



Dr. J. S. Jetly
Institute for research in Indology,
DWARKA.

CONCEPTION OF SOUL IN INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

In the realm of Indian philosophical systems different systems have different belief regarding the self or soul. Except चार्वाक almost all the systems agree in one point that the soul is different than the body of the creatures. चार्वाक does not accept any different soul or self or different than the body of the creature. After every belief there is a reason right or wrong. So चार्वाक also has got his own reason for non-acceptance of different than the body.

Let us see the arguments of चार्वाक for his norm regarding the self. It is well known fact that चार्वाक does not accept पुनर्जन्म or

rebirth of the soul. According to him there is no rebirth of any creature or there is no necessity that creatures are born according to their कर्म of the previous birth (पूर्वजन्म). The creatures are born in the bodies of the creatures are created due to चतुर्भूतसंघात i. e. due to particular type of arrangement of four elements viz. पृथिवी, जल, तेज, and वायु. This particular type of arrangement is responsible for the creation of body and चैतन्य into it. It is just like a creation of wine due to the particular type of arrangement of particular substances like dust of sugar and others. These substances put together in a ves-

sel for a certain time automatically create intoxicating effect in that substance called wine. Similarly, the above mentioned चतुर्भूत arranged in a particular manner are responsible for creation of body as well as चैतन्य in it. The disturbance in the arrangement causes destruction of the body known as death. Death is not the separation of soul from the body but merely the disturbance in the arrangement in a living body.

The modern scientists are also of this view. They also do not accept any different self than the body of the creatures. They also do not accept पुनर्जन्म or rebirth of the soul. Thus acceptance of a different soul than the body is vitally connected with the theory of rebirth. If one does not accept rebirth he can do without the different souls i. e. different than the body itself.

Here the question put by other Indian systems is that, that if rebirth is not accepted then when the fruit of good deeds or bad deeds will be experienced? Thus कर्म and कर्मफल theory are again responsible for accepting the theory of पुनर्जन्म. One who does good deeds will have good rebirth. Or to explain this कर्मफल other systems state that so many creatures are seen

unhappy while others are seen happy. This cannot happen if there is no कर्मफल. Those who are happy without much efforts of their own must have done some good deeds in their previous birth. While those who are seen unhappy must have done bad deeds or sins in their previous birth.

To this चार्वाक replies that this theory is merely an imagination of some selfish people to keep other people under them. It is an illusion that one who has done good deeds in the previous birth has got right of exploiting others and those who have done bad deeds are destined to be exploited. In fact, this is also an arrangement and if this is changed and if good social order is established then there is no necessity of this पापपुण्य theory. A good social order with perfect arrangement or law or order is enough to keep the society happy. Absence of a good and real justice giving social order does not justify the existence of पाप and पुण्य. If social arrangement is made in such a way that real culprits are punished and not the innocent persons, then the question of पाप and पुण्य would not arise.

It is well-known that चार्वाक was deadly against the यज्ञयाग as per-

formed by Brahmins because so many innocent animals were sacrificed in those यज्ञः। This type of mass-killing of innocent creatures created utter disgrace in the mind of चार्वाक towards the performers of such sacrifices. Such sacrifices were performed in those days to achieve different aims like स्वर्ग etc. He could see that the theory of पापपुण्य was responsible to perform such sacrifices and as stated he attacked the theory of पापपुण्य. Thus ultimately the भूतदया inspired चार्वाक to oppose the notion of पापपुण्य, rebirth according to पापपुण्य, and a different soul other than the body enjoying the fruit of the पाप and पुण्य. According to him a good justice-giving social order is enough to keep the society running in a manner required to have the happy society. A bad social order creates misarrangements and give rise to different theories like पाप and पुण्य, पुनर्जन्म and different self etc.

One may agree with the theory of चार्वाक or not but it should be noted that the aim of not accepting the self different then the body was not purely materialistic as thought generally by others philosophers in terms that—

यावज्जीवेत् सुखं जीवेद्
क्षणं कृत्वा घृतं पिबेत् ।

भस्मीभूतस्य देहस्य
पुनरागमनं कुतः ॥

It is not the real चार्वाक theory but it is an imposed one by his opponents. In fact, like many other philosophers he was also a good social reformer and compassion towards innocent animals inspired him to oppose vehemently the Brahmins of those days.

Another typical system is of Buddhists who do not accept separate substance like soul. In fact, they do not accept the theory of an independent substance i. e. द्रव्य. According to them soul is nothing but combination of five स्कन्धः। These स्कन्धः are also ever-changing i. e. momentary. The chain or धारा of these स्कन्धः is responsible of the notion of continuity of the soul. However, this continuous though momentary chain solves the problems of पाप-पुण्य, पुनर्जन्म and निर्वाण also. It well examined सन्ततिनिवृत्त answers the doubts raised by other philosophers regarding the above mentioned problems.

The reason of this type of belief is the aim of creating worldly nonattachment. According to Bauddhas attachment is responsible for all the different type of miseries. The cause of this attachment is a belief in some lasting substance. But if every substance is a momentary

one the soul where one should attach one's mind is also momentary. Thus non-attachment to every substance particularly worldly substance is the background of Buddhist theories like क्षणिकत्व etc. According to them in this word सर्वं दुःखम् दुःखम् and this दुःख is due to attachments to the worldly objects which are in fact momentary but creatures under the pressure of वासना believe them to be lasting,

Thus Buddhist belief not accepting soul as an eternal substance is due to their desire to free human beings from the wrong attachment which is the cause of all miseries.

The third heterodox system is the Jaina system. It is alleged that Jainas believe the soul though different from the body, it is body-measured. i. e. the measure of the soul is just according to the body of the creature. Thus, the soul of an ant is just small like the body of an ant and that of elephant is as big as the body of the elephant.

This is purely a misunderstanding regarding the Jaina conception of soul by many Indian philosophical systems. They state that the Atma of Jainas is मध्यम परिणामिन्. But in fact, it is not so. According to the Jaina system the soul is चैतन्य स्वरूप. It is ever shining. It is just like a powerful light. But the light how-

ever powerful cannot enlighten the other rooms if it is confined and closed in one room. It can only enlighten that room where it is put. Similar is the condition of the soul. The soul though प्रकाश स्वरूप and चैतन्य स्वरूप has no power to act outside its own body. The soul enjoys happiness or misery through the body only. He does good or bad deeds through the body only. Outside the body one cannot feel the existence of the soul. Body is the place of भोग. It is the confinement of the soul. This does not mean that the soul is bodily measured. It only means that the power of the soul or consciousness is limited so long it is connected with the body. It can be limitless when it is freed from the body while attaining मोक्ष. Thus, it should be noted that the soul as accepted by the Jainas is not bodily measured, but bodies are the different confinement of the soul just like different rooms without windows are the confinement of different lights.

Now we come to orthodox system. They are six in all namely- (१) सांख्य (२) योग (३) न्याय (४) वैशेषिक (५) मीमांसा (६) वेदांत. Out of these six systems except Vedānta all are realist. Vedānta is the idealist system. Among realist systems there is different of opinion rega-

rding the conception of soul. न्याय वैशेषिक and सिद्धांत agree with one another. According to them the soul is a permanent substance. It is all pervading but it is different according to the different bodies. The अहङ्कार which is created by good or bad action of the soul is the controlling factor of the world. Thus though the souls of all the creatures are omnipresent, one soul cannot experience the miseries of others. One's own अहङ्कार is a controlling factor to enjoy happiness or experience miseries according to one's पाप or पुण्य. पुण्य and पाप create अहङ्कार. This अहङ्कार is responsible in the creation of all the worldly things as destined to be enjoyed by the soul. The soul is doer of good and bad deeds through the body. For his happiness and miseries he is responsible. This is also acceptable to Jainas and Bauddhas too. They only differ in the nature of the soul.

सांख्य and योग systems though except the omnipresence of the soul, do not consider him the doer of the good and bad deeds. According to them प्रकृति does all the good or bad deeds. The soul is all pervading but कूटस्थ and नित्य. It is illusion that soul does anything. He is merely the साक्षी of the actions of प्रकृति. the realisation that he is totally different from प्रकृति i. e. प्रकृति पुरुष विवेक रक्षाति will free him from the illusory

bondage of प्रकृति. But प्रकृति is active only due to the contact of the soul, प्रकृति is in itself जड but gets power from the contact of the soul. It is just like an electric fan getting power of its movement from electricity for its movement. Thus, the contact of consciousness is responsible for the working of प्रकृति.

Lastly comes the Vedanta school. According to it there is only one चैतन्य. Those Vedanta schools which accept the existence of different souls also state that these souls are अंश of the ultimate चैतन्य. This चैतन्य is all pervading. The contact of माया or प्रकृति is responsible for the creation of the world which is in itself illusory according to अद्वैत i. e. केवलाद्वैत.

The experience of different souls is only due to the उपाधि of अन्तःकरण. In reality, there is only one चैतन्य known as ब्रह्म. This is the only ultimate reality. Other worldly objects are all illusory. Ignorance or अविद्या is the cause of this illusion. One can experience oneness of चैतन्य when he is free from this illusion. To be free from illusion is not an easy thing. One should be free from the worldly attachment which is also the result of अविद्या. The sign of such non-attachment in anybody is his behaviour. One who feels that there is only one चैतन्य

will not have hatred for any small creature. He will have equal love for all the creatures because for him none is small or big. Realisation of चैतन्य will need to परम अहिंसकत्व for he will feel चैतन्य everywhere.

This type of experience can be observed in day to day life of the great saint of our country and also in the saint of other contries

life of

of the world.

If भूतदया is the cause of the creation चार्वाक system, equal love for all the creatures from small or big as is also aimed in Vedanta system. Thus, Indian philosophical systems may agree or may not agree in their conception of soul, their ultimate aim is to be equally loving towards all the creatures.

