



## ***International Journal of Humanities & Social Science Studies (IJHSSS)***

*A Peer-Reviewed Bi-monthly Bi-lingual Research Journal*

*ISSN: 2349-6959 (Online), ISSN: 2349-6711 (Print)*

*ISJN: A4372-3142 (Online) ISJN: A4372-3143 (Print)*

*Volume-IX, Issue-III, May 2023, Page No.143-148*

*Published by Scholar Publications, Karimganj, Assam, India, 788711*

*Website: <http://www.ijhsss.com>*

**DOI: 10.29032/ijhsss.v9.i3.2023.143-148**

---

### **The concept of Soul in Indian Philosophy**

**Sudhangshu Mondal**

*Assistant Professor, Dept. of Philosophy, Netaji Mahavidyalaya, Arambagh, Hooghly,  
West Bengal, India*

#### **Abstract:**

*The historical religions with a scriptural foundation that originated in India, such as Sikhism, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Jainism, each have nuanced and distinct perspectives on the idea of the soul. In a shared cultural environment, each tradition sought to identify its own position in relation to influential and established religious ideals while relating to those ideals. One such idea is the soul. The fundamental ontological premise that there is a vital and animating incorporeal component that distinguishes life from death is accepted by all traditions. In Indian traditions, the status of the soul in relation to physical life and death is a major issue. This brings into play the law of karma, which states that an individual's actions have a residual force that has influence over them beyond this lifetime and is the driving force behind the cycle of birth and death (samsara). In particular, Indian mythology never equates the soul with this lingering force of karma. Spiritual knowledge and practice, as defined by each tradition, are the means by which the ultimate goal—liberation from this cycle—is attained. In this paper I shall try to explain the concept of soul in Indian philosophy.*

**Keywords: Soul, Buddhist, Advaita, Charvaka and God**

---

In the Buddhist way of thinking, that's what they contend, on the off chance that there had been a genuine self, it would have had specific qualities. Perseverance, immutability, the absence of suffering, and being unaffected by previous events are examples of these. Since it would have been aware of itself, a real self would have been content. It would not have been altered or influenced in any way by anything else. However, this description is very different from our experience of the self. This suggests that there is no such thing as the human self and the real self.

We need to let go of the false belief that we have a persistent self. This kind of mental liberation is a step toward liberation. The self is viewed as a spiritual being rather than a material one in accordance with the Atman concept. As a result, there is a strong Hinduism component that emphasizes asceticism and detachment from the material world. As a result,

one could say that rather than a human experiencing a spiritual experience, a spiritual being known as the Atman has a human experience in this world.

Consequently, a person must acknowledge their maya-bound status. He must therefore acknowledge his ignorance and accept that he does not belong in this mayan world. He only has a relationship with his God, who he loves so much and with whom he has many lovely relationships. Knowing that, he must love Him completely and selflessly. The worshipper of the nirakar brahma enters the absolutely dormant state of the Divinity known as kaivalya moksha and remains there forever in a kind of completely passed out state because the nirakar brahma itself is an actionless dormant Divinity.

The Charvaka School is the only Hindu school of thought that categorically denies the existence of Atman. The Charvaka think that consciousness is just matter's product. Life and consciousness are inseparable. It is destroyed when the body breaks down and is always found in close proximity to it.

Advaita philosopher Samkara challenges Charvaka's theory of soullessness. His argument is primarily based on the Charvaka claim that life-movements, consciousness, memory, and the associated intellectual function are all part of the body because they can only be experienced in the body. Sankara asserts that life movements and similar phenomena cannot be products of the body because they do not always occur even when the body exists (such as at death).

In the Digha Nikaya Sutra, the Buddhist term Anatman (Sanskrit) or Anatta (Pali) is used as an adjective. It implies that phenomena lack souls by their very nature. Of the 662 instances of the term "Anatta" in the Digha Nikayas, its use is limited to referring to 22 nouns (forms, feelings, perception, experiences, consciousness, the eye, eye-consciousness, desires, mental formations, ear, nose, tongue, body, lusts, things unreal, etc.). That is the uncompounded subjective Self (Atman), which is the "light (dipam), and only refuge." all incredible due to their selflessness (anatta). There is no mention of the "Doctrine of anatta/anatman" anywhere in the sutras, in contrast to numerous popular (=profane, or =consensus, from which the truth can "never be gathered") books written outside of Buddhist doctrine. In the sutra, anatta is used to describe the temporal and unreal nature of any and all composite, phenomenal, and temporal things, from macrocosmic to microcosmic, including matter as it pertains to the physical body, the cosmos at large, and any and all mental machinations that are of the nature of arising and passing. Instead, anatta is used only to refer to impermanent things/phenomena as other than the Soul. In the sutra, the terms dukkha (suffering) and anicca (impermanent) are used interchangeably with anatta. Each of the three terms are in many cases utilized in trio in offering a sweeping expression as respects all possible peculiarities; e.g. : Anatta, dukkha, and anicca are all aggregates.

Anatta only refers to the absence of any or all of the psycho-physical (nama-rupa) attributes, or khandhas (skandhas, aggregates), as the permanent soul. The primary causes of suffering are the five aggregates that make up a being—aggregate of shifting material

and mental forces. In Majjima Nikaya, Buddha summarizes the five khandhas' nature as follows: The category of corporeality encompasses all corporeal phenomena, both internal and external, present or future, gross or subtle, high or low, far or near; The category of feelings includes all feelings, and the category of perceptions includes all perceptions; The group of formations includes each and every mental formation; all cognizance has a place with the gathering of cognizance.

Rather than the term "no soul," the Pali word for "no soul" is *natthatta*. The Samyutta Nikaya 4.400 mentions this. In this section, Gautama Buddha was asked if there "was no-soul (*natthatta*)" and compared it to nihilistic heresy (*ucchedavada*). The rejection of the psycho-physical characteristics of the mere empirical self as belonging to the Soul or being confused with it is a theme that is prevalent throughout both Vedanta and Buddhist sutra. "Na me so atta" (this or those are not my soul) is the Buddhist paradigm for phenomena. This is most normal expression of Gautama the Buddha in the Nikayas, where —na me so attā = Anatta/Anatman. According to the sutra, to believe that there was "noSoul" (*natthatta*) is to be a nihilist.

Buddhism uses karma to talk about soul transmigration and reincarnation in one way. Buddha rejected the idea that a soul, also known as *anatta*, can move from one body to another. Instead, he claimed that each life is connected to the next by a chain of events. How our past lives were driven carries us to how our ongoing life is lived. This may give the impression that we have no control over how we live our lives, but this is not the case. Even though the actions we've taken in the past have shaped our present existence, our free will is only influenced. That is to say, we continue to have the ability to determine our own futures. This procedure merely asserts that ideas, impressions, feelings, and streams of consciousness resulting from actions will persist into the following life.

There is no soul after death. This transmigration was compared to the flames on a candle by Buddha. When a candle is lit from another candle's flame, neither candle has the original flame. It only indicates that the first candle's flame ignited the second candle, just as a previous life's actions ignite the next. The previous life does not actually pass anything (a soul) on to the next life, just as the candle does not actually pass its flame on to the next candle. In a similar vein, an individual's desires and feelings are not the result of something being transported within the body that possessed those desires and feelings.

Atheism is different from Buddhism (Skt. In claiming a spiritual nature, *Nastika*, or Pali *natthika*) that is unquantifiable, infinite, and unobservable in any way that can be seen. Which, as a result, empirical science is unable to either confirm or deny that he has "Gone to That [Brahman]" (*tathatta*) is in fact the case. It is to the Atman as distinct from oneself (*nama-rupa/khandhas*, the mere self as equals *anatta*), i.e., anything phenomenal and formal (Skt. "Nonbeing" (*asat*, *natthiti*, "the all is ultimately not") and "name and appearance" (Pali *nama-rupa*, and *savinnana-kaya*) are both existential antinomies and heresies of annihilationism, respectively. Rather than the abovementioned, it has been mistakenly declared that certification of the Atman is = *sassatavada* (routinely considered eternalism).

However, the Pali term *sasastavada* never refers to the Atman; rather, it refers to the Atman's role as an agent (*karmin*) in *samsara* that is subject to the whims of becoming (*bhava*), or *kammavada*; such as "*atta ca so loka ca*" in the sutta, which means "the Atman and the world are one," or "Being" (*sat*, *atthiti*; views of *sabbamatthi*, which means "the entirety," or *sabbamekattan*, which means "the entire is one's Soul," both of which are heresies of perpetualism) *Sasastavada* is the false belief that merit is the highest level of achievement for either this life or the next, and that one is *sassata*-bound forever within *samsara*. *Bhava*, or becoming, agencyship, is the heretical antinomy to nihilism (*vibhava*, or = *ucchedavada*), not the Atman, as stated in the sutta. In the sutta, the term "forever" or "eternal being" is not used to refer to the Atman. The Atman "has never become anything" (*bhava*) and "has never been an agent" (*karmin*). Both the *bhava* (*sasastavada*) and the *vibhava* (*ucchedavada*) antinomies result in illogical positions that the Vedantic or Buddhist Atman would find untenable. However, the fallacious secondary argument used to support the noAtman commentarialists' position on *anatta*, implying that there is no Atman, is the idea of "eternalism" as "Atman."

The philosophical foundation of Buddhism rests on Gautama the Buddha, the initiate who is to be "shown the way to Immortality (*amata*)"<sup>7</sup>, in which liberation of the spirit/mind (*cittavimutta*); The common fool "saw any of these forms, feelings, this body in whole or part, to be my Self/Atman, to be that which I am by nature" (Greek: *epistrophe*) must first be educated away from his previous ignorance-based (*avijja*) materialistic proclivities in that he "saw any of these forms, feelings, this body in whole or part, to be my Self/Atman, to be that which I am by nature." Teaching through the negative methodology these were the things: liable to constant change; as a result, it is unsuitable to assert that such things "are mine, these are what I am, that these are my Soul"<sup>8</sup>. The one scriptural entry where Gautama is requested by a layman what the significance from *anatta* is as per the following: The revered Radha sat down once in Savatthi and inquired of the Blessed Lord Buddha: "*Anatta, anatta*," the reverend said. "Just this Radha, form is not the Soul (*anatta*), sensations are not the Soul (*anatta*), perceptions are not the Soul (*anatta*), assemblages are not the Soul (*anatta*), and consciousness is not the Soul (*anatta*)." Because of this, birth has come to an end, the Brahman life has been fulfilled, and what needs to be done has been done.<sup>9</sup> The Nikayas teach that *anatta* has only relative value because it directly promotes subjective awakening, or illumination. It's not the only one. It doesn't say or suggest just that the Spirit (*atta*, Atman) has no reality, yet that specific things (five totals), with which the untaught man (fool = *puthujjana*, as is constantly inferred in otherworldly texts, a realist) recognizes himself, are not the Spirit (*anatta*). As a result, one should become disenchanted with them, separate themselves from them, and feel free. This principle of the much-maligned and misunderstood term *anatta* does not negate the Soul as such; rather, it denies Selfhood to the things that make up the non-self (*anatta*), thereby demonstrating that they are devoid of any ultimate value and should be rejected.

The Atman (Soul) doctrine is actually complemented and affirmed in the most logical way that Subjective is initially gained—through objective negation—rather than being

nullified. There are rumors that: "No Indian school of thought has ever regarded the human soul as a permanent substance"—another error given that the soul neither possesses nor is of the nature of the persona, or "human,"—or the carrier of human personal identity. This is positively obvious while alluding to the observational persona (simple self-aggregates=pancakhandas, rather than the Individual, soul, Atman). It is certain and logically indisputable that the Atman cannot be understood as a thinking substance, phenomenon, or eternal soul.

It is important to keep rigorously to the thought of the spirit as a vivifying and imperative rule while examining Indian practices by and large, for the profound implications of the term from Western old style customs, including the everlasting status of the spirit and its cooperation in a timeless eternity, which are ordinarily perceived as a useful meaning of soul in the contemporary Western setting, are not tracked down in Indian customs. The idea of the soul as a life force is given unique meanings in Indian religions. For instance, the Indian traditions' critique of the individuated state in their visions of spiritual liberation is a significant distinction between Western and classical Indian traditions. Ordinary bodily embodiment is the individuated state that acts and thus generates karma in Indian religions. The individuated state in which one produces karma is dissolved when spiritual liberation is achieved because the definition of spiritual liberation is the cessation of karma and, as a result, release from the cycle of birth and rebirth. This refers to the individuated state of the life-force, also known as the soul, as well as the dissolution of the body. In Indian religions, there is no philosophically developed concept of an individual, personified soul that continues to exist in an eternal afterlife. Indian traditions address the issue of how the residual force of karma can influence subsequent lifetimes. In the sections that follow, we will discuss each tradition in relation to the issue. The individuation that is typical of everyday embodiment is dissolved when they imagine spiritual liberation, which is freedom from karma and the cycle of birth and rebirth. This is their common ground.

Anatta is a critical rule in the convention of Buddhism and the transcendentalism, thereof evaluating anatta and being implied all physical and mental consubstantial and transient objectivity. All are either simplex (matter, hyle) or complex (mental) compounds. "What do you suppose, followers, if people were carrying off into the Jeta grove bunches of sticks, grasses, branches, and leaves and doing with them as they wished or burning them up, would it occur to you: an-atta is meant not-Subject (=object [phenomena]), those things," Buddhism declares. What are these individuals doing with us, burning us, and carrying us off? No, without a doubt not Master. Also, in what manner or capacity? Because, Lord, neither that nor what our Soul resides on is our Soul! For the sake of your followers, get rid of anything that doesn't fit who you are. Once you do, it will bring you happiness and well-being for as long as time lasts. What is it that you lack? Structure, devotees, isn't what your identity is, nor are sensations, insights, encounters, awareness".

**Bibliography:**

1. Hostie, R. (1957). Religion and the psychology of Jung. New York: Sheed and Ward.
2. Lorenz, H. (2003, October 23). Ancient Theories of Soul
3. Stumpf, Samuel Enoch, Philosophy: History and Problems, 2nd Ed., Macraw-Hill Book Company, New York, 1977.
4. Sakellariou, George (Ed.), Proceedings of the congress, Publishing House of French Institute, Athens, 1957.
5. Popper, Karl R., Eccles, John C., The Self and Its Brain, Routledge, New York, 1977
6. James, George G.M., Stolen Legacy, Philosophical Library, New York, 1954.
7. Cornford, F.M., From Religion to Philosophy, Harper & Row Publishers, New York, 1957.