

Pali “Vado Vedeyyo” and Upanisadic “Avāṅki-Anādarah”

IN the famous ‘Sāṇḍilya-vidyā’ Section of the Chāndogya Upaniṣad (3.14.1-4), also found in a somewhat different version in the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa (10.6.3)¹, occurs the following: “. . . Now, verily, a person (*puruṣa*) consists of volition (*kratu*). According as his volition is in this world, so does he become on departing hence (*itah pretya*). So let him exercise for himself volition. Consisting of mind (*manomaya*), having a body of life (*prāṇa-śarīrah*), of the colour of light (*bhā-rūpāḥ*), of true conception, of the nature of *ākāśa*, possessing all actions, all desires, all smells, all tastes, pervading all this, *speechless* and *indifferent* (*avāḱyanādarah*) . . . this self (*ātmā*) of mine within the heart—this is Brahma—into him shall I evolve³ on departing from here.” The Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa version, while generally agreeing with the above, has the latter part as follows: “Let him meditate on the Self (*Ātmānam*), consisting of mind . . . etc . . . changing its shape at will, swift as thought, of true conception, and resolve, possessing all smells, and tastes, which holds sway over all the regions and pervades all this, which is *speechless* and *indifferent* (*avāḱkam-anādarām*), . . . that self of life (*prāṇa*) is my self (*ātmā*); hence departing, into (this) self (*Ātmānam*) shall I evolve³. A study of these passages shows that the attributes ‘speechless’ and ‘indifferent’ refer to the pantheistic Ātman which is immanent in the transmigrating individual self in all its vicissitudes.

In his commentary on the Chāndogya Upaniṣad, Śaṅkara interprets the term ‘*manomaya puruṣa*’ as “the self that resides in the *prāṇa*ic or subtle body, i.e. the *līṅga*, consisting of the two energies of consciousness (*viññāna*) and activity (*kriyā*)⁴. That the self transmigrates in the form of the *līṅga* is attested to at Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad, 4.4.6, which says “where one’s mind is attached, the *līṅga* goes thereto with action . . .” Hence the passage may be taken generally to refer to the mental or intelligential self of the person departing from this life; it is to be observed that ‘*pretya*’ and other forms of *pra* + √ in most Upaniṣadic contexts⁵ imply the departure of the individual self

1. The Chāndogya passage is very early and belongs to what Belvalkar and Ranade have called the “Brāhmaṇo-Upaniṣadic Period.” *History of Indian Philosophy*, Vol. II. p. 135. Perhaps both versions go back to one original source.

2. This parenthetical phrase is probably a later interpolation, for it does not occur in the Brāhmaṇa version.

3. The verb ‘*abhi + sam + √bhū*’ is usually employed in the Upaniṣads in the sense of ‘evolve into’ with the accusative of the noun denoting the new state, as seen from Jacob’s *Concordance*.

4. Chāndogya Upaniṣad Bhāṣya (Ā.Ā. Series ed.), p. 170.

5. See Jacob’s *Concordance*, s. ‘pre.’

at death. But the epithets beginning with 'manomaya' can apply, in the ultimate analysis, only to the macrocosmic Ātman, as the Brāhmaṇa text clearly shows and is interpreted by Sāyana in his *bhāṣya* on the Mādhyandina recension⁶. Similarly, Śaṅkara regards these attributes as belonging to Īśvara or God, although he interprets 'kratumayaḥ puruṣaḥ' as the individual self (*jīva*)⁷ who is said to become what he wills to be, having departed from this world⁸. In fact, the pantheistic nature of the Ātman described is patent from the epithet 'sarvamīdamabhivṛyāpta', and the whole passage has to be taken in this double sense, as most similar passages in the Upaniṣads which maintain the identity of the microcosm and the macrocosm.

A comparison with other early Upaniṣadic texts clearly demonstrates that the particular self described by the terms "manomayaḥ prāṇasarīro bhārūṣaḥ" is what may be called the *anchistological* aspect of the Upaniṣadic Ātman, often also called the 'vijñānātman.' That the individual self has several aspects is proved not only by the famous 'pañcakosa' theory of the Taittirīya Up. (2.3.1, 4.1) but also by many other contexts (e.g., Bṛhad., 1.5.3; 4.4.5, etc.). According to the Taittirīya doctrine, just as the manomaya self is encased within the prāṇamaya, so is the vijñānamaya self posited within the manomaya. But, since manas is also one of the sense-functions in a way, and is therefore a prāṇa⁹, it is not surprising to find the vijñānamaya self itself being referred to as "the person among the functions (prāṇeṣu), inside the heart, an (effulgent) light etc." (Bṛhad., 4.3.7), who being born attains a body and is joined by evils, and departing, on dying (utkrāman-mriyamānaḥ), leaves the body and discards (those) evils" (ib.8). It is unnecessary to point out that this is the same self as the one that is cryptically called 'Indra,' at Tait. Up., 1.6.1 with regard to the dying person, and at Aitareya, 1.3.12, 14 with regard to the pantheistic Ātman as it enters the human body after the latter's first creation in order to enliven it. It is significant that this self is also regarded in the former context as the "manomaya person, immortal, resplendent (hiraṇmaya), within the space inside the heart . . ." Thus the two terms manomaya and vijñānamaya are promiscuously employed to denote the self as survivor at death (cp. Bṛhad., 4.4.4; Tait., 2.8.1; 3.10.5). The progress of this anchistological self in its several stages from the moment of departure from one body till it is reborn in a fresh one is fully described at Bṛhad. Up., 4.4.1-2, thus: "When this self¹⁰ becomes weak, as it were, is reduced to senselessness, then the functions (prāṇāḥ) get concentrated within him; he collects into himself all these particles

of energy and descends into the heart . . . [thus he becomes unified (*ekābhūta*) with his functions (cp. Bṛhad., 2.4.14)] . . . Of him (thus unified) the heart-tip becomes luminous; by that become luminous, the self (*ātman*) leaves. In the wake of him leaving, life leaves; in the wake of life leaving all the vital functions leave; he becomes (just) consciousness (*sa* [?] *viññāno bhavati*), (and) as that very (*eva*) consciousness, he descends (into a womb) over again (*anu-ava-krāmati*)"¹¹. I have shown (*loc. cit*) that this theory of rebirth has at least this much in common with the Buddhist explanation of the phenomenon, that the departing and surviving factor is some form of consciousness (*viññāna* = *Pāli viññāna*). Furthermore, from the foregoing contexts it becomes clear that this Upaniṣadic self in transmigration is held to be radiant or effulgent (*bhārūṣa*, *jyotir*, *hiraṇmaya*)—an idea forcefully expressed at Bṛhad. Up., 4.3.9 where the *vijñānamaya-puruṣa* (the same as the self in the dream state) is identified with the self that arises from the crematory-oblation in the form of 'the person of the colour of light (*bhāsvavaravarnaḥ*).' This attribution of radiance to the anchistological *vijñānātman* in the Upaniṣads appears to be the result of the notion that at death the person discards the evils of the body, as mentioned above, but it is necessary to remember that from the Buddhist point of view¹² it appears to be a fallacy arising from the confusion of the *vijñānātman* as survivor with the *viññāna* of the perfected individual¹³.

Now, the characteristics of the *ātman* as found in the passages under discussion, that are more important for the Pāli terminological parallelism than those dealt with in the preceding paragraph, are the two contained in the Chāndogya phrase "avākī-anādarah" and the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa's "avākkam-anādaram." Both 'avākī' and 'avākkam' can be grammatically regarded as possessive adjectival formations, and mean literally 'speech-less,' i.e., 'non-speaking,' as most translators take them¹⁴. But, as Śaṅkara correctly remarks¹⁵, "the denial of speech (*vāk*) here is purely illustrative (*upalakṣaṇārthaḥ*), for it stands for the denial of all the sense-functions (*karaṇāni*) . . .", an interpretation justified by the special importance given to *vāc* as compared

11. See my full discussion of this passage, with a new reading suggested, in the *University of Ceylon Review*, Vol. III, No. 1, pp. 91, ff.

12. *Ibid.* Vol. I, No. 2, p. 33.

13. The promiscuous application of 'manas' and 'viññāna' in Indian philosophy is well known. Thus Buddhism makes *mano*, *viññāna* and *citta* all synonymous (*Dīgha Nikāya*, I, p. 21).

14. See Hume, *The Thirteen Principal Upanishads*, (trans.), p. 209. R. Mitra, *The Twelve Principal Upanishads*, (Eng. Trans., published by Tatyā), p. 537. Max Müller, *The Upanishads*, S.B.E., Vol. I, p. 48. Cp. Atharva-veda, 5.20.11, *vāgvīn*, speaker. Just as the suffix -*vin*, so the suffix -*in* or -*ka* may develop the agent sense; See Whitney, *Sanskrit Grammar*, §1145.

15. *Loc. cit.*, p. 172.

6. See Eggeling, Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa Translation, S.B.E., Vol. XLIII, p. 400.

7. *Loc. cit.*, p. 169.

8. Here Śaṅkara takes 'pretya' as "mṛtvā," (*ibid.*).

9. See my article on "Upaniṣadic Terms for Sense-Functions" in the *University of Ceylon Review*, Vol. II, Nos. 1 and 2, p. 20.

10. Clearly called "sārīra ātmā" in the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa version (1.4.7.2).

with the other functions in the Upaniṣads¹⁶. It is seen that *speech* often heads the list of *prāṇas* or cognitive and motor functions (e.g., Chānd. Up., 5.1.1-15; Kaush. Up., 3.4-8 etc.)¹⁷. Thus the meaning of the epithet 'un-speaking' here must be taken in the broader sense of 'non-agent'; that is to say, the Ātman is devoid of *agency*. But in view of such passages as Bṛhad. Up., 4.3.26, where the Ātman is held to be the 'speaker' (i.e., agent) *par excellence*, the above interpretation would appear to present a contradiction. So Śaṅkara in order to meet this difficulty interprets the term 'avākī' as "possessed of no organs such as speech (*sci.* but nevertheless, the speaker etc.)" (*loc.cit.*). The difficulty, however, results from the confusion of the sense of 'ātman' in the passage, which seems to waver between the microcosmic and the macrocosmic applications.

The same doubt seems to assail the investigator in attempting to decide the exact connotation of the word 'anādarah.' The form, like 'avākī,' occurs only in these contexts and is to be taken similarly as a *possessive* adjectival formation, literally meaning 'unconcerned' or 'indifferent,' that is to say, 'not moved by external events'¹⁸. That in the Upaniṣadic period the verb *ā + √dr* meant 'to regard' or 'be concerned with' is seen from Bṛhad. Up., 6.2.3, where 'anādrīya' is used in the sense of 'disregarding.' The Upaniṣadic application of these epithets to the Ātman may be compared with the similar attribution to the Puruṣa (Spirit) of "percipience, (yet) non-agency and neutrality" (*mādhyasthyam draṣṭṛvam akartṛbhāvaśca*) in the Sāṅkhya-Kārikā (19). The very next Kārikā (20), in fact, asserts that "it is only by the association with the *liṅga* (or the transmigrating subtle body) that the 'indifferent one' (*udāsīna*) (i.e., the Puruṣa) becomes *agent* as it were (*iva*)."¹⁹ Thus it is seen that in these philosophies the denial of *agency* and *concern* applies in reality only to the macrocosmic Self or Spirit but not to the microcosmic correlates of these in the two systems, particularly not to the transmigrating self. Yet it is significant for the ensuing discussion that even the macrocosmic Self is regarded in the Sāṅkhya and the late Upaniṣads as 'enjoyer' (*bhoktr*), i.e., 'the experiencer'¹⁹.

Now, it is of great significance for the evolution of early Indian religious and philosophical thought to find an apparently similar denial in Early Buddhism of the self (*attā*) or consciousness (*viññāṇa*) as the "speaker and feeler (experiencer) (*vado vedeyyo*)". This expression occurs only twice in the Pāli

Nikāyas and both instances are found in the Majjhima Nikāya. In the Secced or Sabbāsava Sutta of that collection it is said that the uninstructed, common person owing to irrational thinking may come to hold one of the following six false views (*ditthi*): "I have a self (*attā*); I have not a self; by self I perceive self; by self I perceive non-self (*anattānam*) by non-self I perceive self; or (finally) his erroneous view is to hold that 'this self (*attā*) of mine, the speaker and feeler (*vado vedeyyo*), (that) experiences the fruit of good and bad acts (*kammānam*), that for me is (identical with) the Ātman (Cosmic Self), permanent, constant, eternal, unchanging, that will stand fast for all eternity' " (M.I.8)²⁰. As the commentator Buddhaghosa explains it, the term '*vado*' in this context literally means 'speaker' or 'the agent of the act of speaking'²¹, which like the Upaniṣadic parallel '*avākī*' must be taken in the broader sense of 'agent' in general. Similarly '*vedeyyo*' means the 'feeler' or the 'agent of experience'²². The more important occurrence (M.I.258) of this expression, however, is in the famous Mahātaṇhāsāṅkhaya Sutta (38). A monk, Sāti by name, comes to entertain the pernicious view that, as he understood the Lord's teaching of the Doctrine, "the same (*tadeva*)²³ consciousness (*viññāṇam*) runs on and continues (*sci.* after death) without break of identity (*anaññam*)"²⁴. In his commentary Buddhaghosa completely ignores the force of '*tadeva*' and '*anaññam*' and takes the statement as a flat denial of any surviving factor such as *viññāṇa*²⁵, but as Oldenberg, Keith and Mrs Rhys Davids have shown²⁶, what is denied here is only the belief that the surviving consciousness that runs on and continues in *samsāra* is identically the same as the living consciousness. Sāti is sternly rebuked by the Buddha for holding this pernicious view, and is consequently asked to *define* his conception of *viññāṇa* (*katamaṃ taṃ Sāti viññāṇam*?)—be it noted that this request to define it would not have been necessary at all if Buddha had started with a flat denial of a surviving *viññāṇa* of any and every kind of description—and Sāti replies; "Sir, it is that *speaker* and *feeler* (*vado vedeyyo*), who experiences (*paṭisaṃvedeti*) the results of good and bad acts, in this or that existence (*taṭṭa taṭṭa*)."²⁶ Sāti is again rebuked and told that such a *viññāṇa* must be purely empirical, arising

20. "... Atha vā paṇ' assa evaṃ ditthi hoti : Yo me ayam attā vado vedeyyo tatra tatra kalyāṇapāpakāṇaṃ kammānaṃ vipākāṃ paṭisaṃvedeti, so kho paṇa me ayam attā nicco dhuvo sassato avipariṇāmadhammo sassatisamaṃ tath' eva ṭhassatī ti."

21. "Tattha vadatī ti vado. Vacikamassa kārako ti vuttaṃ hoti" (Pt. I, p. 71). The form is made from root *vad*, to speak, with the agent suffix *-as*.

22. "Vediyatī ti vedeyyo. Jānāti, anubhavati cāti vuttaṃ hoti" (*ibid*). The form again is agent suffix *-as* added to a base *vedē-* or *vedaya-*, from the root *vid*, to feel.

23. That is the same as of the person when he was living.

24. The translation is in agreement with that of Chalmers (S.B.B., Vol. V, p. 183).

25. Cy., Pt. II, p. 305.

26. In *Buddha*, p. 228 (cp. 253), *Buddhist Philosophy*, p. 79, and *Sākyā*, p. 322, respectively.

16. See Bṛhad. Up., 1.2.5, 5.4; 4.1.2; Chānd. Up., 1.2.11, 13.2, 3.18.3, 7.2.1, etc.

17. See also other references given by me in the *University of Ceylon Review*, Vol. II, Nos. 1 and 2, pp. 17, ff.

18. Cp. *Petersburger Wörterbuch*, s. *anādara*; Eggeling, *loc. cit.*; Hume, Max Müller, etc., *loc. cit.*

19. Sāṅkhya-Kārikā 17 (*bhoktrbhāvāt*); Kaṭha Up., 3.4, (*bhoktr*), 4.5, (*mādhvāt*); Svet. Up., 1.9, 12; 6.16 (*ḥṣetra-jña*); Muṇḍ. Up. 3.1, etc.

only by way of causation (*paṭiccasamuppannam*) and not coming about without assignable conditions (*aññatra paccayā natthi viññānassa sambhavo*). Then follows a long analysis of such empirical consciousness. It is highly significant that this very analysis is immediately succeeded by an unmistakably emphatic assertion of an extra-empirical element or factor at conception, which must be present along with the physical elements if the latter is to be successful, and, which is called the 'gandhabba' (p. 265-6). Elsewhere²⁷, I have shown that this 'gandhabba' is no other than the 'samvattanika-viññāna' (M.II.262), that is, the consciousness that evolves (in saṃsāra), said to descend into the mother's womb for successful conception and parturition, clearly from *outside* as E. J. Thomas has argued²⁸, in more than one place in the early Nikāyas (D.II.63; M.II.501 etc.). The history of the evolution of this concept of the anchistological 'gandhabba' shows that even some of the later Buddhist Schools, interpreting the surviving factor as some being (*satta*) or personality (*puggala*) endowed with a full sense-apparatus and even, in the opinion of some, a subtle, transporting (*ativāhika*) body of some sort comparable to the *liṅga-śarīra*, had forgotten the exact import of the concept and ignored the term 'gandhabba' completely²⁹. But in my discussion of the subject already referred to, I pointed out with adequate justification that the term, at least for Early Buddhism, meant the saṃsāric consciousness, although having no empirical relationship with sense functions etc., as implied by the Upaniṣadic notion of the prāṇic body or *liṅga* and therefore impossible to be regarded as either *agent* or *experiencer*.

The above considerations would suffice to demonstrate that, by the denial of the attributes of 'speaking' and 'feeling' to the surviving factor as implied in the refutation of Sāti's view that the consciousness that fares on and continues in saṃsāra is '*vado vedeyyo*,' and also by the refusal to indentify it with any *permanent* and *unchanging* self (*attā*), Early Buddhism took a stand radically different from the one taken by the Upaniṣads with regard to the important phenomenon of rebirth. As the above discussion of the Chāndogya passage suggested the epithets '*avāki-anādarah*' were in the ultimate analysis applied only to the macrocosmic Ātman or, as Śaṅkara interpreted it, to God (Īśvara), but the foregoing discussion of the Buddhist phrase should have made it amply clear that Early Buddhism not only denied the existence of any such pantheistic Soul but directly applied the denial of the said attributes to the surviving factor itself. Herein lies the important distinction between the two apparently parallel usages—a distinction that is of the highest importance in a comparative study of the Ātman doctrine of the Upaniṣads in relation to the Buddhist view of *Anatta*.

O. H. de A. W.

27. *University of Ceylon Review*, Vol. III, No. 1, pp. 88 ff.

28. *History of Buddhist Thought*, p. 105.

29. See my discussion in *University of Ceylon Review*, Vol. III, No. 1, pp. 89, ff.

30. As I intend to present in a forthcoming publication on *Ātman and Anatta*.

Notes and Queries

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF ARIYAVAṂSA

The term *Ariya-vasa* occurring in several early inscriptions of Ceylon had been a subject of much speculation among scholars. Rev. W. Rāhula of the University of Ceylon examined* many attempts at explaining the term, in the light of the various usages of *Ariya-vasa* in the Pali texts and commentaries and came to the conclusion that it must have meant an institution or celebration in connection with the preaching and practice of the Ariyavaṃsa-Sutta.

I wish to point out that the traditional explanation of the term that seems to have been current in the 10th century A.D. as is attested by the Dhampiyā-Aṭuvā-Gāṭapadaya (p. 1943-5), (a Sinhalese exegetical work said to have been written by King Kāśyapa V.) lends support to the above conclusion of Rev. Rāhula. The main teachings of the Ariyavaṃsa-Sutta are clearly borne out by the definition given for *Ariyavaṃsa-ṭṭiṭṭi*. The author says:—*itaritara cīvarādi santōsa hay bhāvanārāmatā ariyavaṃsa-ṭṭiṭṭi nam* i.e., 'Contentment with whatsoever, robes etc. and fondness for (or delight in) meditation, are known as the practice (or the path) of Ariya-vaṃsa'. All the words in this definition, with the exception of *hay* and *nam* are loan-words from Pali. *Hay* is a conjunction meaning 'and, together with' and corresponding to the indeclinable *saha* of Pali and Sanskrit. *Nam* corresponds to the indeclinable *nāma* of Pali and Sanskrit and means 'by name, (is or are) named, called or known as.'

By *cīvarādi-santosa* or 'contentment with robes etc.' the author refers to the first three principal sections of the Ariyavaṃsa Sutta, made out by Rev. Rāhula, and by *bhāvanārāmatā* or 'delight in meditation' he refers to the fourth. Much importance seems to have been attached to the inculcation of those two ideals, in the course of the *Ariyavaṃsa-karaṇa*. The Dhampiyā-Aṭuvā-Gāṭapadaya is known to preserve in numerous instances very valuable traditional explanations of various terms, grammatical, doctrinal, etc., and the present is one such instance.

D. E. HETTIARATCHI.

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