,90 the heart, more than the head, occupies the attention of the thinkers of the Upaniṣads. They believe that the vital breaths reside there; and the heart is the home of manas. The heart is called hrdayam, because “it is he” who dwells “in the heart” (hrdy ayam).91 Therefore, heart, mind and intellect were seen as

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87 ārīgusthāmāṇāḥ puruṣo madhyā ātmani tiṣṭhati,
88 ārīgusthāmāṇāḥ puruṣo jyotir ivādhiṃmakāḥ,
89 ārīgusthāmāṇāḥ puruṣo niṣṭhāṁ saddā janoṁnāṁ hrdaye sarīṇivīṣṭaḥ,
ṣaṁ śvācchariṛāḥ pravṛttaḥ pravṛttamūldadive śikāṁ dhairyeṣa,
ṣaṁ ūdācchukramamśaṁtiṣaṁ ūdācchukramamśaṁtiṣaṁti. KaU 2.3.17.
91 tasyatad eva niruktāṁ hrdaya ayam iti tasmāddhrdayam. (This is its etymology, “in the heart is this”) CU 8.3.3.
identical. For example, in KaU, it is said: *By heart, by thought, by mind apprehended, they who know Him become immortal.* Keith also emphasized that KaU is marked by its clear enunciation for the first time of the conception of the enjoyer as the union of the self with the mind and the senses. The detailed parallelism of the constituents of an individual person is also introduced there:

Know the self as the rider in a chariot, and the body, as simply the chariot. Know the intellect as the charioteer, and the mind, as verily the rein. The senses, they say, are the horses, and sense objects are the paths they range over. He who is linked to the body, senses, and mind, the wise declare as the one who enjoys.

In KaU, we see a kind of effort to apprehend the person of individuality in a more substantial and specific way. In this sense, it is quite unique in the Upaniṣads where the Puruṣa, identified with Ātman and Brahman, is generally not conceived of in figurative manner, even in the confined state of being an individual. However, it does not appear to be contradictory to the Puruṣa, precisely the second Puruṣa, of the PS, to which substantiability and corporeality are attributed. This aspect along with the hierarchical arrangement mentioned above seems to show somehow the intention of the redactor of KaU to revaluate the Puruṣa of the PS. It also reflects various efforts that had been made for the better description of the ‘self’ in the long

92 *ḥrdā maniṣā manasābhīkṛptā ya etad vidur amṛtās te bhaveṇti.* KaU 2.3.9.
93 Keith (1925), p.552.
94 KaU 1.3.3-4. Simile of chariot with person appears in *Milinda-paññā* I.1.1 pp.33-34.
history of the Upaniṣads. The significant point we observe here is that the reevaluation of Puruṣa in the KaU seems to have close relation to the abolishment of Ātman and the devaluation of Brahmā in the hierarchical order of the conditioned world established in early Buddhism.

In this chapter, we have seen from the RV how the philosophical speculation on person has started. The idea of puruṣa (person) as an Ultimate Reality shows the identity of macrocosm and microcosm. It is the result of ritual-based speculation that had prevailed prior and posterior to the period of the PS. The idea of person here, however, is not directly related to the concept of ‘individual person’. It is from AV that we see the germ of subject-centred speculation. We have also seen that this idea of person influenced notably to the philosophical atmosphere of the ages that followed. The idea of person of the RV has developed significantly to the identity of the Ātman and the Brahman, which is first observed in AV. The identity here, as we have noticed, is indirect identity. This idea reaches its culmination in early Upaniṣads where we see numerous example of direct identification. We will see in the next chapter, what kind of significance it bears in relation to the early Buddhism.