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SELF AND ETERNAL.

A Study of Indian Monism.

BY CHARLES JOHNSTON.

> "As the web-wombed spider puts forth and draws to him, as trees come forth upon the earth, as from a living man his locks and tresses,—so from the unchanging eternal comes forth all the world."
>
> —*Mundaka Upanishad.*

The teaching of the Upanishads is this: the real self of each being and of all beings is the supreme eternal; this self, though unchanging, falls into dream; it dreams itself first into many separate hostile selves; then it dreams for their enjoyment the manifold sensuous life of the three worlds; then, that the hostile selves may not fall into perpetual fascination and enthralment, the self dreams the last and sanative dream of death; and through the power of that last dream the wandered selves find no lasting joy in their sensuous ways, for they see that all this fades and wastes and wanes; that there is no unchanging joy outside the self, the self re-become one and awaking from all dreams to the reality of its immemorial oneness.

Thus awakened from the dream of life, they see the steps through which they fell to dreaming the dream of the world; they see that, as the rivers come from the ocean and return again to the ocean, as kindred sparkles come forth from a well-lit fire, so this dream of the world, this world of dream, came forth from the self, from the eternal that the seers plainly see as the womb of the worlds.

These teachings of the Upanishads are high inspirations and intuitions, from the golden dawn of India's life,—if indeed their essence and doctrines be not older even than India. To these high intuitions we cannot rise at once, though they awaken strong echoes in our hearts; for, since those sunny days, the self's great dream has grown heavier and darker, so that we can no longer hold clear truth directly by strong intuition, but must fortify intuition by intellect; must support the verdict of our souls by the reasonings of our philosophies.

Thus, it came that, in the latest period of India's life, the clear intuitions and shining wisdom of the Upanishads were expressed anew, in the philosophy of the Vedânta, whose lucid thought and admirable statement can compare with the highest work of the human mind in any age, and only gain by the comparison.

When one speaks of the Vedânta, one means, for the most part, the greatest man of the Vedânta school, the Teacher Shankara, who holds in India the supremacy that Plato holds in Greece, or Kant in the philosophy of to-day. Though his life was very brief, Shankara did all that could have been done to restore for later ages the pure wisdom of India's dawn; the Upanishads themselves he commented on and interpreted, writing much also of the poem which best reflects their spirit, the Bhagavad Gîtâ,—"the Master's Songs." In his day, the learning of the school of the Vedântins was enshrined in a book full of enigmas and obscurities, quite meaningless in parts, without an added explanation; this obscure book of memorial verses, the Brahma Sutras of Bâdarâyana, Shankara took as the theme of his most extensive, and, doubtless, his greatest work, and did all that lucidity, intense concentration of thought, and fluent language could do, to make its dark places light, its rough ways smooth. Besides all this, and many practical labors of reformation and teaching that accompanied it, Shankara found time to write a whole series of lesser works, in verse and prose, full of that wisdom of old, the love of which was the single passion of his passionless life.

From one of these lesser treatises, the "Awakening to Reality,"—Tattva Bodha,—we shall take so much as is needed to make quite clear, in the language of philosophy, what is meant by the great Indian teaching of oneness, the doctrine of the one self in all selves, the unity of the self and the eternal.

After certain sentences of introduction and benediction, and an enumeration of the powers of mind and heart required for the gaining of wisdom, Shankara harks back to the title of his book, and asks,—for most of the work is in the form of question and answer,—"What is the discerning of reality? It is this," he answers: "That the self is real; that all things other than self are delusive." Then, with that intentness of logical thought which gives Shankara such a charm, this is at once followed by another question and a definition: "What is the self? He who stands apart from the physical, emotional, and causal vestures; who is beyond the five veils; who is witness of the three modes; whose own nature is being, consciousness, bliss,—this is the self."

Not a word in all this, whose meaning is not nicely and carefully defined, whose exact value in thought is not precisely ascertained. And as this sentence contains all that the self is not, as well as all that the self is,—in a word, all things whatsoever that exist,—by gaining a full insight into this one sentence we shall have mastered the whole world-teaching of the Vedântins, and, above all, their supreme teaching of the One, above every change and seeming separation.

Beginning with what the self is not, in the individual, and with the assertion already made, that the physical vesture is not the self, Shankara asks: "What is this physical vesture?" And replies in a formula full of concentrated meaning, in which the wisdom of many ages, of many philosophers, is worn down to the fewest possible words: "Formed of the five elements fivefolded, born through works, it is the dwelling where opposing forces like pleasure and pain are experienced; it has these six accidents: it becomes, it comes to birth, it grows, it changes, it declines, it perishes; this is the physical vesture."

We may ask here, as Shankara does in a later part of his book,—when he has left the individual to speak of the building of worlds,—what are the five elements of which the fivefolded nature of the physical body is formed? We must preface the answer by saying that, from the very beginning, Indian philosophy had become entirely penetrated with the thought that we can know nothing except our own states of consciousness; that anything outside our states of consciousness can only be, as Professor Huxley once said, matter for more or less probable hypothesis. With this belief and knowledge, the best Indian philosophy never speaks of matter and force as things-in-themselves, as independent realities, as anything but more or less probable hypotheses; the phenomena which we should call the phenomena of matter and force they always expressed as far as possible in terms of our states of consciousness, and not as independent realities.

Looking in this way at the phenomena of the physical world,—the field in which the physical vesture is manifested,—they found that the states of consciousness from which we infer the existence of the physical world have five leading characteristics or qualities, or shades of color; in other words, the states of consciousness, which not only represent, but also are, the physical world, are five; these five are what we call the five senses, and what Indian philosophy calls the five perceptive, or knowing, powers: hearing, touching, seeing, tasting, smelling.

In order to reach clearness of thought, to give expression to that tendency of our consciousness which sets subject and object up against each other, in complement to each other, they further divided each of these types of physical consciousness into a trinity of subject, predicate, and object; as, seer, seeing, seen; hearer, hearing, heard; knower, knowing, known. Then, seeking for an expression by which the last term in each of these trinities might be expressed by itself, and spoken of as having, for the sake of hypothesis, an independent existence, they developed the terminology of the five elements, ether, or rather the "forward shining" or "radiant" power, as the outward complement of hearing; wind, breath, or air, as the complement of touch, or, rather, extension; fire or light or radiance, as the complement of seeing; the waters, as the complement of tasting, because taste can only apprehend fluids; and, lastly, earth, as the complement of smell.

But as each of these hypothetical elements of sensation contains within it the possibilities of other sensations than the dominant one,—camphor, for example, being seen and touched and tasted, as well as smelt,—they were led to say that these elements, these types of physical consciousness, were not simple but compound, each having in it, besides its dominant character, a possibility of each of the other four; the dominant character and the four other subsidiary characters make the "fivefolded" nature of the elements spoken of by Shankara. Thus, the physical vesture or body is "formed of the five elements, fivefolded."

It is "born through works," or, as we should say, it is subject to the law of causality; which, for the physical body, largely takes the form of heredity. Then again, the physical vesture is subject to the six accidents of generation and birth, growth and change, decline and death. This needs no comment. In each of these characteristics there is also implied a sentence of discrimination: "Therefore this is not the self." The physical vesture is subject to causality; the self is not subject to causality; therefore the physical body is not the self. The physical vesture is subject to change; the self, the pure idea of "I am," is not subject to change; therefore the physical vesture is not the self, and so on, with the other characters.

This doctrine of the five elements is, therefore, not merely defective physics, but far rather a metaphysical attempt to render the phenomena of physical consciousness, the physical world, into terms of our states of consciousness, in a simple and methodical way.

So far the physical vesture, the first of the series of things which the self is not, defined in order to show what the self is. The self is, further, other than the subtle—or psychic or emotional—vesture. This vesture, again, corresponds to a primary fact in our states of consciousness. We quite clearly recognise one set of facts in our states of consciousness as being outward, physical, objective; we not less clearly recognise another set of facts in our states of consciousness as being inward, mental or psychic, subjective. Both sets of facts, both series of pictures and feelings, are outward from consciousness, other than consciousness, objects of consciousness; therefore both are not-self. But the clear difference between them must be marked; therefore, the outward, objective series are spoken of as the physical vesture, while the inward, subjective series belong to the psychical or emotional vesture. Looked at closely, the real difference between these two is, that physical things are constrained and conditioned by both space and time; while psychic, mental things, though subject to time, are free from the rigid frame and outline of space. Both are, of course, subject to causality.

In the psychical, as in the physical states of consciousness, there are the "five knowing powers"; and we also speak of "the mind's eye," "mental touch," and so on. Indeed, according to Shankara's philosophy, hearing, seeing, touching, and the rest are purely psychical powers, even when manifested through physical organs, as "the eye cannot see of itself, nor the ear hear of itself."

As the physical vesture is the complex or nexus of the physical states of consciousness, so the psychical vesture is the complex or nexus of the psychical or mental powers and states of consciousness; these are free from the tyranny of space, though subject to causality and time.

The mention of Kant's famous triad, space, time, and causality, brings us to the third vesture, of which Shankara writes thus: "What is the causal vesture? Formed through ineffable, beginningless unwisdom, it is the substance and cause of the other two vestures; though unknowing as to its own nature, it is yet in nature unerring; this is the causal vesture." Without comment, this is hardly intelligible. The idea in it is this: Our states of consciousness, the pictures and feelings and sensations which are objective to our consciousness in unbroken series, are expanded, the one part in space and time, the other part in time only. Both are subject to causality. That is, the series of pictures, of feelings, of sensations are presented to our consciousness in a defined order, and we interpret this order as implying a causal connexion; we consider the first of two states of consciousness in a series as being the cause of the second; the second as being the effect of the first. This attribution of causality, the division of our states of consciousness into cause, causing, and caused is a separation in a double sense. In the first place, it divides the single substance of existence threefold, into cause, copula, and effect; and, in the second place, it separates the single substance of existence from consciousness, by establishing the idea of knower and known, of observer and observed, and thus sets up a duality. Now it is axiomatic with the Vedânta philosophy, for reasons which we shall presently see, that this duality does not really exist; that the substance of being, the self, is not thus divided into knower and known, observer and observed.

Therefore it is said that this causal vesture or complex of the idea of causality is formed of unwisdom, the unwisdom which sets up a division in the undivided One. Now the idea of causality goes deeper than either space or time. It goes deeper than the idea of time, because time, properly considered is a product of causality. Causality divides the objective into causal series. The elements of these series must appear before consciousness in order, in succession, for this succession of effect to cause is the essence of causality. Now it is this very succession in the series of objects, images, sensations which is the parent of the idea of time; for consciousness of itself has no idea of time. If consciousness had a sense of the passage of time, then the sense of time, in different states of consciousness, would be equal; but in waking and dream, in dream and trance, the sense of time is entirely different. Therefore the sense of time is derived, not original in the self; it has its rise in the succession of images which is the effect of causality.

Space is a further derivation of the same idea, arising from the presence of more than one causal series—or series of images, conditioned by causality—being present to consciousness at the same time; thus giving a breadth or sideways extension to perception; and this breadth of extension is the sense or the idea of space.

Thus the ideas of time and space are not original and independent but derivative from the idea of causality; hence the causal vesture, or complex of the idea of causality, is said to be the cause and substance of the other two vestures, the psychical—or vesture of causality and time—and the physical,—or vesture of causality, time, and space. We saw already that the causal vesture is formed of unwisdom, because the causal idea, the distribution of the one substance of being into causal series, is not inherent, or a property of the thing-in-itself, but merely the result of our mode of perception, "a result of intellect, which supplies the idea of causation" as Shankara says, thus anticipating almost the very words of Kant.

Born of unwisdom, this idea of causality is necessarily beginningless, or outside of time. Because, as causality is the parent of time, it naturally follows that it cannot be expressed in terms of time, or be said to have a beginning in time. As, again, this causal idea goes to the very root of intellect, it cannot be expressed in terms of intellect; so it is said to be ineffable, or "not to be spoken of" in the language of intellectual thought.

This causal idea seems to have its root in the seeming necessity of the one substance of being, the eternal, to reveal itself to itself gradually, in a successive series of revelations. This gradual series of revelations of the eternal to the eternal is the cause of manifested existence, or, to speak more strictly, is manifested existence. Now this gradual series of revelations implies a gradually increasing knowledge which shall stop short only at omniscience, when the whole of the eternal is revealed to the whole of the eternal. And each step in this gradual revelation is perfect in itself, and a perfecting and supplementing of all the revelations that have gone before. Hence each is "in its own nature unerring." But we saw that the revelation of each part of the eternal is in three degrees: first, as conditioned by space, time, and causality, in the physical world; then, as conditioned by time and causality, in the psychical or mental world; and, lastly, as conditioned by causality only, in the causal or moral world. Therefore the revelation in the moral world is freer from conditions than the other two, free from the errors of time and space, and thus "unerring wisdom" as compared with these. But before the whole of the eternal can be revealed to the whole of the eternal, the causal idea must disappear, must cease to separate the eternal into causal series; so that the causal idea is an element of error, of illusion, and therefore "unknowing as to its own nature." This plenary revelation of the whole eternal to the whole eternal is "the own-being of the supreme self"; therefore the self is above the causal vesture, the causal vesture is not the self.

To change for a moment from the language of philosophy to that of common life, the teaching is this: The individual is the Eternal; man is God; nature is Divinity. But the identity of the individual with the eternal, the oneness of man with God, is veiled and hidden, first by the physical body, secondly by the personality, and, lastly by the necessity of continuity which makes one physical body succeed another, one personality develop into another, in the chain of rebirths which continuity and the conservation of—mental and moral, as well as physical—energy inevitably bring forth.

Now, freedom from this circle of necessity will only be reached when we have succeeded first in seeing that the physical body is not our true self, but outward from and objective to our true self; then that the psychic body—the complex of mental states—is likewise not our true self; and, lastly, that our causal vesture—as containing within it the suggestion of our separate individuality opposed to other separate individualities, and thus different from the plenitude of the eternal which includes all individualities—is not our most real self; for our most real self is that very eternal, the "Theos which is all things in all things," as another teacher says. This is the awakening from the dream of the hostile selves, which, as we saw at the outset, the self falls into, and from which it will awake into a knowledge of its own fulness as the eternal.

The self, Shankara further said, "is other than the five veils." These five veils—physical, vital, emotional, intellectual, spiritual—are a development of the idea of the three vestures. The physical veil is the physical vesture, regarded as a form rather than as matter; as formal rather than material, in harmony with the conception of Faraday, that the atoms of matter are really pure centres of force; the seeming substantiality of matter belonging not to the atoms at all, but to the web or network of forces which are centred in the atoms. The idea of a "web" of forces is exactly that of the Vedânta, which constantly speaks of the world as "woven" by the Eternal, as a spider weaves his "web."

The next three veils—vital, emotional, intellectual—are subdivisions of the mental or psychical vesture. A precise determination of their values would lead us too far into the mental psychology of India to be practicable at present. The spiritual veil, again, is the causal vesture, of which we have said much already.

Again, the "three modes" of which the self is "witness," are what are called in the Vedânta: waking, dreaming, and dreamlessness. They are the fields of the activities of the three vestures; waking, the field of the physical vesture; dreaming, the field of the psychical or mental vesture,—whether in day-dreams or the dreams of night; and dreamlessness, the field of the moral or causal vesture, whether in waking inspiration, dreaming vision, or dreamless trance. Here, again, to develop the subject fully would lead us too far afield.

Freedom, the conscious oneness with the most real self, which is the eternal, consists in setting aside these vestures, in stripping off these veils. How this is to be done, we can best show by repeating the words of Shankara: "Just as there is the firm belief that 'I am the body,' 'I am a man,' 'I am a priest,' 'I am a servant,' so he who possesses the firm conviction that 'I am neither priest, nor serf, nor man, but stainless being, consciousness, bliss, the shining, the inner master, shining wisdom,' and realises this in direct perception, he, verily, is free, even in life."

BRAHMANISM AND BUDDHISM, OR THE RELIGION OF POSTULATES AND THE RELIGION OF FACTS.

About two thousand five hundred years ago the Indian mind was engaged with the problem "What am I?" and the documents which still reveal to us the lines of argument and the chief results of these investigations are called the Upanishads. The Brahman thinker considering all the various ingredients of his make-up comes to the conclusion that none of them constitutes his Self, and now, instead of arguing that his Self is the organised totality of all his parts, he comes to the conclusion that Self is a separate being in itself.

The Self or Âtman was regarded as that something which says, "I am," and remains the same in all changes. It is called the Unconditioned, the Absolute, the Eternal, the Immortal.

What is this Self? Is it our body? No! Our body is subject to change; it is born, grows, then it decays, and, at last, it will die. The body is not the Self.

Is our mind the Self? The same answer! Our mind is not unconditioned; our mental activity is subject to change. Therefore, our mind is not the Self.

Perhaps our emotions are the Self? But how can they be the Self, for they come and go and are as variable as the body and the mind.

Body, mind, and the emotional soul (so the Brahmans say) are the vestures only of the Self; they are the husks or sheaths which envelope and hide it. The Self gives reality to, and is in possession of, body, mind, and soul. The Self is the mysterious "ûkâsa," or quintessence of being, without which reality would not exist. We read:

> "This immutable one is the unseen seer, the unheard hearer, the unthought thinker, the unknown knower."[1]

We read in the Châdogya Upanishad:

> "The body is mortal and always held by death. It is the abode of that Self which is immortal and without body." (*Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. I., pp. 140–141.)

The Self is supposed to be the "person" (purusha = person or soul) who is the agent in all the organs. The Self is the seer in the eye, the smeller in the nose, the thinker of the thoughts. Thus Prajâpati, the Lord of Creation, instructs Indra on the nature of the Self:

> "Now where the sight has entered into the void (the pupil of the eye), there is the person of the eye, the eye itself is the instrument of seeing. He who knows, let me smell this, he is the Self, the nose is the instrument of smelling. He who knows, let me say this, he is the Self, the tongue is the instrument of saying. He who knows, let me hear this, he is the self, the ear is the instrument of hearing.
>
> "He who knows, let me think this, he is the self, the mind is his divine eye. He, the Self, seeing these pleasures (which to others are hidden like a buried treasure of gold) through his divine eye, i. e., the mind, rejoices.
>
> "The Devas who are in the world of Brahman meditate on that Self (as taught by Prajâpati to Indra, and by Indra to the Devas). Therefore all worlds belong to them, and all desires. He who knows that Self and understands it, obtains all worlds and all desires. Thus said Prajâpati, yea, thus said Prajâpati." (*Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. I., p. 142.)

[1] Dvivedi, *The Imitation of S'ankara*, p. 15.

Here the Self is defined as the consciousness of the ego-idea. The Self is said to be "he who knows, 'Let me smell, hear, think, or do this.'" The notion of Self is founded upon the fact that there is something in us which says "I am," and the question rises whether or not we are justified in regarding the consciousness as the Self, and the Self as an independent being.

What is the reality that corresponds to the pronoun "I"?

The word "I" is a central and therefore very important idea among many other ideas which constitute man's soul. The brain-structure in which this little word "I" resides is situated, together with all speech, in the island of Rolando, on the left hemisphere of the brain; and if it is conscious, we speak of this condition as ego-consciousness or self-consciousness. Its great prominence among other ideas is due to its significance which comprises nothing more nor less than the whole personality of the speaker. It may now mean the speaker's sentiments, now his body, now one of his limbs, now his thoughts, now his past history, now the potentialities of his future.

Considered by itself without the contents of its meaning, the pronoun "I" (frequently called the "ego" by philosophers) is as empty as a hollow water bubble; if devoid of the realities which it comprises in its meaning, it is a mere abstract; it is a cipher by which the speaker denotes himself. If regarded as a thing in itself, the word is without sense; it is like a circle without centre and periphery; like a cart without wheels, box, and beam; like a tree without roots, stem, and branches. To reify or hypostatise it as a being in itself is a logical fallacy; and to build upon this fallacy a metaphysical system is a grave error which naturally leads to the most fantastical illusions. We might as well hypostatise any and all other words or abstractions and regard them as real entities and things in themselves. In this way mythology has peopled our imagination with all kinds of chimeras, fairies, ogres, gods, and devils.

* * *

It is interesting to know the arguments by which the unity of animated life which manifests itself in consciousness was identified with prâna which means breath, vital principle or the conscious animation of the body. Prajâpati explains that that is the true Self which when leaving the body renders the body most wretched. And this is to be honored like "Uktha," the divine hymn, the embodiment of divine revelation. Thus all the constituents of man, conceived as Devas, made the experiment. We read in the Aitareya Âranyaka:

"'Well,' they said, 'let us all go out from this body; then on whose departure this body shall fall, he shall be the uktha among us.'

"Speech went out, yet the body without speaking remained, eating and drinking.

"Sight went out, yet the body without seeing remained, eating and drinking.

"Hearing went out, yet the body without hearing remained, eating and drinking.

"Mind went out, yet the body, as if blinking, remained, eating and drinking.

"Breath went out, then when breath was gone out, the body fell. . . .

"They strove again, saying: 'I am the uktha, I am the uktha.' 'Well,' they said, 'let us enter that body again; then on whose entrance this body shall rise again, he shall be the uktha among us.'

"Speech entered, but the body lay still. Sight entered, but the body lay still. Hearing entered, but the body lay still. Mind entered, but the body lay still. Breath entered, and when breath had entered, the body rose, and it became the uktha.

"Therefore breath alone is the uktha.

"Let people know that breath is the uktha indeed.

"The Devas (the other senses) said to breath: 'Thou art the uktha, thou art all this, we are thine, thou art ours.'" (*Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. I., pp. 206–207.)

We can trace in the Upanishads the logical arguments on which the Indian mind arrived at the idea of an independent Self, as the breath or spirit of man which at the moment of death was supposed to leave the body and to continue in an independent existence as an immortal being. Breath became identified with consciousness and was supposed to be the Self and is called Sattya, i. e., the true (p. 209). It is the mover of movements and the agent of actions. It is that by which we obtain strength, and its recognition is the object of all knowledge. In Shankara's philosophy the Self plays the part of Kant's thing in itself. The Self is described to us in the Talavakâra-Upanishad (*Sacred Books of the East*, I., p. 147):

"It is the ear of the ear, the mind of the mind, the speech of speech, the breath of breath, and the eye of the eye. When freed (from the senses) the wise, on departing from this world, become immortal."

And it is by recognising the Self that "the wise become immortal when they have departed from this world" (*ib.*, p. 149).

The Self was identified with God, the Creator. Brahman was said to be the Self; and "in the beginning there was only Self. He was alone; and there was nothing else whatsoever." (Aitareya-Âranyaka, Vol. I., p. 1.) Having created worlds and the various deities, Agni (fire), Vâyu (air), Âditya (sun), the Dis (regions), Kandramas (moon), and the rest, the Self created man, and all the gods entered into man to ensoul him. They endowed him with breath, sight, touch, speech, digestion, and other functions.

We read in the Aitareya Âranyaka:[1]

"And then the Self thought: 'If speech names, if scent smells, if the eye sees, if the ear hears, if the skin feels, if the mind thinks, if the off-breathing digests, if the organ discharges, then what am I?'

"Then opening the suture of the skull, he got in by that door.

"That door is called the Vidriti (tearing asunder), the Nândana (the place of bliss).

"There are three dwelling-places for him, three dreams; this dwelling-place (the eye), this dwelling-place (the throat), this dwelling-place (the heart).

"When born (when the Highest Self had entered the body) he looked through all things, in order to see whether anything wished to proclaim here another (Self). He saw this person only (himself) as the widely spread Brahman. 'I saw it,' thus he said;

"Therefore he was (named) 'Idam-dra' (seeing this).

"Being Idamdra by name, they call him Indra mysteriously. For the Devas love mystery, yea, they love mystery."

Of such importance did the Hindu thinkers regard the conception of Self, which as an independent spiritual being was compared to "a bank or boundary, so that these worlds may not be confounded," that they made the belief in its existence an article of faith. Knowledge of the Self was supposed to be a divine revelation which would not have obtained except by the supernatural assistance of the gods, of Prajâpati, of Brahma, of the Lord. The Self is mysterious in its nature. It cannot be discovered either by sense-experience or by scientific investigation; for:

"The eye has no access there, nor has speech nor mind; we do not know the Self, nor the method whereby we can impart It. It is other than the known as well as the unknown; so indeed do we hear from the sages of old who explained It thus to us."[2]

The existence of Self must be believed. We read in the Ch'ândogya Upanishad, (*Sacred Books of the East*, I., page 122):

"When one believes, then one perceives. One who does not believe, does not perceive. Only he who believes, perceives."

On the belief in the existence of the Self man's eternal salvation was supposed to depend. We read (*Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. I., p. 124):

"To him who sees, perceives, and understands this, the spirit (prâ*n*a) springs from the Self, hope springs from the Self, memory springs from the Self; so do ether, fire, water, appearance, and disappearance, food, power, understanding, reflexion, consideration, will, mind, speech, names, sacred hymns, and sacrifices—aye, all this springs from the Self.

"There is this verse, 'He who sees this, does not see death, nor illness, nor pain; he who sees this, sees everything, and obtains everything everywhere.'

"He who sees, perceives, and understands this, loves the Self, delights in the Self, revels in the Self, rejoices in the Self—he becomes a Svarâj (an autocrat or self-ruler); he is lord and master in all the worlds."

There are various complicated systems elaborated from the metaphysics of the conception of the Self.

[1] *Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. I., p. 242.

[2] Dvivedi, *l. l.*, p. 6.

Most of the Indian philosophers identify the Self with Brahma, so that there is really only one Self which manifests itself in many various Selves; and since the Self alone is real, the material universe is conceived as mere appearance, as sham, as an illusion of the senses. This is the doctrine of the Vedânta School, the greatest representative of which is Shankara, a thinker of unusual power and of great influence.

The Vedânta philosophy is called *advaita*, or the non-duality doctrine, as opposed to the dualism of the Samkhya School, whose founder taught that there are innumerable Selves uncreated and indestructible, among whom many by the error of not distinguishing between Self and Body got entangled into this material world of suffering, from which they can be ransomed only by the recognition of the true nature of the Self.

Whatever view we may take, one thing is certain, that the assumption of an independent and separate Self, involves us in contradictions and vagaries wherever we turn and however wisely we may attempt to avoid its consequences.

* * *

In opposition to these speculations, Buddha denied the existence of an independent Self as the soul of man. While the Brahmans spoke of the Self in a dualistic sense, "as of a razor that might be fitted in a razor-case," or "as a fire that might be lit in a fireplace," Buddha propounded a consistent Monism in which he radically ignored all metaphysical assumptions and philosophical postulates, founding his religion on a consideration of the pure facts of experience. While the Brahmans declared that the Self is immortal and immutable, "that it is not increased by a good action, or decreased by a bad action," Buddha taught that there was no use in trying to improve the immutable; but he found it imperative to improve man; and man's nature, according to Buddha, consists of karma, i. e., of actions, or, to use a term of natural science, of functions. Man is the product of the life and thought functions of former existences, and his own karma continues as a living factor in the generations to come.

In Brahmanism facts are nothing, and idea, that is to say theory, is everything. In Buddhism theory is nothing, and facts are everything. Theory has sense only as a comprehensive formulation of facts.[1]

The Self of the Brahmans is Kant's thing-in-itself applied to religion. It is the thing-in-itself of man's soul. It is the hypostatisation of the abstraction of self-consciousness, which is carried so far as to deify that feature of existence which is common to all beings and to regard the particular forms which they assume as unessential. From this standpoint all differences disappear, and, as the Bhagavadgita declares, "a Brahman full of learning and virtue, a cow, an elephant, a dog, and one of low caste," all are on the same level. Shankara, speaking of "the nightmare of separateness, says:

"He who has the firm conviction 'I am this consciousness,' not the form it takes, let him be a Brâhmaṇa or a Chândâla, my mind points to him as the real Master."[1]

Buddha would on the contrary insist that the form in which consciousness appears is the man himself; that that particular form functioning in a particular way is that particular man; but that consciousness in itself, a consciousness which has no particular form and is consciousness in general, is a mere fiction, an empty abstraction, and a thought as "hollow as a water-bubble," and as "hollow as a plantain-tree."

Shankara was an adversary of Buddhism, and the report goes that he had instigated the people to massacre the Buddhists without mercy. This report may have been untrue, but this much is certain, that Shankara was the most energetic reformer of Brahmanism at the time when Buddhism began to lose its hold on the Hindu mind. While Shankara rejected Buddha's philosophy, he adopted those moral truths of his doctrines which had most deeply impressed the people of India, universal love, compassion with the suffering, and the solidarity of all life. And here his theory of the Self merges into Pantheism. He sees with the poet of the Bhagavadgita "all beings in Self, and Self in all beings." Feeling the thrill of omneity in his heart, Shankara says:

"I am all bliss, the bliss all eternal consciousness. Death I fear not, caste I respect not, father, mother, nay even birth, I know not, relatives, friends I recognise not, teacher and pupil I own not;—I am all bliss, the bliss all eternal consciousness."[2]

While Shankara has become the undisputed leader of Hindu thought, whose sway reaches down to the present time, we must not omit to mention another less prominent school, founded by Râmânuja, which has worked out the doctrine of the Self in a form that peculiarly and closely resembles the soul-conception of modern Christianity. Râmânuja believes in a triad of existences: (1) the Highest Self, who is Para-Brahman, or Îshvara, or Vishnu, the Creator and Lord; (2) innumerable Selves of human beings, who possess separate and distinct existences; and (3) the not-self of the inanimate world. Râmânuja's moral ideal for human Selves consists in the attainment of a union with the Highest Self, in which however their separate identities and their individual consciousnesses are not lost.

[1] See Dvivedi, *l. l.*, Introduction, p. xix.

[1] *The Imitation of S'ankara*, p. 181.

[2] *The Imitation of S'ankara*, pp. 157–158 and 156.

The contrast between a religion based upon a belief in postulates and a religion based upon facts has not as yet disappeared. The dogmatic Christianity of the present day is a revival of the metaphysics of the Upanishads, and some representative Christian authors remind us very much of the logic and modes of thought of the old Brahmans. Thus Mr. Gladstone, in his latest article on "The Future Life" says:

"The power of death to destroy living beings is conditioned by their being compounded. For as consciousness is indivisible, so it should seem is the conscious being in which it resides. And, if this be so, it follows that, the body being extraneous and foreign to the true self, no presumption can arise out of the dissolution of the body against the continued existence of the true self.

"As we lose limbs, organs of sense, and yet the true self continues; and as animal bodies are always in a state of flux, with no corresponding loss or gain of the true self, we again infer the distinctness of that true self from the body, and its independence at the time of death."

If this passage which contains the gist of Mr. Gladstone's argument in favor of an immortality in another world of immaterial existence, appeared in one of the Upanishads, it could not be regarded as out of place there, so closely does it resemble the line of thought set forth by Brahman sages. But the objection that Buddha made against the assumption of an independent Self holds good with the same force against Christian metaphysics as against Brahmanical speculations.

If modern psychology has accomplished anything beyond the shadow of doubt, it is this, that consciousness is not an indivisible unity, but a unification, a systematisation or a focussing of feelings. These feelings, when not centralised, as in dreams or swoons, continue in a condition that is commonly called subconscious. The province of subconscious activity in a man's soul is very large, by far larger than the narrow circle that under the stress of attention appears on the surface of consciousness.

But is this not a dreary doctrine as it denies the existence of the Soul. Those readers of *The Open Court* who have followed us in our exposition on the nature of the Soul know that this doctrine is neither dreary, nor nihilistic, nor does it deny the existence of the Soul. It only denies the assumption of the existence of a metaphysical Self, of an âtman, an independent ego-being, and proves that the Soul is larger than the ego. The rescission of that artificial wall raised up round the conception of our Self opens the vistas of eternity, both in the past and the future; it shows the connexion in which our Soul stands with the whole evolution of life upon earth and impresses us with the importance of our deeds which will continue for good or evil in after-life.

"Not from the blank Inane emerged the soul:
A sacred treasury it is of dreams
And deeds that built the present from the past,
Adding thereto its own experiences.
Ancestral lives are seeing in mine eyes,
Their hearing listeneth within mine ears,
And in my hand their strength is plied again.
Speech came, a rich consignment from the past,
Each word aglow with wondrous spirit life,
Thus building up my soul of myriad souls.

"I call that something 'I' which seems my soul;
Yet more the spirit is than ego holds.
For lo! this ego, where shall it be sought?
I'm wont to say 'I see'; yet 'tis the eye
That sees, and seeing, kind'leth in the thought
The beaming images of memory.
'I hear' we say: Hearing is of the ear;
And where the caught word stirs, there cords resound
Of slumb'ring sentiment; and echoes wake
Of sounds that long ago to silence lapsed.
Not dead, perfected only, is the past;
And ever from the darkness of the grave
It rises to rejuvenated life.

"The 'I' is but a name to clothe withal
The clustered mass that now my being forms.
Take not the symbol for reality—
The transient for th' eterne. Mine ego, lo!
'Tis but my spirit's scintillating play
This fluctuant moment of eternities
That now are crossing where my heart's blood beats.
I was not, am, and soon will pass. But never
My soul shall cease; the breeding ages aye
Shall know its life. All that the past bequeathed,
And all that life hath added unto me,
This shall endure in immortality."[1]

[1] *De Rerum Natura*, pp. 7–8.

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