Chapter - IV

DENIAL OF SOUL IN
THE THERAVADA BUDDHISM
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MEANINGS AND USAGES OF THE WORDS ATTĀ (from n-stem) AND ATTA (from a-stem)

In the Pali texts and commentaries, the words 'Attā' (acc.attanaṁ, inst. & abl. attanā) and 'Atta' (acc.attam, inst. attena, abl. attato) are used in several senses as follows:

(1) Very frequently used as a pronoun, thus: (a) as a demonstrative pronoun (or indefinite) = sayam, he himself (opposite para, ubhaya), e.g. attā pi gutto rakkhito bhavissati, SI 89; attana attanaṁ samman-nitabbaṁ, Vin I 94; - (b) likewise instrumental attanā is frequently used in the sense of 'himself' (Nominative) = sayam, with which it is combined; e.g. himsaṁ attanaṁ attanā, Sn 585; attanā jāti-dhamaṁ samāno, M I 161; attanā adhammo pare adhamme niyojetvā, Mil 204; - (c) the indirect cases of attā are very frequently used (as in Sanskrit) as reflexive pronoun for all three persons and genders, thus expressing the different case-relations of sayam; attanaṁ samukkaṁse pare ca avajānti, Sn 438; attanā duggahitena amhe abbhācikkhasi, M I 132; tvaṁ maṁ attano gharāṁ ma peshehi, Ja VI 312; attanā vā attano anattho kato, Ja V 79; attano attano gharad-vāraṁ sodhetabbaṁ, Ps I 102; etaṁ ahaṁ ... attani sampassamaṁo M I 17.
(2) the self, the ego, one's self, as a metaphysical entity, 'soul'; e.g. D I 31-34; eso 'ham asmi, eso me attā, S III 223; Vin I 14; M I 135; kena attanā gacchati Brahma-lokaṁ, Sn 508; evam-vanṇo attā hoti arogo paraṁ maraṇā, M II 33; ekanta-sukhiḥ attā hoti sukha-dukkhā vā, M II 37; saṁra-parimāṇo aṅguṭṭha-parimāṇo yava-parimāṇo paramāṇu-parimāṇo attā, Ud-a 339 = Sv I 192 = Ps I 260 = Vībh-a 354; -- sometimes the notion 'one's (own) self' is nearly related to the use of attā as a pronoun; e.g. yaṁ vā itthiṁ gaveseyyātha, yaṁ vā attānaṁ ..., Vin I 23; kesaṁ nu kho piyo attā, S I 78; saṁraṁ attanā saddhiṁ na gacchati, Dh-paI 6 -- other forms of attā are ātuma and tuma; e.g. atumā vuccati attā, Mahani-ddesa 69; yo ātumānaṁ sayaṁ eva pāvā, Sn 782; yaṁ tumo karissati tumo vā tena paññāyissati, Vin II 186; tumo saha hoti nihinapaṇṇo, Sn 890.

It is with the meaning No.(2) that we are concerned here, the entity that is conceived and sought and made the subject of a certain class of views called in the Theravāda Buddhism attadīṭṭhi, attānudīṭṭhi (=self-views or heresy of self) and attagāha (=misconception regarding self or soul). In the previous chapter i.e. Chapter III, we have discussed about them in detail. Here in this chapter we will discuss about the complete denial of such a conception of Ātman (=attā) by the Buddha on the basis of the Theravāda Buddhist texts and commentaries in Pali.
IV.2. **WHAT IS ANATTĀ?**

Etymologically, Anattā consists of the negative prefix an plus attā (Skt. Ātman). So Anattā means non-self or no-soul, the term used by the Buddha Gotama to contradict the theories extant in His time regarding the self or soul, as a metaphysical entity. Anattā is one of the three characteristics (anicca-dukkha-anattā) of the universe and everything in it, preached by the Buddha. Like the teaching of the four Noble Truths, it is also regarded as the exalted teaching of the Buddhas (=Buddhānaṁ sāmukkaṁsīkā dhammadesanā). In the words of Nyanatiloka: (2) "The Anattā doctrine teaches that neither within the bodily and mental phenomena of existence, nor outside of them, can be found anything that in the ultimate sense could be regarded as a self-existing real Ego-entity, soul or any other abiding substance. This is the central doctrine of Buddhism, without understanding of which a real knowledge of Buddhism is altogether impossible. It is the only really specific Buddhist doctrine, with which the entire structure of the Buddhist teachings stands or falls. All the remaining Buddhist doctrines may, more or less, be found in other philosophic systems and religions, but the Anattā-Doctrine has been clearly and unreservedly taught only by the Buddha, wherefore the Buddha is known as the Anatta-vādī, or teacher of Impersonality. Whosoever has not penetrated this impersonality of all existence, and does not comprehend that in reality there exists only this continually
self-consuming process of arising and passing bodily and mental phenomena, and that there is no separate Ego-entity within or without this process, he will not be able to understand Buddhism, i.e. the teaching of the 4 Noble Truths in the right light. He will think that it is his Ego, his personality, that experiences the suffering, his personality that performs good and evil actions and will be reborn according to these actions, his personality that will enter into Nirvāṇa, his personality that walks on the Eightfold Path".

Mahāthera Ledi Sayadaw, Aggamahāpanḍita(3) has very clearly explained the connotations of Atta and Anattā as follows:

The mark by which mental and material phenomena are to be understood as No-soul is called the Anattā-lakkhana or the mark of No-soul. In considering the word Anattā, the meaning of the word Atta ought first to be understood. Atta in ordinary sense means essence or substantiality. The essence or substantiality can be explained with the example of earth which is the essence or substantiality of a pot. The word 'pot' is merely the name by which is indicated a certain pictorial idea (=saṁthāna-paññatti); it is not a name for earth. And a pictorial idea possesses no essence or substantiality as an ultimate thing; here earth alone is ultimate thing and possesses essence or substantiality. If the question is asked: "Does such a thing as pot exist in the world?" - those who are unable to differentiate between the two kinds of truth,
ultimate and conventional, - would answer that the pot exists. They should then be asked to point out the pot. They will now point to an earthen pot near at hand, saying: "Is not that a pot?"
But it is not correct of them thus to allege that earth is pot; it is a false allegation. Why is it a false allegation? Simply because earth is an ultimate thing and has essence or substantiality; while pot is a mere conception having no essence or substantiality, and thus, like space, is void. To allege of earth that it is pot, is in effect to try to make out that the essential earth constitutes the essence or substantiality of pot, which is actual fact, seeing that pot as a mere representation of the mind, possesses no substantial essence whatever. Here, what actually is non-existent pot becomes existent pot, and earth also becomes Attā of the earth, so that earth and pot become one and the same thing, the identity of the one is confused with the identity of the other. For this reason it is that we call this a false allegation. In this illustration, "earth" corresponds with the Five Aggregates or their constituents, material and mental phenomena, while "pot" corresponds with persons and living creatures. Just as earth becomes the essence of pot in the statement that the earth is the pot, so also the Five Aggregates of their constituents become the Attā or the essence of persons and creatures, when it is said that the Aggregates are persons and creatures. This is the meaning of Attā.
Now for Anattā. In the expression "earthen pot", if one is able to discern that earth is one thing, and pot another, and that earth is an ultimate thing and pot a mere conception of the mind, and again, that earth is not pot, and pot is not earth, and also that it is false to call earth a pot, and to call pot, earth, then the earth becomes not the essence or attā of the pot, but becomes Anattā; while at the same time also, pot is seen to be void like space, since it is a mere conception of form. A like result is obtained if one is able to discern the Five Aggregates and the material and mental phenomena thus: The fivefold set of Aggregates are ultimate things; persons and creatures are ideas derived from the forms and the continua; hence the phenomena are not persons and creatures; and persons and creatures are not the phenomena. If the phenomena are called persons and creatures, this is a false naming of them; and if persons and creatures are called the phenomena, this is false too. Accordingly the phenomena become, not the essence of persons and creatures, but become Anattā, or the reverse of substantial essence. And also, persons and creatures become quite evidently void and empty, in as much as they are mere ideas derived from the forms and continua of the phenomena. The is what is meant by Anattā.

The marks of Impermanence and Suffering (=anicca-lakkhana and dukkha-lakkhana) are also the marks of No-soul (=anatta-lakkhana). How? It is supposed that the ideas (=paññatti) of persons and
creatures are eternal and immortal both in this existence and in those that follow, and it has been explained that the phenomena are not eternal since they are subject to momentary decays and deaths which are the marks of impermanence; and also because they are constantly ceasing and being reproduced many times beyond possibility of being numbered, even in one day, the mark of that kind of impermanence being known as Annathabhava.

In Buddhist philosophy there are three things which are eternal and immortal, which are called in Pali, Paññatti (= concept(s)), Ākāsa (= space) and Nibbāna. They exist independent of whether any particular being thinks them or not. In other words, they are eternal and immortal and independent of time, and not in any sense of being unbrokenly continuous in time. In the ideas (= Paññatti) of persons and creatures no marks of change (= viparīṭa) and unstableness or alteration (= aṇṇathabhava) are to be seen. If such marks were to be found in the ideas (= paññattis) of persons and creatures, then, of course, the ideas would also be subject to births, decays and deaths, and would be reborn, decay and die many times even in one day. But these marks are not to be found in the ideas or paññattis; we discern these marks only in the mental and material phenomena. Therefore it comes to this that the mental and material phenomena, i.e. Nāma-rūpa-dhamma, are not to be regarded as the essence or substantiality of persons and creatures. So it is said: "Asarakattena anatta" or "On account of being without
IV.3 **ANATTĀ DOCTRINE DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND**

Of all the truths, the doctrine of Anattā is the most difficult to realise. According to Buddhaghosa, the great Pali commentator, the description of the characteristics of Anattā is the province of none but the Buddhas. (4) When Paribbājaka Aggivacchagotta cannot understand the implication of the doctrine, the Buddha says: "Profound, O Vaccha, is this doctrine, hard to see, hard to comprehend, calm, excellent, beyond the sphere of reasoning, subtle, intelligible only to the wise."

"Gambhīro hāyaṁ, Vaccha, dhammo duddaso duranubodho santo pāñīto atakkāvacaro nipoṇo pāñjitave-daniyō(5)"

Dr. G.P. Malalasekera also remarks (6): It is no idle tradition which states that even the Groups of Five-Monks (= pañcaavaggiya Bhikkhus), the Buddha’s first disciples, who were very nearly his equals in knowledge and wisdom, failed to realise Arahantship (i.e. final liberation) till the Buddha preached to them the Anattalakkhanasutta on the characteristics of Anattā. The belief in the categories of an abiding SELF with changing qualities is so deeply rooted in our habits of thought that we are reluctant to admit the doctrine of pure and complete change. Even among the Buddhist schools the doctrine did not hold undisputed sway. The notion of a perma-
nent entity, constituting reality, though officially banned and repudiated in Buddhism, constantly tended to appear through some back-door and to haunt the domain of Buddhist philosophy in various guises. Nor is this surprising, for it is only with the attainment of Arahantship that the threefold illusion of SELF, known as the three conceits (=mannanā), is destroyed. Till that stage is achieved, our all attempts to escape from the belief in SELF are like those of the hare, in the old Indian tale, who, annoyed with the earth jumped off it, hoping never to return, only to find that the higher he jumped the greater was the thud with which he fell. It is because of our clinging that this is so, says the Buddha. (7) To the herdsman who has no cows, the cry of 'Wolf!' no longer brings any terror; similarly, to him who has no clinging, the realisation of Anattā spells the highest liberation, perfect bliss and emancipation.

IV.4 USEFULNESS OF THE BUDDHA'S DOCTRINE OF ANATTĀ

From the long forty-five years' of His career we find that the Buddha had to fight against and speak against sixty-two kinds of Wrong Views (=micchādītthi) extant in His time which were deeply rooted in the Indian minds and the belief of an eternal Atman also comes in the purview of those wrong views. Besides, the doctrine of Atman was included in the list of ten Avyākata Dhammas i.e. indeterminable or inexpressible problems which were put to Him many times and the Buddha always avoided them from
giving any answer stating the reason that the disputation on those problems would not lead to the frame of mind which was essential for the attainment of emancipation. In the Potthapāda Sutta of the Pali Dīghanikāya we find that Potthapāda, the wandering mendicant, asked the Buddha the following ten indeterminable questions:

1) Is the world eternal?
2) Is the world not eternal?
3) Is there an end of the world?
4) Is there no end of the world?
5) Is the soul and the body identical?
6) Is the soul different from the body?
7) Does the Tathāgata exist after death?
8) Does not the Tathāgata exist after death?
9) Does the Tathāgata exist, does not the Tathāgata exist after death?
10) Does the Tathāgata neither exist nor not-exist after death?

The Buddha made no declaration concerning those ten matters. So Potthapāda again asked: "Why has the Exalted One made no declaration concerning these matters?"

The Buddha replied: "I have made no declaration concerning those matters, because they do not lead to that which is connected with welfare, truth, or leading to the Higher life, to disenchantment with the world, to the absence of desire, the destruction of desire, to calm, to thorough understanding, to the Highest Wisdom, or
or to the final bliss, Nibbāna. That is why I do not teach concerning them".

"What then the Exalted One teach?" - asked Poṭṭhapāda.

"Suffering is my teaching; the origin of suffering is my teaching; the cessation of suffering is my teaching; the way to the cessation of suffering is my teaching" - said the Buddha.

"Why does the Tathāgata teach these (four) things only?"

"I teach them because they lead to that which is connected with welfare, truth ... Nibbāna. That is why I teach concerning them".  

We know that the entire structure of the Buddha's teaching stands on the Four Noble Truths - suffering, origin of suffering, cessation of suffering and the way to the cessation of suffering - as mentioned above, which comprise the very first teaching of the Buddha after his Enlightenment. The doctrine of the Four Noble Truths implies also the three characteristics of existence - that (1) all formations are impermanent (=anicca); (2) all formations are subject to suffering (=dukkha); and (3) all things are without a self or soul (=anattā). The Buddha was very much conversant with the fact that people in general believed in the existence of a permanent entity in man, namely, the Ātman, which persists through changes that overcome the body, which exists before birth and after death, which migrates from one body to another, which is eternal, all-pervading, stable, immovable and everlasting. But that firm belief was contradictory to his goal. He felt pain seeing the non-ending miseries of the people and he wholeheartedly wanted to help them in getting liberation from those miseries. That was
his mission, his goal. So, the very first teaching that he preached to the Pañcavaggiya monks was the Four Noble Truths, especially the way leading to the cessation of suffering (=dukkha-nirodha-gāmini-paṭipadā). Now the Pañcavaggiya monks, as we know, had been very much advanced spiritually and their knowledge was nearly equal to that of the Buddha. But still they could not properly realise the doctrine of the Four Noble Truths. As a result, save and except Ānāñāta-koṇḍaññā, others did not have clear vision as regards the basic characteristics of the universal phenomena i.e. impermanence, suffering and unsubstantiality. So, the second teaching that the Buddha preached to the Pañcavaggiya monks was the famous Anattalakkhana-sutta. When this sutta was preached all of them had attained the "Eye of Wisdom" and they became Arahant, emancipated. By preaching to them the second Sutta the Buddha wanted to establish the fact that the illusion of a permanent entity causes attachment and misery only and that from a psychological point of view in a man's life there is no other thing than the five groups of changing elements (=pañcakkhandha), namely, Rūpa (=material form), Vedanā (=feelings), Saññā (=perception), Saṅkhāra (=mental formations) and Vinnāna (consciousness). These five groups, otherwise called Nāma-rūpa, however, neither singly nor collectively constitute any self-dependent real Ego-entity, or Personality, nor is there to be found any such entity apart from them. Hence the belief in such an Ego-entity or Personality, as real in the ultimate sense, proves a mere illusion. Ātman is only in name or merely an idea, and not in reality. Moreover, the belief in such a permanent entity will negate the usefulness of the moral life.
If the immortal Ātman, which is supposed to be the essence of man, be eternal, there cannot be either a rise or a fall in a man's life. And one cannot understand why different souls are so variously constituted at the very outset.

IV.5. NOT ĀTMAN BUT PAÑCAKKHANDHAS (=FIVE AGGREGATES) AS THE REALITY

In the Anattalakkhana-sutta, as mentioned above, the Buddha has stated the characteristics of his doctrine of Anattā. He begins by emphasizing that if there were an Ātman it should be autonomous, but no such thing is to be found. According to him, human life consists of the Five Aggregates (as mentioned above) only. He analysed each of the aggregates and put searching questions to his disciples in order to bring home to them the actual truth about the Self. Let us quote here the following passage, in an abridged form, from the Anattalakkhana-Sutta:

"Then the Blessed One addressed the band of five monks:
'The Rūpa i.e. material form, O monks, is not the Self. If it were so, O monks, the material form would not be subject to sickness, and it would be possible to say of the material form: "Let my material form be so and so, and not so and so". But inasmuch, O monks, as the material form is not the Self, it is subject to sickness, and it is not possible to say of it: "Let my material form be so and so, and not so and so"."
On the other hand, as the material form, O monks, is not the Self, it is subject to sickness, and it is not possible to say of it: 
"Let my material form be so and so, and not so and so".

"Now what do you think, O monks, is the material form, permanent or impermanent?"

"Impermanent, Reverend Sire".

"But is that which is impermanent, sorrow or joy?"

"Sorrow, Reverend Sire".

"Now that which is impermanent, full of sorrow, and subject to change, is it possible to say of it: "This is mine, this am I, this is my Self?"

"Certainly not, Reverend Sire".

In like manner the Buddha dealt also with the remaining four aggregates, viz. feeling, perception, mental formations and consciousness, leading the monks to the same conclusion as in the case with regard to the material form, that is, of none of them it is possible to say: "This is mine, this am I, this is my Self".

"Perceiving this, O monks, the learned and noble disciple feels an aversion (=nibbeda) for all the aggregates beginning with the material form, and feeling an aversion for them he becomes divested of attachment (=virāga), and by the absence of attachment he becomes free, and when he is free, he becomes aware that he is free, and he knows that rebirth is exhausted, that successful is his life that he has lived and his duty is fulfilled, and there is nothing left for the world".
The conclusion, therefore, is reached that all the five aggregates, whether past, future or presently arisen, in oneself or external, gross or subtle, inferior or superior, far or near, are all to be viewed thus: "This is not mine; this is not what I am; this is not my Self". (10)

DETAILED EXPOSITION OF THE FIVE AGGREGATES (PÄNCÅKKHANDHA)

In the Mahā-Rāhulovāda Sutta and Mahā-Taṇhakkhaya Sutta of the Majjhima-nilāya and the Mahā-Nidāna Sutta of the Dīghanilāya, the five aggregates of clinging which constitute a being and which are involved in each moment of sensory perception have been further detailed by the Buddha as follows:

1. Rūpakkhandha or Aggregate of matter or material form - The aggregate of matter consists of all the material manifestations which are the objects of sense cognition. These include the physical body and all material objects in the world - visible objects, sounds, smell, flavours - any sense stimulus whatsoever of a material nature. All forms are compounded and derived from four primary modes or characteristics which matter can assume. These are the earth element, which is experienced as being solid-hard or soft and having extension or occupying space; the water element, which is experienced as being liquid or fluid in nature and having cohesive properties; the fire element, which is experienced as different ranges in temperature - hot and cold and which functions in the maturation or ripening process; the air element, which is
experienced as motion or pressure and allows the movements of
the body parts. These four primary elements are the constituents
of the human and animal body and the various ways in which they
combine produce the various parts with their peculiar characteris-
tics and functions of maintaining physical life. All four elements
are inherent in each manifestation of matter but one is usually
predominant and stands out over the others so the object is said
to be or exhibits that particular characteristic.

Further explanation of the primary elements -

a) **Earth Element**: Whatever pertains to oneself as an individual,
is hard, (or soft) of a solid nature, and an object of grasping, to wit:
hair of the head, hair of the body, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, sinews,
bones, kidneys, diaphragm, liver, spleen, lungs, stomach, intestines,
excrement, brain or anything else whatsoever in oneself is hard
(or soft), of a solid nature and an object of grasping or clinging,
this is called the internal element of earth. But even this personal
earthy element, as well as the external earth element, this is
merely the element of earth.

b) **Water Element**: Whatever pertains to oneself as an individual,
is liquid, of a fluid nature, and an object of grasping or clinging,
to wit: bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, tears, saliva, nasal mucus,
urine, or anything else whatsoever in oneself is liquid, of a fluid
nature, and an object of grasping, this is called the internal element
of water. But even this internal water element, as well as the external water element, this is merely the element of water.

c) **Fire Element**: Whatever pertains to oneself as an individual, is hot (or cold), of a fiery nature, and an object of grasping, to wit: that whereby there is deterioration, intense burning, fever, digestion, or anything else whatsoever in oneself that is hot (or cold) ... this is called the internal element of fire. But even this internal fire element, as well as the external fire element, this is merely the element of fire.

d) **Air Element**: Whatever pertains to oneself as an individual, is gaseous, movement, of an airy nature, and an object of grasping, to wit: the ascending and descending airs, stomach gas, pressure in the bowels, inhalation, exhalation, movement of the limbs, or anything else whatsoever in oneself that is gaseous ... this is called the internal air element. But even this internal air element as well as external air element, this is merely the element of air.

e) **Space Element**: (The space element is not one of the four primary elements [mahābhūtas], but as it is often an object of cognition and grasping, the Buddha included it in this discourse) Whatever pertains to oneself as an individual, is void, of an empty or hollow nature, and an object of grasping, to wit: the cavities of the mouth, nose and ears, the inside of the stomach, intestines or bowel, or anything else inside the body that is void ... this is called the internal element of space. But even this internal space element, as well as the external space element (the enclosed
space in a house, a rubber ball, a glass or cup), this is merely the element of space.

"These five elements, Rāhula, in accordance with fact and with perfect insight, should be regarded thus: 'This is not mine; this I am not; this is not myself". (11)

In other words, whenever a person feels these elements of solid, liquid, heat, motion or space in his own body the picture or idea of a body arises in the mind and he immediately thinks about it as belonging to and affecting 'him'. Therefore, because of his taking it for 'Self', it does come to affect him (such as pain, pleasure etc.) and disturbs his mind. Rather, one should regard those cognitions as just being these modes of behaviour and nothing more. One should not think and conceive them as pertaining to oneself. If one does insist on clinging to these characteristics of matter and grasp them as 'Self', belonging to his body, then he will have to suffer whatever consequences which they bring.

"Knowing this, having seen with perfect insight that such is the case, a wise person becomes less identified with these elements and he detaches his mind from them, he becomes free from their overwhelming influence". (12)

2. Vedanakkhandha or Aggregate of feelings - The group or factor of feelings or sensations that arise and pass away continually in the body and mind whenever there is sensory impingement.
There are six seats of feeling: feeling (pleasant, painful or neutral) that is born of contact with the eye ... with the ear ... with the nose ... with the tongue ... with the body; and feeling that is born of contact or cognizing mental objects (memories, dreams, hallucinations, ideas, thoughts etc.). That is called feeling (=vedanā). From the arising of contact is the arising of feeling; from the ceasing of contact is the ceasing of feeling.

These feelings are only conditioned, habit-reflex mental reactions which arise on account of sensory impingement or contact. It is these feelings or sensations constantly arising and vanishing in the body and mind that cause or condition the craving or attachment for certain objects, aversion or hatred towards other objects, and just indifferent or neutral reactions to some. Most unaware people think it is the object itself that they desire or crave. When it is seen closely, however, it is actually the conditioned, habit-reflex element of feeling which the object stimulated the mind to react. So, it is this mental activity of feeling which is reacted to and not really the object itself.

We must understand these feelings and sensations that are continually arising and passing away in the body and mind and see how, really they are the main thing which keeps the mind whirling on its insatiable quest for sensual gratification. It is like a monkey swinging through the forest among the trees, grasping one branch after another as he moves swiftly along. So do beings continually
grasp the sensations which arise due to delusion and attachment. We should, therefore, develop an attitude of detachment and equanimity to these feelings, knowing that they are impermanent, continually changing, conditionally arising and without substantial self-nature. They are not our possession and they are the potential source of most of our frustration, confusion and sorrow. We are not able to have the pleasant sensations at our will and we are subjected to the unpleasant ones, which are also not under our control. If we train the mind to remain equanimous when they arise, no desiring or avoiding, no attachment or aversion, then we can be free from their binding influence.

"The body is like a skinned cow; wherever she stands, she will be subject to ceaseless attacks by the insects and other creatures living in the vicinity; in like manner a man is helplessly exposed to constant excitation and irritation of sensory impingement, crowding upon him from all sides, through all six senses."

3. Sānākkhandha or Aggregate of perceptions - This consists of the perceptions or recognitions of visible objects, sounds, smells, tastes, bodily impressions and mental objects. Perception is the mark or peculiar characteristic of a thing or the memory of an object how it is normally pictured and recognized. The perceptions are also conditioned, habit-reflex mental reactions which arise on account of sensory contact, just as the feelings and sensations; since, 'What one feels, that one perceives'.
4. Sākhārakkhandha or Aggregate of Mental formations - This consists of the mental formations and latent tendencies which the mind creates and involves itself in towards objects come into contact with. These mental activities again, are conditioned, habit-reflex reactions which the mind spontaneously produces and they include the newly formed volitions and other activities of mind as well. These sākhāras are the result of our past Kamma of body, speech and mind, and on which the present and future thoughts and actions are based. They are actually the stuff of the mind from which all mental activities and the corresponding bodily activities are conditioned and develop into habits.

In total fifty-two mental factors are included in the Sākhārakkhandha. Some of them arise all the time, in each sense experience and some only arise once in a while whenever the proper conditions are present, according to their function and habitual exercise. By use and repetition they gain strength to affect our thinking and actions. It is these Sākhāras which we must understand and recognise by our direct experience and learn to control. For it is from them that all of our personal weal and woe arise.

5. Vinnānakkhandha or Aggregate of consciousness - There are six kinds of consciousness which arise, named according to which of the six senses was contacted and stimulated. It is only when the appropriate conditions are present that Consciousness able
to arise. The Buddha said: "Monks, consciousness is generated by conditions; apart from conditions there is no manifestation of consciousness. It is because of the appropriate condition arising that consciousness is known by this or that name. If consciousness arises because of the eye coming in contact with a visible object, it is known as eye-consciousness (seeing); if consciousness arises because of ear and sounds, it is known as ear-consciousness (hearing); if it arises because of the nose and odours, it is known as nose-consciousness (smelling); if it arises because of the tongue and flavours, it is known as tongue-consciousness (tasting); if it arises because of the body and tangible objects, it is known as body-consciousness (touching); and if it arises because of the mind and mental objects, it is known as mind-consciousness (knowing).

But it should not be understood that there are six separate consciousness, each one connected with its respective sense-organ. It is merely the role of the sensory activity of consciousness which plays within the realm of the six sense-spheres. (13)

This consciousness is not owned by nor is it under the control or direction of any permanent entity such as an eternal individual 'Self' or 'Soul'. consciousness is merely the habit-reflex like phenomenon of mind occurring by the stimulation of a sense object on its respective sense organ, just as for feeling, perception and the saṅkhāras. If there is no stimulation or contact, or if the sense organ is impaired, then this consciousness of object is not able
to arise. This because of its soulless nature and its dependence on other factors. It is this phenomenon of consciousness which most people erroneously take to be their Self or Soul. The illusive notion of an individual, separate 'I' which arises with consciousness has developed due to ignorance and craving and has strongly attached itself like a parasite to each moment of consciousness.

So, these are the five aggregates of which our life is formed. These five are also called Nāma-rūpa (mind and matter or mentality and materiality) in brief. The Rūpakkhandha is Rūpa and the rest four are called Nāma. Our life, therefore, is nothing but a mind-body organism.

Now, as regards these five aggregates, the well-instructed wise man reflects thus: "I am the prey of these five aggregates of grasping now; in the past likewise I was prey to them. Should I now continue to be enticed, lured and cling to them, then in future also I shall continue to be prey to them, just as I am now because of my infatuation and clinging to them in the past". Thus reflecting he is freed from desire and enticement by them and he is apt for dispassion and non-attachment for his present body (and sense objects), for present feelings, perceptions, mental formations and consciousness; he is apt for turning away from them, from clinging to them, he is apt for ceasing of them.

These five aggregates are not something which can be physically or mentally pulled apart and exist independently. They arise more
or less simultaneously in each sense-experience and are blended together in a mass so to speak, so that each individual factor is difficult to distinguish, but they can be to some extent by bare attention and keen awareness.

Because this five-fold-mass-sense-experience arises seemingly as a whole unit, and not perceived broken apart in its fleeting nature as it really is, most people take it for a very stable, self-owned activity-sensory cognition. They deludedly take it for granted as being 'them' or their 'Soul', failing to see it in its true nature, as being completely devoid of any type individual, substantial self-nature.

The five aggregates were taught and explained by the Buddha as five, for the purpose of their easy apprehension and understanding in the order as follows:

"Materiality which is gross, is the objective field of the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and the mind; and after that arises feeling which feels that materiality as desirable or undesirable; then perception arises which apprehends the aspects of the feeling's objective field (the object), for "What one feels, that one perceives"; then arise the mental formations and mind-made concepts (saṅkhāras) which form volitionally through means of perception; and lastly, there is consciousness, which these things, beginning with feeling, have as their support and which is dominant over them".
The Buddha has likened forms or material shapes to a large mass of foott floating on the water, which when closely examined by a clear-sighted man, appears to him to be empty, unsubstantial and without essence. He has likened feelings and sensations which arise and pass away in the body and mind, to bubbles rising in a pool of water bursting into nothing on the surface. If a clear-sighted man were to see, observe closely and examine them, they would appear to him to be empty, unsubstantial and without essence. A perception is likened to a mirage which appears at noon on a hot summer day, which if seen, observed and examined closely, would appear to be empty, unsubstantial and without essence. The Buddha described Sānkharas or mental formations to be pithless like the trunk of a banana tree. Because when cut down and stripped of its other skin or layers, there is found no inner core or hardwood. A clear-sighted man seeing, observing and closely examining it, would find them (i.e. the habit-formations) to be empty, unsubstantial and without essence. Consciousness is likened to a magical illusion produced by a skillful magician. But if seen and observed keenly by a quick, clear-sighted man, that magical illusion which fools most people, is in reality empty, unsubstantial and without essence. In the words of the Buddha:

"Phena-pīṇḍūpamaṁ rūpaṁ, vedanā bubbulūpamaṁ,
Marīcikūpamā saññā, sañkhārā kadalūpamā;
Māyūpamaṁ ca vitthāpaṁ, dīpādīccabandhūna.
Yathā yathā nijjhāyati yoniso upaparikkhati,
Rittakaṁ tucchakaṁ hoti, yo naṁ passati yoniso".
Therefore, this five-fold-mass of phenomena, the body and mind, should be regarded as, "This is not mine, I am not this, this is not my self". It is because of being attached to and deludedly identifying them as 'mine', that the more gross forms of Dukkha or suffering arise. These gross forms are experienceable as physical pain, sickness, old-age, death, and mental sorrow, grief, lamentation, frustration, anxiety, confusion and misery which beset a person who is uncontrolled and heedless with respect to this person-pack.

In the Bhārahāra Sutta of the Saṅyutanikāya also the Buddha clarifies his standpoint as regards the non-existence of the self apart from the five aggregates. In the words of the Buddha-Brethren, I will explain to you the burden (=bhāra), the taking up of the burden, the laying aside of the burden, and the carrier of the burden (=bhārahāra). Of these, the burden is the five aggregates, which are the substrates of life; the taking up of the burden is the craving (=taphā) for a continuation of life, accompanied by satisfaction; the laying aside of the burden is emancipation; the carrier of the burden is the individual i.e. this venerable man, having this name, of such a caste, of such family, eating such food, finding pleasure or displeasure at such things, of such an age, the man who after a life of such length, will pass away having reached such an age". Here the carrier of the burden has been pointed to by the Buddha with the express purpose to show that only so much can be known of him: "He is a venerable man, named so and so" and other (common life)
particulars ending with "after so long a life he will die at such an age", but he must not be misunderstood to represent some eternal (Soul) or some (real) individual. In reality nothing exists but momentary sets of elements, the elements of the former moments exercising (as it were) a pressure upon the elements of the following one. Hence the preceding moment has been conventionally called the burden and the following one - the carrier of the burden. But scholars like Dr. Keith and Dr. Radhakrishnan wrongly interpret the above Bhārahāra-sutta. According to them, the 'individual' mentioned by the Buddha is definitely distinct from the five aggregates, otherwise the burden-bearer and the burden would be the same. But Dr. S. K. Mukherjee rightly observes: "the individual spoken as the carrier of the burden is nothing distinct from the aggregates; the preceding aggregates which culminate in the succeeding aggregates, are called the burden, and the latter are the burden carrier, being the inheritor of all that has gone before". The bearer of the burden is not the permanent self.

In the Milindapañha also, Thera Nāgasena instructs the king Milinda on the nature of the so-called self by means of the parable of the chariot. Just as a chariot is nothing but an aggregate of the wheels, the axle, and the body, etc. so the self is nothing but a name of the aggregates of material form, feelings, perceptions, dispositions and consciousness. The five aggregates constitute the empirical individual. There is no eternal self behind the collection
of the five aggregates. The mind is a collection of mental processes. The body is a collection of bodily processes. The empirical individual is a mind-body-complex. There is no permanent noumenal self. Personal identity is an illusion. It is ignorance. The impermanent series of mental and bodily processes is mistaken for the permanent self. Continuity produces an illusion of identity. It accounts for moral responsibility, reward and retribution, and transmigration. (20)

Buddhaghosa, the great Pali commentator, very clearly explains the Buddha's doctrine about the Five Aggregates (=pañcakkhandha). He says: (21) Here in this world someone looks upon material qualities as the self (=rūpaṃ attato samanupassati): 'That which is corporeal is I, I am that matter.' Thus he looks upon matter and self not as two. As he views the flame and the colour as one, 'That which is the flame of a burning oil-lamp is the colour, that which is the colour is the flame,' so here he views matter as the self, owing to wrong views. 'Or the self to be possessed of matter' (rūpavantaṁ vā attanāṁ samanupassati): taking the immaterial to be the self, he views it as having matter, as a tree has a shadow. 'Or matter in the self' (Attani vā rūpaṁ samanupassati): taking the immaterial to be the self, he views matter as in the self, like scent in a flower. 'Or the self in matter' (rūpasmiṁ vā attānaṁ): taking the immaterial to be the self, he sees the self as in matter, like a gem in a casket.—

And the same with the other four Aggregates, viz. feeling, perception, mental formations and consciousness. (22) Thus Buddhaghosa
sheds further light on the Buddha's doctrine as regards the Five Aggregates and comes to the conclusion that it is a fools' business to consider the collection of the five aggregates as one's SELF.

[ "Ayaṁ me attha ti bālaṅkana pariggaṁitā tattabhāvo vuccati sarīraṁ pi khandhaṁcakam pi" ]

The Buddha therefore, admonishes his disciples to forsake those aggregates which do not belong to them, which neither contain Self nor anything belonging to Self. If they can do so it will be the cause of their good and welfare for long. In the words of the Buddha:

"Bhikkhave, yaṁ na tumhākaṁ taṁ pajahatha; taṁ vo pahīnaṁ diñgarattam hitāya sukhāya bhavissati. Kiṁ ca bhikkhave na tumhākaṁ? Rūpaṁ, bhikkhave, na tumhākaṁ, taṁ pajahatha; taṁ vo pahīnaṁ diñgarattam hitāya sukhāya bhavissati. Vedanā, bhikkhave ... saṁñā ... sañkhārā ... viññānaṁ, bhikkhave na tumhākaṁ, taṁ pajahatha; taṁ vo pahīnaṁ diñgarattam hitāya sukhāya bhavissati."\(^{(24)}\)

In some other discourses the Buddha's doctrine of Anatta is more explicit. He says\(^{(25)}\) "The eye is impermanent; what is impermanent is fraught with sorrow; what is fraught with sorrow is not Self. Form i.e. the object of the eye, is impermanent; what is impermanent is fraught with sorrow; what is fraught with sorrow is not Self. The Eye-consciousness is impermanent; what is impermanent is fraught with sorrow; what is fraught with sorrow is not Self. Similarly the ear - sound - ear-consciousness ... the nose - smell - nose-consciousness ... tongue - taste - tongue-consciousness ... body -
touch - body-consciousness ... mind - mental factors - mind-consciousness - all is not Self. The generic name for all the Khandhas (=aggregates), 12 Āyatanas (6 cognitive faculties + their 6 objects) and 18 Dhātus (6 sense-faculties + 6 sense-objects + 6 resultant consciousness) is dhamma. Hence the significance of the formula: Sabbe dhamma anatta i.e. All existence (=all things, all dhammas) is not-self (without Self).

Thus and in various other ways, the existence of a permanent Self or Ātman, as accepted in other systems, was utterly denied by the Buddha, thereby pulling down the very foundation of desire or longing where it can rest. We can notice here the trend of the Buddha's Anatta-discourse which drives at emancipation through the absence of desire or attachment that arises from the notion of a permanent Ātman. Because the Buddha was fully conversant with the truth that desire (=tanha) or attachment (=raga) to strive to profit oneself and aversion (=dosa) or hatred against what is not in accordance with one's longings or to strive to injure others, spring up owing to the notion of Ātman or Self. The Blessed One explains: If one knows that really there is Ātman, his notion of 'I' (=ahamkāra) does not disappear. For when a man sees that there is Ātman, he identifies his body with it, and there arises his lasting love for it. This love rouses thirst for comforts and the thirst prevents him from realizing the deficiency of the objects he wants to enjoy. Out of sheer ignorance, he imagines that whatever he desires must
be good and loves to think that 'they are mine', and adopts all possible means for their attainment. Besides, there is a possibility of danger coming from another end. When there is the notion of the Atman, there arises also the notion of other than the Atman, and owing to this division of the Atman and the other than the Atman, there spring up the feelings of attachment as well as aversion, and being bound to these two all evils arise.

Viewing things in this light the Blessed One declares that anything, external or internal, that appears to us as existing, is, in fact, unreal, and just like the imaginary town in the sky (=gandhabbanagara). Thus there being nothing, internally or externally, the notion of 'I' and 'mine' (=ahamkāra and mamakāra), technically known as sakkāyaditthi, disappears completely, as there is neither the subject nor the object of the notion. The disappearance of this notion is followed by the disappearance of samsāra, which has its roots struck deep in it. Thus the sole object of the seekers after liberation should be to root out the notion of 'I' and 'mine' or the Self and that which belongs to the Self (atta and attanīya).

**IV. 6. ANATTĀ-TEACHING – A SINE QUA NON FOR WINNING PERFECT LIBERATION**

What was the necessity of preaching the Anattalakkhana-sutta to the Pañcavaggiya monks at the Deer Park of Sarnath just after the First Sermon named Dhammacakka-pavattana-sutta ("The Turning of the Wheel of the Law") by the Buddha? Was the Dhammacakka-
pavattana-sutta i.e. Discourse on the Four Noble Truths not all-inclusive and sufficient for attaining perfect liberation? Did not myriads of deities and Brahmases attain perfect liberation as a result of the first sermon? - These and similar other queries arise in the minds of the critics as regards the Buddha's preaching the Anatta-lakkhana-sutta to the Pañcavaggiya monks on the fifth day after the first sermon. It is a fact that myriads of Devas and Brahmases became Arahants on hearing the first sermon. But none of the five monks could attain Arahantship as a result of the first sermon. Only one of the five i.e. Anānata-Koṇḍañña gained the "Spotless Eye of Truth" and became a Sotāpanna, a Stream-enterer, only. So, on the fifth day after the first sermon the Buddha preached to them the Anatta-teaching and on hearing that all of the five became Arahants.

Now a critic would ask: "But how did Koṇḍañña break the first of the fetters, that of personality belief (=sakkayaditthi), without the aid of the Anatta-teaching? We know that to become a Sotāpanna one must, first of all, break the fetter of personality belief".

The answer is as follows: The Personality Belief has got two distinct phases - one is the gross fetter which is called sakkayaditthi, and the other is the finer fetter which is called mana or conceit. The former i.e. sakkayaditthi implies a definite belief or view concerning the assumption of a self or soul, and being the first of the fetters (out of 10) it disappears at attainment of Sotāpatti, which was
attained by Kondaṁṇa on hearing the first sermon of the Buddha.

In the Culavedalla-sutta of the Majjhimanikāya we find that there are 20 kinds of Sakkāyadiṭṭhi, which are obtained by applying 4 types of that belief to each of the 5 Groups of Existence (=Pañca-kkhandha): \(26\)

\(\begin{align*}
(1) - (5) \quad & \text{The belief to be identical with corporeal reality (=rūpa), feeling, perception, mental formations and consciousness.} \\
(6) - (10) \quad & \text{The belief to be contained in them, i.e. Rūpa etc.} \\
(11) - (15) \quad & \text{The belief to be independent of them, i.e. Rūpa etc.} \\
(16) - (20) \quad & \text{The belief to be the owner of them, i.e. Rūpa etc.}
\end{align*}\)

All of these 20 kinds of sakkāyadiṭṭhi disappear at the attainment of Sotāpatti, the first stage of sanctification. But the latter i.e. māna or conceit vanishes completely only at the entrance to Arahantship, the final stage of sanctification. Māna is the finer fetter of Personality Belief. There are three kinds of Māna, viz. the equality-conceit (=māna), the inferiority-conceit (=omāna or avamāna) and the superiority-conceit (=atimāna) -- this threefold conceit should be overcome. After overcoming this threefold conceit, one is said to have put an end to suffering. In the words of the Buddha:
"Those ascetics and Brahman priests who, relying on this impermanent, miserable and transitory nature of corporeality, feelings, perceptions, mental formations and consciousness, fancy: 'Better am I' or 'Equal am I' or 'Worse am I', all these imagine thus through not understanding reality. In reality no Ego-entity is to be found.

Now, Sakkāyadiṭṭhi was implicit in the First Step (=samma-diṭṭhi) of the Noble Eightfold Path preached by the Buddha in his first Sermon. In the Samyuttanikāya the samma-diṭṭhi or right understanding has been explained as follows: "When one understands that corporeality, feelings, perceptions, mental formations, and consciousness are transient, subject to pain and soul-less (=anatta), in that case one possesses Right Understanding (=samma-diṭṭhi)."

But the First Sermon was not explicit as regards Māna, the highest fetter in the path of liberation. Only in the Anattalakkhana-Sutta we find the indication of Māna and the way to eradicate it to attain the final liberation i.e. Arahatta or Nibbāna. There lies the very importance of the Anattalakkhana-Sutta which was preached by the Buddha just after his First Sermon.

IV. 7 USAGES OF THE EXPRESSIONS LIKE ATṬĀ, SATṬA, PUGGALA ETC.- JUSTIFIED

According to the Kathavatthu, one of the important treatises of the Pali Abhidhammapitaka, the Sammitiyas and the Vajjiputtakas, two Buddhist Schools which originated before the time of Asoka, the Great, held the conception of Puggala or a person or an individual.
They taught that the internal khandhas at a given moment constitute a certain unity which is related to them as fire is to fuel. This is called Puggala which assumes new elements at birth and casts them off at death. But this view was criticized and rejected by Orthodox Buddhists, for Puggala was obviously another name for Atta. The first chapter of the Kathāvatthu is devoted to refute this erroneous conception of Puggala as a permanent entity. Vasubandhu, the great Buddhist philosopher of the 5th century A.D., also devotes a whole chapter in his famous treatise Abhidharmakosā to refute the heretical Ātman-theory used by some Buddhist schools with a new label of Pudgala (=Puggala). Of course, Buddhism has no objection to the use of the words Atta, Satta or Puggala to indicate the individual as a whole, or to distinguish one person from another, where such distinction is necessary, especially as regards such things as memory and kamma which are private and personal and where it is necessary to recognise the existence of separate lines of continuity. But, even so, these terms should be treated only as labels, binding-conceptions and conventions in language, assisting economy in thought and word and nothing more. Even the Buddha uses such terms many times. According to the Buddha: "These are worldly usages, worldly terms of communication, worldly descriptions, by which a Tathāgata communicates without misapprehending them."
Let us quote below some examples from the Pali Nikāyas which will bear evidences that the Buddha, on several occasions, used the words like Atta, Satta and Puggala, but only in conventional and empirical sense, not in the sense of any permanent entity.

In the Dhammapada, for example, there is a good collection of such usages:

- "Na attahetu na parassa hetu" (Neither for the sake of oneself nor for the sake of another) - Dhp. 84.

- "Attānaṁ upamaṁ katvā na haneyya na ghātaye" (Comparing others with oneself one should neither strike nor cause to strike) - Dhp. 129.

- "Attano sukham esano pecca so labhate sukham" (Seeking his happiness ... experiences happiness hereafter) - Dhp. 132.

- "Attā hi attano nātho ko hi nātho paro siyā" (Oneself, indeed, is one's saviour, for what other saviour would there be?) - Dhp. 160.

- "Attanā'va kataṁ pāpaṁ attajāṁ attasambhavaṁ" (By oneself alone is evil done; it is self-born, it is self-caused) - Dhp. 161.
"Kammaro rajattas'eva niddhame malaṁ attano" (Should remove one's own impurities, as a smith removes the dross of silver) - Dhp. 239.

"Ucchinda sineham attano" (Cut off your own affection) - Dhp. 285.

"Paradukkhūpadānena attano sukhāṁ icchati" (Wishes own happiness by causing pain to others) - Dhp. 291.

"Nagaraṁ yathā paccantaṁ guttaṁ santarabāhiraṁ evaṁ gopetha attānaṁ" (Like a border city, guarded within and without, so guard yourself) - Dhp. 315.

"Attānaṁ coday' attānaṁ, paṭimāse attānaṁ attanāṁ" (By self do you censure yourself. By self do you examine yourself) - Dhp. 379.

"Attā hi attano nātho, attā hi attano gati, Tasmā saṁñāmay′ attānaṁ, assaṁ bhadraṁ′va vāpijo" (Self, indeed, is the protector of self. Self, indeed, is one's refuge. Control, therefore, your own self as a merchant controls a noble steed) - Dhp. 380.

Similar usages we find in many other texts. For example:

"Attadīpā viharatha atta-saranā anaṁna-saranā" (Be ye islands unto yourselves, be ye refuges to yourselves, and do not seek other refuges) - D II 100 ; S V 154 ; Cf.
Sn. verse. 501.

"Katamaṁ nu kho tumhākaṁ varaṁ, yaṁ vā tumhe itthīṁ
gaveseyyātha, yaṁ vā attānaṁ gaveseyyātha" (Which
would be better for you, that you seek the woman or
seek youself) - Vin I 123.

"Attanā attānaṁ nānupassati, Sn 477

"Kataṁ me saraṇaṁ attanā" (I have made my own refuge) -
D II 120.

"Evaṁ khandhesu santesu hoti satto ti sammuti" (Just so,
when the five groups exist, of 'living being' do we speak) -
S I 135.

"Puggalaṁ p'aham, Sāriputta, duvidhena vadāmi Sevitabbaṁ
pi asevitabbaṁ pi" M III 58.

"Taṁ puggalaṁ eva passatha, mutto bandhanaṁ eva
dhāvati" - Dhp. 344.

Sadevakasmiṁ lokasmiṁ n'at thi te paṭipuggalo" - Sn 544.

"Parasattānaṁ para-puggalānaṁ cetasā ceto paricca
pajānātā" - S V 263.

"Yaṁ cāyaṁ purisa-puggalo paṭisaṁvedeti" - M II 217.

Dīṭṭhisampamo puggalo kañci dhamaṁ attato upagacc-
heyya, Vibh. 337.
In the Poṭṭhapāda Sutta of the Pali Dīghanikāya, the Buddha discusses about "atta-patilābhā" (acquired-self or acquired-personality) and its three aspects, viz. olāriko attapatilābhā (i.e. gross state of the acquired-self), manomayo attapatilābhā (i.e. mind-made state of the acquired-self) and arūpo attapatilābhā (i.e. formless state of the acquired-self). But this does not mean that the Buddha accepted the theory of the existence of an eternal self, as some scholars wrongly interpreted. Because at the end of the Sutta, the Buddha himself said: "But these are only worldly usages, worldly terms of communication, worldly descriptions, by which a Tathāgata communicates without misapprehending them."

Now we will give some idea in brief about the three aspects of atta-patilābhā as mentioned above, just to express the Buddha's concept regarding self. The gross state (olārika) possessing material qualities is composed of the four primary elements and is nourished with material food (=rupī catumahābhūtiko kabalikārāhāra-bhakkho). The mind-made (manomaya) state has material qualities, possessing the major and minor limbs, and is not defective in any faculties (rupī manomayo sabbaṅgapaccaṅgī ahinindriyo). The formless state (arūpo) is consciousness-made and without material qualities (arūpi saññamayo).
About the first one i.e. gross aspect of the acquired-self the Buddha says: "I preach a doctrine of the giving up of this. Following this teaching, things of corruption will vanish, things of purity will increase, and insight will be fully developed; having understood thoroughly and experienced for yourself, here in the elements of existence as seen in the present world, you will, having so attained, remain therein." The Buddha repeats the same with reference to the mind-made and the formless aspects of the acquired self also.

Now, there are others who might ask: "What is this gross aspect ... mind-made aspect ... formless aspect of the acquired self, the abandoning of which the Buddha's teaching speaks, and according to which impurities will vanish, and so on?" To them the Buddha's reply is as follows: "Here before you is this gross self ... mind-made self ... formless self of which I have spoken and of which my teaching shows the abandoning." Then the Buddha concludes:

"What is your opinion, Poṭṭhapāda? Is not this talk founded on a sound basis?"

"Surely it is, Revered Sir."

"It is just as if, Poṭṭhapāda, a man should build a staircase leading to a palace above it, and some should say: 'Hullo! That palace you are building the stairs for, do you know if it lies in the east, south, west or north? Is it high, low or of medium height?' And the man would say: 'The palace to which I am building the flight of steps
lies immediately above the steps. What do you think, Poṭṭapāda? Would not the man's talk be based on a sound foundation?"

"Certainly it would, Revered Sir."

"Then it is just so when I am asked such questions regarding gross aspect, mind-made aspect and formless aspect of the acquired self."

Moreover, all the three aspects of the acquired self do not come into reckoning all at the same time. At the time that the gross form is the acquired self, the mind-made and formless acquired-selves do not come into the reckoning, only the gross one that counts. Similarly with the mind-made and the formless acquired-selves. To clarify this point the Buddha gives an illustration which is as follows:

"It is just as from the cow comes milk, from milk curds, from curds fresh butter, from fresh butter ghee, and from ghee comes whey; at the time there is the milk, the other things do not count but only the milk does. Similarly with the curds, butter, ghee and whey. So, when any one of them, the gross, the mind-made or the formless is the acquired-self, at that time, only that acquired-self forms the basis of calculation."

"But, whatever the gross or mind-made or formless acquired self there might be—all these are but mere worldly usages, worldly terms of communication, worldly descriptions, by which a Tathāgata communicates without misapprehending them."

In the same Poṭṭhapāda Sutta the Buddha, therefore, very wittily...
remarks that to believe in an eternal self is like falling in love with the most beautiful maiden of the country though she has never been seen or known. In the words of the Buddha: "It is as if a man should say: 'There is a beautiful woman in this district that I wish and long for very much,' and others should say: 'Hullo! Do you know if she is of the warrior caste, or the Brāhmaṇa, or the traders', or of the lower ranks?' And he would not know. Then they would ask again: 'Well, do you know her name and family, whether she is tall or short or of medium height, dark-complexioned or olive or golden, and what village or market-town or city she belongs to?' And he would say, 'No'. Then they would say: 'You wish and long for very much a person you do not know and have not seen.' And he would agree that was so. What do you think, Poṭṭhapāda? Was not the talk of that man foolishness?"

Poṭṭhapāda replied: "Most certainly, Reverend Sir." Thus he confirms that the views of the Samaṇas and Brāhmaṇas regarding self are based on slender foundations (=appāṭhipakataṁ bhāṣitaṁ).

V. 8 IF THERE IS NO SOUL (=ATMAN) WHAT MAINTAINS REBIRTH I.E.-WHO IS BORN AFTER DEATH?

Buddhism does not agree with the existence of any Soul or permanent entity, but fully agrees with the doctrine of rebirth. The doctrine of rebirth, which Buddhists regard not as a mere theory but as an evidentially verifiable fact, forms a fundamental tenet of Buddhism. Now, the question is: If there is no permanent entity
what is that is reborn? To justify the existence of endless happiness in an eternal heaven or unending torment in an eternal hell, is not an immortal soul absolutely necessary? Otherwise what is that sinned on earth and is punished in hell? What is that earned merits on earth and is rewarded in heaven?

Bertrand Russell writes (31): "It should be said that the old distinction between soul and body has evaporated, quite as much because matter has lost its solidity, as because mind has lost its spirituality. Psychology is just beginning to be scientific. In the present state of psychology belief in immortality can at any rate claim no support from science."

The learned author of "The Riddle of the Universe" writes (32): "The theological proof that a personal creator has breathed an immortal soul (generally regarded as a portion of the Divine soul) into man is a pure myth. The cosmological proof that the 'moral order of the world' demands the eternal duration of the human soul is a baseless dogma. The teleological proof that the 'higher destiny' of man involves the perfecting of his defective, earthly soul beyond the grave rests on a false anthropism. The moral proof that the defects and the unsatisfied desires of earthly existence must be fulfilled by 'compensative' justice on the other side of eternity is nothing more than a pious wish. The ethnological proof that the belief in immortality, like the belief in God, is an innate
truth, common to all humanity is an error in fact. The ontological proof that the soul being a 'simple, immaterial and indivisible entity' cannot be involved in the corruption of death is based on an entirely erroneous view of the psychic phenomena; it is a spiritualistic fallacy. All these and similar 'proofs of athanatism' are in a parlous condition; they are definitely annulled by the scientific criticism of the last few decades.

Hume, for instance, looked into consciousness and perceived that there was nothing except fleeting mental states and concluded that the supposed 'permanent ego' is non-existent. He declares (33):

"There are some philosophers who imagine we are every moment intimately conscious of what we call our Self; that we feel its existence and its continuance in existence and so we are certain ... both of its perfect identity and simplicity .... For my part, when I enter most intimately into what I call myself, I always stumble on some particular perception or other - of heat or cold, light or shade, love or hatred, pain or pleasure. I never can catch myself at any time without a perception, and never can observe anything but the perception ... nor do I conceive what is further requisite to make me a perfect non-entry."

Dealing with this question of soul Prof. William James says (34):

"... This is an empirical aggregate of things objectively known. The 'I' which knows them cannot itself be an aggregate; neither
for psychological purpose need it be an unchanging metaphysical entity like the Soul, or a principle like the transcendental Ego, viewed as 'out of time'. It is a thought, at each moment different from that of the last moment, but appropriative of the latter, together with all that the latter called its own ... The soul-theory is a complete superfluity, so far as accounting for the actually verified facts of conscious experience goes — and in this book the provisional solution which we have reached must be final: the thoughts themselves are the thinkers."

The Buddha anticipated these facts more than 2500 years ago. According to the Buddha, mind is nothing but a complex compound of fleeting mental states. One unit of consciousness consists of three phases - arising or genesis (=upppāda), static or development (=ṭhiti) and cessation or dissolution (=bhāṅga). Immediately after the cessation stage of a thought-moment there occurs the genesis stage of the subsequent thought-moment. Each momentary consciousness of this ever-changing life-process, on passing away, transmits its whole energy, all the indelibly recorded impressions to its successor. Every fresh consciousness consists of the potentialities of its predecessors together with something more. There is, therefore, a continuous flow of consciousness like a stream without any interruption. The subsequent thought-moment is neither absolutely the same as its predecessor - since that which goes to make it
up is not identical – nor entirely different – being the same continuity of Kamma energy. Here there is no identical being but there is an identity in process (35).

But, is there anything that is reborn? The only answer is 'No'. There is nothing to be reborn. When life ceases the Kammic energy re-materialises itself in another form. Unseen it passes whithersoever the conditions appropriate to its visible manifestation are present. When one mode of its manifestation ceases it merely passes on, and where subtle circumstances offer, reveals itself afresh in another name or form. The Kammic force of each individual binds the elements together. We have discussed previously that the uninterrupted flux or continuity (=santati) of psycho-physical phenomenon, which is conditioned by Kamma, and not limited only to the present life, but having its source in the beginningless past and its continuation in the future – is the Buddhist substitute for the permanent ego or the immortal soul in other religious systems.

In the Milindapañha the venerable Nāgasena have employed several similes to illustrate that nothing transmigrates from one life to another. The simile of the flame (36) is very striking. Life is compared to a flame. Rebirth is the transmitting of this flame from one group to another. The flame of life is continuous although there is an apparent break at so-called death.
King Milinda asked: "Revered Sir, the man that obtains rebirth is the same who dies or different?"

Venerable Nāgasena replied: "O King, he is neither the same nor different."

"Give me a parable.

"What do you think, great king, are you now as an adult the same as you were as a tender little boy, a little child lying flat on your back?"

"No, revered Sir, that tender little boy, that little child lying flat on its back was another, and I as an adult am now another."

"If that is so, great king, then you have no mother, no father, no teacher, you have never been instructed, never learned the commandments, never gained wisdom. How then, great king, is the mother of the embryo in its four stages each time another, is the mother of the little child another, and the mother of the adult yet another? Is it another who takes instruction, and another who has learned something? Is it another who commits a crime, and another who is punished by having his hands and feet cut off?"

"No, revered Sir, but what would you reply?"

Nāgasena said: "I myself, great king, was the tender little boy, the little child lying flat on my back, and I myself am now the adult. Through one and the same body all these are combined into
one unity."

"Give me a parable."

"It is, as if, great king, some person might light a lamp. Would it burn all night long?"

"Yes, reverend Sir, it might burn all night long."

"O great king, is the flame of the first watch the same as the flame of the middle watch?"

"No, reverend Sir."

"O great king, is the flame of the middle watch the same as the flame of the third watch?"

"No, reverend Sir."

"Is it then, O great king, that the lamp in the first watch was one thing, the lamp in the middle watch another, and the lamp in the last watch still another?"

"O, no, reverend Sir, it was the same burning all through the night in dependence on itself."

"Even so, O great king, a continuity of Dhammas runs on; one uprisens, another ceases; it runs on as though there were no before, no after; consequently neither the one Dhamma nor another is reckoned as the last consciousness.

The evolution of the butterfly may also be cited as a further illus-
tration. Its initial stage was an egg. Then it turned into a caterpillar. Later it developed into a chrysalis, and eventually into a butterfly. This process occurs in the course of one life-time. The butterfly is neither the same as, nor totally different from, the caterpillar. Here also there is a flux of life, or a continuity and nothing more than that.

Therefore, the conclusion lies in the fact that the man who obtains rebirth after death is neither the same or different. Rebirth is possible without a Soul to be reborn. What happens is that the body dies and its Kammic force is reborn in another. There is merely a continuity of a particular life-flux; just that and nothing more.

Still one may ask as to what survives death to bear the results of Kamma in one's life. Similar questions or something to the same effect were put to the Buddha by a certain brahmin. He asked: "How now, Lord Gotama? Is he who acts the same as he who feels the result of the act (so karoti, so patisamvedayati?)"

"He who acts is the same as he who feels' - that, brāhmaṇa, is one end (heresy)."

"How, then, Lord Gotama? Is he who acts another man than he who feels?"

"He who acts is another than he who feels - that, brāhmaṇa, is the other end (heresy). Overcoming these two ends (heresies) the Tathāgata points out the doctrine in the
middle, in terms of Paṭicca-samuppāda. It means that there is no permanent, unchanging identity between the actor and the feeler, but there is at the same time a continuity between them - na ca so, na ca añño."

Hence the Buddhist idea of identity consists in continuity and not in identity of substance, for the simple reason that there is no such thing as identity of substance in the universe -- sabbe saṅkhārā aniccā.

IV. 9 WHAT IS DEATH AND HOW REBIRTH TAKES PLACE IN BUDDHISM?

According to Buddhism, death is the cessation of the psycho-physical life of any one individual existence. It takes place by the passing away of vitality, i.e. psychic and physical life, heat and consciousness. Death is not the complete annihilation of a being, for though that particular life-span ended, the force which hitherto actuated is not destroyed. Just as an electric light is the outward visible manifestation of invisible electric energy, even so we are the outward manifestations of invisible Kammic energy. The bulb may break, and the light may be extinguished, but the current remains and the light may be reproduced in another bulb. In the same way, the Kammic force remains undisturbed by the disintegration of the physical body (i.e. death), and the passing away of the present consciousness leads to the arising of a fresh one in another birth. But nothing unchangeable or permanent passes from the present to the future.
According to the Theravada Buddhism rebirth takes place immediately, irrespective of the place of birth, just as an electro-magnetic wave, projected into space, is immediately reproduced in a receiving Radio set. Now, one may ask: "Are the sperm and ovum cells always ready, waiting to take up this rebirth thought?"

Buddhism gives a suitable answer to this question. According to Buddhism, living beings are infinite, and so are world systems. Nor is the impregnated ovum the only route to rebirth. Earth, an almost insignificant speck in the universe, is not the only habitable plane, and humans are not the only living beings. As such it is not impossible to believe that there will always be an appropriate place to receive the last thought vibrations of a dying person. A point is always ready to receive the falling stone - is it not true? (37)

Buddhism also gives answer as to how rebirth takes place. Suppose a person is about to die. This critical stage may be compared to the flickering of a lamp just before it is extinguished. To this dying man is represented a Kamma or a Kamma Nimitta or Gati Nimitta. By Kamma here is meant some good or bad action committed during his life-time, or immediately before his dying moment. Kamma Nimitta or Symbol of Action, means a mental reproduction of any sight, sound, smell, taste, touch or idea which dominated at the time of committing some act - good or bad - for example, a vision
of knives or dying animals in the case of a butcher; sights of patients in the case of kind physician; an object of worship in the case of a devotee, and so forth. By Gati Nimitta or "Symbol of Destiny" is meant some sign of the place where he is to take rebirth. Such a symbol frequently appears before the eyes of a dying person and stamps its gladness or gloom upon his feature. When these indications of the future birth occur, and if they are bad, they might at times be remedied. This is done by influencing the thoughts of the dying man. Say for example, his relatives present near his death-bed may remind him of some of his meritorious deed(s) performed by him during his life time.

IV.10 IF THERE IS NO SOUL, CAN THERE BE ANY MORAL RESPONSIBILITY?

One may ask: if there is no soul, can there be any moral responsibility? The Buddhist position is that moral responsibility is possible without a soul. Because there is a continuity but not identity and memory of the past can be recalled even though there is no soul. A child, for instance, becomes a man. The latter is neither absolutely the same, - since the cells have undergone a complete change, not totally different, - being the identical stream of life. Nevertheless the individual, as man, is responsible for whatever he has done in his childhood. Whether the flux dies here and is reborn elsewhere, or continues to exist in the same life, the essential factor is this continuity.
Suppose a person was "A" in his last birth, and is "B" in the present life. With the death of "A" the physical vehicle, the outward manifestation of Kammic energy, is relinquished, and, with the birth of "B" a fresh physical vehicle arises. Despite the apparent material changes, the invisible stream of consciousness (=citta-santati) continuous to flow, uninterrupted by death, carrying along with it all the impressions received from the tributary streams of sense.

And what about moral responsibility? Yes, though there is no permanent soul, a man is yet responsible for his actions. If, for instance, a person were to commit a crime, and by sudden loss of memory he were to forget the incident, would he not be responsible for his act? His forgetfulness would not exempt him from responsibility for the commission of that crime. A murderer is hanged whether he remembers his crime or not. Similarly the fact that the man who dies does not remember his acts committed in his past life is no bar to his reaping the fruits of such acts.

In the Milindapañha, Thera Nagasena gives a series of parables in support of this moral responsibility. The following parables are some of them: (38)

1) "Suppose a man has stolen another man's mangoes; the owner of the mango tree seizes him, takes him before the king and says: 'Your Majesty, this man has stolen my mangoes;' now, if the thief says: 'Your Majesty, I did not steal this
man's mangoes; the fruits which he planted, and those which I took away, were not the same fruits, and so I deserve no punishment, would this man be punished, O king?" Yes, Venerable Sir, he would be punished. "And why so?" Because, whatever the man may say, he would be punished on account of the mangoes he took away, which undeniably would not be there, had it not been for the former mango planted."

2) "Suppose a man, taking a lamp in his hand, ascends a pavilion and takes his dinner. But all on a sudden the lamp comes in contact with hay lying there. While burning the hay, the fire spreads and burns the house. From the house the fire spreads and burns the entire village. The villagers takes the man before the king and say: 'Your Majesty, this man has burnt the entire village; now if the man says: 'Your Majesty, I did not burn the village; the flame of lamp by which I took my dinner and the flame which burnt the village were not the same, and so I deserve no punishment, whom would you believe, O great king, the villagers or the man?'" "Revered Sir, I should believe the villagers?" "Any why so?" "Because, whatever the man may say, the man is responsible for burning the entire village, as the fire broke out from the lamp by which he was taking his dinner."

3) "Suppose a man selects a tender girl for marriage (when she will be grown up) and pays bride-money for her to her father
and leaves the place. Now, when the girl becomes adult another man comes and marries her after paying due bride-money. While he was taking her in his house, the former man comes forward and challenges him saying: 'Why do you take away my wife?' The latter says: 'I am not taking away your wife. The tender girl for whom you paid the bride-money, and the present adult lady for whom I have paid the bride-money and married are not the same.' Thus quarrelling they come to you. O great king, whom would you believe, the first man or the second man?''Revered Sir, I should believe the first man, because the same tender girl for whom he paid the bride-money became adult and married by the second man. So, the second man should be punished as he has become guilty of marrying other's betrothed wife.'

4) "Suppose a man buys milk from a milk-man and keeps the milk-pot with the milk-man saying: 'I shall take it back tomorrow.' Now the next day that milk automatically was turned to curd. The man comes next day and says: 'Give me back my milk-pot.' The milk-man gives him the pot where there was no milk but curd. So the man says: 'I did not buy curd from you, but milk. Give me back my milk.' But how could the milk-man return him the milk which already became curd? But the man would not spare him. Thus quarre-
lling they approach you, O great king, whom then would you believe, the milk-man or the man? "Revered Sir, I should believe the milk-man." "And why so?" "Because the milk-man is not responsible for the curd. He sold the man milk, but as the man did not take away the milk in time, it turned to curd. Why then the milk-man should be responsible for that?"

IV. 11 CONSCIOUSNESS MISUNDERSTOOD AS AUTONOMOUS SOUL:

According to Buddhism the first moment of the new life is called Consciousness or Vīññāna. In the formula of the Law of Dependent Origination (=Paṭicca-samuppāda), antecedents of the consciousness are the Saṅkhāras, the pre-natal forces, which contain latent in them the proclivities or anusayas, the resultant of all the impressions made in that particular flux of elements (=santāna), conventionally called an individual, in the whole course of its repeated births and deaths, its faring through life (=saṅsāra). The new person, psychologically, if not physically, is continuous with the deceased and suffers or enjoys what his predecessor had prepared for him by his behaviour. But the teaching that Vīññāna or consciousness forms the connecting link between one life and the next is misunderstood by some to be something like autonomous Vīññāna. The Mahātaṅha-kkkhaya Sutta of the Majjhimanikāya relates the story of a monk, Sāti by name, who misunderstood the Buddha's doctrine and went on saying that one's consciousness runs on and on and continues
Sāti's colleagues tried to point out his error and when they failed they brought him before the Buddha who explained to him that, according to His teaching, consciousness arises only by causation and that without assignable conditions, consciousness does not come about.

There is also a misinterpretation regarding the Buddha's one statement in the Mahānidāna Sutta of the Dīghanikāya. The statement is as follows:

"Viññāṇaṁ vā Ānanda mātu kucchiṁ na okkamissatha, api nu kho nāma-rūpaṁ mātu kucchiṁ samucchissathā" ti (=Ānanda, if consciousness should not enter into the womb of the mother, would mental physical states develop into the womb of the mother?).

From the above statement of the Buddha some scholars have come to the conclusion that in addition to the continuity of consciousness between the old and the new lives there is also some sort of corporeal accompaniment, some kind of subtle matter, for instance. But Buddhaghosa does not agree with them. According to him, consciousness is not accompanied by any physical form and that it is in process of constant change. The 'entering into mother's
womb' is only an expression to denote the simultaneity of death and rebirth.

In the Godhika Sutta of the Sañyuttanikāya also there is an amusing tale of Māra's (=the Evil One's) searching for the 'rebirth-consciousness' of the sage Godhika who obtained Nibbāna. The tale runs as follows:

Venerable Godhika made various attempts to win arahantship, but disease prevented him from maintaining his state of trance long enough. At last he decided to commit suicide and cut his throat. But before he died, he put forth a final effort and won Nibbāna. Māra, the Evil one, thinking that Venerable Godhika committed suicide, he assumed the form of a cloud of smoke and went about searching for the rebirth - consciousness of Godhika. When he failed to find it he reported this to the Buddha who explained that his search was in vain because Godhika had gone beyond Māra's sphere.

Now, the above tale of Godhika and Māra invites question. Does the tale mean that the rebirth-consciousness is something visible? Our only answer is 'No'. The rebirth-consciousness is not visible, as it is in process of constant change as the waves of the river - one passes away and another comes into being simultaneously, as it were.
From the above examples it is, therefore, clear that there is no indication at all of an autonomous consciousness persisting unchanged, but only of a continuity of consciousness.\(^{(41)}\)

IV. 12 JUSTIFICATION OF THE IDEA OF GANDHABBA :

In the previous section (i.e. IV.11) we have discussed about the Buddha's statement that Viññāṇa or consciousness enters into the mother's womb. This consciousness is dependent on name and form (=nāma-rūpa) and vice versa. There is a relation of mutuality (=aṇñamaṇñapaṭcaya). The one cannot exist without the other. So, this consciousness is nothing but rebirth-consciousness (=paṭisandhicitta). But what is Gandhabba as mentioned by the Buddha in connection with the conditions necessary for successful conception?

In the Majjhimanikāya\(^{(42)}\) Buddha lays down three conditions necessary for successful conception. There should be the coitus of the parents, the mother should have her fertile period and Gandhabba must be present. Now, what is this Gandhabba? The Pañcasūdani,\(^{(43)}\) the commentary of the Majjhimanikāya, explains that Gandhabba here is interpreted as the being about to enter the womb, being driven by the working of Kamma. Here Gandhabba is, no doubt, taken to mean the death-consciousness (=cuti-citta) of the dying person. It serves as the object of rebirth-consciousness (=paṭisandhicitta) and the character of the new-born child is determined and influenced by the consciousness of the dying person. Thus is the
continuity of life set up without a break until the attainment of Nibbāna.

In the later schools of Buddhist thought, however, there grew up a conception of Antarābhava or intermediate existence, i.e. existence between death in one life and rebirth in the other. This concept is quite contradictory to the philosophy of life as expounded in early Buddhism.
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7. S III 182
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10. Vin I 14 = MI 139
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21. Atthasālini, pp. 333

22. M I 300 ; III 17, 188, 227f

23. Atthasālini, p. 308

24. M I 141-142

25. S IV 28

26. "rupam attato samanupassati, rupavantaṁ va attānaṁ, attani va rupam, rupasmiṁ va attānaṁ ... saṁkhāram attato ... viññānaṁ attato samanupassati, viññānavantaṁ va attānaṁ, attani va viññānaṁ, viññānasmiṁ va attānaṁ." - M I 300, S XXII 1

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