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Happiness and Immortality

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Eastern Wisdom and Western Thought

Happiness and Immortality

GEORGE GRIMM'S INVESTIGATIONS INTO
THE SECRETS OF BUDDHISM

49051
by

P. J. SAHER



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INTRODUCTION

This book contains the essence of all the works of George Grimm. When in 1915 the first German edition of *The Doctrine of the Buddha* appeared, Karl Eugen Neumann, wrote to its author:

'Your work is undoubtedly by far the most important presentation of Buddhism which has appeared since Oldenberg. Yet it is much deeper, more comprehensive, and thoroughly thought out from every aspect. From a first cursory perusal I have been particularly impressed by two explanations, namely *anatta* as not-I, and *āsava* as exercising an influence.'¹

Friedrich Zimmermann (+ 1917), who as *Subhadra Bhikshu*, compiled the *Buddhist Catechism*, wrote to Grimm:

'I was particularly pleased with your treatment of the difficult theme of personality and *anattā*. On this doctrine so much preposterous nonsense has been published in Buddhist periodicals, that I was beginning to doubt whether any of our "Buddhists" really understood the matter. It seemed as though everyone wanted to show off his profundity of thought, in order to plunge the reader into confusion and misunderstanding, and to discredit the Master's principal teaching. For, at bottom, all this amounts to stating that the Buddha taught the absurdity that there is nothing, absolutely nothing, in and behind personality. On the contrary, they stated that there is no such thing as the subject of knowing, and that, in modern language, the Buddha said: "Brothers, I proclaim to you that I am not; I am nothing but an illusion." Here it was not even explained who then really had this illusion, so that this too was again left in the air without support. I have often reproached myself with my dislike for polemics, but my profound fear of such writing prevented me from attacking and ending such nonsense with a precise presentation of the truth. I am now delighted that you have done this, and indeed so thoroughly and comprehensively, that the brainless adherents of nihilism will not be able to advance against it.'²

In 1928 Grimm's *Buddha und Christus* contrasted the Buddha's teaching as a religion of knowledge with that of Christianity as a religion of faith. With the help of Grimm's unpublished notes and records, this work is brought out in its present form with the co-operation of his daughter, Mrs Mayā Keller-Grimm and Max Hoppe. The collected works of this illustrious interpreter of Buddhist thought were taken into account. It is the first complete presentation in English of Grimm's investigations.

Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan, the well-known Indian philosopher, wrote:

'Mysticism, which lays stress on the personal experience of God through direct contact with the creative spirit, is what Bergson calls "open religion". The closed religions are the credul, ritualistic ones which give a sense of

¹ Max Hoppe, Preface to Grimm, *The Doctrine of the Buddha*.

² *Ibid.*

security to frightened children. Only an open religion which requires us to enter the spiritual stream where our mind can refresh and restore itself can save humanity, which is half crushed by the weight of its own progress.¹

George Grimm wrote his books in that inner frame of mind, which had been given to him through a practical realization of the doctrine. The last twelve years of his life were spent in the rural peace of Ammersee and round him there gathered a number of disciples and devotees. His works became a guide for a large community of readers. What Friedrich Heller said of him in 1922 remained true throughout his life:

'What distinguishes Grimm from other fine and scholarly interpreters of the Buddhist doctrine of salvation is the compelling force and complete devotion with which he interprets almost psycho-cybernetically the religious truth of the Buddha's wisdom of deliverance.'

The Indian periodical *Dharmachakra* has this to say of his work:

'By virtue of a sincerely spiritual attitude which he had gained through a practical realization of the doctrine, his critical mind was able to probe the great mass of facts and statements and to separate the essential from the inessential. With the mere play of logic, arguments, and processes of reasoning, the author could never have created what in fact he did create.'²

George Grimm (February 25, 1868–August 26, 1945), a *Mahā-Thera* as he is titled today, was a judge of the High Court of Bavaria and was famous for pronouncing decisions which were not only just but also equitable from an ethical and human point of view. He had studied Theology prior to preparing for the Bar. After his promotion to the Bench he became increasingly interested in Philosophy and Metaphysics. Friendship with the historian of mysticism, Carl Du Prel, and Schopenhauer's influence led him to pursue indological studies. Increasingly there came upon him an urge to seek spiritual truth at all costs and something told him to look for it in the ancient wisdom of India. He thereupon gave up his lucrative post and took up the study of Sanskrit and Pāli. Although he lost most of his savings in the inflation of 1924, he refused the tempting offers of the Nazis and narrowly escaped with his life for being so bold as to oppose Hitler. He wrote his books with an equanimity derived from his own mystic realization of Buddhist wisdom. He was writing them, as he often said, for himself.

Grimm studied the Buddha and his teachings with extreme thoroughness and he was appalled by the superficial view of Buddhist thought in Europe at that time. People regarded it as a kind of 'oriental pessimism caused by malnutrition'! *Nirvāṇa* was represented as an atheistic invention to abolish a self that never was. Grimm's researches convinced him that the Buddha formulated a philosophy and a technique of logical thinking combined

¹ But see my *Eastern Wisdom and Western Thought*, George Allen & Unwin, London.

² Max Hoppe, Preface to Grimm, *Das Glück, die Botschaft des Buddha*, Baum-Verlag, 1962.

with meditation which helps us to understand ourselves and the world around us as they really are. In his masterpiece *The Doctrine of the Buddha, The Religion of Reason and Meditation* (E. T. Akademie-Verlag, Berlin 1958), he took great pains to prove that the Buddha's teachings are not at variance with the main tenets of Indian philosophy. The Buddha, he said, belongs to the mainstream of Indian thought because he also was trying to draw our attention to the cardinal problem of Self in contradistinction to ego. The Buddha in effect comes to similar conclusions as Vedānta. In the following pages an attempt has been made to summarize Grimm's penetrating researches in his own words. Instead of quoting him at every page and line I let him speak direct to the English reader for whose sagacity and sober commonsense Grimm had the greatest respect. It would be a mistake, however, to look upon this work as just 'one more book on Buddhism'. Buddhism, whatever its merits, is not its central feature. What distinguishes it from all other books is that here the reader is shown step by step a practical method whereby he can acquire insight for himself into the twin secrets of immortality and happiness. Surprising as it may sound, this book offers a practical method to acquire happiness. When you have finished it, write down the date on the back-cover. Then return to it after three months and hold it again in your hands. Now ask yourself honestly if you are happier or not. It, like life, is a challenge.

One last word of warning. The word consciousness is used in this book exclusively in its Buddhist meaning of a consciousness that cognizes; i.e. = to be conscious of sight, sound, taste, etc. and of thoughts. Only in this specific sense can it be said that there is no consciousness independent of a sense organ or of a brain. In all my other works the word consciousness is used in its broader sense which in Vedānta includes integral states of mind—so much so that, according to Yoga, the body is contained in consciousness instead of *vice versa*. That is not the case here.

The Perennial Problems of Philosophy

Two of the many perennial problems of philosophy are happiness and immortality. The philosophical aspect of the first problem is not the question how to be happy but *why* do all beings want to be happy.

All life, all existence, has only one aim and purpose, namely happiness. We are beings who crave happiness and who abhor suffering, says the Buddha. And so, we incessantly reflect on how we can become happy, and when we imagine that we have done so, we are anxious and troubled about remaining happy.

All thought and effort in business and profession, in arts and crafts, science and technology, commerce and politics have only this one purpose, to make oneself and possibly others happy. All statesmen and leaders of industry, the nobler they are, the more they aim at making their fellow-citizens happy. All philosophers search for indestructible happiness, all religions promise their followers eternal bliss. The longing is so deep-rooted in man that no power on earth can divert him from it. Even the man, who takes his own life from despair, does so only because he hopes to find rest and peace and thus happiness, or at any rate to become happier than he is at the moment.

What then is this happiness for which we all are striving? Is there such a thing? Does it not depend on whether we are well or ill, on the money that we earn, on the length of our holidays, and so on? Do we not always depend on social circumstances and above all on our moods and passions? Are we not constantly in search of diversion and amusement in order to escape from ourselves? Can we avoid the colossal influence of the press, television, radio, and films?

The arguments in this book will reveal something quite new and singularly great. It will become clear that the inadequate situation in which we happen to be involved affects us only in our attributes, but cannot touch us in our true inner essence. The Buddha's great message is that *everything* cognizable is frail, perishable, and thus ultimately sorrowful. Consequently, our true Self can be satisfied only by something that is imperishable and thus without 'sorrow'. When we grasp this, there comes peace which is always followed by happiness. This peace of inner harmony grows and the individual who has become calm comes to know ever more clearly what it means to be happy and to have no desires. 'In the deserts of life he has discovered oases which are separate from the troubles and pains of existence, just as the sacred with its rich content contrasts with the profane. The Master indicated the three refuges to him who longed for deliverance, and that behind the wretched causal chain of existence there lies the eternal peace of *Nirvāṇa*.'

When we are in the right frame of mind, all suffering warns us that fundamentally we are removed from the trouble caused by transitoriness. All suffering, whether mental or bodily, all grief, sorrow, affliction, pain, despair, every illness, the hardships of old age, and the inevitability of death—all these are messengers of the gods who in solemn majesty appear before us. If we have the right attitude, they confront us as heralds and warn us that eagerness of will and greedy attachment always ensnare us in the net of suffering, but that detachment and freedom from ties enable us to obtain *here and now* a happiness which lies beyond the raging waterfall of transitoriness. Only through this message of him who became whole and holy do we learn the true meaning of suffering. In the words of the *Samyutta-Nikāya*, a work of the old Buddhist Pāli Canon: 'Suffering is . . . the secret cause of happiness.'

The discussions in the present volume teach that detachment and freedom from ties do not make us narrow-minded and obtuse, but enable us to become broader and freer for the highest and most exalted tasks. Just as malice and spite spring from inner adversity, so do genuine goodwill and benevolence from one's own happiness. He who first frees himself in this way learns to understand his fellow-men. 'As I am so are they, as they are so am I. Whoever makes a parable of himself no longer kills and no longer causes to be killed.'¹ The spirit of genuine kindness is first awakened on the path to true happiness, the spirit of compassion and of joy in the happiness of others. Such a purified consciousness then leads to a sublime and holy equanimity to all the insult and injury we may encounter. 'There is the sordid, there is the sublime, and there is an escape into the sphere beyond the realm of perception.'²

The seeker of true happiness, who cannot be dazzled and deceived by the fascination of momentary happiness, becomes a sage. Just as real philosophers think for themselves but sophists for others, the former alone being in earnest, so does the truly religious man find the eternal within himself on the path of silent realization.

The present work also shows, in a more or less psycho-cybernetic way, how the Buddha establishes an almost irrefutable proof of immortality. There is hardly anyone who escapes entirely from the influence of the spirit of his age. The vexation, annoyance, and hypocrisy of these harassing times distract many a man with deep insight, to whom the problem of immortality is of sufficient importance for earnest reflection. Nevertheless, those, 'whose eyes are covered with only a little dust', will have in the present work the quintessence of the Buddha's teaching in the analysis which Grimm develops and elucidates systematically. In this analysis all religion and philosophy have found their culminating point in that *unity* which the best minds have always earnestly desired.

In order to arrive at this profoundly satisfying result, the reader should take to heart George Grimm's admonition:

¹ *Sutta Nipāta*, v. 705.

² *Majjh. Nik.*, sutta 7.

'Will a man glance only *once* through a text-book on chemistry, physics, medicine, jurisprudence, or the history of art? A work on philosophy is also a text-book, indeed one that is to convey the profoundest of all knowledge. He must, therefore, read it, and likewise *study* it as if it were a text-book on chemistry or mathematics. This will take up much of his leisure for years. It is so with the other branches of knowledge, because they too bring practical advantages also. The most important thing is to muster the courage and energy necessary to draw *conclusions* from the knowledge thus gained.'

George Grimm, relying on the Pāli Canon, tells us in his striking way how the Buddha discovered the secrets of immortality and happiness: 'The Buddha during his lifetime had often succeeded in detaching himself at will from *all* the elements of his personality; not merely from his body, but from all sensation.¹ Therefore, through *practical experience*, the fact was established for him that the elements of our personality are not indispensable, and that even their abolition leaves our *essence* untouched.' Thus all that Grimm had to do was to reduce this experience psycho-cybernetically to the logical thought-forms of metaphysics, and thus make it accessible to and verifiable by others. He did so with a perspicuity bordering on genius.

A religious genius *knows* what others merely *feel*, and this elevates him far above them. He represents for mankind an auspicious phenomenon that recurs only rarely in the course of centuries. The Buddha himself had prophesied: 'The doctrine of truth, Āmāda, will not last for long.'²

'It was only for a brief and glorious noontide that the Buddha's teaching was clear to all in its entire splendour. In a dismally short time, the long dark night of scholastic erudition set in, which was no longer matched with the inspiration behind the teaching. Nine centuries later the Buddhism of Buddhaghosa began to prevail in Asia. From him comes the *Theravāda* interpretation which today predominates in Ceylon, Burma, and Siam. Of the living religious spirit and profound insight which were inherent in the Perfect One and in his great disciples; of the strong religious devotion which inspires the verses of the ancient *Sutta-Nipāta*: of the deep, other-worldly equanimity and unshakable aspiration for salvation, to which so many of the psalms of the monks and nuns impressively testify; of all this we find little in the works of Buddhaghosa. He is the typical advocate of a very learned, but also extremely dry and pedantic scholasticism; a mere scholar is quite incapable of grasping the great intellectual relationships beyond the bounds of dogmatism, and of penetrating to the very source from which religious consciousness is always nourished.'³

The reason why Buddhism is so often misunderstood is that this *Theravāda* interpretation has distorted the kernel of the Buddha's teaching. It dogmatizes that man is born complete with body and mind. It asserts

¹ In particular *Majjh. Nik.*, sutta III.

² *Cullavagga* X, 1, 6.

³ Karl Seidenstücker *Buddhistischer Weltspiegel*, Vol. III, 'Die buddhistische Kosmographie und ihre Probleme'.

that there is no substantial 'I' or Self. With this statement it comes into glaring contradiction with the Buddha's own words as recorded in the *Tipiṭaka*. However, this does not disturb it in the least; the sayings of the Buddha need not be taken literally; have not scribes explained the meaning in commentaries? Yet these *Theras* admit that both body and mind perish at death. But if the entire man is accounted for in body and mind, he is completely annihilated in death. Nevertheless, they teach that man is reborn after death, and that he then has to bear the consequences of deeds committed in previous lives. In other words, deeds without a doer, moral responsibility without someone responsible, rebirth without someone who is reborn! It is not, therefore, surprising that *this* kind of Buddhism only evoked such contempt on the part of Shankara, the great founder of Vedānta, that he called the Buddha 'an old prattler'; thus the teaching of the Buddha disappeared from India between A.D. 800 and 1000. The Buddhism of the Commentaries was not in keeping with the spiritual genius of India.

In Buddhist tradition there is also an opposite line of thought. If its advocates have been (rightly) reproached for having dragged into discussion the essential element that is withdrawn from all knowledge, then they shared that fundamental attitude which Schopenhauer expressed when he said: 'The greatest blasphemy is the denial of the indestructible essence in ourselves.'

The Exalted One says: 'And who, mendicants, is the bearer of the burden? The subject (*puggala*) is the answer, namely just the venerable N.N. of the family XX. This, mendicants, is called the bearer of the burden.'¹ They were the *Pudgalavādins*,² so called because they advocated the doctrine of the 'subject'. According to the testimony of the Chinese pilgrim, Hsüan Tsang, who wandered through India from A.D. 619 to 645, they were still flourishing more than a thousand years after the Buddha. Their *viḥāras* enjoyed the special favour of Asoka's ardent follower, the Emperor Harsha (A.D. 606-647). A hundred years later, the position of many of their principal centres in the west of India was so unfavourable that they were the first to succumb to the assaults and vandalism of foreign invaders.

Louis de la Vallée-Poussin says of the *Pudgalavādins* that their numbers and learning was not properly assessed by Indologists who were inclined to describe them as 'heretics'. For them the problem of *nirvāṇa* was simple and logical; as it also is for the *Vijñānavādins* who, resembling Vedānta, make 'pure consciousness' the ultimate and primary ground. In this connexion, we should bear in mind the Sutta of the characteristics of the Not-Self.³

'Body and mind, mendicants, are not the I. If body and mind were the I, mendicants, body and mind could not be liable to disease, and we should have to say of body and mind that they ought to be thus, they ought not

¹ *Samy. Nik.*, III, xxii, 22.

² *Pudgala* is Sanskrit for the Pāli *puggala*.

³ *Samy. Nik.*, III, xxii, 59; *Mahāvagga*, I, 6.

to be thus. But as, mendicants, body and mind are not the I, then body and mind are liable to disease, and we cannot say of them that they ought to be thus, they ought not to be thus.'

Here there is the clear notion of an existence that is sublime and superior to worldly existence. The struggle and triumph, which are described, cannot be fought and won on the waves of an 'inconstant stream'. Transitoriness, recognizing itself as such, could hardly turn away from itself and soliloquize: 'This am I not.'

It is instructive to read in Louis de la Vallée-Poussin's *Nirvāṇa*:

'If the Buddha declines to affirm the identity or difference of the principle of life and of the body, this is done (according to the *Pudgalvādins*) because the *pudgala*, the life-principle or life-essence (*sattva*, *tathāgata*), is neither identical with, nor different from, the elements (*skandhas*). In comparison with the elements, the *pudgala* is indescribable (*avācya*). The *pudgala* is not perceived independently of the elements; therefore it does not differ from them. It does not have the nature of the elements, for in that case it would be subject to birth and death, and hence it is not identical with the elements. In the same way, we cannot say that it is perishable or imperishable. The *pudgala* is a thing-in-itself (*dravya*); it is defined as the doer of deeds, and as that which reaps the fruit. Rebirth and *nirvāṇa*, the state of bondage and the state of freedom, have a bearing on it.'

The whole depth of this interpretation of the Buddha's teaching is apparent from the definition: '*The pudgala is something positively incomprehensible.*'

Did not the Buddha himself say: 'Already in this visible phenomenon I call the *Tathāgata* incomprehensible.'¹ Again: 'He is not a *dharma* (Pāli, *dhamma*), since he has more than a momentary existence; on the other hand, he is again not a substance, spiritual, immaterial, and existing by itself, like the individual *ātman* of the Brahmins.'²

After his 'Great Enlightenment' the Buddha hesitated to make known this wonderful thing, 'which goes to meet the stream, is fine, so unfathomable, and can hardly be seen, because it is over-subtle'. It is only natural that deviations and departures soon made their appearance. The glaring contrast in which the Buddhism of the commentaries stands not only to the teaching of the Buddha himself, but also to the Indo-aryan genius in general, almost forces one to assume that those commentators were not Aryans of North India, but Dravidians in the South. The Sinhalese (the commentators on the Buddha's discourses) consist in the main of Dravidian elements.

This misinterpretation prompted Mrs Rhys Davids to write:

'But although Buddhaghosa's mode of expression is rich (and often very confused), the wealth of his ideas is very limited. Even poorer in ideas is the *Milindapañha*, and indeed the poorest of all is the *Kathavatthu*. And this was because in those texts knowledge of the laws and forces of nature

¹ *Majjh. Nik.*, sutta 22.

² *Ibid.*

was poor and primitive. Here is a wide gulf between us and the authors of those works. They try very hard to dismiss from the layman, from the "man in the street", the notion that when one says "person", "being", "soul", "I", and "you", the word corresponds to a definite, inner, invisible, objective unity which is concealed behind the visible phenomenon. So vigorously did they strive for this that they lost sight of something much more important, namely that there is a spiritual connexion or a true essence of man which cannot be objectively grasped. . . . They have played a little into the hands of the materialists.¹

So long as she attributed to the Buddha the thought of the commentaries and of the canonical adherents to the commentaries, she consistently called him the 'little man of Kosala' and 'the sick man of a sick age'. But then she noticed that something must be wrong, and that one cannot ascribe to a world-saviour that which was perpetrated by hair-splitting schoolmen. With this knowledge she exclaimed: 'Is no one ready to justify and vindicate this noble and wise deliverer of mankind? Is there no one who will recognize that one who brought a new message to men which we call a religion is someone who, whatever he taught, has not taught definite things, because, simply as the man that he was, he could not teach them?'² We shall find that justification in what lies before us.

The above clarifies, the real nature of the two perennial problems and shows the path on which we may be able to arrive at their solution. Indeed, it can be shown that on this path the ancient Indo-Aryans succeeded in solving the so-called 'perennial' problems.

The ancient Indians, in the early stages of their religious development, sought and found the 'ground' of the world in the *externally* knowable forces of nature which were then personified as gods.³ Yet they soon felt that the ground of the world cannot consist of a plurality of gods since the principle underlying the world must be single and uniform.

And so it says even in the famous hymn of creation of the *Rigveda* 'perhaps the most admirable piece of philosophy that has come down to us from the most ancient Aryan times':

'There was then neither what is nor what is not, there was no sky, nor the heaven which is beyond. What covered? Where was it, and in whose shelter? Was the water the deep abyss in which it lay?

'There was no death, hence was their nothing immortal . . . Who then knows, who has declared it here, from whence was born this creation? The gods came later than this creation, who then knows whence it arose?'⁴

At this stage the answer was a single supreme personal God who was set up on a throne, in keeping with mankind's general psychological development; and therefore in the Prajāpati hymn, the question: 'Who is God that we

¹ *The Buddhist Doctrine of Rebirth.*

² *The Man.*

³ Sri Aurobindo, *On the Veda*, Pondicherry 1956, pp. 3-67.

⁴ *Rg Veda*, X, 129; see also Radhakrishnan's *India Philosophy*, Vol. I, pp. 100-101.

may serve him with sacrifices?' was answered: 'Prajāpati! (i.e. Lord of Creation)—thou art he and no other who embraces all these created things.' Prajāpati then became a kind of 'supreme God' in the Vedic pantheon.

Yet even he was only a passing phase in the development of Indian religious thought. His dominion ended when the Aryan genius came more and more to commune with itself. There dawned on it the awareness that the world-ground, the original Ground of the phenomenal world, remains untouched by the incessant changes of the phenomenal world springing from it; that, on the contrary, it underlies all creation, and so is to be looked for in the metaphysical depths of creation. This is comparable to the crust formed by the nickel-iron masses of the earth's interior in relation to its surface. These masses are also untouched by the incessant changes on the surface of the earth; on the contrary, they first make such changes possible. Thus one sought, as it says in the *Rg Veda*, 'the boneless by which everything bony is borne; who has seen how the boneless one bears the first bony being to spring into existence?' In the *Atharva Veda* the question is asked concerning the *Skambha*, the supporter, who bears everything without himself being borne: 'Make known this *skambha*, who may he be?'

It is a great thrill to see how the Indian genius very soon discovered the way which led to that 'supporter', to the 'boneless one', in short, to the ground of the world. This way disclosed itself to the Indian genius as *our own inner and essential nature*. Only in his own Self can a man descend into the depths; all phenomena outside him show only their external aspect hence not the essential, not their innermost nature, not the primary ground. Thus, according to the *Uchishta* hymn of the *Atharva Veda*, all visible shapes and forms of the phenomenal world rest on *Uchishta* (that which is 'left over' when everything externally cognizable is deducted). That which is left over is then described as 'the radiance in me'. Thus the standpoint of the Upanishads was reached in which our inner core, our real Self, our *Ātman* is proclaimed as the ultimate and original essence, as the primary ground of Being.

He who will penetrate to the ground must look for this inner core, this 'radiance in him', this real Self of his. The fact that each must seek his 'real Self' implies that everything presenting itself to us 'unsought', (e.g. our own body, the sense organs etc.) cannot be our real Self, our *Ātman*.

If I lose my arms and legs or my nose and eyes, I have not lost myself; I am still intact. My real Self is independent of the most vitally important organs of my body, even of my heart, lungs, head, and so on. All these organs are constantly changing so that, after about seven years, no cell of my body is the same; on the contrary, the whole of my body in all its parts has been completely renewed, and yet, in spite of this replacement and change the Self is always the same.

The ancient masters of the Upanishads establish that our body is not our real Self, but merely *something added* (*upadhi*) by us, in much the same way as we merely 'add' to ourselves a garment that we put on. What then is our real Self? The sages of the Upanishads reply: That which is 'left over' when we leave the body out of account. But what is left over?

Naturally the psyche. This psyche, liberated from the body, can also be seen at work every night in its purity, so say the Upanishads. The psyche, independent of the sleeping body, is then in the highest activity of its dream-life. Yet even *this* activity of our mind 'disturbs' us, and, therefore, cannot bring us perfect peace. According to the Upanishads, if we wish to attain the state perfectly adequate to us, this activity must also be suspended, so that a more tranquillized mental state is left, such as prevails in deep dreamless sleep. This utterly tranquillized state ought then to be our true nature, our real Self, our *Ātman*; consequently the state that is wholly in keeping with psychic and ontological structure!

The whole of this teaching is summed up in the *Chāndogya* Upanishad:

'The Self, the Self which is free from evil, free from old age, free from death, free from grief, free from hunger and thirst . . . He should be sought, him one should desire (to know).'¹

Urged by this demand, the god Indra and the demon Virojana went to Prajāpati for instruction, and stayed with him as disciples for thirty-two years. Then Prajāpati said to them: 'Look at your self in a pan of water, and whatever you do not understand of the Self tell me.' They then looked at themselves in the vessel full of water, and Prajāpati said to them: 'What do you see?' They said: 'Venerable Sir, we both see the Self even to the very hairs and nails.' Then Prajāpati said to the two: 'After you have well adorned yourselves, put on your best clothes, and make yourselves tidy, (then) look into the pan of water.' They then decked themselves out in their finest, put on fine clothes, dressed themselves up, and again looked at themselves in the vessel full of water. Then Prajāpati said to the two: 'What do you see?' 'Just as we are, Venerable Sir, well adorned with our best clothes and tidy, thus we see both these (in the reflection of the water).' To put them to the test, Prajāpati said: 'That is the Self, that is the immortal, the fearless.'

The answer satisfied the two disciples, and they went home. But Prajāpati, seeing them thus depart, cried: 'They go away without having perceived, without having known the Self.'

Virojana and the demons were comforted with the 'answer', and so are all demonic men who see in the body their real Self, who therefore gratify the lusts of this body here on earth. Indra, on the other hand, reflecting that such an answer would leave the Self subject to all the sufferings and infirmities of the body, felt (what everyone indeed can feel) that all changes occurring to the body cannot affect our essence. So he returned to Prajāpati.

Prajāpati invited him to stay as his disciple for thirty-two more years, Prajāpati then gave him another answer: 'He who moves about happy in a dream, he is the Self, he is the immortal, the fearless.'

But even with this answer Indra could not find relief. He thought: 'Of course, this Self, is not blind, even when the body is blind; is not lame, even when the body is lame; of course, it is not affected by the body's infirmities;

¹ VIII, 7, 3; Radhakrishnan, *The Principal Upanishads*, London 1953, p. 502.

yet it is as though it were harassed by them, as though it experienced something disagreeable, I see no good in this.'

He came once more to Prajāpati with his doubts. Prajāpati said: 'That, of course, is the present position, o friend, but I will further explain the Self to you. Stay thirty-two more years as a disciple'

And Indra stayed thirty-two more years as a disciple, and then Prajāpati said to him: 'When a man is asleep, composed, serene, and knows no dream, that is the Self, that is the immortal, the fearless.'

Indra now went away with a contented heart, but before he reached home, a new doubt arose in him. He returned once again to Prajāpati and said: 'Ah, now in this state a man does not know himself, Venerable Sir, and he does not know that he is this, nor does he know other beings. I can see no good even in this.'

'That, of course, is the present position, o friend', said Prajāpati, 'but I will explain it to you still further. Stay five more years as a disciple' Then Prajāpati said to him: 'O friend, mortal indeed is this body. It is held by death. But it is the support of that immortal, bodiless Self. He who is invested with a body is held by pleasure and pain; for since he is incarnated (with a body), he cannot ward off joy and suffering, but the bodiless one is untouched by it all.'

Thus one must become free from attachment to the body by entering into the supreme light, in other words, by withdrawing to a pure, wholly introspective way of thinking.

According to the Upanishads, this is the deathless and therefore eternal state that is perfectly adequate to us. Hence the *Bṛihadāranyaka* Upanishad also says: 'Just as a bird flying about in the air becomes tired, folds up its wings, and settles down, so does the mind hasten to that state where, fully contented, it feels no more desire and sees no more dream-images. This is the essential state of the Self in which it is superior to craving, free from ill-will, and without fear. Indeed, this is the essential state of the Self in which it is without craving, withdrawn from sorrow and without affliction. This is the state beyond good and evil. Then has a man overcome all the afflictions of his heart.'

In this way is found, according to the Upanishads, the primary ground of our personality; it is our spiritual and essential Self which, freed from the body that alone is subject to disease, old age, and death, is immortal, is *thoroughly content in itself* and thus absolutely desireless. Hence it endures to all eternity in perfect peace in the state that befits it.

If our own innermost essence is pure, wholly tranquillized, immortal being-in-itself, then the same applies also to every one else in the world. The ground of all beings, and thus of the whole phenomenal world generally, must therefore be *pure, motionless spirituality*. From this ocean of pure spirituality that is in absolute peace, the entire phenomenal world has arisen like ice-burys from the substance of the sea itself. The Indian sages called this 'substance', or ground-of-the-world-as-such, *Brahman*. Hence it came to be called the impersonal Divinity. The result of this, then, is the equation: *Ātman = Brahman*.

This means that my own Self in its deepest ground is identical with the Self of the entire world, and so with the 'substance' or ground of all creation. Into that ground-of-Being, therefore, withdraws the man who disidentifies himself from the body, and draws back into his own spiritual depths. That is practical mysticism.

This, then, was the Indian way of fathoming the miracle of God. A man descended into his own depths and ultimately came upon the Ground of all Being, the *Brahman*, hence God. In astonishment, he found that in his own unfathomable depths are the depths of the Godhead itself, and that therefore he is ultimately that Godhead. '*Brahman* is he and into *Brahman* is he merged' states the Upanishad.

Again: 'Thus kindling the sacrifice for the Self, he enters into the grandeur of his own Self.'

This method of solving the perennial problem has also been cultivated with the same results by religious geniuses in the West such as Plotinus and the Christian mystics.

For instance, Meister Eckhart:

'Where I am, there is God; this is the naked truth.'

'Man is in truth God, and God is in truth man.'

'In this break-through I experience that I and God are one.'

Finally:

'Truly if thou wilt find the noble birth, thou must return to the origin and to the Ground from which thou hast come.'

Why do all beings insist on being happy; feel they have a title to it by right; feel 'deprived' of happiness if life is found sad? Why does even the most miserable situation carry a gleam of hope?

Because happiness is the state of our real nature, the condition of our real Self. The Self abides ever in the bliss of *Nirvāna*; all life outside its immediate sphere of influence is, relative to this bliss, suffering. That is what the Buddha meant when he said: 'All life is suffering.'

Indeed, we learn how to be cheerful only after we have discovered that life as such is sad.

Buddhism has often been called a 'doctrine of suffering' and thus accused of pessimism. Yet there are two sides to everything. Grimm showed that Buddhism, rightly understood is a science of happiness; a psycho-cybernetic method of attaining transcendental bliss. Not pessimism, but transcendental optimism is the right term to describe Buddhism.

To know the difference between the real Self and the psyche-ego is to have grasped the Buddha's idea of *anattā*. Thus Grimm shows how the metaphysics of the Buddha, far from being contrary to the spirit of Vedānta, is the crest-jewel of Upanishadic thought.

The Science of Happiness

The Conquest of *Samsāra*, that 'Merry-go-round' of unending Despair

The doctrine of the Buddha has a thoroughly practical side, for it aims to make us so happy that it could be called the science of happiness.

What is happiness? We may define it as a satisfaction of the will; a person is happy when he attains the objects which he wills and desires. Accordingly, it might be thought that even the question how we can become happy is not so very difficult to answer; we just procure for ourselves, in ceaseless struggle if necessary, the coveted object. Yet at the moment there is scarcely one *perfectly* happy person in the whole world. What is the cause of this? The desired object can only bring me happiness if it does not disappoint me after I have acquired it. As soon as I note that it does not possess the qualities I expected so that I am disappointed, the feeling of happiness is at an end, and is replaced by one of sorrow, and hence by *suffering*. The previously imagined happiness slips away. Thus the problem of how one becomes happy is a question of *cognition*; to guard against possible disappointments, I should not covet any object which takes my fancy. Instead, before letting it influence my feelings, I must try to find out whether it does not conceal qualities which, if they come to light, will inevitably disappoint me, making my supposed happiness appear an illusion. It, therefore, follows that if men do not find happiness, but see themselves ensnared again and again in unhappiness, this is due to their defective cognition, to their want of insight into the object that promises them happiness. Here too it is *ultimately* a question of right cognition.

The question of happiness is a matter of right cognition; this explains why man's striving for happiness is so radically different. What appears to one as the greatest joy is worthless to another. What one finds beautiful, another finds ugly; one man ignores that which to another seems to be precious above all.

Further, it is also clear why men cannot become happy, for their faculty of cognition, especially their power of judgement, is generally too feeble for them to examine thoroughly the objects confronting their will and for them to see to what extent such objects will disappoint them later, as indeed they are bound to. In fact, most men hardly rise above the level of animals who live in and for the present, and for whom the future does not exist. Therefore animals are taken up entirely with objects that stimulate their greed and cannot judge whether pain and suffering will result in the future that will one day become the present. Thus most men rush after everything that at first sight seems to be worth desiring; and they are not concerned that bitter disappointments almost always follow: like animals, they too live only for the present. If we prophesy to a debauchee the consequences of his action, he always refuses to listen, and says that it is

a matter of complete indifference to him whether he will later be ruined, if only he can enjoy himself now. Only a small part of mankind have enough cognitive ability to take the future into account, and of these only a small percentage in their hunt for happiness are inclined or able to consider the Great Future after death.

But then there is also a fundamental division between men which is much more deep-rooted than that between different castes in India or that caused in the West by upbringing and wealth. All who regard the same objects of the senses as the substance of happiness, feel drawn to one another, in spite of all social barriers, just because their thoughts and aspirations are the same; and they avoid those who declare these objects to be worthless or even objectionable. It is obvious that a man, whose progress in cognition reaches the point where he is no longer tempted by things other men desire, demolishes the bridge hitherto uniting him with such people. He thus becomes increasingly isolated and lonely. Indeed, in this elevation of cognition above that of the average person, and in the isolation and loneliness thus brought about, is to be found a criterion of our being on the right path. Whoever cannot cope with the unpopularity that he experiences on such grounds is unable to follow the path to true happiness. 'Why do you complain of enemies? Could they ever become your friends to whom your true nature is secretly an eternal reproach?'

This isolation need not cause us unhappiness. We have a duty not to enter into a closer relationship with these whose ethics are contrary to the holy life. The words 'keep your distance' are directly applicable here, unless, out of love and compassion, we associate with such fellow-men in order to lead them to a higher morality. 'But, disciples, with what men should we not deal, should we not have intercourse, should we not associate? There exists, disciples, a man with little morality, little concentration, little wisdom; with such a man, disciples, we should not deal, should not have intercourse, should not associate, unless it be out of love and compassion.'¹ Why not? For the same reason that we 'most carefully avoid an enraged elephant, a mettlesome horse, a mad bull, or keep away from snakes, from ground cleared of trees, from copsewood, clefts and crevices, pools and swamps, from plains not fit to stay in, and areas not fit to walk in'.² Just as a man of intelligence avoids all these things, so also does he avoid 'those men who are not fit to associate with and thus he escapes those destructive influences pulling him down again.'³

Such a point of view is recommended not only by the Buddha, it is also the experience of all wise men. We call to mind the great Diogenes who in broad daylight went about Athens with a lighted lamp. Voltaire said that the earth swarms with people who are not worth talking to; and La Bruyère says: '*Tout notre mal vient de ne pouvoir être seuls*' (all our adversity comes from our inability to be alone). Bernardin de St Pierre says that abstinence from food ensures the health of our body and from people the peace of our

¹ *Ang. Nik.*, III, 26.

² *Majjh. Nik.*, sutta 2.

³ *Ibid.*

soul. Let us recall Giordano Bruno saying: 'So many who on earth wanted to enjoy a heavenly life have with one voice assured us that they fled and remained in solitude.' Then there are the words of Angelus Silesius: 'Solitude is necessary; make not common cause with worldly people, then you can find a desert everywhere!' Above all, let us recall Schopenhauer's in praise of solitude. 'There is in the world only the choice between loneliness and vulgarity. Only in loneliness can a man be himself; in it alone is there freedom. Loneliness is a source of happiness and of peace of mind, and to learn to endure it should be our principal study. Whoever at an early age has come to like loneliness has acquired a gold-mine. Loneliness affords a twofold advantage to the man of intellectual eminence, first the advantage of being with himself, and secondly that of not being with others. Everyone likes or dislikes loneliness according to his intrinsic worth, the miserable wretch feeling in it the whole of his wretchedness, and the great mind his entire greatness. For the fool in purple groans under the burden of his wretched individuality that cannot be thrown off, whereas the man of great gifts populates and animates with his ideas the most dreary and desolate environment.'¹

These remarks show us that, whoever has attained a clear cognition of the futile and pitiable nature of the striving for happiness by the great majority, has broken with those who are wedded to such 'happiness', and has withdrawn into himself. But this is in the highest degree the consequence that faces the disciple of the Buddha. For the Buddha shows us that all objects capable of affecting only one of our senses (thus all sensual pleasures), are transient; when they come to an end they are always bound to cause us great suffering so that 'misery predominates'.² This is quite apart from the fact that the Buddha reveals to us that what we understand by 'sensual pleasure' is also sordid and vulgar. Whoever sees this, continues to lose interest in worldly things, in so far as he does not have to attend to them: 'And if there is a conversation on worldly attractions, he pays no attention to it, does not give it a hearing, does not turn his mind to such a conversation, does not deal with such people, does not make friends with them.'³ This means that he hardly finds anyone with whom to carry on an interesting conversation, or become more closely associated with. To the extent that we are in earnest about the Buddha's teaching, it leads us to almost complete isolation and loneliness; and that is why so few take it seriously. The many are unable to master their sociable instinct. They naturally forego as well that true state of happiness in which there are no more disappointments. This happy state is based on complete and absolute solitude; and so the external isolation, into which we go when following the Buddha's path, is the necessary point of transition to that state. Therefore, whoever wants true happiness, should no more be afraid of his gradual isolation than a man of the lonely mountain-path leading up to the summit of a high mountain from which he wishes to enjoy the

¹ *Paverga and Paralipomena*, Vol. I, Aphorisms on the Wisdom of Life.

² *Majjh. Nik.*, sutta 54.

³ *Ibid.*, sutta 105.

splendid view. As Meister Eckhart, says: 'Whoever walks about wretchedly in his own house as a stranger and an exile, becomes peaceful and happy in this body.'

But the Buddha knows of an even higher happiness than that of Meister Eckhart; he leads us to an even greater loneliness. Thus we must not just walk about wretchedly in our own house as a stranger and an exile, but we must also imagine ourselves to be a stranger and an exile *in our own body*, indeed in our entire personality with its sensation, perception, and thinking. Our own body is only a prison into which we see ourselves cast, and when we detach ourselves for ever from it and so from our entire personality, we are freed from an enormous burden, from which we must first be liberated before we can speak of happiness. If I am freed from this burden, then I am freed from all suffering. As Lao-tse asks, what could still worry and disturb anyone who no longer has a body? If nothing can trouble me any more, and if I have withdrawn myself into the perfect state of my own true essence, then, submerged in eternity and without limits, I too shall experience, in the perfect stillness and unity of my own true essence, the inner harmony and self-sufficiency of the real Self, and thus the only true state of happiness. 'The truly redeemed, who have come through the stream of sensuous ties, have achieved unshakeable bliss.'¹ We shall then understand the close relationship between the loneliness that comes to the disciple of the Buddha and true happiness. Loneliness is the only *natural* and hence adequate state of everyone; it inaugurates him as the first Adam in original and genuine happiness.

Mere descriptions of the nature of true happiness are not enough. A man must also *experience* within himself the bliss of detachment, of isolation, of solitude, in order to understand the exalted nature of this state of happiness compared with the vulgar and lusty well-being of the senses.

'Whoever, Nagita, does not share, like me, in that well-being which is brought about by renunciation, detachment, and peace, may lust for the miry and putrid well-being of the senses.'² The Buddha's way is such that, very soon after the first step, a man has an ever greater living experience of that true well-being. With this there then appears automatically a disgust for sensual pleasures which have yet to make anyone *really* happy.

'What think you, Sakyas, might not a man at the age of one hundred years acquire an enormous fortune, if day after day he received large sums of money and always put aside what he had received?'

'Certainly, Lord.'

'But now, in consequence and on the basis of that fortune and relying thereon, could that man have the feeling of perfect well-being even for a single day or a single night, or for half a day or half a night?'

'Indeed not, Lord.'

'And why not?'

¹ *Psalms of the Nuns*, v. 350.

² *Ang. Nik.*, V, 30.

'Transient, Lord, are the things of the senses, vain, empty, deceptive, and subject to change.'

'But, Sakyas, my disciple who lives for ten years assiduously, zealously, resolutely, and in accordance with my instructions, is able to have the feeling of *perfect* well-being for even a hundred years, or a hundred times a hundred years, or a hundred times a thousand years, or a hundred times a hundred thousand years. It may be ten years, but my disciple who lives for nine, eight, seven, six, five, four, three, or two years, or for one year, assiduously, zealously, resolutely, and in accordance with my instructions, is able to have the feeling of *perfect* well-being for even a hundred years, or a hundred times a hundred years, or a hundred times a thousand years, or a hundred times a hundred thousand years. It is a great pity for you, Sakyas, it is bad for you, that with a life so threatened by care and death, you occasionally do not observe (my instructions).'¹

Only the very few can endure solitude for any length of time, and so most people abandon the jewel of the Buddha's doctrine in order to regain the lost tie with the hum and bustle of life, and become once more one of the crowd. Permanent isolation is something to which only the highest minds are equal:

'It is, Upāli, difficult to dwell in the forest, in remote and secluded places, difficult to endure seclusion and to feel well in it. If in his loneliness a monk does not achieve any concentration, the forest, so to speak, takes possession of his mind. Whoever tried to live in the forest, in remote and secluded places, without having achieved concentration, might expect either to perish there or to become mentally deranged. There is, Upāli, a large pond and an elephant seven or eight feet tall approaches it and thinks: "I will step into this pond and delight in bathing my ears and back." And he steps into the pond and delights in bathing his ears and back. But how is this possible? Because, Upāli, a large animal can still gain a footing in the deep water. But now a small hare or kitten jumps into the pond and is drowned. And why? Because a tiny animal cannot gain a footing in the deep water.'²

These words, which are spoken in reference to physical seclusion, apply far more to the mental isolation into which we enter, the more we remove ourselves from the thought habits of others, especially of those in our immediate vicinity. Living on the lines of the Buddha's doctrine is a new and unprecedented way of life. He who tries so to regulate his life, soon comes to enjoy a great desert, more desolate and fascinating than the Kalahari. This feeling of the profoundest inner isolation is expressed by Lao-tse thus:

'Whoever is enlightened in the *Tao* is considered to be enveloped in darkness; whoever has gone forward in the *Tao* appears to come back; whoever has assimilated the *Tao* is classed with the unimportant. . . . What I advocate is called inferior by the whole world. A thing may be really great, but

¹ *Ang. Nik.*, X, 46.

² *Ang. Nik.*, X, 99.

it is regarded as inferior. My words are easy to understand and easy to follow, yet no one can understand or follow them. . . . Because such things happen, the perfect sage wraps himself in a coarse garment and conceals his treasure within himself. Mankind continues to live in keen delight as at a sacrificial feast, as when one ascends a hill in the prime of life. I alone remain indifferent; no trace of such a life—as with a new-born child which does not yet smile—I am always travelling like one who is homeless! People have more than enough, I alone am like a beggar in the street. Feeble-minded am I, indeed scatter-brained! Ordinary people are very cheerful; I alone am full of care. Bruised and battered like a wreck at sea! Driven around like a thing that does not belong anywhere! All men are of some use; I alone am as clumsy as a boor. I alone am different from other men. . . .'

We too say that the Buddha-Wisdom is the religion of the great and lonely ones—'the flight of the Alone to the Alone', as the splendid words run which end the *Enneads* of Plotinus. Yet it is necessary to see that this solitariness, so greatly feared and in fact so difficult to endure, is under the aegis of the Buddha the very path to supreme happiness.

How does one advance by stages to the supreme, deathless state of the happiness of inner seclusion? The Buddha describes these stages again and again. It is one thing to know them in an abstract form, it is another to picture them vividly in all their beatifying sublimity. Only the latter goads us into doing something about it. In other words right insight determines right action. 'The deed reveals to me the fool, the deed reveals to me the sage.'¹

The *first* stage is moral purity, which is, therefore, the painfully precise observance of the five *sīlas* (or moral precepts) together with unimpeachable conduct in other respects as well. An attitude leading to concentrated thought or to a way of thinking that at each moment considers everything in the light of the Buddha's teaching, and so particularly from the point of view of the three characteristics of 'transitory, hence causing suffering, hence inadequate for me'. This first stage is the real goal of a Buddhist layman: 'We have taken upon ourselves the moral precepts and endeavour to live up to them, and here we discern a danger even in minor lapses.'² A man who reaches this stage with real and not merely imagined success, no longer breaks any of the five *sīlas*, and he no longer allows his mind to become clouded and confused by any crude emotion that might disturb balanced and congenial thinking. Of him the Buddha says: 'He no longer sees danger in any direction because he is armed with moral purity, like a king of noble lineage, who has been anointed and has overthrown his enemies and no longer sees dangers in any direction, because he has overthrown his enemies.' Incidentally, it is worth noting how here a person, who is moral in the Buddha's sense, is compared to a noble king. 'Equipped with this exalted treasure of moral purity, he feels within himself a serene

¹ *Majjh. Nik.*, sutta 33.

² *Dīgh. Nik.*, sutta 2.

and stainless happiness.¹ He who has experienced within himself this happiness of moral purity will no longer complain about isolation and loneliness. Instead he runs away from all worldly company and, in the absence of a good friend with similar aspirations, will gladly 'go into homelessness' to use another of the Buddha's expressions. Such solitude gives opportunity to relish permanently the happiness of a life of spiritual purity.

Many will not even be able to picture this happiness. Life in moral purity must be the outcome of grasping the *anattā*-idea, and thus is the effect thereof. Therefore, if we wish to experience the happiness of moral purity, we must first understand this idea of *anattā*, which must then be the fixed and conscious guiding-star of our progress on the path. This means that, by reaching perfect moral purity, we will have overcome our previous impulses and desires, in so far as these were opposed to the precepts. We must try to bring about, through our own strength and action, a radical improvement of character. We then free ourselves for ever from a considerable part of our former personality, in particular from that sordid part which is most difficult to overcome. And so to this extent we are then face to face with the truth of the *anattā*-idea: 'This belongs not to me, this am I not, this is not my Self.' Just as a man, whose body is infested and worm-eaten, would gloat over the fact of his recovery, if he were to see these worms removed from his body and lying dead on the ground in front of him.

Whoever in this way has realized the idea of *anattā* will never again go astray. There arises in him the unshakeable certainty that he will never again be deprived of supreme salvation, will never again sink to the charnels of pain and suffering, to the cast-off modes of existence in the realms of ghosts, animals, and hells. In short, he is certain that he has become a perfect *sotāpanna*—one who in seven more lives at most will be immersed in the supramundane peace of *Nirvāṇa*.

This is only the first stage, although a basic one, of the ascent to *Nirvāṇa*'s solitary splendour. Non-attachment to the world and consequently the bliss of contentment, become ever greater, the more we scale the higher stages of the *anattā*-idea. Beyond the unclouded and stainless happiness of an intense inner peace, we attain that freedom of action which is at all times clearly felt; our consciousness is always concentrated wholly on the task we may be performing at the moment. This greatly increases efficiency and improves the performance of all our duties. Paradox of paradoxes: the pursuit of solitude makes one a better man of action and more useful to society. Thought without action (*Hamlet*) is not so great a tragedy as action without thought (*Othello*). All craving, all desire which could turn the mind in another direction, have come to rest. Here it is clear how complete is the solitude which is entirely inward to such a man and in which he continues to live, even when he moves among the densest crowds. 'A monk living in this manner, Migajāla, may wander among a crowd of monks, of men and women followers, of princes and princely ministers, of leaders and members of sects, yet he is called a

¹ *Ibid.*

hermit. And why? He has dismissed craving and so he is called a hermit.¹

This leads to the next stage of mystic visions. The Buddha extols the bliss of these visions in lavish terms: 'It is as though there were a lake with an underground source into which no brook flowed from east or west, from north or south, no cloud discharged, but only the cool source welled up from the ground and wholly permeated, percolated, filled, and saturated this lake, so that not even the smallest part of it was left unfilled by the cool water. In just the same way does the monk also permeate, percolate, fill, and saturate this body with that blissful serenity, such as springs from a concentrated mind, so that not even the smallest part of his body is left unsaturated by this blissful serenity. But this, o King, is a reward for spiritual struggles.'²

Yet even these mystic visions are still not the highest stage. Beyond them, in the profound silence in which the disciple finds himself, there arises the whole purity of a spiritual contemplation of the components of his personality. He literally *sees* them. He perceives: 'This is my body which has a form, has arisen from chemical substances, has been generated by father and mother, and is doomed to old age, sickness and death. Personality is my consciousness of being tied and connected to this body,' and so on.

'It is as though, o King, there were a precious stone, clear and pellucid, and a thread were drawn through it, blue or yellow, red, white, or grey, and a man of keen vision were to contemplate that precious stone lying before him; just so, great King, does the monk really *see* and observe: "This is my body which has form, has arisen from the four main substances, is generated by father and mother, and is doomed to dissolution, decline, and disintegration. This is my consciousness tied and connected to the body." But this, o King, is a reward for spiritual struggles, which already appears here on earth and is even more splendid and exquisite than was the previous reward.'³

With this 'visual penetration' of his personality the disciple becomes its complete master. Indeed, the barriers which had previously arisen for him out of 'ego-ism' now disappear and the omnipotence of his own true essence stands revealed:

'From this body he causes to emerge his astral body consisting of thought-substance, furnished with limbs, and evident to the senses, precisely as a man draws the stem out of a reed and says to himself: "This is the reed and this is the stem; out of the reed I have drawn the stem"; or when he draws the sword from the sheath and says to himself: "This is the sword and this is the sheath; from the sheath I have drawn the sword." But this, o King, is a reward for spiritual struggles, which already appears here on earth and is even more splendid and exquisite than was the previous reward. And further he directs his mind to the realm of magic power.

¹ *Sam. Nik.*, XXXV, 63.

² *Digh. Nik.*, sutta 2.

³ *Digh. Nik.*, sutta 2.

From one person he becomes many and from the many he again becomes one; at one moment he becomes visible, at another he vanishes. He walks unobstructed through walls, banks, and mountains as if they were mere air; he dives into the earth and out again, as if it were water; he walks on water without sinking, as though he were on solid ground; sitting cross-legged he floats through the air like a bird on the wing; the two mighty and immense heavenly bodies, moon and sun, he grasps and touches with his hand; and in bodily form he is able to rise into the Brahma world. (Like a skilled potter, a carver in ivory, or a goldsmith shapes any object he pleases), so does my monk shape his mind (when it is concentrated) producing forms in the realm of magic power. This also, great King, is a reward for spiritual struggles, which already appears here on earth and is even more splendid and exquisite than was the previous reward.

'He then directs his mind to the development of the divine ear; and with this ear, which far surpasses the human ear, he hears two different kinds of sounds, those of the divine world and those of the human world, at a distance as well as near at hand. Just as anyone, great King, who is walking on the highway and hears the sound of a kettle-drum or a drum, of a tambourine or a gong, so with his refined ear does my monk hear the sounds of the divine world and of the human world, at a distance as well as near at hand. This also, great King, is a reward for religious aspiration, which already appears here on earth and is even more splendid and exquisite than was the previous reward.

'He then directs his mind to the visual penetration of the minds of others. He sees through a mind consumed with passion as full of passion, a dispassionate mind as free from passion, a mind consumed with hatred as full of hatred, a mind without hatred as free from hatred, a deluded mind as deluded, a mind without delusion as free from delusion, a concentrated mind as concentrated, a flighty mind as flighty, a noble mind as noble, a vulgar mind as vulgar, a redeemed mind as redeemed, and a mind still shackled to the world as shackled. Just as a woman or a youth, who like to look at themselves, scrutinize the reflection of their own faces in a perfect mirror or in a vessel containing clear water, and, when these faces are without spots, they really see their spotlessness, but, when such faces show a spot, they perceive this spot, so does my disciple see through the minds of others. This also, great King, is a reward for moral struggles, which already appears here on earth and is even more splendid and exquisite than was the previous reward.

'He then directs his mind to the recollection of previous forms of existence. He first recalls one previous life, then two lives, then five lives, then ten lives, then fifty lives, then a hundred lives, then a thousand lives, then a hundred thousand lives, then the times during many world formations, and then the times during many world disappearances, saying: "I was there and had that name; there I died and was reborn elsewhere. Then I was at this other place, had this name, belonged to this family, this was my rank, this my vocation, such weal and woe did I experience, such was the end of my life. Then I died and was reborn here." Thus he

recalls very many of his previous lives, each with its own characteristics, each with its peculiar connections. It is, great King, as if someone goes from his native village to another village, from there again to a second, and from there again to a third, and then returns to his native village, thinking to himself: "From my native village I came to such and such a village, there I stood, saw, spoke, and was silent in such and such circumstances; then I came to such and such a village, there I stood, saw, spoke, and was silent in such and such circumstances; then I returned again to my native village." In the same way, my disciple recalls many different lives. This also, great King, is a reward for religious struggles, which already appears here on earth and is even more splendid and exquisite than was the previous reward.

My disciple then perceives the death and rebirth of other beings. He recognizes the vulgar and the noble, those going to beauty or to ugliness, to happiness or to unhappiness, according to the works they have carried out. "Such things are loaded with the evil they have committed in deeds, words, or thoughts; they reviled what is sacred, cherished false views, and loaded themselves with evil deeds, such as spring from false views. On the dissolution of their body after death, they entered unhappy and sorrowful states, and on the wrong path arrived in hell. But these other beings have a rich store of merit which they have acquired in deeds, words, and thoughts; they did not revile what is sacred, had right views, and achieved good *karma*, such as springs from right views. On the dissolution of their body after death, they reach happy states and heavenly worlds." Thus does my disciple perceive the death and rebirth of other beings of the vulgar and the noble, of those going to beauty or to ugliness, to happiness or to unhappiness, according to the works they have carried out. It is, great King, as if a man of keen sight stands on the balcony of a house towering above a square in the centre of the town, and sees how many people go into and come out of a house, how many walk in the street, how many sit in the square, and he thinks: "There they go into and come out of the house, there they are walking in the street, and there they are sitting in the square." In the same way my disciple surveys and perceives the death and rebirth of beings according to the works they have carried out. This also, great King, is a reward for spiritual struggles, which already appears here on earth and is even more splendid and exquisite than was the previous reward.¹

Now the lonely wanderer on Buddha's mountain path arrives at the summit: "This is suffering," so does he really discover, "This is the origin of suffering," so does he really discover, "This is the annihilation of suffering," so does he really discover, "This is the path to the annihilation of suffering," so does he really discover. "These are the influences," so does he really discover, "This is the origin of the influences," so does he really discover, "This is the annihilation of the influences," so does he really discover, "This is the path to the annihilation of the influences," thus does

¹ *Dīgh. Nik., sutta 2.*

he really discover. Perceiving thus and really seeing thus, his mind is freed from the influences of sensual desire, freed from the influences of craving to become, freed from the influences of a want of knowledge. In one so delivered there arises the knowledge of his deliverance: "Delivered am I." "For me rebirth has ceased, finished is the holy course of life, I have done what I was in duty bound to do, I have nothing more in common with this world," thus does he realize. It is as if there is a mountain lake with pure and clear water. A man of keen sight standing on the bank sees in the water mussels, pebbles, a heap of stones, and shoal of fish swimming round or stationary, and he thinks to himself: "Here is this lake with pure and clear water, and in it are these mussels, these pebbles, this heap of stones, and these fish swimming round or stationary." In the same way the monk perceives: "This is suffering, this is the origin of suffering, this is the annihilation of suffering," and he is fully and finally redeemed. This also, great King is a reward for spiritual efforts, which already appears here on earth and is even more splendid and exquisite than was the previous reward, indeed more splendid and sublime than all the other rewards. There is no other reward for spiritual struggles which would surpass this and be more exquisite.¹

The Buddha's disciple has now released himself from his personality, and so from the whole world; in fact from everything that could still bring him suffering in the future. His unfathomable Essence now sinks to all eternity into the realm of Being-in-itself, into the supreme Reality which is free from all becoming and is therefore unchanging, into the sphere of *nibbāna*, or, to speak in theological terms, into the ground of the Godhead.

Would not the majesty of that lonely path of the Buddha overwhelm anyone capable of following (if even only for a little) this mighty ascent that starts from ethical purity and goes right on to the dizzy heights of the divine summit? Buddhism is a philosophy of religion that has set itself such aims and indicates the path to them.

One is tempted to say that all these unprecedented aims can hardly be accomplished in 'practical' life. We cannot leave our Londons, and debts or duties bind us hand and foot. The criticism will be offered that these ideas may be poetical and profound, but that they cannot be put into practice. Remote spiritual goals may appear worse than worthless to the man of affairs. Of course, not one of us can reach the summit in his present life; but this is not indispensable for Nature is in no hurry and can spread the ascent over several lives. All that is necessary is that we take in our present life the first and most vital step, that of virtuous conduct (ethical purity). If we have done this before we die, and so have become *sotāpānnas*, then we are certain that all has not been in vain. Perhaps we shall be reborn, under the influence of the Buddha's doctrine, with the following five qualities: (1) we shall be inspired with an unshakeable confidence in the Awakened One and his teaching; (2) we shall have a strong and healthy body; (3) our psychic nature will be harmonized; (4) we shall

¹ *Dīgh. Nik.*, sutta 2.

be virtuous and straightforward, not hypocritical and deceitful; (5) we shall bring to the new life strength and energy in order to renounce unwholesome things and acquire those that are wholesome so that we shall be wise and gifted with the wisdom that sees everywhere the arising and passing away of things. Along with these five helpful qualities we shall have, as *sotāpannas*, the guarantee of final emancipation; this is possible only with the above five qualities, as is taught by the Awakened One. So in a relatively short span of time we shall *gradually* progress to the summit.

As Kant says, two things will always excite the astonishment and admiration of every thinking person, namely the starry heavens above and the moral law within (i.e. conscience). But who today gazes up in complete astonishment and admiration at the stars? Hardly anyone ever looks up to heaven except to observe space-ships and sputniks. Who today still listens in complete astonishment and admiration to the voice of his conscience? Does he not rather make fun of this 'conscience' as a kind of cybernetic contraption? And so, how many 'thinking people' are there in Kant's sense? But the Buddha's doctrine is even more mighty than the starry heavens and far more powerful than the voice of our conscience. For it reveals the absolute reality, the *nibbāna*-sphere, enthroned behind the phenomenal world; and from this reality have proceeded the stars, and the voice of our conscience arises, which tries to lead us back to that absolute reality. The path thereto is indicated by the Buddha's doctrine.

'Just as a man, honoured master, who has eaten his fill of the most pleasant dishes no longer desires the other and less palatable ones, so he who once understands Lord Gautama's teaching, no longer relishes (other doctrines). Or when a man, overcome by thirst and weakness, receives a lump of sugar and always experiences a pleasant taste whenever he takes some of it, so does the man, who once understands Lord Gautama's teaching, feel contented and confident in his mind. Or when a man receives a vessel of yellow or red sandal-wood and always experiences a sweet and pleasant odour whenever he smells it, so does the man, who understands Lord Gautama's teaching, feel contented and confident in his mind. Or as a man who is sick, infirm, and gravely ill is cured by a skilled physician, so do care, lamentation, suffering, and despair vanish as soon as Lord Gautama's teaching is understood. Or suppose that there is a pond with clear, refreshing, cool, and sparkling water in a delightful and pleasant location, and that a man, burning and overcome with heat, tired, exhausted, tormented by thirst, were to jump in that pond and bathe therein, and were to drink some water and thus bring to an end all torment, exhaustion, and burning heat, so are all torment, exhaustion, and burning heat brought to an end, as soon as Lord Gautama's teaching is understood.

From this world's kitchen

Crave not to obtain

Those dainties which seem so real, but are so vain.

Which greedy worldlings gorge to their own loss

Renounce that loss,

So loss shall prove they gain!

So sing the poets of Sufism thereby confirming the message of the Buddha.

The goal of the absolute state of happiness is incomprehensible to the average person and thus unattainable. Hence for him the Buddha's doctrine must remain at least to begin with, an inaccessible domain, in so far as it discloses this goal and shows him the way thereto. Yet whoever has reached the summit of a high mountain can guide those who wish to approach its foot. In the same way, according to the Buddha's own statement, his doctrine satisfies the aspirations to happiness even of those who deny the path of complete renunciation; even of those who lust after sensual pleasures. Thus it shows the ways in which one can find *within* the world the greatest possible amount of real happiness. Here, however the Buddha not only has in mind the happiest possible life *during* our present existence on earth, but is also concerned with securing our happiness after death.

The perennial question whether such a future is in store for us is dealt with later. Of everything that could ever be known within and around me, the following words hold good: 'This belongs not to me, this am I not, this is not my Self.' Therefore birth and death do not touch me, but refer only to the complex of my personality, as a mere 'attribute' of my being. At my death, I give it up, in order to cling instead to a fresh 'seed' and fashion therefrom a new body and a new personality because I still crave for life. It is uncertain to what fresh 'germ' one clings at the moment of death. However, theoretically, through the *anattā*-idea, one can enter into any possible phenomena form. My present human one is not *essential* to me, but is only the product of my clinging (at the moment of the death that ended my past life) to the germ-psyche provoked by the marital act of my parents: that is the Buddha's idea of conception. When I am forced by death to abandon my present human form, I can, in principle, cling even to a non-human 'germ' and thus become a non-human being. As my Self is not *of* this world, its projection, my 'I', can become anything *in* it.

Now what forms of life other than those on earth can we assume to exist in the universe? The Buddha maintains that in his contemplative visions he encountered realms of existence which are not immediately accessible to normal cognition. As *we*, for the time being, are restricted to normal cognition, must we accept on *faith* this part of the Buddha's doctrine? There can be a belief with such a firm foundation that it affords certainty. But it must not clash with the accepted norms of reason, not be inconsistent with the well-founded and authentic facts of science. Indeed, there may be a belief that is even demanded by our faculty of reason. This is primarily the case when the fact we are expected to believe accords with the other known facts of nature, and also fills up a gap. Such articles of faith are, for example, scientific hypotheses, one of which is the belief in realms of superhuman beings. It is most unlikely that in the immeasurable universe nature has produced only those forms of existence which are accessible to our normal sense and which are to be met with on our relatively tiny earth. Our vanity demands that man should be the supreme form of existence in the entire cosmos. Yet since our earth is only

an inconceivably small part of the boundless cosmos, the forms of life on it must be only a tiny sample of the totality of living forms in that cosmos. Is not this very idea a postulate of every faculty of reason, a feeble presentiment of the bubbling fertility and limitless plenitude of energy seen everywhere at work in nature? Is it not also self-evident that in the higher, subtle, and spiritual spheres of the universe forms of life are present which are so superior to the animal-human form that the following words apply:

'To the "gods" men are impure and are known to be impure, are of evil odour and are known to be of evil odour, are repulsive and are known to be repulsive. The odour of man drives the gods a hundred miles away!'¹ In any case, we have, as du Prel says, 'no right whatever to regard as identical the concepts of living beings and albuminous creatures, and it is far more likely that they are related to each other as the genus to the species. It would be very narrow-minded of us to attempt to apply our earthly conceptions to the cosmos; and even if we wish to regard the change of matter with persistence of form as a characteristic of all cosmic life, metabolism could still be brought about in a way different from that of digestion, blood circulation, and respiration.'

If, in fact, the existence of realms of higher beings is a postulate of the faculty of reason then it is dogmatic to want to dismiss as impossible the statement of the Buddha that he has been in direct communication with the denizens of those higher realms:

'I have had a vision of beings with good conduct in works, words, and thoughts, who did not turn up their noses at the elect, who cherished right views, and who in their works were determined by right views. With the dissolution of the body after death, they have entered on the good path and have reached the heaven-world (*sagga loka*). But monks, I say this not because I have heard it from other religious men or Brahmins; on the contrary, I say only what I myself have perceived, I myself have seen, I myself have experienced.'² The question is whether the Buddha is a trustworthy witness, and whether his method is scientifically suitable for communicating with those higher realms. Surely the Buddha was incapable of any conscious lying. During his lifetime he was never false to the basic moral principles which he had laid down. He laid special emphasis on the fourth of these basic principles: never tell an untruth. 'Whoever does not shrink from a conscious lie, is capable of all evil. Therefore, Rāhula, say to yourself: "I will not lie even in fun"; you have thus to train yourself.' The Buddha had a critical intellect, perhaps the most critical on earth, and for this reason every kind of self-deception is ruled out as regards his statements. So it is certain, at least for anyone who is aware of the Buddha's acute mental keenness as shown by his unique *anattā*-doctrine and the way in which he expounds it, that such a man does not fall a victim to hallucinations.

Even on earth the scale of living beings is determined by the growth of the intellect. In particular, man owes his supremacy over all other earthly

¹ *Dīgh. Nik.*, XXIII, 9.

² *Itivuttaka*, 70, 71.

beings exclusively to his intelligence. This intelligence is so outstanding a characteristic that it is in inverse proportion to the grossly physical forces of the body. Thus the more intellectual a man is, the gentler is his physical nature, just because the more powerful and effective forces of the mind take the place of the crude forces of the body. Consequently the denizens of those higher worlds possess a very definite characteristic. The higher they are, the more ethereal and hence the finer must their substance be. And so it is plainly self-evident when it is stated that while the Buddha was staying one night in the Jeta grove there appeared before him in radiant and glorious form a 'son of the gods' (a man reborn in the world of the gods).¹ But in our crude earthly sphere this son of the gods could not stand upright and collapsed and sank down. The Buddha then called out to him to assume for himself a form of crude substance, whereupon he became more crudely 'materialized'. The second and even more important characteristic of the higher worlds must be the ethical perfection of their denizens; just as morality is man's highest function. We instinctively put this higher than education. We scarcely feel the absence of education in a moral person, but genius without morality repels us. Now the criterion of all genuine morality is kindness to all that lives and breathes. But kindness again presupposes on its part our own frugality, an absence of egoism and of selfishness. Therefore those who dwell in the higher worlds must excel in this respect. The result of all this is that contact with these higher worlds cannot be made through 'wheels and cogs, rollers and rods', through space-ships, or wireless waves; in other words through the crude methods of our physical sciences. On the contrary, such contact is possible only by conforming to the conditions of those higher worlds. Therefore, in contrast to that 'son of the gods', we must first 'dematerialize' ourselves, that is to say we must assume for ourselves a form of finer substance, in other words, we have to become spiritualized. Through moral perfection in this sense we must then engender an elective affinity with those spiritual beings or 'gods', so that the words 'the odour of man drives the gods a hundred miles away' no longer apply, but they on their part feel drawn to us and thus want to enter into relations with us. Who would not acknowledge at once that this condition of moral and spiritual perfection was fulfilled in the highest degree by the Buddha? According to him this was averred by 'the gods' with whom he discoursed, indeed at all times, in that they always showed themselves to be imbued with admiration and the deepest veneration for him. With regard to the first condition (the suitable dematerialization), the Buddha could always fulfil this in his contemplative visions, for these consist precisely in our withdrawing more and more from our crudely material organism on to the astral. In these visions 'we enter into that form of concentration in which in the concentrated mind the path leading to the gods becomes known.'² The following passage gives the directions for entering the world of pure forms: 'Whoever in the four months of the rainy season dwells alone and is absorbed in a contemplative vision

¹ *Ang. Nik.*, III, fo. 125.

² *Digh. Nik.*, XI, 67.

full of pity and compassion can see *Brahma*, speak with *Brahma*, discourse and have intimate talks with him.¹ Or again:

'You say to me, prince: "Who tells you, Kassapa, that there are the three and thirty gods? I simply do not believe what you say."—It is just as if, prince, there were a man born blind who did not see black, white, blue, yellow, red, brown, and did not see stars, moon or sun. Now if he were to say: "There is no black or white, and there is no one who sees black and white; there are no stars, no moon, no sun, and there is no one who sees stars, moon, and sun. I do not know this, I do not see this, therefore it does not exist." Would he, prince, really be speaking the truth?'

'This he would not, my dear Kassapa.'

'But now, prince, as such a man born blind you appear to me when you say: "I simply do not believe in the three and thirty gods." The world beyond this one, prince, cannot be seen thus with the fleshy eye as you imagine; but ascetics and mystics who dwell in the wilderness or in remote places in the forest, whither no sound and no noise reach, and who remain there dedicating themselves with firm resolve and iron energy entirely to this endeavour, they cultivate (in deep contemplative meditation) the purity of the divine eye. With this they see this world and that world, and they see those beings who come into existence without physical birth. In *this* way, prince, can that other world be seen.'²

This makes it clear that solitude and seclusion are specially necessary. It is only when the coarser aspects of the sense organs and the vibrations corresponding to them have been eliminated that we can develop the more subtle sense organs and so perceive the finer vibrations of the higher worlds. It is as if someone alone in a large field at dead of night hears with his physical ears the faintest of distant sounds, which could never be heard in the deafening noise of day.

Naturally a modern, materialistic worldling cannot directly and through his own intuitive vision convince himself of the existence of higher worlds. But when, because of his inability, he denies the existence of such realms, then he is like a savage who denies the existence of the polar regions because he has not the means to convince himself directly of their reality.

Moreover the religious person has an awareness of higher worlds in the form of an 'obscure' feeling. As long as there are religious people, this feeling will remain as ineradicable as that of the indestructibility of our true essence, which Spinoza expresses when he says: 'we feel and experience that we are eternal'. Here it is unimportant what form this 'feeling' of higher worlds assumes in the individual due to the influence of the religious dogmas on which he was brought up. The reason for this 'feeling' of the religiously inclined is obvious to one who understands the inner evidence of the *anattā*-idea and the fact of our constant rebirth that follows with logical necessity from that idea. It is a last reflection of his stay in a heavenly world either immediately prior to or not very long before his present life.

¹ *Ibid.*, XIX, 38.

² *Dtgh. Nih.*, XXIII.

From this it follows that whoever completely lacks this feeling of the existence of higher worlds has not been in any such world for a long time, but has always incarnated as a human being, an animal, or a devil. And so, everything human and perhaps even animal and diabolical appeals strongly to him.

Moreover, there are divine spheres because the mystic is able to overcome humanity and human nature. To the extent that he does so he is already in a superhuman sphere, although he is still dragging round his human 'attribute'. The kingdom of heaven is already in him, or, as Angelus Silesius says: 'If paradise be not within you first of all—believe me, you will never enter there.'

Now what detailed information does the Buddha give about those 'realms of the gods'? That they are formed of etherial matter has already been mentioned, as also their high moral level which is expressed primarily in benevolence and kindness. The Buddha also says that these beings, apart from the sorrow of transitoriness, which even they are not spared, have nothing but feelings of unalloyed bliss:

'Just as if, Sāriputta, there were a country-house with an airy terrace, gracefully faced and polished, with a pleasant balustrade, and delightful mats in front of the window arches, and therein was to be found a couch, upholstered in fleecy wool, hung with the softest antelope skins, and cushioned in purple at both ends; and a man approached, scorched by the heat of the sun, half-dead through the heat of the sun, exhausted, trembling, thirsty and making straight for that country-house, and a sharp-sighted observer saw him and said: "In such a way does that esteemed man act and labour; such a path has he taken that he will come straight to that country-house"; and then later he were to see him in that country-house, sitting or lying on the terrace, filled only with feelings of well-being. In the same way, Sāriputta, I see through the mind and heart of a man and say: "In such a way does this man act and direct his labours; such a path has he taken that, on the dissolution of his body after his death, he will arrive at the place of heavenly joy"; and then later with the divine eye, clear and superhuman, I see him on the dissolution of his body after his death in places of heavenly joy, filled only with feelings of well-being.'¹

In the realms of the gods, which are adjacent to the human realm, an exalted sensuality prevails and in particular, ethereal love and courtship. These superhuman sensuous realms are alluded to by the Buddha in the *Māgandiya sutta* of the *Majjhima-Nikāya*:

'It is as if, Māgandiya, there were a householder or the son of a householder, wealthy, richly endowed with money and property, and possessing and enjoying the five different pleasures of the senses. Following the right path in deeds, words, and thoughts, after his death and on the dissolution of his body he attained the heavenly world and reached as high as the three and thirty gods. There he lived in a grove with divine maidens, possessing

¹ *Majjh. Nik.*, sutta 12.

and enjoying the five heavenly pleasures of the senses. And he perceived a householder or the son of a householder possessing and enjoying the five different pleasures of the human senses. What think you, Māgandiya, would the son of the gods envy this householder or son of a householder, feel the loss of the pleasures of the human senses, and turn to the pleasures of the human senses?’

‘Certainly not, Gautama.’

‘And why not?’

‘The heavenly pleasures of the senses, Gautama, are to be placed above and be preferred to the human pleasures of the senses.’

Again:

‘Poor and wretched is man’s royal splendour when compared to heavenly bliss.’

Here the higher the realms, the purer become the feelings of delight; in them ‘objects of the senses which inspire spiritual pleasures’ (*ulāra kāmāgunā*) are presented in an ever higher degree.¹ Thus there are several ‘heavens’ of the region of supra-sensual bliss, whose names will be given later on.

Above these ‘super-sensuous heavens’ rise the ‘*Brahma* heavens’ or the world of pure forms, as it is also called. Beings here, though still invested with a ‘body’, are spiritual for their bodies consist of mind (*manomāya*) to the extent that not even astral beings living in the sphere of the super-sensuous are able to perceive them:

‘When *Brahma*, the eternal youth, appears before the three and thirty gods, he assumes for himself a grosser form. For *Brahma*’s true nature cannot be seen by the three and thirty gods even with their divine sense of sight.’² Beings in the *Brahma* worlds are no longer sexually differentiated, for whoever reappears there has left all sexuality behind. In such a realm there is no more courting or being courted. On the contrary, entry into these worlds of light is spiritual, and occurs spontaneously without ‘birth’ (*opapātika*). Along with sexual pleasure every delight and thus every form of enjoyment in objects of the senses has been sublimated. The *Brahma* worlds lie in the region beyond sensual pleasures.³ Hence the sublime and spiritual bliss of their inhabitants consists of that happiness which is experienced even on earth through the first four mystic visions or psychic states, with the sole difference that in the *Brahma* worlds this is the normal and natural state of their inhabitants. This uninterrupted happiness of supreme inner contentment and peace can be so great that many of these beings⁴ are ‘permeated, suffused, and filled with happiness and occasionally call out: “Oh, what happiness! Oh, what happiness!”’⁵ In keeping with their perfectly peaceful state of mind, they enjoy a supreme

¹ *Ang. Nik.*, V, 148.

² *Digh. Nik.*, XIX, 16.

³ *Digh. Nik.*, XIX, 15.

⁴ The Buddha calls them *abhassara*, shining, resplendent.

Ibid., XXIII, 1, 10, 41.

display of power. The Buddha says (especially of Brahma, the Highest in this hierarchy of divine beings) that he is 'of high magical power, of supreme strength'.¹ He explains this in another passage: 'To whatever thing Brahma directs his mind, he attains realization, in whatever sphere it may be.'² Accordingly, Brahma is also called 'the conqueror, the one who is not overcome, the all-seer who leaves everything to his will'.³ The most essential characteristic of beings in the world of pure forms is kindness, boundless both as to degree and radius of action, and consequently to all that lives and breathes. So much is this the case, that the development of such kindness together with the cultivation of perfect chastity and of indifference to all the pleasures caused by objects of the senses is shown in the Canon to be the direct path of these *Brahma* worlds.

Yet even this is still not the very highest within the sphere of that which has become. Above even the *Brahma* worlds are the four formless regions:

- (1) the realm of boundless space
- (2) the realm of boundless consciousness
- (3) the realm of not-anything-ness and
- (4) the realm of neither-perception-nor-non-perception.

On these supreme heights one feels in and around himself only that boundless peace which is superior to all the delights of the supra-sensuous worlds and to all the bliss of the *Brahma* worlds. These regions are reached at the dissolution of the present body by any human being who can successfully meditate on them and is so deeply attracted to them that he seeks contentment only in them.⁴ If he can recollect his wanderings through all his previous lives, past cosmic periods will appear to his spiritual eye:

'But, Lord, how long is a cosmic period?'

'It is as if, monk, there were a huge mountain of granite, a mile long, a mile wide, and a mile high, without crack or crevice, nothing but a hard solid mass. Once every hundred years a man brushes it with a piece of silk. In less time than a cosmic period this great granite rock would be worn away and would vanish. Of such length, monk, is a cosmic period.'

Buddhist schoolmen have been bold enough to try to express in years the duration of such a cosmic period, and have arrived at a number consisting of one hundred and forty digits! In order to have some idea of what this means, let us bear in mind that, to *count* up to a million million (a number of only twelve digits) takes thirty-one thousand seven hundred and nine years, if there is an interval of one second between each number. What an immeasurable time then is needed to *count* a number consisting of one hundred and forty digits. Here it is immaterial whether the number of years is objectively correct, for it is only one of the Buddha's mathe-

¹ *Majjh. Nik.*, sutta 49.

² *Majjh. Nik.*, sutta 117.

³ *Itivuttaka*, 22.

⁴ *Ang. Nik.*, III, 114.

matical similes. But it helps us to understand the prodigious immensity of so gigantic a scale.

According to the Pāli Canon¹ a hundred years to human beings are as a day and a night to the gods. A thousand years calculated on this basis amount to the length of life in those regions, and hence to thirty-six million of our years. In the same way, the length of life in other 'heavens' is stated: In the realm of the *Yama* gods a life lasts for seventy-two million years, with the blissful gods five hundred and seventy-six million years, with the gods rejoicing in creation two thousand three hundred and sixteen million years, and with the gods who have at their disposal treasures produced for them by others, nine thousand two hundred and sixteen million years. In the worlds of pure form the life of the Brahma gods lasts for a cosmic period, that of the resplendent gods (*abhassara*) to two cosmic periods, that of the radiant gods to four cosmic periods, and that of the mighty gods to five hundred cosmic periods. Yet all this is nothing compared to the length of life in the four formless regions. That of beings in the sphere of boundless space amounts to twenty thousand cosmic periods, that of the gods of the domain of boundless consciousness to forty thousand cosmic periods, and that of the gods of the sphere of not-anythingness to sixty thousand cosmic periods.

It is not surprising if such numbers are no longer taken seriously by the Westerner, but are declared by him to be mere myths, if not fantasies. This is because such intervals of time, especially if they are to represent the length of an individual life, no longer find any place in Western minds. But how long ago is it that in those very minds there was also no place for the astronomical linear measure of the light-year, which likewise enhanced to the absolutely inconceivable those distances in inter-stellar space formerly regarded as possible? Why should not the same apply also to temporal possibilities; if only we substitute here, in place of our earthly scales, the scale of infinite reality, wherein *all* possibilities can be realized? What indeed would an ephemeral fly think if it were told that other animals become hundreds of years old? Might not the attitude of an average person be that of the fly with regard to that part of the Buddha's teaching which we are considering here? But what is the length of life of even so many cosmic periods compared with an 'eternal' life? It is still not even one second of the 'eternal' life of Christian theology. However, this proof for the reality of such immeasurably long lives is only an *argumentum ad hominem*, for those to whom the words of Queen Mallikā apply: 'If, King, the Exalted One has said this, then it is so.'² Whoever rejects this line of reasoning may justly do so; in its kernel, and in so far as the doctrine of rebirth is concerned, the Buddha's teaching is in no way affected thereby.

In any case, the religious person who is concerned about his future after death, will not object to these heavenly worlds as taught by the Buddha. He will understand better his own prescience of their existence and of the possibility of reaching them; he will receive a fresh impulse to pursue the

¹ *Ang. Nik.*, III, 70; and VIII, 45.

² *Majjh. Nik.*, sutta 87.

path to such heavenly regions. Indeed, these remarks are intended only for the spiritually inclined, as is ultimately the whole of the Buddha's wisdom.

The nature of our willing, or more precisely the thirst which imbues us, determines to what state we shall cling when we are about to die. This 'thirst' causes us to grasp the thought of the state most congenial to it. Consequently, everything depends on our refining and ennobling our deepest will (our 'thirst') as much as possible through an increase in our insight. Such a correct insight is the fruit of pursuing the Buddha's wisdom as the supreme cognition of reality. As soon as one begins to realize that this doctrine is true, it inspires in him love and trust for the Buddha as its proclaimer. 'Those who have faith and affection for me, ascend to heaven.'¹ Indeed, this is easy to understand, for whoever is able to feel confidence in and affection for the Buddha has in a high degree an *elective affinity* with the higher worlds.² Whoever wants to attain a 'heavenly world' must therefore, make the following five precepts of moral purity (*sīla*) the guiding line of his life, as the fundamental expressions of real goodness of heart and as the basis whereon all heavenly worlds rest. These *sīlas* are:

- (1) not to kill any living being;
- (2) not to take what is not given;
- (3) not to indulge in unlawful sexual intercourse;
- (4) not to tell lies;
- (5) not to take intoxicating drinks and narcotics, because these cloud the mind and thus prevent the observance of the other four precepts.

Whoever so grasps the doctrine that he can also renounce all those sensual pleasures opposed to the higher goal, is able to determine the nature of his coming rebirth, as is explained by the Buddha in the sutta on 'rebirth according to the nature of one's thoughts'.³

'Then, monks, a monk has acquired confidence, acquired moral purity (*sīla*), acquired a grasp of the doctrine, acquired detachment, acquired wisdom. He thinks to himself: "On the disintegration of my body after my death I would like to associate again with powerful princes." To this he directs his mind, to this he attunes his mind, to this he trains his mind. These ideas and this frame of mind (*vihāra*), which he has cultivated and developed, lead to his return to such an existence.

'And further, monks, a monk has acquired confidence, acquired moral purity, acquired a grasp of the doctrine, acquired detachment, acquired wisdom. He thinks to himself: "On the disintegration of my body after my death I would like to associate again with holy Brahmins, with powerful citizens!" To this he directs his mind, to this he attunes his mind, to this he trains his mind. These ideas and this frame of mind, which he has cultivated and developed, lead to his return to such an existence.

¹ *Majjh. Nik.*, sutta 22.

² *Majjh. Nik.*, sutta 122.

³ *Majjh. Nik.*, sutta 120.

'And further, monks, a monk has acquired confidence, acquired moral purity, acquired a grasp of the doctrine, acquired detachment, acquired wisdom. He has heard it said: "The three and thirty gods live long, gloriously and blissfully." And he thinks to himself: "On the disintegration of my body after my death I would like to associate again with the three and thirty gods!" To this he directs his mind, to this he attunes his mind, to this he trains his mind. These ideas and this frame of mind, which he has cultivated and developed, lead to his return to such an existence.

'And further, monks, a monk has acquired confidence, acquired moral purity, acquired a grasp of the doctrine, acquired detachment, acquired wisdom. He has heard it said: "The *Yāma* gods, the blissful gods, the gods of creative joy, the gods having at their disposal the treasures produced for them by others, all these live long, gloriously and blissfully." And he thinks to himself: "On the disintegration of my body after my death I would like to associate again with such gods!" To this he directs his mind, to this he attunes his mind, to this he trains his mind. These ideas and this frame of mind, which he has cultivated and developed, lead to his return to such an existence.

'And further, monks, a monk has acquired confidence, acquired moral purity, acquired a grasp of the doctrine, acquired detachment, acquired wisdom. He has heard it said: "The hundred-thousandfold *Brahma* lives long, gloriously and blissfully. The hundred-thousandfold *Brahma*, monks, irradiates the realm of a hundred thousand worlds and is well disposed to them; the beings who return there he also irradiates and is well disposed to them. It is, monks, as if a golden ornament, most elaborately cast in a crucible by a skilful goldsmith, lies on a bright cover, sparkles, radiates and shines. In just the same way does the hundred-thousandfold *Brahma* irradiate the realm of a hundred thousand worlds and is well disposed to them; and the beings who return there he also irradiates and is well disposed to them." And he thinks to himself: "On the disintegration of my body after my death I would like to associate again with the hundred-thousandfold *Brahma*!" To this he directs his mind, to this he attunes his mind, to this he trains his mind. These ideas and this frame of mind, which he has cultivated and developed, lead to his return to such an existence.

'And further, monks, a monk has acquired confidence, acquired moral purity, acquired a grasp of the doctrine, acquired detachment, acquired wisdom. He has heard it said: "The radiant gods, the brightly shining gods, the immeasurable brilliant gods, the resplendent gods, the beaming gods, the brightly radiant gods, the immeasurably radiant gods, the powerful gods, the majestic gods, the exalted gods, all these live long and gloriously and blissfully!" And he thinks to himself: "On the disintegration of my body after my death I would like to associate again with such gods!" To this he directs his mind, to this he attunes his mind, to this he trains his mind. These ideas and this frame of mind, which he has cultivated and developed, lead to his return to such an existence.

'And further, monks, a monk has acquired confidence, acquired moral purity, acquired a grasp of the doctrine, acquired detachment, acquired

wisdom. He has heard it said: "The gods enjoying infinity of space, the gods enjoying infinity of consciousness, the gods enjoying the realm of not-anythingness, the gods enjoying neither-perception-nor-non-perception, all these live long, exist for a long time and blissfully." And he thinks to himself: "On the disintegration of my body after my death I would like to associate again with such gods!" To this he directs his mind, to this he attunes his mind, to this he trains his mind. These thoughts and this frame of mind, which he has cultivated and developed, lead to his return to such an existence.

'And further, monks, a monk has acquired confidence, acquired moral purity, acquired a grasp of the doctrine, acquired detachment, acquired wisdom. He thinks to himself: "*After the passing away of the influences I would like to grasp, realize, and dwell with a liberated mind free from all influences, and liberated through wisdom while I am still on earth*" And he brings about the disappearance of the influences, grasps by the exercise of his own strength while he is still on earth the deliverance through wisdom, realizes it and dwells in it. Monks, *such a monk nowhere comes again, neither here nor there comes again.*"¹

There is also a relationship between the path to *nibbāna* and that to the heavenly worlds. Thus the Buddha also teaches the following. Whoever has grasped the doctrine, and above all the idea of *anattā* as its central point, to the extent that he has for ever lost all doubt as to its truth; he knows that he can be liberated by the exercise of his moral and spiritual faculties. He has thus become a *solāpanna*, one who has entered the stream that leads to *nibbāna*. As such he may be reborn at most seven times more. Indeed, the more a *solāpanna* progresses on this path to absolute desirelessness, the greater his affinity with the heavenly realms, whose denizens desire less and less the higher they stand. Therefore the Buddha urges his *solāpannas*, to make themselves worthy of one of the worlds of gods.

'Further, Mahānāma, a noble disciple (*ariyasāvaka*) is mindful of the gods and says: "There are the gods of the Four Great Monarchs, there are the gods of the three and thirty, there are the Yāma gods, there are the blissful gods, there are the gods of creative joy, there are the gods having at their disposal the productions of others, there are the Brahma gods, and beyond these there are yet other gods. Imbued with faith, these gods once as human beings departed from here and reappeared there; such faith is proper also to me. Imbued with moral purity (*sīla*), a grasp of the doctrine, detachment, and wisdom, the gods once as human beings departed from here and reappeared there; such moral purity, such grasp of the doctrine, such detachment, such wisdom are proper also to me." At a time, Mahānāma, when the noble disciple is mindful of his faith and of that of these gods, of his moral purity and of that of these gods, of his grasp of the doctrine and of that of these gods, of his detachment and of that of these gods, and of his wisdom and of that of these gods, at such a time his mind

¹ *Majjh. Nik.*, sutta 120.

is not in bondage either to greed (for worldly things), or to aversion, or to delusion. On the contrary, at that time his mind is uplifted in the presence of the gods. With uplifted mind, the noble disciple acquires a liking for the doctrine of reality and becomes cheerfully contented. When he is cheerfully contented, blissful joy arises in him. Full of blissful joy, his body is also calm. He whose body is calm, feels well. Because he feels well, his mind is concentrated (on the doctrine of reality). Of this noble disciple, Mahānāma, it is said that he dwells among the perverted and is in possession of what is right, that as one who is harmless he dwells among those who cause harm; having an ear for the doctrine, he cultivates a recollection of the gods. Whoever, Mahānāma, has achieved all this and has understood the message, stays very often in such a frame of mind.

'When walking, Mahānāma, you should be mindful of the gods, when standing, when sitting, when lying, when working, you should be mindful of the gods. While you are living in a house full of children, you should be mindful of the gods!'¹

The goal of a lay follower (*upāsaka*) of the Buddha may in the first instance be a world of gods. But these heavenly worlds do not lead out of the labyrinth of rebirths: 'The three and thirty gods and the Yāma gods and the blissful gods and the gods of creative joy are tied with the bonds of sensual pleasure (*kāma*) and again come under the power of *Māra* (death).'² Even when a man has entered the *Brahma* world or a formless world, with his departure he again falls into the lower realms of existence, and so back into the ocean of suffering. The Buddha says with reference to the *Brahma* world and the formless realms: 'The ordinary man, who has lived through his time there and has spent as many years as are contained in a lifetime of those gods, inevitably comes once again into hell, into the womb of an animal, or into the realm of ghosts.'³

A worldling (*puṭhujjana*, literally 'one of the crowd') is anyone who is not a 'select disciple'; only the latter has escaped the abysses of existence. But the select disciple who is not able to attain *nibbāna* here on earth, can at least aspire to a heavenly realm.

Only the select disciple is on the path to the actual annihilation of suffering, and so the Buddha advises all lay followers to aim at becoming one and hence a *sotāpanna*, 'I am a *sotāpanna*, and so for me a relapse into the abysses of existence is impossible; I am secure and am certain of the great awakening.' This aim of the lay follower is constantly observed in the Canon.

How far at the time of the Buddha his lay followers acknowledged and realized this aim is to be seen from the following. There the monk Ānanda asked about the fate of the deceased lay followers of Nāḍika, a very small town by our standards. The Buddha replied: 'More than fifty deceased lay followers, Ānanda, had broken the fetters that leads to the inferior and

¹ *Ang. Nik.*, VI, No. 10; XI, No. 13.

² *Sam. Nik.*, I, p. 133; V, 7.

³ *Ang. Nik.*, IV, 123; III, 114.

have reappeared in the superior regions, in order to gain *nibbāna* there and never more to return. More than ninety lay followers had broken the fetters, and in addition had weakened greed, aversion, and delusion, so that they became 'once-more-returners' who return only once more to this world, in order to bring suffering to an end. More than five hundred deceased lay followers of Nāḍika had broken the fetters, had become *sotāpannas*, and were incapable of sinking back even once more into the abysses of existence, secured and assured of the supreme awakening.¹

On another occasion the monk Ānanda asked the Buddha about a fire in the palace of King Udena, in which five hundred women had met their death. 'What, Lord, is the path of these lay women followers, what is their future state?' The Buddha replied: 'Ānanda, among these lay women followers there were *sotāpannas*, among them there were 'once-more-returners', and among them there were those who would never return. All these lay women followers have not died in vain.'²

Thus it is easy even for the Buddhist worldling to become a 'select disciple' to whom absolute happiness is certain in a short time. One thing, however, is necessary, that a man must have the will. One often hears the plaint: 'I am indeed willing, but I cannot.' The Buddhist reply to this is: 'You can, for you ought; if you cannot, then you will not, and you will not, because you do not see the terrible nature of omitting to do what you ought to do.'

It was said just now that a select disciple attains to absolute well-being in a 'short' time. Yet, sixty thousand cosmic periods may be necessary for this. There are at most, still in store for a *sotāpanna*, seven lives as a human being or in a heavenly realm. But then such a life in a world of gods may last for cosmic periods; indeed a lifetime in the domain of neither-perception-nor-non-perception amounts to sixty thousand cosmic periods. From these facts we get the following: the miracle of a change of the will (character) and of the complete and final annihilation of egoism. Christian theology, as well as a number of philosophers, declare salvation to be impossible through the exercise of our own powers. On the other hand a *sotāpanna* works out his salvation by his unaided efforts as taught by the Buddha. But even a *sotāpanna* may in certain circumstances need hundreds, or even thousands, of cosmic periods for his achievement. So colossal is this miracle of the complete denial of the will and of desire. The main obstacle may first appear at the end of the path; thus, either still here on earth or in one of his next existences, a *sotāpanna* may become wholly desireless with regard to body and mind, but he still wants to be conscious of the boundless peace into which he sees himself immersed. This attitude of the will then leads him at his death into one of the highest spiritual states, in which he is conscious for a long time of the great peace that results through an inner detachment from personality. This may continue until he is weary even of this observation; for in time even this will become a burden.

¹ *Digh. Nik.*, XVI, 2, 7.

² *Udāna*, VII, 10.

Therefore the *sotāpanna*, who has become a 'never-returner' (*anāgāmi*), finally becomes weary of *all* mental activity, even when restricted to the observation of the great peace wherein he dwells. So he finally detaches himself from this mental body; he dies his last death, holds communion with his Self, and is wholly submerged in eternal peace.

In this way a *sotāpanna* arrives at the final goal in at most seven existences. Possibly seven such lives do not seem to the reader to be a short time, as was stated above. But time is relative. Measured by the length of our present life, the sixty thousand cosmic periods which a *sotāpanna* may need are an inconceivably enormous interval; but measured against the beginninglessness of *Saṃsāra*, such an interval is not even one minute of eternity. The Buddha put it thus: 'The Exalted One picked up a speck of dust on the tip of his finger-nail and asked the monks: "Which, monks, is the larger, this tiny speck of earth which I have on the tip of my finger-nail or the great earth?"' "Much larger, Lord, is the great earth than this tiny speck. Such a tiny speck of earth, which the Exalted One has on the tip of his finger-nail, cannot possibly be compared with the great earth."

"For the select disciple, monks, who has gained cognition and acquired insight there is a similar ratio between the suffering he has overcome and the small amount of suffering he still has to go through in seven existences." ¹

Now when is one a *sotāpanna*? The Buddha was once asked by Ānanda what had been the fate of certain of his followers after their death. The Buddha replied:

"There is nothing strange when a man dies. If in the case of every death you were to ask me about the fate of the deceased, then for the Perfect One this would be too much trouble. Therefore, Ānanda, I will give you a norm of the doctrine of reality as a mirror into which every select disciple can look and find out for himself: "I have escaped from hell, have escaped from the animal womb, have escaped from the realm of ghosts, have escaped from ruin, from the evil path, from hell and destruction, I am a *sotāpanna*, I am secure, I am certain of the Great Awakening." And what, Ānanda, is this mirror of the doctrine of reality which enables the select disciple to make this discovery? The select disciple, Ānanda, is endowed with faith in the Buddha which rests on insight and so he says: "This is the Exalted One, the Holy One, the Perfectly Awakened One, versed in right knowledge and right conduct, the Accomplisher of the Path who knows the worlds, the Incomparable who tames man like a bull, the Teacher of gods and men, the Awakened, the Sublime."²—He is endowed with faith, resting on insight in the Order (*Sangha*). The Exalted One's community of disciples (*sāvaka-sangha*) lives in right conduct, the Exalted One's community of disciples lives a straight course of life. The Exalted One's community of disciples lives in accordance with the right

¹ *Sam. Nik.*, V, p. 459; LVI, 51.

² The same in respect of *dharma* = the Teaching, the Law.

method, in genuine actions lives the Exalted One's community of disciples, namely those who advance towards holiness. This is the Exalted One's community of disciples, worthy of sacrifices, worthy of alms, worthy of gifts, worthy of our reverential raising of hands, the matchless corn-field of the world for propitious beneficence. Each has acquired for himself moral qualities of character which are pleasing to the elect, which determine his whole conduct, which offer no cause of rebuke, but are blameless and stainless, which inwardly make free, are esteemed by sages, do not lead astray, but lead to concentration. This, Ānanda, is the mirror of the doctrine of reality into which every select disciple can look and find out for himself: "I have escaped from hell, have escaped from the animal womb, have escaped from the realm of ghosts, have escaped from crashing, from the evil path, from ruin and destruction, I am a *solāpanna*, I am secure, I am certain of supreme awakening."¹

As we see, the faith which a *solāpanna* has in the Buddha, in the 'wondrous thing' proclaimed by him, and in his community of disciples, must rest on insight (*avecca*), that is to say it must be born of an appreciation of the correctness of the *anattā*-idea, the core of the Buddha's doctrine. Such insight must be so great that all doubt concerning the 'wondrous thing' has for ever vanished; one is absolutely sure of himself and has, therefore, become wholly independent of the views of others about the Buddha's doctrine.

'To what extent, Lord, does a disciple of yours adopt your message, is responsive to instruction, has got beyond any doubt, has evaded all uncertainty, is left in complete self-assurance, and is no longer dependent on anyone else in everything that concerns your message?'

This question is put to the Buddha by Aggivessana and coincides with that other question: when is a man a *solāpanna*? The Buddha answers:

'Then, Aggivessana, a disciple of mine sees whatever there is in body and mind, his own or another's coarse or fine, common or noble, near or remote, past, present, or future, corporeal or intellectual in accordance with reality and says: "This belongs to me not, this am I not, this is not my self." To this extent, Aggivessana, a disciple of mine adopts my message, is responsive to instruction, has got beyond any doubt, has evaded all uncertainty, is completely self-assured, and no longer depends on anyone else in everything that concerns my message.'²

To grasp the idea of *anattā* thoroughly we have to see through all corporeality and intellectuality, for being transitory they bring suffering; and to achieve that detachment from them, which brings the greatest happiness and leads to the absolutely adequate state:

'When, monks, a select disciple escapes from these five groups of grasping and understands in accordance with reality their arising and passing away, the pleasure they bring, and the misery they entail, he is then called a

¹ *Sam. Nik.*, V, p. 357; LV, 8.

² *Majjh. Nik.*, sutta 35.

select disciple, a *sotāpanna*, who has escaped the evil path and is certain of the great awakening.¹

Further we must realize that we are connected to our body and mind, or to the five groups of grasping² only through our thirsting will, and that we must, therefore, annihilate this will by knowing its terrible qualities. This annihilation and thus our detachment from body and mind is a gradual process. In the *Dīgha-Nikāya* the Buddha tells us how to attain this detachment of body and mind, which is already realized to a certain extent by a *sotāpanna*. It includes association with holy sages, hearing good doctrine, profound meditation, and living in accordance with the teaching.³

These four points taken together result in the *ariya sīla* (noble discipline), the select *sīla* of a *sotāpanna*, which the Awakened One is for ever describing as the starting-point of the mystic path:

'To what blessing, Lord, do wholesome morals (*kusalāni sīlāni*) lead, to what gain?'

'To the blessing of a clear conscience (*avippatisāra*), Ānanda, do wholesome morals lead, to the gaining of a clear conscience.'

'To what blessing, Lord, does a clear conscience lead, to what gain?'

'To the blessing of joy (*pāmuja*), Ānanda, does a clear conscience lead, to the gaining of joy.'

'To what blessing, Lord, does joy lead, to what gain?'

'To the blessing of cheerfulness (*pīti*), Ānanda, does joy lead, to the gaining of cheerfulness.'

'To what blessing, Lord, does cheerfulness lead, to what gain?'

'To the blessing of tranquillity (*passaddhi*),—Ānanda, does cheerfulness lead, to the gaining of tranquillity.'

'To what blessing, Lord, does tranquillity lead, to what gain?'

'To the blessing of well-being (*sukha*), Ānanda, does tranquillity lead, to the gaining of well-being.'

'To what blessing, Lord, does well-being lead, to what gain?'

'To the blessing of concentration (*samādhi*), Ānanda, does well-being lead, to the gaining of concentration.'

'To what blessing, Lord, does concentration lead, to what gain?'

'To the blessing of meditative contemplation in accordance with the seeing of reality (*yathabhūtañāna-dassana*), Ānanda, does concentration lead, to the gaining of meditative contemplation in accordance with reality.'

'To what blessing, Lord, does meditative contemplation on seeing in accordance with reality lead, to what gain?'

'To the blessing of the weariness of existence and of freedom from allurements (*nibbindā-viṛāgo*), Ānanda, does such contemplation in accordance with reality lead, to the gaining of weariness of existence and of

¹ *Sam. Nik.*, III, p. 160; XXII, 109.

² Body, sensation, perception, activities of the mind and consciousness.

³ *Dīgh. Nik.*, III, p. 227; XXIII, 13.

freedom from fascination. In this way, Ānanda, do wholesome morals lead *gradually* to that which is supreme."¹

Such is the Gospel according to the Buddha for all who are concerned about their great future after death; and who wish to secure this future on the basis of insight instead of guess-work. Everyone can attempt the goal within his reach in order then to progress further. One should make at least *one* person happy! That one is oneself. The path to this happiness consists in contributing as much as possible to the happiness of others, whether man, animal, or plant, by developing an ever greater goodness of heart.

'But, Cunda, it is impossible for one who is himself not tamed, not subdued, not wholly happy, to tame, to subdue, to bring to complete happiness another. But, Cunda, it is possible for one who is himself tamed, subdued, wholly happy, to tame, to subdue, to bring to complete happiness another.'² A man cannot give what he does not have; this means that happiness cannot be brought to anyone by a person who has not previously made *himself* happy.

¹ *Ang. Nik.*, X, 1.

² *Majjh. Nik.* sutta 8.

Meta-Thanatology: The Secret of Deathlessness

How the Buddha's Logic puts Immortality on a Scientific Basis

Since only what is logically correct can be reduced to a cogent and conclusive syllogism, we have an infallible standard for verifying, on internal evidence, the 'truth' of what the Buddha taught. It contains as much 'truth' as can be put into a cogent syllogism. It is frequently asserted that the Buddha's Teaching should *not* be judged from a logical point of view. Yet the very opposite is the case; indeed the Buddha appeals so often to the faculty of reason that he directly enjoins his monks to accept, even from him, only that which 'they have thought out, discerned, and comprehended by themselves'; and to this he added:

'Clear and evident is this teaching, intelligible to everyone who is intelligent.'¹ This is expressed even more vigorously when the monk Sāriputta reports to the Buddha that the former monk Sunakkhatta 'spread slander' everywhere in Vesāli, he says: 'The ascetic Gotama expresses a doctrine that is forged with *logical reflection* and obtained through critical investigation. It is a product of his own faculty of reason, and the quintessence of his teaching is simply that the way out of suffering is through logical reflection.'

To which the Buddha replied: 'This fool thinks to slander me, but he merely praises the Perfect One. I take it as a compliment when anyone says of my teaching that it can be summed up in this one sentence: "the way out of suffering is through logical reflection."'

Therefore the Buddha's Teaching is called *vibhajjhavāda* which means 'the religion of logical reflection'. The truth of this was understood by Oldenberg, when he said: 'Knowledge (based on logic) is, according to the Buddha, the only power that can strike at the root of all evil. Therefore, according to him, the pursuit salvation is primarily a science.'² This way of thinking has found its most characteristic and naïve expression in the narrative of the Sinhalese chronicles concerning the first discourse of Mahinda, the *thera* (elder) and converter of Ceylon, with King Devānam piya Tissa (about 250 B.C.). The *thera* examines the King in formal logic, in order to ascertain whether he 'possesses a clear understanding'. In the vicinity there is a mango tree and the *thera* asks: 'What is the name of this tree?'

'It is called a mango tree.'

'Besides this mango tree is there or is there not yet another mango tree?'

¹ *Majjh. Nik.*, sutta 38.

² *Majjh. Nik.*, sutta 12.

'There are many other mango trees.'

'Besides this mango tree and those mango trees are there any other trees?'

'There are, but they are not mango trees.'

'Besides the other mango trees and the trees that are not mangos, is there still another tree?'

'Yes, this mango tree here.'

'Well done, Sire, you have passed in logic.'

The *thera* sets a similar test which the King passes just as brilliantly:

'Besides your relations and those not related to you, is there still some person?'

'Myself, Lord.'

'Well replied, Your Majesty, a person is neither related nor not related to himself.'

The *thera* then saw, so the narrative runs, that the King was 'intelligent', and that he would be able to understand the Teaching.

The Buddha thought and taught so *logically* that one can condense his solution of the great problem of immortality into a syllogism of three short propositions. To determine whether his solution is incontestable or not, we need only test the two premises.

(a) *The Problem*

The Buddha wanted to be free from all suffering, including that which is conditioned by the laws of nature, hence from sickness, old age, and death. Moreover, he wanted to liberate himself through his own actions. He did not expect his 'salvation' to come from a supramundane power or a personal God. It is clear that, in this undertaking, he was bound to face the question whether liberation from suffering was possible. The primary and ardent desire of everyone not to taste death can only be satisfied in a twofold way.

- (1) Either death is not a necessity of nature; (we have not found how to avoid it so that if the means are discovered, there is a prospect of gaining eternal life on earth).

Or

- (2) death is not what we take it to be; (and on account of which we fear it, namely our own annihilation).

To the Buddha, as to every rational person, it was clear that death is an unavoidable necessity of nature. The flux of all matter is to be seen in change; the most radical change when our material organism disintegrates is called 'death'. Consequently, if we are to avoid the assumption that man's deep-seated longing for immortality has no prospect of fulfilment, then we are left with only one way out of the difficulty, that death fundamentally does not touch us at all. The Buddha's investigations were in this direction; the problem of overcoming death not by theological short-

cuts but on the basis of a logical-positivist (and indeed psycho-cybernetically thought out) *Meta-Thanatology*.¹ But what must death be, if it is not to touch us? There can be no doubt that what death destroys cannot be our inner essence; it only destroys something which we can do without. Only in this way can our absolute annihilation in death be excluded on principle. For death signifies the destruction of that which has already declined, as is clearly demonstrated by corpses which disintegrate into their inorganic elements. If, therefore, death embraced our true inner essence, it would inevitably destroy us wholly. In that case, we could only reckon with a resurrection of the dead (who as such 'are asleep in their graves') at the end of time through the 'Grace' of a (personal) God. Such a resurrection was taught by the ancient Iranian religion of Zarathustra, and was taken over in part by the Jews. A resurrection of the dead in this sense, however, is not *immortality* but a *new* creation of man which is expected in the future.²

We can speak of immortality only so long as *something* in man does not change even in death. All religions speak of 'something' immortal in man which they call a soul. Whoever denies it contradicts all the religions of mankind. The Buddha too would stand in such opposition, if he denied the soul. Indeed, the *Theravāda* school of Buddhism does not hesitate to represent the Buddha as in opposition to all other religions, and thus even to the greatest sages, by asserting that he disputed that there is *something* in man not touched by death. Yet in the same breath these schoolmen admit that the Buddha expressly rejects man's total annihilation in death. He taught constant rebirth, they say, and proclaimed immortality as the ultimate goal.³

Thus the Buddha is credited, on the one hand, with objecting to man's annihilation in death (with teaching rebirth, and with solemnly setting up immortality as the goal) yet, on the other hand, with representing the whole of man's nature as affected by death. It is perfectly clear that this is an intrinsic absurdity. Those who see in the Buddha a 'great deliverer', resign themselves to it in the same way as Christians do to many incomprehensible dogmas, such as *credo quia absurdum est*. Thus the Buddhists, who believe in this paradox, console themselves with the hope that it will resolve itself with the attainment of 'supreme enlightenment' or in 'mystical rapture'. They illustrate the 'aphorism' that as mysticism begins where comprehension ends, it begins all the sooner, the less one comprehends. Other keener and more logical minds recognize the absurdity. Unfortunately for them this puts an end to the Buddha's greatness; for a man who teaches such an absurdity is intellectually a simpleton, however moral he may be. Everyone would arrive at this assessment if he knew

¹ As to what 'Meta-Thanatology' is, see my *Wisdom of Dying Wisely*, Ratingen 1967.

² But see my *Eastern Wisdom and Western Thought*, Allen and Unwin, London 1968.

³ 'Lend me your ear, mendicant, immortality has been found; I introduce it and present the doctrine. Following its guidance, you will attain this supreme goal in a very short time.'

only of this ridiculous and paradoxical form of the Buddha's views on immortality. Even Fausbøll came perilously near to this when he wrote:

'It is absurd to say that *karma* continues to operate and is eternal without saying that the same is the case with *aham* (Self). And is there not in the Buddha's system a contradiction in the fact that we ought to believe in the transmigration of souls from one existence to another, whereas at the same time we deny the reality of the soul, of the final purpose, of the *aham*?'

The critics hostile to Buddhism welcome such a view, for it provides them with the target they seek.

However, there is yet another possibility. What if the Buddha had not taught this absurdity; what if for him the kernel of man were in no way subject to death. Immortality would then mean the casting off of man's inessential elements which alone disappear in death. Is not this already surmised in the case of one who says, as the Buddha did of himself: 'Whereof the sages say "it is", of that I also say "it is"; and whereof the sages say "it is not", of that I also say "it is not".'

This means that the modern *Theravāda* school is wrong in its interpretation, even though it was made over two thousand years ago, within a few centuries of the Buddha's death. This ought not to appear strange as we know from the history of religions, above all of Christianity, how in an incredibly short time the ideas of the founders' are distorted. They are often perverted into their very opposite as soon as their interpretation is no longer under the founders' control. How could the teaching of the Buddha form an exception—especially since the Buddha himself prophesied that it would have disappeared in five hundred years. Indeed, it seems strange that our modern Indologists, who consider everything from a 'historical' point of view, believe in this historical improbability. Are they too influenced by the 'spirit' of the modern age:

'Today the need for immortality is generally treated with meanness and condescension. With ignominious ease we make the problem arising from it not merely an ontological, but also a psychological one'. Weininger then adds the pointed remark: 'how frequently "pure" scientists become concerned over religious and metaphysical problems shortly before their death; Newton, Gauss, Riemann, Wilhelm Weber'.¹

The Buddha, far from teaching the absurdity imputed to him, taught with unequalled logic the *indestructibility of our inner essence even by death*. He succeeded in making this evident by an obviously correct 'theorem' which is based on scientific and psycho-cybernetic reasoning. At the same time, he succeeded in giving us the *only completely valid proof that can possibly be given of our immortality*. As this is of supreme importance, it is presented here in detail with the conclusions that result from it. Anyone who in the future wishes to discuss the value of the Buddha's

¹ Otto Weininger, *Geschlecht und Charakter*, popular edition, 1926, p. 104.

teaching, will have to come to terms with the invincible logic of this 'theorem'.

(b) *The Framework of the Problem*

If we wish to be sure of thinking psycho-cybernetically, and thus of arriving at infallible judgements and incontrovertible truths, we should think in mathematical concepts and in syllogisms whose major and minor premises are taken from the 'information-flow' of intuitive cognition. This applies also to the Buddha's Theorem-of-Immortality in which his triumphant call, 'Lend me your ear, mendicant, immortality has been found', finds its logical basis: for he *proves* that man's inner essence as such cannot be affected by death. What, then, do we understand by the *inner essence* of a thing? It is that through the abolition of which the thing itself is abolished; it is that which ultimately endows the thing with its reality: it is the kernel, the essence, of the thing. The opposite of this is what is 'inessential' to a thing, and is constituted by its ancillary qualities, which may even be absent without affecting the thing in its ontological reality. In this sense everything in the world has an inner essence. Man too has an inner essence, which from time immemorial has been called the Self. With the word 'I' everyone means that in which he is ultimately bound up; it is immaterial what may be this essence through whose destruction he himself would be destroyed; whether his body, his mind, his will, or anything else. Consequently, the word I, as the declaration of one's own actuality, represents the most banal and self-evident thing that can be imagined. But we are still left in the dark as to what this actuality guarantees for us. The same train of thought is expressed by Shankara when he says: 'We cannot demonstrate the Self to anyone (through proofs). For it is that which employs all the means of proof, such as perception etc., in order to demonstrate a thing that is not known . . . The Self is the basis (*āsraya*) for the activity of proving, and thus is established even before the activity of proving . . . We can dispute a thing that comes to us (from without), but not the thing that is our own inner nature. For whoever disputes it simply questions his own true nature.'¹

Descartes expresses the same thing when he says: '*Nam quod ego sim qui dubitem, qui intelligam, qui velim, tam manifestum est, ut nihil occurrat per quod evidentius explicetur.*' (That it is I who think, doubt, understand, and will is so evident that it cannot be made clearer by anything else.)²

By using the word I in the sense described, the Buddha cannot run into opposition with anyone, either with the naïve and natural man or the most thoughtful philosopher, with the materialist or spiritualist, with the individualist or the pantheist. They all ask themselves: 'Am "I" mortal or immortal?'—a question whose solution follows from that into which one now puts his 'I', and thus how he answers the other question: in what does this 'I' really consist? From time out of mind man's faculty of

¹ Cp. Radhakrishnan, *The Brahma Sutra*, pp. 7-144.

² *Meditationes II.*

reason has produced the most varied answers to this question of immortality but without reaching any agreement.

Why is this so? As we have just said, the question about the immortality of our 'I' coincides with that concerning the nature of our 'I'. Everyone has an answer ready; there is no lack of definitions for our 'I'; but they all amount to tautological assertions which do not satisfy those who make them.

Schopenhauer was once arrested for walking in a park at a prohibited hour. The attendant asked him: 'Who are you?' Schopenhauer replied: 'Ah, my dear fellow, if only I knew the answer to the question "who am I?"'

That none of the familiar definitions of our 'I' is adequate is due to the fact that here an essential requirement of every definition is overlooked. If it is a question of discovering an object and identifying it as such, then at least *one* unmistakable feature of it must be known. Otherwise we can never exclude the possibility of taking the something else to be that which we are looking for. For example, if I am looking for gold, I must know at least one specific characteristic of it, or else I run the risk of mistaking copper, brass, pyrites for gold. Therefore I must know at least *one* unmistakable feature of the Self if I am to distinguish successfully between the objects of cognition and my 'I' as the Self or subject of cognition; if I am not to run the risk of regarding as my Self something that is not it. This 'one specific' characteristic must be drawn from the data of sense-perception; must have its roots in cognizable reality, must furnish in this evidence of an existence something which can be verified. As yet no Western philosopher has discovered such an *infallible* criterion for our *real* 'I'; and the best proof of this is that no uniformly valid definition of the Self is to be found in Western thought. The East furnishes such an infallible criterion, the Buddha.

If I see a train rush past, I know that it has nothing to do with myself. Why not? Because I existed even before the train approached me, and I exist after it has past me and disappeared into the distance. What comes after I have begun to exist and then disappears while I continue to exist, cannot have anything to do with my 'I'! If my cash-box is stolen from me, then the loss causes me suffering, but this theft has not removed anything of my 'I', of my Essence. My Self cannot possibly be that which I see disappear and then know as having disappeared.

Accordingly, the major premise of the psycho-cybernetic Syllogism of the Buddha is: *That which I see arise and pass away in consequence of this, its transitoriness, cannot be the 'I'; my real Self.*

We must meditate on this, reflect logically on it in order to gain insight into its metaphysical implications. We must recognize it as a datum of such *immediate* certainty that it is rooted directly in intuitive cognition. It cannot be 'demonstrated' any more than the axioms of mathematics; in other words, it cannot be reduced to elements of intuitive perception which are even more immediate. Like the axioms of mathematics it does not even need to be demonstrated, for it speaks for itself, it is right without

more ado. Accordingly, the Buddha does not demonstrate it further, but always gives it out as something self-evident which is unhesitatingly accepted as such by *all* his hearers; indeed this is done regularly in the following form of question and answer: 'But, mendicants, can we really say of what is transient, sorrowful, and subject to constant change; "This belongs to me, this am I, this is my Self"?'

'Certainly not, Lord.'

Thus this major premise is *axiomatically certain*.

It does not contain any *positive* characteristic of our real 'I' or the Self, and so it tells us nothing of that in which the essential 'I' consists. It has only a negative characteristic, so that with it we do not get to know anything about the real nature of our 'I', but are only able to say in what our Essence does *not* consist. Yet even in this negative version the major premise leads to a significant and logical conclusion. The main point is that the datum assumes nothing that is not expressly stated, and contains nothing which would not be accepted as self-evident by everyone, even by the anti-metaphysical neo-positivists.

(c) *Solution*

Man looks for his inner essence, and hence for his 'I', in his personality, in the complex of all that is cognizable in a person. It is wrong to assume that our knowledge exhausts the whole of reality and hence of man himself. If *something* in man is to be immortal, this 'something' can be either one or all the components of his personality. From this point of view, the problem of immortality becomes *personal*; either something in my personality outlasts death, or this personality perishes *entirely* in death, so that, with it, the 'I' (Self) perishes as well.

Our body forms the basis of our personality; and in no case does that body outlast death, for it disintegrates in death, and perishes entirely and for ever. This plain truth is brought home to us by every corpse, by every cemetery, but above all by every crematorium with its ashes. Indeed as one of the *Jataka* stories puts it, there is no spot which does not contain the dust of the dead; or as Voltaire says: '*Le globe ne contient que des cadavres*' (the globe contains only corpses).

Belief in the 'immortality' of our body is absurd and no one asserts it. Immortality only means that an aspect of our personality does not die, and so is 'immortal'; this aspect or principle is then incarnated in a new body, or else again receives its dead body at the end of time by way of the resurrection of the flesh.

What principle or part of our personality is it which is supposed *not* to be subject to death? One may say that it is the *mind*. But what is understood by this word? Mind is synonymous with thought; and this again consists of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, and imagining. According to degree, it is resolved into feeling, perceiving and imagining; to begin with, we feel something, we then perceive what is felt, and turn it over in our minds. These different manifestations of consciousness are therefore summarized under the concept 'mind'. As an immaterial principle,

it is supposed not to be subject to death. This could be wishful thinking. The decisive question is whether it can be *demonstrated*, in the form of a syllogism, as conclusive proof. We have a right to demand such conclusive evidence from the advocates of the immortality of mind. The assertion of a mental principle independent of the body has its difficulties. Is not everything mental in us dependent on, and indeed directly conditioned by, our mortal body? If we lose our eyes, we no longer have any sensations and perceptions of sight, in short, we no longer have any visual consciousness. If we become deaf, we no longer have any sensations of hearing, and hence no consciousness of audition. If nose and tongue can no more function, we no longer have any sensations of smell and taste, and hence no conscious smelling or tasting can take place. In so far as the body, as an organ of touch, loses its capacity for sensation, the consciousness of touching also ceases. If the brain is seriously damaged then we can no longer think consciously.

It is, therefore, obvious that all feeling, all perceiving, and all thinking, and hence everything mental, is dependent on, and conditioned by, the material sense organs of our body including the brain. All mental functions are organic, in other words, functions of our bodily organism. A mental activity without sense organs or brain is just as impossible as digestion without a stomach. In short, thought-consciousness, or 'mind', is the product of physiological processes of our body in general, and of the functions of sense organs in particular. Thus the human mind proves to be a light which is tied to our body, is carried and always kindled afresh by it, just as the light of a candle is conditioned and borne by the candle. Therefore conscious thinking is bound to be annihilated with the dissolution of the body in death; like candlelight after the combustion and destruction of the candle.

It is tempting to think we elude this consequence by assuming as the bearer of consciousness a so-called astral body, which is not touched by the destruction of the grossly material body. It may well be that all parts of our body, especially our cognitive organs, harbour within themselves organs of still finer material; not visible to the ordinary eye, which in their totality produce an *astral* body. In certain circumstances, this can be externalized as the 'double' of the grossly material body. The Buddha refers to it when he says: 'The mendicant causes to merge from his physical body another body having shape and consisting of mind, with all the principal and secondary organs, just as a man draws a blade of grass from its sheath and thinks: "Leaf-sheath and blade of grass are two different things; yet I have drawn the blade of grass from the sheath."'

But because even this astral body consists of matter, albeit of the finest kind, it, like all matter, is transient. The essence of matter consists in change, and so the astral body too must perish. Indeed, this is admitted by Paracelsus. It can be seen that this astral body is dependent on, and shares the fate of, the gross material body. In any case it behaves as if it were a mere radiation of that body. The 'astral' organs of sense and of thought are supposed to be primarily the bearers of the functions of mind

or consciousness. But we have already seen that every serious injury to our material organs of sense entails the complete loss of their corresponding function; that in particular the injury to the material brain involves the loss of all conscious thinking and with it of everything mental generally. Thus the astral body must also be affected by such injury, otherwise, in spite of the grossly material sense organs being put out of function, it could go on fulfilling their functions. In short, it too dies with the body. Just as electricity disappears when the metal wire through which it flows is destroyed; or perhaps even better, when the galvanic element which generated it is destroyed. It is, as the Buddha states. 'With the dissolution of the body all sensations are extinguished. It is precisely, disciples, as when a shadow might arise which is conditioned by a tree. Then a man, armed with an axe and a basket, might come and fell that tree at the roots. After felling the tree, he might dig up the roots and at the same time pull out the fine root-fibres. Then he could saw the trunk into logs, split them and make them into shavings. He could arrange for the shavings to be dried by wind and sun, and then burnt and reduced to ash. The ash could then be scattered to the winds or poured away in the racing waters of the river. Thus would that shadow that was conditioned by the tree be utterly destroyed, demolished like a palm torn from the soil; it could never exist again. Just as radically are all sensations extinguished with the dissolution of the body.'

All this proves to be so obviously correct that belief in man's absolute annihilation at death draws its greatest sustenance from it. For this reason, many people recoil from admitting this knowledge and prefer to distrust their faculty of reason which seems to force them to that frightening conclusion. Yet even this undoubtedly correct 'conclusion' of the destruction of our entire personality in death is inconsistent with our fundamental desire for deathlessness. The direct path to the other knowledge is how our primary urge for deathlessness comes into its own. What if an immortality other than a personal one were possible? What if we were to establish immortality *per se* by proving the impossibility of a personal immortality?

This would only be possible if our real 'I', our essence, were not exhausted in our personality. If I consist solely of this personality, then I must obviously be annihilated with it in death. As an infallible indication as to whether the 'I' is so contained in something as to be identical with it, we have found in the major premise of the syllogism of the Buddha: *That which I see arise and pass away (and so cause me suffering) in consequence of this, its transitoriness, cannot be my real 'I' or the Self.*

We should analyse the components of our personality (body and mind) in order to test this criterion.

Our body consists of materials from the external world which are reduced to definite, chemical substances. This reduction or assimilation proceeds in such a way that used up materials are constantly eliminated and fresh ones introduced¹ with the result that after a certain time, say

¹ Assimilation or metabolism.

seven years, no cell in our body is the same. All parts of it have by then been replaced. Therefore, after a lapse of seven years, we have a wholly *new* body. If, for example, I am now seventy, I have already changed my body ten times. Thus as a youth I had a body different from the one I had as a child, again as a man a body different from that of the youth, and finally as a man of mature age I have a body different from that of a young man. But the 'I' or my Self was and remained the same—as a child, as a youth, and as a man. Only this body became different. I may deplore this constant change of the body, as soon as it becomes one for the worse; as an old man I deplore the fact that I no longer have the strong body which I had as a youth. I thus complain about something which for a long time has ceased to exist. Consequently, to the major premise already laid down we can add the minor premise: *I see my body in its whole range and size incessantly arise and pass away (and so cause me suffering) in consequence of this, its transitoriness, the body is not my real 'I' or the Self.*

Something about which a man can complain after it has passed away (namely the body he had as a youth) cannot be his Self. How could it be his real I, for the Self still observes an ego deploring the loss of a youthful body. If it had been I who had declined and disappeared, then I could not complain now! But if the destruction of the body I had as a child and then as a man did not also take me away, then naturally the destruction of the body I shall have as an old man will not take me away. If, during my lifetime, I have learnt how to control my thoughts completely then I may feel confident of gaining insight into immortality even at the hour of death. At the mortal hour, I am enabled to see how in the last breath 'excretion at the second potential occurs'¹ (and how in my ontological essence I am as little diminished by it as I have been by daily excretions).

Now, as we have seen, our mental functions, and with them all forms of thought-activity, are tied to the material sense organs of our body including the brain. The only further consequence here is that these mental functions, together with thought-activity, cannot belong inseparably to my inner essence, to my real 'I' or Self.

'How could the mind be the Self, for it originates from that which is not the Self?' (*Anattasambhūto mano kuto attā bhavissati*). If a television set is not my essence, then neither is the programme projected on its screen. According to the Buddha, the body is such a television set, the usufruct of which I 'enjoy'. The keys are the organs of sense together with the brain, and what is projected are sensations, perceptions, and ideas; and with these mental activities the whole of personality. The body is, therefore, only the *apparatus* with which we project all this. The body along with all mental functions may disappear but I myself as the real Self or Ātman am in no way affected. The end of my body and of the consciousness attached to it will not be *my* end.

Such mental activities as are only the product of the sense organs or of the brain, can also be *observed*: their constant arising and passing away. When one of my sense organs becomes weak or ceases to function, I notice

¹ Schopenhauer.

how the consciousness released and carried by this sense organ (for example the consciousness of seeing) becomes feeble in a similar ratio. At the same time there may arise in me affliction, or the dread of it, that can affect me for decades after the loss has occurred. When my central cognitive organ, the brain, begins to stop functioning, for example through loss of blood, I can still observe: 'Now I can no longer think; I am losing consciousness'; and here I may feel the fear that ensues from the menace. If the derangement is remedied, and a fresh mental activity again started in the brain, I may then say: 'I have now regained consciousness.' In the interval I was without waking consciousness, but none the less I existed. This is so obvious that no one, who ever lost consciousness, has ever said that he originated afresh with its return. On the contrary, in such a case, everyone behaves as one does who has found again some thing he thought he had lost. For this reason, no one when he awakes in the morning from deep sleep, has yet believed that he had been 'annihilated' during the night and now originates afresh.

This temporary cessation of the functions of sense, and thus loss of waking consciousness, is earnestly desired by us every night when we go to bed; precisely for the purpose of inducing a peaceful sleep. This is the most striking proof that the consciousness we lose when falling asleep has nothing to do with our real Self. Otherwise with the loss of such consciousness, we ourselves would also be annihilated. If this were so we would face the prospect of falling asleep with a holy terror of death. If, on the other hand, our Essence consisted only of our psychic consciousness, we would awake as new beings every morning with a *newly* commencing consciousness. In that case we would look at the world each morning as if for the first time and thus with ever-fresh and incomprehensible astonishment. Moreover, since in effect we had not existed the day before, we could not have any kind of *recollection*, but at most a survey of mental images which had disappeared but were reappearing. These images would seem just as strange as a whole line of his ancestors to an infant. Recollection however, is not a mere survey of former images or pictures now reappearing, but rather a recognition of them as something experienced by ourselves.

Do we not observe how our thoughts incessantly arise and pass away; arise afresh, now with this content, now with that, often producing in the later moment sorrow concerning the fate of the earlier moment of consciousness that has passed away?

Consequently, we can recapitulate the Immortality-Theorem as follows:

'That which I see arise and pass away in consequence of this, its transitoriness, cannot be *my real I or the Self*.

As I can see how not only my body, but also all mental states, all *thoughts*, incessantly arise and pass away (and *thus* bring me suffering) in consequence of this, *their* transitoriness, neither the body *nor* the mind is *my real I or the Self*.

My Self or Essence, therefore, does not perish with my body and mind at death.

My I is beyond the boundaries of cognition.

My I is transcendent.

I am (in essence) immortal.

The Self is never born and never dies; IT IS.'

This is the correct method for the *cognitive* investigation of the basic problem, and here too the problems of the 'I' and of 'God' finally merge into each other; in other words, the primary ground of our own Self, or in theological terms, of our *soul*, must flow into the primary ground of all creation, hence into God. Nevertheless, neither the ancient Indian sages of the Vedas nor the great philosophers of Greece, not even Plotinus, nor Meister Eckhart, have penetrated to the ultimate depths of our own Essence, and so to the real ground of being. The enlightenment of this primary ground of ourselves and thus of the entire cosmos was revealed for the first time by one who was called Siddhattha Gautama, the son of an Indian king. For this very reason, he was called the Buddha, that is to say, the man *awakened* to the highest of all Reality. He is also called the sage from the *Sakya* clan, and lived from 560 to 480 B.C. At the age of thirty, he left the easy domestic life of an Indian prince to wander homeless as a mendicant with the object of making himself *absolutely free from suffering*.

All suffering, in particular that of sickness and death, is conditioned by our body which can be called the instrument of suffering. Therefore, even Lao-tse asks: 'What could still plague the man who no longer has a body?'

Consequently, we can only become free from suffering if we *free ourselves from a body*. But this presupposes that the body does not *essentially* belong to us, and is not inseparably bound up with our real Self. As stated already, even the Vedic seers and all great sages of religious genius in East and West have taught and acknowledged this. Gautama the Buddha also attained to this Enlightenment. Indeed, he not merely taught but conclusively demonstrated that *our corporeality is essentially foreign to us*.

The Buddha showed that there cannot be any 'pure spirituality' free from corporeality, but that every kind of spirituality is without exception bound to some corporeal form. This itself is a conclusion with immense consequences. It resulted in the overthrow of all Vedic and Greek wisdom, and of the entire wisdom of all mystics, according to which man's true nature is said to consist in pure, bodiless spirituality. Since every corporeal form is subject to death, so too must all spirituality perish with the corporeal form in which it is contained. There is, therefore, just as little an immortal mind as there is an immortal body. Pure spirituality cannot be the state perfectly adequate to us, cannot bring us *perfect* everlasting happiness, since that which contains it is subject to death.

It is of immense importance to follow closely the logical arguments by which the Buddha substantiates this part of his Teaching. We may summarize it as follows:

Our true being is said to be mental, but what do we understand by that. Mind is synonymous with the totality of thoughts, which is a totality of

seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, and imagining. By degrees it resolves itself into sensation, perception, and imagination; first of all, we sense something, then we perceive that something, and after that we reflect upon it. These different expressions of consciousness are summarized under the word 'mind'. All sensing, perceiving and thinking, hence all thoughts or every mental activity in general, depend on the material sense organs of our body, including the organ of thinking, and are conditioned by them; consequently, all mental functions are *organic*, in other words, those of our bodily organism. A mental activity without material sense organs, particularly without an organ of thinking, is impossible.

The Buddha says: 'The body, bhikkhus, is glowing ash.'¹ The glow is consciousness. And he represents a bhikkhu as saying: 'My body is formed, has originated from the four chief elements, generated by father and mother, a heap of rice-pap and sour rice-milk, impermanent, doomed to destruction, disintegration, dissolution, and decay, and this is my consciousness which is tied and bound to the body.'²

This is why that light of personality or of the mind must also be destroyed with the dissolution of our body in death precisely as candlelight is annihilated by the combustion and destruction of the candle.

According to the Buddha, there is no personality, no independent mind, after the destruction of the body.

But does this not teach the crudest materialism? No; the Buddha takes into account only the legitimate objection of materialism that there cannot be a mind without a body. For the rest, however, this knowledge helped the Buddha to reach the ultimate depths of his own Self. He wanted to discover our *real* Self, hence that which is our inner being, through the destruction of which we ourselves would consequently be annihilated thoroughly and entirely. Of my Self or 'I' proper, of that in which I ultimately end, there must already be known at least *one* unmistakable characteristic, if I am not to run the risk of regarding as my Self that which in reality is not my Self.

We are merely *connected* with our body; the bond establishing this is our *thirst*, our craving for a personality, for body plus mind.³ The consequence of this is our *contamination*: 'Because "body plus mind"⁴ bring well-being and not merely suffering, beings crave for a "body plus mind"; in consequence of such craving they are connected with them, and in consequence of this connection they become contaminated.'⁵ But it is different with the man who has realized 'body plus mind' to be *garments* which the Self has

¹ *Sam. Nik.*, XXII, 136.

² *Digh. Nik.*, II, 83.

³ This thirst for a body dooms us at death to the grasping of a new germ from which a corporeal organism is again formed. This thirst or desire for life is also the primary force which throughout life maintains the body in action.

⁴ The Buddha speaks always of the 'five groups of grasping', bodily form, sensation, perception, activities of the mind; cognition, which we summarize here as 'body plus mind'.

⁵ The Buddha to Mahāli in *Samyutta Nikāya* XXII, 60. Compare this with the maxim of the Vedānta: 'The absolutely pure enters the absolutely impure body'.

put on, and which the redeemed man has cast off. 'I have laid aside all garments; for me there is no longer a new becoming.'¹

The Buddha compares our infatuation for our 'body plus mind' to the pride a blind man takes in the dirty and stained flayer's smock he has put on because someone has described it as a beautiful white garment.² Elsewhere he describes 'body plus mind' as toys with which we play like children:

'As long as these boys and girls in the presence of these sand-castles are not free from craving and desire, are not free from inclination and thirst, so long are they drawn to these sand-castles, take delight in them, are anxious about them, and regard them as their own. But as soon as they have become free from craving and desire, free from inclination and thirst, they demolish them with hands and feet, destroy and ruin them, and cease to play with them. In the same manner, Radha, cease to play with 'body plus mind', and devote thyself to destroying the thirst for them!'³

Sāriputta then realized this exhortation in such a way, that he could report to the Buddha: 'Just as if, Lord, a man were to carry around a vessel full of fat dripping from many holes, so do I carry around with me this body that drips from many holes.'

But then *what are we*, if we are neither body nor mind? In the phenomenal world *everything* is made up of mind and body; such a world consists *only* of these *two* elements, although in varying degrees and combinations. Something that is neither body nor mind is beyond the phenomenal world, and can no longer be grasped by cognition, any more than ultra-violet rays can be perceived by our eyes; hence we can no longer picture it to ourselves. Thus it is for us inconceivable, indescribable, and unfathomable.

Consequently our true Self is unimaginable, inconceivable, indescribable and unfathomable, just because it lies beyond our 'body plus mind'.

'A perfect one, freed from "body plus mind", is as profound, immeasurable, and unfathomable as the great ocean', says the Buddha. Meister Eckhart says: 'The soul (after its salvation) has lost its name in the unity of divine being; therefore it is no longer called soul there, its name is "immeasurable being" '; And again: 'What the soul is in its deepest ground has never yet been discovered'.

But why cannot our true Self be subject to cognition? Why can we only know what is *not* our I or Self? Because all cognition is directed outwards. It is exactly like a motorist driving along the road at night. Everything coming into the range of the dazzling glare of his headlights is seen by him as in the light of day. He, however, does not come into the glare of his headlights, for he sits behind them. Even the Upanishads say: 'The being-in-itself (our true Self) bored the openings outwards; we therefore see outwards, but not into the inner I or Self.'

¹ 'Vitasoka's Triumph' in the *Psalms of the Monks*.

² *Majjh. Nik.*, sutta 75.

³ *Sam. Nik.*, XXIII, 2.

Schopenhauer says: 'The I is the dark point in consciousness, just as on the retina the point of entry of the optic nerve is blind, the brain is wholly insensible, the body of the sun is dark, and the eye sees everything except itself. Our faculty of cognition is directed entirely outwards. . . . Therefore, everyone knows of himself only as of this individual. . . . If, on the other hand, he could be conscious of what he is besides and beyond this, he would willingly give up his individuality, and smile at the tenacity of his attachment to it.'¹

But if our true Self lies beyond the phenomenal world, then it lies also beyond the transitory; for transitoriness is the cardinal trait of the phenomenal world.

'What is transitory is called the phenomenal world in the Order of the saints', says the Buddha. Hence the Self also lies beyond that which brings sorrow; for only that which is transitory brings sorrow.

Thus we have the saint who has eradicated from himself all will, desire and thirst for the transitory, above all even for his own body and mind, and so has become *absolutely* will-less, desireless, and free from thirst. We can only desire the transitory; something foreign to us; something which we do not already have, and thus one who, in that absolute desirelessness of everything foreign to him, has withdrawn utterly into himself. Precisely because of this absolute desirelessness, there dwells in such a man the highest self-contentment, thus boundless inner peace, hence the perfectly adequate state, and so perfect well-being. It is happiness without end.

Therefore only in complete desirelessness may we separate ourselves forever from our 'body plus mind', and withdraw into ourselves, into our real Self that is free from all attributes, into the primary ground of being-in-itself into *Nirvāṇa*.² In this way, we experience deathless, eternal, perfect well-being (*acalam sukham*) just as such bliss was experienced by the Buddha when he withdrew utterly into himself: 'I leave you alone and go away; I have chosen to take refuge with myself,' he said to his bhikkhus when facing death.³ With this withdrawal into ourselves, into our transcendent Essence, we get beyond the reach of death.

Then according to the Buddha these words will apply also to us: 'Hast thou, great King, a calculator or master of numbers who could measure the waters of the mighty ocean so that he could say: "Therein are so many measures of water, or so many hundreds or thousands or hundreds of

¹ *The World as Will and Idea*, Ch. 41.

² The final religious aim of Buddhism is usually described as *Nibbāna* (*Nirvāṇa*). This word means 'extinction', namely the extinction of all craving ('thirst') for what is foreign. In the *Psalms of the Monks* (691) and elsewhere, it is traced to *nis + vana*. Here *nis* corresponds to 'less', and *vana* is desire. Consequently, *Nibbāna* is here tantamount to desirelessness. 'After banishing thirst one speaks of *Nibbāna*' (*Sam. Nik.*, I). 'Mortification of the greedy desire for "body plus mind"; this is the destruction of suffering' (*Majjh. Nik.*, sutta 28.)

³ Compare this with *Sam. Nik.*, XXII, 35, where it says: 'Let the monk loosen every connection (with the elements (*handhe*) constituting his personality) and let him take refuge in himself, in his Self.'

thousands of measures of water?" "I have not such a man, Venerable Sir; indeed, the great ocean is deep, immeasurable, unfathomable." "Likewise, great King, it would be as if one tried to comprehend a Perfected One according to the predicates of body and mind. Indeed, in a Perfected one "body plus mind" are abolished, destroyed at the roots, so that they can no longer arise. A Perfected One, freed from "body plus mind", great King, is deep, immeasurable, and unfathomable as the mighty ocean."¹

This primary ground of our being and with it also the Ground of all Being represents the *absolute* reality that Schopenhauer had in view when he said:

'When we wake up from a dream that affects us vividly, what convinces us of its illusoriness is not so much its disappearance as the emergence of a second reality, which lay concealed under the reality of the dream so powerfully affecting us, and which now comes to the fore. We all have a permanent notion or presentiment that, under this reality in which we live and are, there also lies concealed a second and different reality; it is the thing-in-itself, the *ἄρα* (the real in the proper sense) to this *ὄρα* (our present life-dream).'

To this absolute reality has the Buddha 'awakened', and for that reason he also called himself 'one who has woken up from the dream' (*Suttapabuddha*).

This absolute reality, 'the great point of rest at the centre of the universe' is our eternal destiny.² In it, which at the same time is 'the great point of support of the universe', is grounded the miracle of immortality.³ In it are grounded the marvels of evolution, the numberless worlds that present themselves to us as the starry heavens, in it is grounded *everything*.

'In thy nothing—(the primary ground is not accessible to our cognition)—I hope to find (the essence) of the Universe.' Reality is grounded in this incomprehensible and inconceivable primary state; the state beyond all possible cognition.⁴

Everything positive, everything comprehensible, in particular everything good as well as evil, has arisen first on this side of the phenomenal world.

For the man who has found his way back to this primary ground of being, and thus to *Nirvāṇa*, remains there, as 'the highest goal there is in the created and uncreated'; 'the great peace'—'eternal imperturbability'. It is the great liberation.

This incomprehensibility and splendour of our primary ground was divined also by Meister Eckhart, when he said:

'The First Thing is above all name, it is withdrawn from loving, under-

¹ As we see, here as elsewhere, one who has succeeded in freeing himself from the attributes of 'body plus mind' is called 'a saint'; hence what we call the true Self, is called a 'Perfected One', to distinguish it from the unredeemed individual.

² *Kaivalya*, Up. 16.

³ *Mahānāv*, Up. 11, 7.

⁴ Compare this with the words of Meister Eckhart: 'In itself the soul, like God, is beyond all possible cognition.'

standing, and comprehending, it is higher than "essence", higher than "nature", it is neither light nor darkness. Indeed, how foreign is this Ground to all that is grounded! There it is in undisclosed peace and calm, in a stillness that hovers out of sight; only profound silence.¹

The sage *Yājñavalkya* expresses the matter thus:

If only man saw through the 'I'
And knew who he *really* was,
How could he feverishly desire a body,
With what desire and to what purpose?

This goal is also claimed for the redeemed by another Upanishad where it says: 'Whether he may have abandoned his body in a hallowed place or in the hovel of an eater of dog's flesh, he enters into the absolute; he shakes off the breath of life, and enters into the absolute.'

Consequently, the man who wants to have perfect happiness combined with Immortality must return thither; to his Self beyond the personality, and thus into the absolute. The Buddha calls this 'absolute state' *padam asankhatam* or that which is beyond the realm of all possible cognition.²

This is more easily said than done. It makes the extreme demand of separating ourselves for ever from our personality ('body plus mind') and thus of wholly disappearing from the phenomenal world. Who can do this? Perhaps one in two thousand millions, perhaps less. But what according to the Buddha, awaits those others after death?

As we have seen, our body is only an *attribute* of the Self. We thus existed before this body was formed. Some say that we acquired it through procreation on the part of my parents.

Others object to this and ask: 'How does the fertilized ovum prepared by my parents concern me, since I already had an independent existence? It concerns me no more than any other fertilized egg that may be prepared.'

Thus I too must in some way have taken part in the act of my conception. As a result that fertilized ovum prepared by my parents became *my* embryo and later on *my* body. But when does anything become mine? When, for example, does an apple on a road-side tree become *my* apple? When I take possession of it, when I grasp it. And that is when I desire it, in other words, when I *will* it. If I did not desire it, then it would not occur to me to grasp it; and if I did not grasp it, it would not pass into my possession, it would not become *my* apple. In the same way, the fertilized ovum prepared by my parents could only become *mine* by my grasping it, by my clinging to it, with the result that, when it formed itself into a bodily

¹ Dionysius the Areopagite said the same.

² *Majjh. Nik.*, sutta 7. The difference between Vedanta and Meister Eckhart, on one hand, and the Buddha, on the other, is to be found in that, according to the former, the absolute is already attained in pure spirituality, whereas, according to the latter, it presupposes the elimination of all positive attributes ('mental', 'spiritual', 'pure' etc.) whatsoever. Buddhism is the *neti neti* of the Upanishads carried to its logical conclusion.

organism, it would become *my* bodily organism. And I grasped and clung to that ovum, because I had a desire, a will, to build up for myself a bodily organism. Consequently, it was my *will* for a body which determined me to grow in my mother's womb by appropriating the ovum prepared by parents, just as it is now my will continuously to use this body for cognizing the sensations and perceptions of the world.

But how have we to picture to ourselves that grasping of a germ which emanates from the unfathomable? We can no more picture it than we can our will. However, we can make that grasping intelligible by thinking of a magnet's force of attraction or if that force with which the sun ties its planets to itself. Even if these forces of attraction, which in Buddhist terms are also acts of 'grasping' emanating from the unfathomable, we can establish only their reality, not the nature of their activity. Why do magnets ultimately behave like magnets? In the last resort even 'science' has no better answer than that God wills it to be so.

But from where *before* my conception did this will for a body come? We use the body in order to be able to see forms, to hear sounds, to smell odours, to taste and touch objects; to think thoughts, or, what is the same thing, to sense and perceive objects in the world. For our body is an *apparatus* of sensation and perception, or in short, of cognition. Without it and its organs of sense, we cannot see, hear, smell, taste, touch, or think; and so we cannot have sensations and perceptions, any more than we can make musical sounds without a musical instrument. We wish to have a body only for this purpose. The man who does not want to see anything more, is no longer concerned when in his body everything perishes which makes visual activity possible; and the man who also does not want to hear, smell, taste, or touch anything more, clings to his body only in so far as it presents the necessary instrument for imagining, which is all that he now regards as indispensable. But the man who, in addition, becomes weary of all thinking, has lost every interest in the continued existence of his body which is then of no more use to him. Therefore it is clear that for us the body is only a means to an end, namely to enable us to cognize and perceive the phenomena of the world. If, therefore, we had before our conception the desire and will for a body, and thus adhered to the fertilized ovum which was prepared by our parents and out of which our body subsequently grew, then that will, that desire, was to experience and perceive in that way the phenomena of the world. Fundamentally we were concerned with the enjoyment of such phenomena; we wanted to be connected with them through the body as an instrument of the senses. But, before I had assumed this body, I could have desired and longed for such 'phenomena of the world', only if I had already cognized, experienced, and therefore, 'enjoyed' them before. What the eye sees not the heart does not rue, or what I do not know I cannot desire. Thus it follows that, even before the building up of my present body, I must have seen, heard, smelt, tasted and touched the phenomena of the world. Yet all this could only have happened by means of the sense organs of a bodily organism, just as at the present moment I can do those things only through such organs of the senses. And

so before I possessed my present body, I must have had another one with which I dwelt in the world and experienced and cognized it. Hence that was the time when I learned to love this world, and from it sprang that will which, at the dissolution of the previous body, destined me to cling to the fertilized ovum prepared by my present parents; to build for myself in this way a *new* body and, by means of its organs of sense, to experience the world afresh.

But how did I acquire that previous body? Naturally in the same way in which I acquired the present one; the longing and will for such a body, which arose from my use of a former one, drove me to it. And so back into the beginningless past, and on into the endless future. In my next death I shall cling to a new ovum in a new womb, if I still desire to remain in the world. For the same reason, after the destruction of that future body, I shall build for myself a new body in a similar way, and so on *in saecula saeculorum*, as long as I do not withdraw into my primary ground, to my real Self that is free from all attributes, and thus into absolute reality. Only then is the chain of rebirth completely broken.

This doctrine of rebirth is for the Buddha an imperative consequence of the reasoning which he made so logically consistent. Thus our body is not our real Self, but is only an attribute of it, and is, therefore, fundamentally something foreign to us. That again means that we can only assume something foreign by grasping it again and again as long as we still *will* and *crave* for it. Because I am not affected by the arising and passing away of my corporeality, I existed before it; and indeed at every moment before it, since no change and thus no time could touch or affect my real 'I'. Therefore I shall also exist in the future; indeed I was and shall continue to be as I *will* (endowed with a bodily organism so long as I will it). Even today that attachment to the body lives in us, and so long as it does so, there is no need for anxiety about acquiring another one, since life is dependant on the will-to-live. Thus the beginninglessness and endlessness of our rebirths become the mirror of our own inner being. 'The infinity of the world is the measure of our own greatness that always surpasses it.'¹

As the doctrine of rebirth is a primary and fundamental truth, it has prevailed from time immemorial, and prevails in India to this day. It was taught in Greece by the votaries of Orpheus at about the same time as the Buddha, then by the Pythagoreans, and further by Empedocles, Socrates, Plato, and Plotinus. Goethe also accepted the doctrine and remained faithful to it till his death:

Long was I reluctant and finally yielded,
When the old man turns to dust there quickens the new.
And whilst thou hast not this 'die and be born again',
Thou art on dark earth but a sombre guest.

But as what can we be reborn? If we were *essentially and really* human

¹ Moreover, the necessity for the rebirth of beings already follows from their eternal destiny, for this destiny (namely the absolutely adequate state) cannot possibly be realized in *one* existence.

beings, then we could be reborn only as human beings. For man cannot alter his essential nature. Since our human body for the time being is fundamentally as foreign to us as any other body, we can at death grasp a 'germ' different from the human in the womb of an animal, or in an infernal world, or in a world of light which we call heaven.

To what 'germ' shall we cling at our death? This, says the Buddha, depends on the nature of our will in its deepest depths; hence it depends on our innermost character. This comes to light when it manifests itself as *thirst*, as a blind impulse. For our will will be in this condition at the decisive moment of death, when it is forced to let go of the body and to seize a new 'germ'. With the cessation of all the activities, of sense, those of thought vanish as well so that our thirst for a new body manifests without any regard for the consequences. As it is no longer illuminated by cognition, it is more or less blind. It leads simply to the grasping of the 'germ' *which is most in keeping with it and has an elective affinity* for it. It is the same as when lightning strikes only an object for which it has an elective affinity, and then causes a fire.¹ The thirst, therefore, leads to the grasping of an animal germ if it is of an animal nature, of a human ovum if the impulse of the dying person is specifically human, and to an attachment in a world of light if the urge is for the superhuman and divine. But if the deathbed impulse is so degenerate that it no longer has any elective affinity even for the animal world, then it leads to an attachment in an even lower world, the psychic abyss wherein is gathered the scum of beings cast out from all the other realms of life.

Only later, when the newly grasped germ has developed (and consciousness dawns with the appearance of sensuous activity) does consciousness illuminate what one has grasped and clung to; we then see ourselves as an animal, human being, god, ghost or demon!

The 'heavenly' world² are those realms of existence which lie between the human stage of evolution and the safe return to the primary ground. Thus the Buddha states that, on his return to *Nirvāṇa* he traversed those worlds; and he also declares that, in the profoundest concentration of mind, one can gaze into any and all of the recesses of existence.

How much the higher realms into which we too can pass are a postulate of reason, may be seen from the fact that even Kant grants them a degree of credibility. To characterize the relationship between ourselves and the inhabitants of those 'higher realms', he cited Pope who claimed that such higher beings regarded Newton in much the same way as we regard an ape.³ Goethe says: 'May man be noble, helpful and good! For this alone distinguishes him from all the beings we know. Hail to the unknown *higher beings* whom we divine! May man be like them, may his example teach us to believe in them!'

¹ Moreover, this law of elective affinity which determines the nature of the rebirth is also expressed by Socrates in Plato's *Phaedo*.

² The 'world of gods' in India.

³ Kant, 'On the possibility of other planets being inhabited', in *A Theory of Heaven*.

This is, in outline, the metapsychological solution given by the Indian genius to the perennial problems of religion.

Let us survey the whole once more. All beings, and primarily all human beings, are in a desperate and hopeless state. Indeed, they are infinitely far removed from a state that is '*perfectly adequate*' to them. But just such a state is earnestly desired by every being as the highest goal, and the longing for it is the *primary* longing of everything that lives. Yet a fulfilment for this longing of all beings must be possible. In fact, nature always attains with certainty (although only after evolutionary periods) the ends she has striven after in the impulses of her beings. It is true that nature is not all powerful, but she is all competent. Thus it is certain that in beings there must also be found the capacity and ability to satisfy their greatest, indeed their primary longing.

But *how* is such capacity to be developed, how is it to be realized, how is the primary longing to be stilled and satisfied? That is the great *fundamental problem*, precisely as great as its object, the fundamental longing.

With the attempt to solve this fundamental problem one thing is certain; within that part of reality in which we are for the time being spell-bound a state *perfectly adequate* to us is impossible. For within that part of reality there rules without exception the natural law of death, the necessity of dying, and thus the opposite of a state perfectly suitable to us. Thus the fundamental problem is a *religious* one. However, the purpose of religion consists in discovering that part of reality in which the laws governing our mortal tribulations lose their validity; or, to use the Buddha's words, 'to which earth, water, fire, and air—(to which, however, all natural laws refer)—have no access'.

Religions themselves are divided into those based on revelation and those based on insight. Among the latter is the 'religion' of a Socrates, a Plato, a Plotinus, and of the Christian mystics who likewise based religious attitude on insight. Above all, the great Indian religions of the *Vedas* and of the Buddha belong to the group of metaphysical religions based on insight. In the foregoing remarks we have shown briefly the results reached by metaphysical religions in the attempt to solve the perennial problems.

We can, therefore, recapitulate and say that the perfectly adequate state is reached when we no longer want anything; hence when we no longer deplore the loss of anything. In general, we try to approach this state by attempting to acquire the 'good things' that are supposed to be missing. But this is impossible for the simple reason that everything is subject to the curse of transitoriness, and is for ever parting from us again and again. Consequently, this way of striving for the realization of the absolutely adequate state proves to be a *labour of Sisyphus*. Yet the attainment of the absolutely adequate state *must* be possible. The solution of the perennial problems given by the metaphysical religions is amazingly simple. It is a grotesque delusion that we lack anything; in reality we lack nothing at all. And only because of this colossal *delusion* have we developed a will; the longing, the 'thirst' to superimpose on our Essence a personality, a 'body plus mind'. Therefore it is merely a question of clearing up that

delusion by seeing through it; we shall then neither grasp nor be able to grasp anything more. To the extent that we renounce, we approach the absolutely adequate state, indeed we experience it in the boundless peace that comes upon us. We also experience it in exuberant well-being, beginning from the heavenly states that start with the renunciation of everything earthly, and ending at the summit of absolute desirelessness for every kind of 'body plus mind'.

'God is the eternal peace because He neither seeks nor wills anything.— If likewise thou desirest not, then art thou just as much.'

Angelus Silesius.

CHAPTER 4

The Mystery of the Higher Self

The Unsolved Problems of Science

The value of a religious or philosophical system is proved by the morality emanating from it, in other words in the practical conduct that results from such a system, just as the worth of an individual is determined by his deeds. Moral conduct alone is ultimately the test of what is adequate to man. Every moral system has a principle and a foundation.

'The *principle* is the shortest and concisest expression for the line of conduct prescribed, or . . . the line of conduct to which is attributed real moral worth . . . , whereas the *foundation* . . . is the ground or reason for that obligation or recommendation.'¹

In the doctrine of the Buddha the foundation of all genuine morality follows from the ultimate destiny of man; it is the realization of the state absolutely adequate to him. This state lies beyond the world (of cognition) and thus, strictly speaking, in the 'nothing'. Therefore we get as a principle of morals, in Schopenhauer's formula, 'thou shalt not *will*', or, in the Buddha's words: '. . . with the Exalted One the holy life is lived to deny the will; precisely through the will is the will denied, is the whole forest of desire cut down, not merely one tree. From the forest of desire comes danger. If you have felled desiring and desires, monks, you are then free from danger.'²

No one will contest that the moral foundation of the Buddha's teaching, and hence the realization of the state that is absolutely adequate to man, is a right one. What this means can be understood when we consider the words of Schopenhauer: 'It is disheartening to reflect that ethics . . . has always been pursued since Socrates founded it, but that its first principle is still sought . . . The problem is so difficult that the philosophers of every age and land have blunted their wits on it. Like the philosophers' stone, the foundation of ethics has been sought for thousands of years (in vain).'³ Schopenhauer did not know that the Buddha had discovered this stone.

Moreover, no one can question the Buddha's reasoning that the state absolutely adequate to us, if it is attainable at all, and according to our previous remarks it *must* be, it cannot be attained in this world, and we know of no other; its attainment presupposes an overcoming of the world. Therefore the Buddha's principle of ethics is absolutely unassailable. At the same time only the *permanent* satisfaction of the vital impulses brings happiness, never their temporary fulfilment. The characteristic of *perfect* happiness is the inward peace appearing as a symptom that moral regeneration has taken place. Whoever still wills anything which is of this world

¹ Schopenhauer, *Basis of Morality*, §6.

² *The Dhammapada*, v. 283.

³ *Basis of Morality*, §§1, 2.

cannot yet be happy; the more he is still consumed by desires the unhappier he is, in contrast to the happy person who no longer has any knowledge of the phenomenon of willing. Thus Schopenhauer's words are also easy to understand: 'Everyone whose will is thoroughly broken, no matter how and in what way, should know that this is to his advantage, for it is precisely the will which is his misfortune.'¹

We need only apply this standard, in order to see at once that our 'civilization of factory chimneys', which has as the very condition of its life the cultivation of ever fresh desires, is the opposite of the 'eternal order' of the sages. Only that will is justified which is in line with this 'eternal order' and which is, therefore, directed to the stemming or sublimation of desires.

A further result is that the Buddha's ethics is *eudemonism*, that is to say it teaches that happiness is the ultimate aim of all activity. It is the opposite of hedonism which finds happiness in bodily or mental *pleasure*. According to the Buddha, pleasure is just as inadequate as pain, for it *gives birth* to pain: 'If pleasure has risen, then pain rises: this, Punna, is what I say.'²

For this reason, he also teaches that 'Whoever wishes to taste pleasure will taste pain. Whatever tempts with pleasures is worse than the worst goblet of poison'.³ This insight that pleasure for us is as 'inadequate' as pain had taught the Buddha to be so afraid of pleasure that, when sitting in the cool shade of a rose-apple tree and experiencing for the first time the entire well-being (*sukha*) of the first contemplative vision, he had to compose his mind by saying to himself: 'How could I fear this well-being which is beyond pleasures, beyond the bad? No, this well-being I fear not, this well-being beyond pleasures, beyond the bad.'⁴

Such well-being is brought about by the progressive liberation from an immense 'burden', namely from suffering:

'He sees the fetters of craving disappear; he has completely cleared away the path of desire . . .'⁵—'He notes that he is being freed from everything evil and unwholesome, that he is liberated. This perception fills him with bliss'.—'When in silence the Brahmin has by himself become one who knows, he is delivered from form and not-form, from pleasure and pain (and so he is elevated above form and not-form, above pleasure and pain)'.⁶

This well-being thus indicates a liberation from all the things that are for us *inadequate*. And so the well-being 'of liberation, of tranquillization, and of awakening is to be fostered, cherished, and increased; we have not to guard against it.'⁷ Finally we must go beyond even well-being. We cannot

¹ *The World as Will and Idea*, Vol. II, p. 610.

² *Majjh. Nik.*, sutta 145.

³ *Psalm of the Nuns*, vv. 503, 506.

⁴ *Majjh. Nik.*, sutta 85.

⁵ *Su.*, v. 476.

⁶ *Majjh. Nik.*, sutta 40.

⁷ *Ibid.*, sutta 139.

stop until a complete absence of desire in *every* situation has been reached;¹ a state which manifests itself as holy indifference, and which is prized by mystics as the supreme goal, *sancta indifferentia*: 'This is peaceful, this is supreme and sublime, indeed it is equanimity.'²

Genuine morality teaches goodness for its own sake, which is here an end in itself. In it the morally good and happiness are merged into one. Hence in Buddhist morality renunciation is cultivated for its own sake, for every such act carries its own reward, the blessing of renunciation; in particular, every *virtue* is also a renunciation, a loosening or release in a definite direction. There is in reality only one categorical imperative which constantly springs up from the depths of our being and which is acknowledged by all. It states; perceive and avoid what makes you unhappy! In the light of right insight this means: *renounce!* All duties and all happiness are covered by this categorical imperative.

At the same time, the *negative* character of the Buddha's doctrine is thereby vindicated. As being full of suffering, the order of things in the phenomenal world (*papañca*) is not adequate. Thus this phenomenal world is, as Schopenhauer puts it, 'something that ought not to be', or, as the anonymous mystic writes in his *Theologia Germanica*: 'Therefore the evil spirit and nature are one, and where nature is overcome, so too is the evil spirit overcome; and on the other hand, where nature is not overcome, so too is the evil spirit not overcome.'

But the Buddha teaches that the state of 'being here' or the 'present state of becoming' (*itthatta*) is one to be overcome: '*nāparam itthattāya*, I have nothing more in common with this order of things' is the formula of attained sainthood. Only by completely overcoming the world of cognition can we reach the state beyond this world which alone is absolutely 'adequate' to us. Therefore true morality must deny everything which in our present frame of mind *appears* to be desirable, namely the world and life. For even the slightest affirmation of life in any form signifies a similar affirmation of suffering, 'just as even a tiny bit of excrement has an evil smell.'³ Conversely, every act of denial is an approach to that which is legitimately desirable. Or could there be anything more desirable than to realize the state that is 'absolutely adequate' to us, *Perfect Happiness*?

Who indeed is able at the present time to reach the dizzy heights of this path of perfect happiness? Even the shortest step on it brings us nearer to true happiness and enables a glimpse thereof to reach us, just as the smallest crack enables a faint light to penetrate into a dark room. And so in the end, the doctrine of the Awakened One has something to say to everyone who has not yet sunk completely in the morass of sensual pleasure.

The question is how many of such people there are today. For if Schopenhauer's words have any significance, they are pertinent to our times. 'The wretchedness and perversity of men is so infinitely great, that

¹ *Ibid.*, sutta 66.

² *Ibid.*, sutta 152.

³ *Ang. Nik.*, I, 18.

each is the sole and just measure of the other.' How then can we hope that, with the Buddha, they will regard the significance of life as a growing beyond it? It is true that no one can discover a positive meaning in life as such. However, in order not to be driven to despair, man hits upon the expedient of imputing a *metaphysical* meaning by claiming that a higher supramundane power carries out with the world, and especially with our own lives, aims that are unknown to us. On closer inspection, this is nonsense, for all concepts, as Kant explains, must only be of immanent, never of transcendent, use. This implies that we use concepts to register the elements of the phenomenal world entering our consciousness with the aid of the senses. Therefore all concepts are drawn from the phenomenal world, and so have meaning only for and within such a world. This applies also to the concept of meaning itself. This too serves merely to mark and distinguish a definite mutual relation of obvious quantities. So at bottom it states simply that definite phenomena are laid down and intended to produce other definite phenomena. Thus to speak of a 'metaphysical meaning' is the same as affirming a wooden piece of iron. Outside the phenomenal world all concepts have lost meaning; everything in the world has a beginning except the world itself; everything in the world has a conditional cause, but not the world for it has existed from all eternity. Thus everything in the world has an effect and can, therefore, also have a 'meaning', if this effect (again lying within the phenomenal world) rests on an inner fitness for a purpose. But *the world itself has no purpose* and so no 'meaning'; it is thus above and beyond this concept. Moreover, since the world is without beginning, every purpose we may wish to attribute to it is bound to have been realized infinitely long ago, and thus also every meaning of it must have been fulfilled. In particular, life as such is also without purpose and so without meaning, or, as Kant says, 'And one does not see why it is then necessary for men to exist'.¹ Meister Eckhart says that this life is *ane warumbe*, without a why; it too has existed from all eternity. To each of my separate actions, however, I can give a rational purpose and thus a sense and meaning, and can then impart such a significance to the whole of my life by planning it in its separate parts. To safeguard an eventual next life that follows closely, one again seeks a rational purpose within the phenomenal world. The highest purpose in whose service I can place my life, and thus the highest significance or meaning I can give it, is to do away with the nonsense of life in general.

Faith is not a form of knowledge; for it consists in our belief in the certainty of another's assertion. Knowledge is gained by one's own experience of the truth of a statement, by the rational proof of its correctness. Indeed, spiritual knowledge is acquired only by *intuitive* insight, by one's own *personal realization* of a truth. And so from time immemorial all who could not be satisfied with their existentialist presentiment of immortality, who merely believed in the existence of higher worlds, tried to turn these felt truths into spiritual knowledge.² They sought to demonstrate them in

¹ *Critique of Teleological Judgement*, I, 672.

² Even Spinoza said: 'we feel before we come to know we are immortal'.

accordance with the laws of reason; indeed, they tried to realize here on earth the immortality and the 'kingdom of heaven' which is promised in the state 'perfectly adequate' to us.

It is clear that only mystics or men of moral and intellectual genius can do this. Sublime shafts of light radiate towards us from Greek philosophy, above all from the profound wisdom of Plotinus, also from the Christian mystics of whom Meister Eckhart had attained the zenith, and whom Angelus Silesius was then able to popularize.

The ancient Indians sages have drawn the magic circle of a cognitive solution to the perennial problem of being. Their religious wisdom is treasured up in the *Vedas*, just as that of Christianity is in the Bible. *Veda* means vision, knowledge of awareness (*video*), that is to say, spiritual or sacred knowledge, revealed to seers called *Rishis*. The oldest portion is the *Rgveda* which goes back to 2700 B.C., and to even remoter times according to some scholars. The most recent part of the *Veda* is found in the *Upanishads* which were in the formative stage about 800 B.C.

At heart, the Indian mind is interested only in examining its relationship to the cosmos, and thus in exploring the possibilities that await us after death. The question whither we are going can be solved only if it can be established beforehand whence we, and the entire phenomenal world in which we fight and struggle, come; or, as a modern sage puts it, 'Who am I? What is this world which has come upon me like a dream of whose beginning I am not aware?'

The Indian genius regarded the problem of the *world's ground* as the essence of man's quest for spiritual knowledge. Thus nearly everyone has at some time felt that the phenomenal world cannot carry within itself its own 'sufficient reason', since no knowable cause is sufficient for its effect. The origination of the higher forms of life is conditioned through the formation and union of the male and female germ-cells. These material changes are the cause of a new living being as an effect. It is impossible to explain why such material events which end in generation give weft and woof to the most ingenious and elaborate tissues, and are the foundation of the inexpressibly complicated human organism. As Schopenhauer says, only the man who has studied anatomy knows how infinitely complex and perfect that organism is. Therefore there must be something which endows the fertilized germ-cell with its special causal nature to bring forth a living being formed with incalculable ingenuity—a being whose ingenuity can then solve the mystery of its own origination and that of the world. The same applies also to animal organisms which in all essential respects are of the same kind as the human. Thus as soon as the appropriate temperature supervenes, the homogeneous, formless fluid of the bird's egg assumes the very complicated and precisely determined form of the genus and species of a bird. Could the sufficient reason for this be the intervening warmth? But this by itself could at most cause the fluid of the bird's egg to become warmer. Moreover, in the animal world we see the miracle of mechanical instinct and protective colouring (mimicry) through which the living beings so endowed work resolutely towards aims of which they

have no notion. Here they work with such perfection that the zoologist is lost in astonishment at the mysterious power behind evolution. What constitutes the marvels of the plant world within which, as in the human and animal kingdoms, reign the vital and healing powers together with instinct and the impulse for beauty? Hence all that we call psychic activity. What is it that makes the seed of the quassia tree change the sap into bitterness, and the seed of the sugar-cane convert the sap into sweetness? Is it in the material constituents of the seed which the earth receives, or in the earth itself? Everyone feels that it would be madness to make such an assertion. Why does sap rise up, in defiance of all gravity, to the highest and finest branches of a tree? What constitutes the forces that are active in minerals? What makes fire break out when a match is struck on a rough surface? No chemist has yet discovered this in the match or in the rough surface, nor will he ever do so. Finally, to direct our gaze beyond the earth, what underlies the innumerable worlds and heavens which, as fixed stars with their planets, often float at such distances that it takes millions of years for their light to reach us? What is the basis of the laws by which all those numberless worlds circle in space in such complete harmony that they do not collide with one another? Here certain parts of their orbits, as in the case of the planets of double stars and of multiple suns, are so complex that, according to Littrow, mathematical analysis cannot determine them accurately. What generally underlies the laws that govern the universe? These laws disappear with the destruction of the forms in which they operate, but reappear when the right conditions are laid down afresh, even if it be after billions of years. Thus such laws are themselves never annihilated, but only unknowable for a time.

This total inadequacy of every known physical cause for the total effect, and the resultant necessity to assume a hidden factor in world events (with whose knowledge everything would be clarified so that no doubt and no riddle would remain) are the two factors which have forced themselves overwhelmingly on the mind man. They supply the real reason for all belief in God; its unshakable basis at all times.

The concept of God in this sense is a *necessary* product of every systematic use of reason. Indeed, to this extent, we cannot even speak of a 'belief' in God, but directly of a *knowledge* of God. The consciousness of God is so ineradicably grounded in man that he can never take kindly to any philosophical system that does not bring forth the knowledge of God as its crown.

This then is the essence of the concept of God. There is a hidden and mysterious factor in world events; this first endows the occasional causes (which alone we can know) with their causality, with their ability to create such incomprehensible and marvellous effects.¹ Indeed, from it world events draw their whole substance, and in it their potentialities are already to be found. And the name God, which includes everything mysterious and marvellous, is really destined to describe this mysterious and marvellous

¹ God = the *Atman* in all beings.

factor. At the same time, it is clear that 'God' represents only another description of the ground of all being.

Now in this ground of the world lies the solution to the fundamental problems of the state that is absolutely adequate to us, of immortality, and finally of a beyond after death. Their solution can ultimately be derived from the reason or ground of all creation. At all times and places men have sought and still seek this ground of the world; they look for it on the path of logic and in their philosophies. In so far as this logic does not suffice, they look for it in their religions through faith, and in this way the religious expression for the ground of the world is just God, the Godhead, the Divine.

Science tries to approach divinity (in this sense) through the investigation of the external world and of its laws. But this is a vain endeavour for (as was explained) God is the ground of the world. This ground, however, is not in the realm of cognition, but, as the ultimate ground of the entire phenomenal world, it lies beyond cognition. We can, therefore, illuminate this ground through investigation of the external world as little as we can, say, the bottom of the ocean by examining the mass of water that covers it. From this we see the folly of the Russian astronaut who said that he had explored the entire heavens in his space-ship, but had not found God. As natural science is concerned solely with natural *phenomena*, it can never penetrate conceptually to the ground of being from which all creation springs; even the well-known physicist Du Bois-Reymond confirms this in his famous maxim: *Ignoramus et ignorabimus* (we know it not and shall never come to know it). So Goethe has expressed it strikingly:

Ye instruments, forsooth, but jeer at me
With wheel and cog, and shapes uncouth of wonder;
I found the portal, you the keys should be;
Your wards are deftly wrought, but drive no bolts asunder!
Mysterious even in open day,
Nature retains her veil, despite our clamours:
That which she doth not willingly display
Cannot be wrenched from her with levers, screws and hammers.¹

But how then can we penetrate to the ground of all being? Only by a quite different method which is as follows:

We too belong to the world, each one of us, hence our personalities are also rooted ultimately in the *ground* of the world, have grown out of it. As personalities we absorb our strength from it, just as the tree from the ground on which it stands and out of which it has grown. Thus our own ultimate ground coincides with that of the world, just as when we know the ground and soil in which a given tree is rooted, we know also, in principle, the ground from which all trees grow. I can return to my own ground; I can withdraw myself from the phenomenal world more and more back to my innermost being, to my very core. As soon as I encounter in this way my innermost being, my very core and thus the ultimate ground on

¹ *Faust*; Baynard Taylor's translation.

which my cognizable personality is based, I have also encountered the ground of all being; the ground out of which springs ever anew the entire phenomenal world with all its marvels and mysteries.

This path was followed by the ancient Indians, by Plotinus, and by the Christian mystics. Here the word *mystic* does not mean that this path is shrouded in mystical darkness. On this sober and rational path we penetrate to the solution of the mystery of our own Self, and thus to the mystery of the ground of all being; hence to that which we ultimately understand to be *Divine*. The German mystic Meister Eckhart says: 'Whoever will fathom the wonder of God easily draws knowledge of it from himself.' Elsewhere he states: 'To the extent in which man knows himself may he come to the knowledge of God!'

And Boehme says: 'Where wilt thou search for God? In the depths beyond the stars? There wilt thou search for God? In the depths beyond the stars? There wilt thou not find him. Search for him in thy heart, in the centre of thy vital birth. There wilt thou find him!'

This path is neither easy nor convenient; in any case not so amusing as orbiting in space-ships, and gazing in astonishment at the marvels (and horrors) of the phantoms which are presented on the surface of the world. It is, indeed, much more convenient to view, from a distance, a majestic eruption of Vesuvius, than to descend as far as possible into the interior of the crater. The mystic is the explorer of *inner space*.

The secret path into the depths of our own being reveals not only the Self, but also the ultimate ground of the entire phenomenal world. Thus is revealed also the deepest meaning of our existence, revealed with brilliant clearness are our own immortality and all the possibilities of our future after death. Finally even the state 'perfectly adequate' to us stands revealed and the great peace, the perfect, deathless, eternal state of happiness claims us as its own.

Mysticism is inverted cognition; repentance means turning inwards. Salvation means a safe return to the ground of being. He who will know the Self, must first acquire insight into the processes of cognition.

In the first place, the psycho-cybernetic activity of our cognitive faculties occurs in a sphere in which very few imagine it to exist, namely where our perception of things takes place. Each of our outer senses only transmits to us definite properties of things; thus with our eyes we see only colours, with the ear only sounds, with the nose only odours, with our organ of taste only flavours, whilst the sense of touch transmits the degree of hardness and firmness of objects, and thus gives us a clue to an object's size, shape, hardness, and temperature. They are, however, only *separate* data of information from which our understanding must construct a psycho-cybernetic pattern, before it can arrive at a total cognition of the thing. If, for example, in open country I see in the distance a spot of colour rise above the ground, then, to begin with, it is nothing more than that. In order to know what it really represents, the syllogistic activity of the understanding must come into play. As the outline of the spot of colour coincides with that of a human figure, my understanding at once associates

such a figure with it. But then it may be that the form is only flat, perhaps a target that has been raised, or it may be a figure in three dimensions. If from the different shades of colour, and in particular from the degrees of brightness and darkness in the boundary lines, I have established that it is three-dimensional, I then draw the further conclusion that I have before me a living person. But as the form does not move, I become uncertain again, since it might be perhaps a three-dimensional scarecrow merely dressed like a man. But now my sense of hearing is affected, since from the direction of the form I hear a human voice. I associate this voice with him. And yet I have been deceived; for I now see next to it another figure rise from the ground and run away from it with a scream. Then I know that the voice did not come from the original figure, and my supposed certainty about its nature again disappears. Then it too begins to run, and only now am I certain that it is in fact a human being. And yet an illusion is always possible. Suppose that the form were an ingeniously made automaton? I can only be certain when I draw upon my other senses as well. I then consider it at close quarters, and eventually touch it, if I do not happen to hear it speak. Only then can I make sure that the figure has all the characteristics emerging from the general representation of 'human beings' which exists in me, and so can conclude that before me is a living person. *Only now do I actually cognize it psycho-cybernetically as a human being.* For the complete picture agrees with objective reality put or 'extended' by me (again in agreement with that objective reality) into the place from which my senses have supplied me with the separate flows of information (sense-data). It is the same with the cognition of *all* objects, even of those that are directly in front of us; only that here the separate impressions of the outer senses are picked up by the central cognitive faculty with such certainty and speed (and collected into a unity in synthetic thinking) that we are not aware of any part of this entire operation except the result.

In this way, the Buddha has analysed the entire process of perception: When we have a sensation, we perceive (colours, sounds, and so on). What we perceive we think (in combination). What we think (in combination) we extend (out into space). What we thus extend comes up to us as a 'perception of the extended world'. Thus it is clear that, with the occurrence of the immediate *perception* of an object, the sources of error are to be found not in our sense organs in so far as these are normal, but in the cybernetic activity of our psyche. The errors, that our understanding makes in this field, produce what is called *illusion*. Such an illusion occurs, for example, when we are sitting in one of two railway trains standing next to each other without perceiving the wheels of either, and suddenly see our own train in motion, whereas in reality it is standing still and the other is moving. Here it is not our eye, but our cognition that deceives us. In this case, our eye acquaints us only with the fact that a change in the position of the two trains relative to each other is beginning to take place; it does not tell us from which of the two trains this change comes. The latter is rather an inference of our mind. Thus as we are expecting the departure of our train, we conclude quite unconsciously that 'our train may depart at

any moment—we now see a change occur in the position of our train relative to the other—and hence it is our train that produces this change of position'. We then regard this notion as so in keeping with reality, that we imagine we see our train move. But the false cognition (illusion) is brought about only through such a false inference. It is the same with the false cognition by which we see the sun moving in the heavens. Here too in reality we see only how our own position on the earth is shifting in relation to that of the sun. Now the notion is deeply engrained in our consciousness that the earth stands firm and motionless, and the opposite, purely abstract idea that the earth really moves is the less able to set aside or even to weaken that fundamental notion, which is merely abstract, and is not always present in our minds even in this form. Therefore we again infer automatically that 'in the relation of our position on the earth to the sun, there constantly occurs a change of position; the cause of this cannot reside on the earth; therefore it is the sun which moves'. Again the effect of this is that we then actually see the sun move. If, however, we were astronomers who know the real sequence of events, could have before us all the actual facts, and hence could set aside temporarily the basically false idea that the earth stands still, then we should actually *see* the sun stand still with our eyes. The overwhelming part played by the syllogistic activity of our understanding in bringing about the perception of things, becomes clear in the following case. We place a small ball on the table, cross the middle and index fingers of the right hand, and then touch the ball with the tips of the two fingers. We clearly feel two balls. The reason for this is as follows. If the left side of the index finger as well as the right side of the middle finger when in their normal position receive the impression of a ball, these impressions must result from two balls. We carry this experience around with us in the form of a living, universal notion, and thus automatically use it as a basis even in the present case of the abnormal position of the two fingers. Here also we infer that 'if the left side of the index finger as well as the right side of the middle finger have the impression of a ball, these impressions must result from two balls; in the present case I also have such impressions; therefore there are two balls'. Our cognition then constructs the received sense-impressions into two balls which we now actually feel. However, even this false illusion can be removed if, when touching the ball, we examine it as clearly as possible, and thus restrain the fundamental notion which is taken from the normal case, and under which we are inclined to subsume the concrete case.

A false cognition will result (even in normal cases) from the share the intellect (as the central organ) has in bringing about intuitive-empirical perception, if that intellect is not sufficiently developed, and thus not yet able correctly to classify the material supplied to it by the senses; in other words, to combine it in thought, and therefore to assign to it its correct place. This, for example, is the case with the child who cannot find with his little hands the spot from which an object is held out to him, and who therefore fails to grasp it. With the predominant part played by the psyche in bringing about perception, it follows that all living beings must possess

a form of cybernetic thinking (still wholly without concepts), a combination in thought of the received external impressions, and hence a cognitive faculty or 'mind'. Even water-polyps without separate sense organs have perception and consequently a 'mind' when, in order to reach brighter light, they wander on their aquatic plant from leaf to leaf, while clinging to it with their feelers. On the other hand, it is also clear how poor must be the lowest organisms' perception of the external world in respect of their minimal understanding, and how completely different it must be from ours and that of the higher animals.

In its *immediate* apprehension of reality, our cognitive faculty is called understanding. By understanding we imply that the cybernetic activity of our cognitive faculty, when carried out directly, is still unable to form any concepts, and hence so is without any awareness of this. Even with the higher animals this activity of the understanding goes far beyond the immediate construction of perception. They also grasp the causal references of things *to one another* in this direct manner and often to an astonishing degree, as can be observed especially in the monkey, the elephant, and the dog. Just because of its direct and correct judgement of the individual case, which is still made without the aid of concepts and on the strength of knowledge already gained, the understanding is also the principal mark of distinction between one man and another. It appears in its various manifestations as prudence or judiciousness, and is called cunning when it is accompanied by the deception of others.

In its higher degrees it is called acumen, insight, sagacity, discernment, penetration, whereas a want of understanding is called dullness, stupidity, silliness and so on. Even the keenest understanding is always tied to a given case, and so even the higher animals always live in and for the present. For instance, the sight of a cat at once evokes in the mouse, in the form of a vague feeling, the memory of all the innumerable perils it has already suffered through cats.¹ The result is that the mouse then refers that feeling to the animal now confronting it, and then runs away. Therefore it draws the instinctive conclusion unconsciously and free from concepts, that 'cats are dangerous, this being a cat, therefore it is dangerous'. In this judgement of the *specific case* is exhausted the entire activity of the understanding of even the higher animals. It would be the same with man, if he had *only* understanding.

Now in man the cognitive faculty experiences a further enhancement to the *faculty of reason*, of forming concepts and of *consciously* coming to conclusions in the broad sense. Every concept contains within itself innumerable individual things, and is therefore a *complex or comprehensive totality*. The concepts are drawn by the faculty of reason from the world of intuitive perception.

Thus we have formed the concept 'rose' to distinguish all the innumerable individual flowers which are given to us in intuitive perception, and are summarized under this very concept. Thus as we grasp with one concept

¹ Here we may impute, hypothetically to begin with, the constant rebirth of all beings.

innumerable individual things, we can obtain in concepts a comprehensive survey of the entire past, and also of what is absent, and thus can make unlimited use of the syllogistic nature of our faculty of reason, in particular for the shaping of our future. We now carry out the syllogisms in clear concepts and consciously in the form of major premise, minor premise, and conclusion, since with them we can at the same time and at will clothe in syllogisms the activity of the understanding which works unconsciously.

Only now does 'truth' become possible. In form it is always a conscious judgement in concepts which as such rests on a syllogism; this provides the logical basis for truth. With every estimation of a relation or of a train of thought, his own or another's, the person who estimates starts from a proposition which for *him* is axiomatic, and which he makes the basis of his estimation. This axiomatic proposition then appears as the *major* premise. The thing to be estimated, however, appears as the *minor* premise, of the syllogism. Consequently, truth is essentially a *logical* function, or, since logical and mathematical are synonymous, a product of the faculty of *reason*.

Every truth is a judgement, that is to say, a proposition in which a predicate is attributed or denied to the subject. Thus if I say: 'This flower is a rose', then to the subject ('this flower') is attributed the predicate of being a rose. And if I say: 'It is not a rose', then this predicate is denied to it. Underlying every judgement there is a syllogism, and hence in our case:

A rose is a flower with $X^1, X^2, X^3 \dots X^n$ characteristics. This flower has $X^1, X^2, X^3 \dots X^n$ characteristics. Therefore it is a rose.

If a man wants to know whether a certain metal is copper, he must first know an infallible characteristic of copper—such as its red colour, for copper is the only red metal. Therefore the investigator only needs to lay bare enough of the metal to reveal its natural colour. If this is red, then he knows that he is dealing with copper. Thus he has first formed the major premise: 'Copper is the only red metal.' Then he has proceeded to the minor premise: 'The metal before me is red', and from this has obtained the conclusion: 'Therefore this metal is copper.'

Naturally a judgement is also formed by self-evident propositions such as: 'The world exists.' This too rests on a syllogism namely: 'What I perceive, exists; I perceive the world; consequently it exists.' Here the syllogism is so obvious, that no one is conscious of this judgement as having been obtained from a syllogism. Whether such a judgement obtained through the faculty of reason is *true*, depends on whether the major and minor premises are correctly and exhaustively drawn from the sensuous world that is known through the understanding—we know of no other world than that which is conveyed through our outer senses. In other words, reality must form the granite foundation on which the premises are based. If this is right, then the syllogism thus formed is the product of *perfectly* correct thinking, and so its conclusion gives us irrefutable certainty and perfect truth. 'Logic is the *thorough-bass* of the faculty of reason, and conversely thorough-bassis the logic of music'.¹ But Alfarabi

¹ Schopenhauer, *New Paralipomena*, §14.

says: 'Logic for the practical logician becomes the great instrument for a knowledge of the truth.'¹

Testing the agreement of the premises with objective reality is the business of the power of judgement. It is the intermediary between the perceptual and the abstract modes of cognition, or between understanding and the faculty of reason. The testing is the more difficult, the more remote the employed concepts are from the reality of intuitive perception, and hence the more abstract and thus the more pregnant and comprehensive they are. They are then turned more and more into empty husks into which anyone can put what he likes, and thus become all too easily the source of sophistical dialectics. On the other hand, the testing becomes the easier, the more exclusively one works with concepts which are taken directly from the reality of intuitive perception, and which, therefore, can always be substantiated as such by corresponding intuitive representations (pictures of the imagination). The thinking, which operates in this way with the help of ideas of intuitive perception, is the real kernel of all knowledge, since it goes back to the primary source, to the foundation of all concepts.

Since every truth is fundamentally a judgement, and as such rests on a syllogism, it can also be *proved*. For by proof we understand merely the production of the syllogism on which the stated truth rests. Therefore only that is true which can be proved or demonstrated.

Are there intuitive truths or 'experiences' for which we may not demand a proof? What have men not already 'experienced'? Even a fool intuitively perceives, and therefore *experiences*, his obsession. We may argue away the significance of an 'experience' by demonstrating to the experienter that it is a dream, or hallucination, or vivid imagination; but a cogent and conclusive syllogism cannot be 'lived away' by us. We can only experience the incorrectness of its major or minor premise, but then it is the syllogism that was false from the start. It is, therefore, the height of folly to smile at a syllogism whose premises cannot be refuted, but must be acknowledged as correct. Yet even here men are mistaken. To know of a cogent and conclusive syllogism in its separate parts is a genuine spiritual experience; indeed that of truth itself, which always forms the conclusion of a syllogism.

Every judgement rests on a syllogism, and every truth on a correct syllogism; and therefore Kant says that, if we cannot be clear as to the correctness of a proposition, we need only reduce it to a syllogism. Naturally, this is not always simple. Like the great majority of vital processes, the syllogistic activity of our cognitive faculty is carried out in such a way that we are not conscious of it as such. In most cases, we do not even know on which of the syllogisms made by us our judgements rest. Indeed, this ignorance may go to such lengths that we are unable to become aware of the syllogism. We then speak of *felt* truths, or of a *feeling* that we have with regard to a definite set of circumstances. Even such a feeling (to be distinguished from the physiological act of sensation) is, therefore, the

¹ Deussen, *Philosophy of the Middle Ages*, p. 404.

product of a cybernetic activity of our mind. This applies particularly to the two primary and original 'feelings' of God and immortality; these too are syllogistic products of our cognitive activity, obtained from the intuitively perceived elements of reality, and are products formed more or less by the mind's cybernetic faculty. As we are not conscious of the premises on which they rest as their conclusion, we are unable to state even the precise contents of such 'felt truths'; or 'religious truths' as they are also called. Thus everyone interprets and explains them in the *conscious* activity of his mind according to the direction this takes, or he does not acknowledge them at all. Therefore we can reach clarity even on these two fundamental ideas, only if we succeed in discovering the premises by virtue of which we arrive at primary judgements in the form of 'feelings' or 'ideas'.

For our present theme, the result of these observations is that the syllogism, in which the Buddha has summarized his deepest wisdom, can be unassailable truth only if its premises are logically correct, and indeed axiomatic. Whether this is the case will be seen in what follows.

Every being wills and can will nothing but the state that is absolutely adequate to it. It is impossible to realize this state in the world, for here the suffering of transitoriness prevails which for us is the least adequate state. And so the absolutely adequate state for us can reside only outside the world. Therefore, the man who wishes to reach that state, must leave the entire world behind him; this is an inescapable preliminary condition. He does so by his casting away his personality through which alone the world is cognized.

'Free from influences they are beyond the world.'¹

'The wise go out of the world, in truth they are triumphant and victorious.'²

'The wise wander out of the world.'³

But *whither* do they wander? Into the Not-Cognizable and thus into the 'no thing'. For only the world and hence the transitory can be known by our sense organs together with the fantasies they kindle. We describe as the 'no thing' that which is not accessible to thought or to any of the sense organs. Therefore wise men wander into the 'no thing', 'there happiness resides; a man lost a priceless treasure, the "no thing" found it'.

The contrast to the world is described as the 'no thing'; but we ourselves *are* this contrast, for the entire world is *anattā*, not the Self. The Self, therefore, lies in the not-cognizable, in the 'no thing'. This applies not merely to our own Self, but to the *essence* of every phenomenon, and thus to that of the entire phenomenal world. Indeed, this expression is intended to describe the sum of all the innumerable phenomena that present themselves to our cognition. Out of this 'no thing' there have sprung since beginningless time all the willing and grasping (in the form of subtle energies) in the organic and inorganic worlds, which resulted in *this* world.

¹ *Psalms of the Nuns*, v. 329.

² *Sam. Nik.*, V, 61; XLV, 4.

³ *Dh.*, v. 175.

Therefore the *ground* of the world is that which is not-cognizable in beings, that 'kernel of reality' (*dharmasāra*), which is inaccessible to cognition.¹ Now in theology God is the religious expression for the ground of the world. Therefore in the purest and deepest sense God is the not-cognizable essence of the world, which is the Self of all beings. Consequently when the sage wanders out of the world, this means that he withdraws into himself by throwing off for ever the factors of his personality (of suffering), to which he had hitherto clung. For this reason, the Buddha said to his disciples shortly before his death:

'I am going away, I am leaving you alone, I am retiring into myself.'

'Let the monk give up every connection (*sabbasamyoga*) with the groups (of grasping), and let him take refuge in himself (*kareyya saranattano*). Let him walk as one whose head is surrounded by a glow of flames, striving only for the imperturbable state (*accutam padam*).²—Elsewhere the Buddha says: 'The Perfect One has found happiness in himself' (*c'assa paccattam yeva nibbuti viditā*).³ There, in our ground, in the ground of the world, in the 'no thing', or in 'God' is the abode that is absolutely adequate to us; there perfect happiness prevails. For there 'the great peace' reigns, the absolute condition of perfect happiness.

'Where there is discord, there is suffering. Whoever has recognized that peace is happiness will never become careless in Gautama's message.'⁴

'Resolutely struggling day and night, untiringly, with the mother's encouragement I have won the supreme peace.'⁵

The Buddha describes this domain of absolute transcendence as 'the other shore'. As a rule he calls this 'state of supreme peace' and hence of perfect happiness *Nirvāṇa* (being extinguished) because every dissatisfaction is there extinguished.

'The extinction of craving, the extinction of hatred, the extinction of delusion, this is called *Nibbāna*.'

Accordingly, 'he who has reached supreme peace'⁶ is described as 'extinguished' (*nibbuta*); he no longer 'burns' with discontent, he has extinguished his personality's 'process of combustion', and so has 'realized the incomparable cooling down (*sītibhāvam*)'.⁷ He has 'become cool', has 'become peaceful', as the expression 'extinguished' is often explained in the Buddhist Canon. Therefore it also says that 'the wise are extinguished like a lamp', which is itself untouched by such extinction.⁸

'Gautama, I am burning with a craving for pleasure; moved by compassion, show me extinction (*nibbāpanam*).'

'Because your perception is wrong, your mind burns; annihilate every

¹ *Itivuttaka*, 44.

² *Sam. Nik.*, III, 413; XXII, 95.

³ *Digh. Nik.*, I, 36.

⁴ *Su.*, v. 933.

⁵ *Psalm of the Nuns*, v. 212.

⁶ *It.*, IV, 77.

⁷ *Ang. Nik.*, III, p. 435; VI, 85.

⁸ *Su.*, v. 235.

attack of complacency and conceit (*māna*), and then you will be tranquillized.¹

'Desireless the Eye-of-wisdom has attained to peace, he is completely extinguished.'² 'No longer grasping, he has contemplative peace and among those who are burning he is extinguished' (*jhāyati anupādāno dayhamānesu nibbuto*).³

'Thinking thus, my allurements have been wholly eradicated, my burning annihilated, and I have become cool, extinguished.'⁴

'Annihilated is the previous becoming, there is no new becoming. The mind is not attracted to a future becoming; in those who have annihilated the germ, the will no longer grows; like this lamp are the wise extinguished.'⁵

The Buddha no longer 'burned' for the flames of craving which had long since been extinguished; and so in respect of him one *Devatā*, could exclaim: 'Truly do I behold a Brahmin who has long since become wholly extinguished.'⁶

We find this meaning elsewhere although it is expressed there in different words. The Brahmin Sundarika asks the Exalted One: 'Of what birth is the Lord?'

The Lord replied: 'I am not a Brahmin, I am not a prince's son, I am no citizen, I am not anybody at all. After passing through the race of Worldlings, I wander as a thinker in the world without being anything. Clad in a monk's robe, I wander as one who is homeless, with close-cropped hair, with the ego-personality wholly extinguished (*abhinibbutatto*), without allowing myself to be polluted by the greed of men.'⁷

To illustrate these ideas, we may compare a few more statements from the Buddhist Canon with those of the Christian mystics. The latter show us that they too thought and lived on similar lines and thus furnish proof of the truth of the Buddha's words:

'What the wise declare to exist in the world, that I also declare to exist. Only in detachment from everything do I see salvation for living beings.'⁸ 'Only after giving up thirst, one speaks of *Nibbāna*' (*Tanhāya vipphānena nibbānam iti vuccatīti*).⁹

'By giving up desires, a man cuts through every fetter.'

'What does he give who wants to give everything? He who makes known that the Buddha's teaching gives everything; gives an abiding

¹ *Psalm of the Monks*, vv. 1223 ff.

² *Ibid.*, v. 905.

³ *Ibid.*, v. 1060.

⁴ *Psalm of the Nuns*, v. 34.

⁵ *Su.*, v. 235.

⁶ *Sam. Nik.*, I, 1.

⁷ *Su.*, vv. 455-456.

⁸ *Sam. Nik.*, I, 54; II, 2, 7.

⁹ *Ibid.*, I, 39; I, 7, 4.

home, and gives immortality.¹ 'For him who controls his body, speech, and thoughts, there is after his death a place of protection, a place of concealment, an oasis.'²

'The wise who injure no being and keep their personality (*kāya*) well in check, go to the unchangeable place, where they are no longer weighed down by any grief.'³

'If they expel impurity, you will become free from all filth, and will reach the marvellous land of the elect.' (*Nibbāna*).⁴

'For not with such vehicles (as elephants, mules, and horses) do we reach the untrodden land, whither goes the tamed one with well-subdued self.'⁵

'I shall go to the motionless, to the unshakeable, with which nothing can be compared.'⁶

'There is a domain where there is neither earth nor water, neither fire nor air, neither the realm of boundless space, nor the realm of boundless consciousness, neither sun nor moon. This, monks, I call neither coming nor going, neither arising nor passing away; it is without basis, without continuation, without foundation. It is just this which is the end of suffering.'⁷

'I penetrated to the peaceful state, to the blissful cessation of the (mental) productions (*sankhārā*).'

'Undergo elimination (*nirodha*), the blissful tranquillization of perception (*saññārupasamam sukham*), attain *Nibbāna*, the incomparable security (from every bond).'⁸

'They came to know the absolute state of *Nibbāna*.'⁹

'He who has cast off the burden, the liberated one, goes to rest.'

'So joyful is *Nibbāna* which is indicated by the Perfectly Awakened One and which affords security, free from care and allurements, because suffering has come to an end.'¹⁰

'Whoever with joyful mind hears the victor's message, obtains supreme peace and becomes extinguished and free from influences and has achieved imperturbability.'¹¹

'When he has pondered fully over the five groups (of grasping), he will pursue the straight path and attain supreme peace, free from every influence and wholly extinguished.'¹²

'No more sufferings befall him who is no longer infatuated with the bodily organism, who is not anything (*akiñcana*). He has given up name

¹ *Sam. Nik.*, I, 32; V, 2.

² *Ang. Nik.*, III, 51.

³ *Dh.*, v. 225.

⁴ *Ibid.*, v. 226.

⁵ *Ibid.*, v. 323.

⁶ *Su.*, v. 1149.

⁷ *Udāna*, VII, 1.

⁸ *Psalm of the Nuns*, v. 6.

⁹ *Psalm of the Monks*, v. 725.

¹⁰ *Psalm of the Nuns*, v. 277.

¹¹ *Psalm of the Monks*, vv. 363, 364.

¹² *Ibid.*, v. 369.

and appellation, and is no longer housed in any dwelling; he has cut off the thirst for a bodily organism. Free from care and desire, he was not found by gods and men when they sought him, either here or in other worlds, in the heavens or in any of the abodes.¹

'For the vanished one there is no measure; that whereby he might be designated no longer exists; where all phenomena have ceased, there also all possibilities of naming are gone.'²

'Venerate the great lords, those who have overcome all ties, the wholly extinguished, the immeasurable.'³

'Free from disturbance are the saints, removed from disturbance are the saints.'⁴

'Well-being is the seclusion of him who is contented in himself (*sukho viveko tulthassa*), who hears and sees reality. Well-being is freedom from ill-will in the world, is consideration for all living beings. Well-being is disinterestedness and an absence of lust (*virāgalā*) in the world, and the abandonment of pleasures that arise from objects of the senses (*kāmānam samatikkamo*). But supreme well-being is brought about by the expulsion of the delusion of "I am" (*asmimānassa yo vinayo etam ve paramam sukham*).⁵

'Those who are delivered into the state of security have gained unshakeable well-being.'⁶

'Well-being is *Nibbāna*, well-being is *Nibbāna*; but friend, how can there be well-being where there is no sensation?; This, friend, is precisely well-being, that here there is no sensation.'⁷

'Other than this there is no adequate state (*phāsuvihāra*) which would be higher and more glorious.'⁸

Meister Eckhart, the greatest of the Christian mystics, says:

'There is nothing so unknown to the soul as the soul itself. It therefore has nothing with which it can recognize itself, and so it knows everything else, but not itself. Of no thing does the soul know so little as it does of itself.'

'No one has ever yet discovered what fundamentally the soul is.'

'The forces whereby the soul operates, certainly spring from the depths of the soul, but in these depths there is only profound silence. In these depths there are no works of any sort.'

'In the purest the soul can offer, in its noblest, in its ground, in short in its true essence, there is only profound silence; for never has any creature or any image thereof got as far.'

'So must you stay and dwell in your true essence, in your ground and depth.'

¹ *Sam. Nik.*, I, 23; I, 4, 4.

² *Su.*, v. 1076.

³ *Majjh. Nik.*, sutta 116.

⁴ *Ang. Nik.*, V, p. 135; X, 72.

⁵ *Ud.*, II, 1.

⁶ *Psalms of the Nuns*, v. 350.

⁷ *Ang. Nik.*, IV, p. 414; IX, 34.

⁸ *Majjh. Nik.*, sutta 31.

'The first thing is above all names, is withdrawn from love, from understanding, and from comprehension. It is higher than "being", higher than "nature", it is neither light nor darkness. To be sure, how strange is this ground to all that is grounded.'

'God is the nameless Essence, the groundless gulf.'

'God dwells in a silence that is beyond all silence.'

'If I am asked what all creatures seek in their natural desire, I say peace. If I am asked what on all its paths the soul seeks, again I say peace.'

'Where I am, there is God; this is the plain truth.'

'In truth man is God, and in truth God is man.'

'In this breaking through I accept that I and God are one.'

'I have stated before and still state that *now* I already possess all that was allotted to me in eternity. For God with all his bliss and in the fullness of his divinity is inherent in that archetype. But it is concealed in the soul. Time has hidden this treasure of the divine realm and the soul's diversity and its own works, in short its manner of creation. But to the extent that the soul is progressively separated from all that diversity, there is revealed in it the divine realm. The soul is, of course, able to do this only with the help of grace; when it makes this discovery, it has been helped thereby. That is only natural with the archetype, for here the soul is God. And then it enjoys all things and has control of them like God. Here the soul receives nothing more either from God or from creatures. For it is itself what it holds; and takes everything only from out of its own. Here soul and divinity are one. Finally here it has discovered *that it is itself the divine realm.*'

'What is the ultimate goal? It is the hidden darkness of divinity.'

'Truly, if you wish to find the "second" birth, you must return to the origin and ground, whence you have come.'

'Whoever has peered into this ground, if only for a moment, will look upon a thousand thalers of beaten gold as a false farthing.'

'There even the soul's own true essence as soul vanishes from it, for it bears this description only in so far as it gives life to the body and to this, its form. Thus it is there no longer called soul, but its name is *immeasurable being.*'¹

Compare this with the Buddha's words:

'A Perfect One, free from personality, is deep, *immeasurable*, and unfathomable as the ocean.'

Henry Suso says:

'The setting of the senses is the rising of truth.'

'What is the practice of one who is really tranquil and composed? To cease becoming.'

¹ Source of references: *Die Wissenschaft des Buddhismus* by George Grimm, pp. 115 ff., and *Meister Eckhart* by Walter Lehman.

'What in all things is the counter-throw of one who is really tranquil and composed? It is a sinking away from himself, and with him all things sink away.'

'There must occur here a dying, a cessation of becoming, and a destruction; there must be *non sum* (I am not) . . . so "will-less" that one would no longer be aware of anything but *non sum*.'

Suso quotes *non sum* sixteen times in his famous discourse, the so-called *Second Sermon*:

'All woe and all vexation come solely from our wanting to be something. Alas, not to be! In every way, in all places, and with all men he would have complete, true, essential, and eternal peace, and would be the most blissful, surest, and noblest in this world. Yet no one tries to attain it, either rich or poor, young or old.'¹

The *Theologia Germanica* says:

'Be separated from thyself.'

'That which is perfect, is to all creatures in their capacity as creatures inconceivable. Therefore that which is perfect, is called *nothing*.'

Boehme says:

'Where do you wish to look for God? In the depths or beyond the stars? You will not find him there. Look for him in your heart, in the centre of your life's birth; there you will find him.'²

Angelus Silesius says:

'A blessed thing am I, an impossibility I may be, neither known nor common to all that is.'

'You laugh at the child's tears over its dolls. But say whether what grieves you are not dolls.'

Compare this with the following Buddhist passages:

'The phantom, the golden tree of your dream, you also regard as real; blindly you run after the toy dolls of men.'³

'I know not what ran along the path, whether a male or female being; yet I know that a bundle of bones moves down the street.'⁴

'If, man, you are still something, and know and love and hate, believe me, you are not free from your burden.'

'Be poor, the saint at this time has only what he does not like to have, the body of mortality.'

'What cherubs perceive may not suffice me; I will fly beyond them, where nothing is perceived.'

¹ Heinrich Seuse, *Deutsche Schriften* by Bihlmeyer, pp. 164, 165, 168, 515 f., 511, 517.

² *The Three Principles of Divine Essence*, 4, 8.

³ *Psalms of the Nuns*, v. 394.

⁴ *Visuddhi Magga*, *sila-niddesa*.

'Cease to be formed, my child, you then become like God and in silent peace are your own heaven.'

'With such zeal you seek continual motion and I eternal rest; but which is more important?'

'God is eternal rest, because there is nothing he seeks or wills. If you too do not will, you are as much.'

'What is God's attribute? To know, to have, to will nothing.'

'Whoever is as if he were not or had never become, has become (o blessedness) divinity himself.'

'No one knows what God is; he is not light, nor spirit, nor blissfulness, not one, not what is called godhead, not wisdom, nor understanding, nor love, will or goodness, not a thing and also not an impossibility, not an entity, nor a mind. He is what I and you and any creature never experience before we have become what he is.'

'You cannot cry aloud to God, the source of the spring is within you. If you do not block the outlet, it flows for ever.'

'I am in God a mountain and must myself ascend, for there God shall reveal to me his glorious countenance.'

'In truth, the eternal word is born even today, but where? At the point where in yourself you have lost yourself.'

'Man, become real and essential, for when the world disappears, chance and hazard are abolished; the *essence* is what endures.'

'Nothing but annihilation brings you above yourself; whoever is more annihilated, has more divinity.'

'Friend, it is likewise enough. In case you want to read more, go and yourself become the document and even the very essence.'

Thomas a Kempis says:

'God is the eternal rest of the saints.'

The Spanish mystic Molinos says:

'Walk then on this path of safety and aim at becoming absorbed in *the nothing*, at letting yourself sink down into it as into an abyss, at losing yourself therein if you will after being annihilated to yourself, and at becoming united with and transfigured in God.'

In his *Faust* Nikolaus Lenau makes Faust say:

'T is thus; I'm firmly tied to God
And from eternity have been with him the same,
And "Faust" is not my real or essential "I".'

Man clings to sensation, to perception, to activities of the mind, to consciousness, and there arises the arrogance of 'I am'. When he does not cling to them, it does not arise.

'Just so, friend Ānanda, the arrogance of "I am" arises if a man clings to his bodily form, if he clings to sensation, to perception, to the activities of

the mind, to consciousness, and it does not arise, if he does not cling to these five groups.' Thus in the arrogance of 'I am' two powerful obstacles block the path to an understanding of the *anattā*-idea, and hence to salvation. One is the 'ego-habit' of thought which has existed for aeons, and the other is our boundless attachment to the realm of the cognizable. Only in a very few 'noble' beings is this foe so weakened that one is able to draw from the great theorem (the *anattā*-idea) the practical conclusion in the form of a *realization* of the real Self.

A person can penetrate to his essence only by descending to the ground of his own being, in contrast to modern scientists who prefer to look in the bodies of vivisected animals for the formula of explaining the riddle of man. This is why the Buddha descended into his own innermost essence, and drew from there the solution to the two great and fundamental problems of immortality and godhead. The reader who has been able to follow so far may now expect the solution to these perennial problems.

We will first deal with immortality. We have seen that everything cognizable in us is subject to, and so perishes at death; it also follows that immortality is only possible for ourselves if there is also something 'not-cognizable' in us. But we have ascertained that this 'not-cognizable' something is *our real I or Self*. Thus the fact that it is not cognizable is the *condition sine qua non*, the absolute presupposition, for the possibility of our immortality in general.

But may not the kernel of our true essence be mortal, in spite of its being uncognizable? Whoever raises this objection is not clear about the nature of the immortality of the Self. As is indicated by the great theorem, our Self is uncognizable because it could *not* be anything that is perishable or transient. We see all things in the world in an eternal flux; we see them flow *past* us. This we expressed by saying that all the objects of our knowledge are transient. Therefore *only* these objects are transient; for only from these cognized objects have we abstracted every concept, and amongst them the concept of transitoriness which is therefore valid only for these objects. For the subject, and hence for our real 'I' or Self, it has no validity, for all things flow past it and it is incessantly 'suffering' through this restless transitoriness.

If our Self is not transient, does it *remain* and stand 'firm as a rock' in the stream of time? Whoever asks this has not fully grasped the uncognizable nature of his Self or 'I'. Again only that can continue to exist which is an *object* of our knowledge; that which we cognize in some way. For only from these cognized objects have we abstracted even this concept of persistence, so that it too is valid only for the *objects* of our knowledge, in order to describe a definite attribute or quality of *them*, but not for the *subject* (our 'I' or Self) that underlies cognition. This is also expressed by Schelling when he says: '*In so far as the Self is eternal, it has no duration; for duration is conceivable only in reference to objects.*' We speak of an eternity of duration (*aeviternitas*), that is to say, of an existence in all time. But eternity in a pure sense (*aeternitas*) is existence in no time. The *pure and original form of eternity lies in the Self*.' Perhaps this becomes even

clearer from the idea that that which is cognizable is the world. We are nothing knowable, and therefore lie outside the world and time. But what is the opposite of the world? That which can never be cognized, hence '*no thing*' from the point of view of our cognition. As soon as we no longer perceive anything, in other words, no longer see, hear, smell, taste, touch, or think anything, we say: 'Now I stand face to face with nothing.' But in '*no thing*' there is in general no time. Expressed in yet another way, the concept of time is abstracted from the world of cognizable things, and so is valid only within that world. Then if there is no time the transient is meaningless. *Our real 'I' or Self is, as we have established, outside the world and therefore outside time.* Thus it is not transient. 'Yet if we now withdraw from it the two predicates not together but separately, it appears as though the contradictory opposite of the predicate (for the time being withdrawn) were thus proved by it. But this rests on the fact that incommensurable quantities are here compared in so far as the problem shifts us to a scene which abolishes time and yet asks about determinations of time. Consequently, it is equally false to attribute and to deny time to the subject; and this simply means that the problem is transcendent.'¹ On the other hand, in a Buddhist setting, it is correct to say that, in man's attribute as personality, he is indeed transient, though his essence-in-itself is not touched thereby. Therefore, although we cannot attribute to it any continued existence on account of the elimination of time-concepts attaching to it, it is nevertheless indestructible. This leads us to the concept of an *indestructibility* which, however, is not a continued existence. 'Now this concept is such that, obtained on the path of abstraction, it may perhaps be thought of in the abstract, but cannot be demonstrated by any intuitive perception, and consequently cannot be made really clear.'

The appearance of the persistence of our 'I' or Self arises from the persistent flux of transient things which *confront* it. Just as in these things, as the objects of our knowledge, the actual positive nature of our I or Self is mirrored as that of the *subject* underlying knowledge, so do these objects reflect on our real Self the light of their own persistent flux in time. Accordingly, this illusion of a persistent I or Self again disappears the moment we attempt to picture to ourselves an I or Self freed from all attributes, for instance, a perfectly redeemed individual. We no longer grasp anything about him, or any kind of persistence; on the contrary, we gaze into the abyss of the eternally unknowable, of the transcendent, of no-thing-ness.

This is the immortality that results from the Great Theorem; only the cognizable in us, and hence our personality as a mere attribute, is touched by death. Our real Self is superior to all that is cognizable, and thus to all arising and passing away, and so also to all change. All these concepts of time generally have meaning only in respect of the elements of our personality as our 'attributes' and that too, only in so far as we are the bearers of such attributes and are therefore enmeshed in the world. We ourselves can be determined by them, in just the same way as a man wearing clothes

¹ Schopenhauer: *The World as Will and Idea*, Vol. II, Ch. 41.

can be determined by them. But just as a naked man can no longer be determined by these 'attributes' of clothing, so too a Self freed from all attributes¹ can no longer be determined at all. We are now in a position to understand fully what the Buddha said:

'Just as if, mendicants, a man were to carry away grass and brushwood, twigs and leaves in this Jeta-forest, or to burn it, or do to what he liked with it, would you think: "The man carries *us* away, or burns *us*, or does what he likes with *us*"?'

'Certainly not, Lord.'

'And why not?'

'Indeed, Lord, *we* are not this, nor does it belong to *us*.'

'Likewise, mendicants, the body does not belong to you: give it up. The body given up by you will bring you salvation and bliss. Now, as the I or Self and anything essentially appertaining to it cannot be grasped, is not the belief the height of folly which says: "This is the I or Self, this I shall become after my death, persisting, enduring, everlasting, not subject to change, so that I shall always remain the same"?''

Again:

"'A Perfect One is beyond death", or "a Perfect One is not beyond death": This, my friend, is a way of thinking after the manner of corporeality (which a Perfect One has cast off). For one who has departed from this life there is no measure or standard; *for him* there is no longer that by which he was distinguished or characterized (in his lifetime). Every body, every sensation, every perception, every activity of the mind, every consciousness, by which we would make known a Perfect One is overcome by him, is cut off at the roots, has been levelled like an up-rooted palm, so that they can no longer spring forth, can no longer develop. Freed from that which is called body, sensation, perception, activity of the mind and consciousness, a Perfect One is like the ocean profound, immeasurable, unfathomable.'²

Yet in spite of all this, there are men of intellect and culture, who deny that the Buddha taught immortality—he who is positively the only one, so far as the history of mankind goes, who has logically and cogently *demonstrated* it. At the same time, he has *shown* that it *can be experienced* by man in himself; for he learns *intuitively to perceive* his entire personality as something essentially foreign to him. Hence the Buddha's demonstration is clear and obvious. He teaches immortality as a mere absence of mortality, mere deathlessness, indestructibility without any admixture of a positive, and therefore personal, immortality occurring in time.

A further consequence of the Great Theorem is *rebirth*. We do not consist in our bodily organism with its bodily and mental functions: it is one of our attributes. Therefore the beginning of this organism is not our beginning, but that of our body. We must have come to it as to something

¹ The Buddha calls such a Self *Tathāgata*, a *Perfect One*.

² *Majjh. Nik.*, sutta 72.

'external'. But how does one arrive at something exterior? Life itself provides the answer. It says: If you wish to possess something 'exterior', you must *grasp* it. Therefore we must have grasped the fertilized cell in our mother's womb, and from this cell our body then developed. But why this grasping? What else could have induced us except an *urge or desire* to provide a body for ourselves in this way? In other words all grasping is conditioned and determined by a previous will or urge. Where there exists no will, no desire, no urge for something, nothing is grasped by anyone. But why did we have such an urge or desire for a body? Let us ask a further question: Why do we *now* wish to keep our body? Simply in order to obtain through it (as the apparatus of cognition) the sensations and perceptions of the world. If we saw a way of producing in ourselves (without a body) all the sensations, perceptions, and ideas of the world, which our body now conveys to us, we would gladly give it up. Accordingly, that urge which induced us to grasp the fertilized cell in our mother's womb was an impulse to provide ourselves with a body, in order to sense, perceive, and think of the object world with its help. But whence comes this urge? A desire or urge merely for a *known object* can arise. But we cannot desire what we do not know, and accordingly it cannot press or urge us; and so we must already have cognized the objects of the world before we grasped the fertilized cell in the womb. But again this could only have happened by means of a bodily organism just as we are able (even now) to cognize objects only by means of such an organism. Consequently, we must have had another body before our present one. How did we come to have this previous body? Naturally in the same way in which we arrived at our present one, by grasping a fertilized cell in the womb. The longing, the craving, the urge for such a body had likewise induced us to this grasping—an urge that had arisen through the use of a still earlier body; and so back into the beginningless past. And so too into the endless future; at our death we shall again grasp a new cell in a womb, if we still have a desire for the world, and thus for an apparatus for cognizing the world. On the same lines, we shall again build a new body after the disintegration of that one, and after this once again a fresh body, and so on *in saecula saeculorum*. The chain of our rebirths is complete.

Where is there in this chain, disclosed to us by the Buddha, a broken link or even a gap? Can a man *who has understood the Great Theorem* even imagine that it could be otherwise; that in particular his parents for the time being could be more than his *adopted* parents, and his children more than his *'adopted'* children? This refutes the assertion that the Buddha's doctrine of rebirth cannot be demonstrated. It is as self-evident as the Great Theorem itself which forms its basis.

If we follow, from the present back into the past, this chain of causality, which always conditions our new rebirth, we shall note that it does not lead to any kind of first beginning. We may go back countless millions or billions of years, or even whole world periods, in order to arrive at our 'first' body. Every such former body was always conditioned by us through a preceding seizure of some fertilized cell, though possibly of a

species quite different from the human. And that grasping was conditioned by a will, a desire, a thirst; and this thirst was conditioned by a preceding cognition of the world, and hence by a preceding body as the *apparatus* of cognition. Accordingly, a first beginning is quite inconceivable; just as *every* causal chain in the world is beginningless, even in nuclear physics.

'As we know *a priori*, and therefore with absolute certainty, the chain of causes runs back into infinity, so that positively not one of them could ever be the first.'¹ But then there is no meaning to the question how such a first beginning was possible, or, as a critic put it, how in our primordial state free from will, and thus from body, and so from personality, an impulse to change could ever have arisen—an active event that obliterated this primordial condition. For knowledge to conform with reality there can have been *in the past* no first beginning and therefore, no primary and original state free from will and body. For such a state would have to be prior to the first beginning which was just shown to be impossible. But then why are we entangled in such a beginningless cycle of rebirth, or indeed why have we given ourselves again and again from all eternity a body so miserable and wretched, subject to disease, old age, and death? This question is transcendent, for it represents the desire to write 'the story of the thing-in-itself', or rather of our I-in-itself, as was already stated by Schopenhauer. Yet our cognitive apparatus is incapable of this; to do so we would have to look right into our innermost essence, into our innermost Self. But our cognitive apparatus, is directed outwards: 'The being-in-itself bored the cavities outwards, and so one sees outwards, but not into the inner I or Self.'

The reader will see how very transcendent this question is because it coincides with the other question why we are in this sorrowful world, indeed ultimately with the fundamental and primary question why this sorrowful world exists at all. These are questions about which everyone at once feels that they pass beyond the limit of human knowledge.² We are able to know that at any time we can step into the state that is free from personality. Thus if we consider the causal chain more closely, we find that the decisive link in it is our *will*, our *desire* for a new body.

The Great Theorem culminates in its conclusion which is identical with the formula used by the Buddha on innumerable occasions:

'This belongs not to me, this am I not, this is not my Self.' This formula, which holds good of everything cognizable, in particular of the body and personality, is the great formula of the Buddha's teaching. It is briefly condensed by him in the word *anattā* which is composed of the negative *a* (*an* before vowels) and the word *attā*, 'the I', 'the Self'. It therefore means 'not the I', 'not the Self'. *Anattā* is, in fact, only the embodiment of the great formula: 'This belongs not to me, this am I not, this is not my Self.'³

Nothing that is cognizable is our innermost and deepest essence, and

¹ Schopenhauer: *The World as Will and Idea*, Vol. I, §29.

² Schopenhauer: *The World as Will and Idea*, Vol. II, Ch. 50.

³ The Buddha repeatedly expresses this in *Sam. Nih.*, V.

hence our real 'I' or Self. But this does not rule out that the qualities we cognize in ourselves, namely body, mind, and will, are our characteristics. But they are only *inessential* characteristics, mere accidents, or, as the Buddha would say, mere 'attributes'—we have merely attributed them to ourselves. We shall now also understand the deep implication to be found in the fact that we describe these attributes of ours by the word 'personality'. The profoundest truths, directly and therefore intellectually grasped, are often reflected in language. The word person (=mask) can be traced to the Latin *personare* which means 'to cause to resound'. Accordingly, with the Romans, the mask of the actor was called a *persona*; it covered the whole head and differed in keeping with the character to be represented. Person or personality is, therefore, synonymous with 'mask made to resound'. We make use of this mask that consists of body and mind, in order to satisfy our will to play a part in the world.

Now the relation to our personality in its capacity as a cognitive apparatus is as follows: In our real unknowable essence we are the *subject* of knowing, that which *underlies* the entire cognitive process,¹ that *for* which the entire cognitive activity takes place. This activity itself is directed outwards, in other words, on to the external world, which *faces* us, and to which our personality already belongs. Consequently, all this can be cognized. Through this cognition, we are able to observe not only the external world, our body, our will, but also our 'mind', that is to say, our cognition itself; cognitive thoughts in all their incessant fluctuation. It is as if one were to look through a constantly changing pair of spectacles at the constantly varying images of a kaleidoscope.

Our cognition is directed outwards, in other words, to that which is *not* our real I or Self; therefore this I or Self can never become the object of our perception and consequently of our cognition. It can never present itself to the senses as they are all directed outwards. Therefore we cannot see, hear, smell, taste, touch or even imagine our real I or Self. We can cognize objects, and hence, in particular, the elements of our personality in their relation to ourselves; but this too represents only a cognition of *objects* in a definite direction. Therefore our I, our Self can never become an object of cognition.

Moreover, this is already expressed by the word 'object' which comes from the Latin *obicere* meaning 'to throw in the way of'. Thus the concept object is relative, and presupposes two factors or elements, one which throws itself, and the other *to* which it throws itself, the latter being called the *subject*. Just as there is no poison-in-itself without a being *for* whom it is a poison, so nothing can be an object, if there is no subject, independent of and facing it; for whom it is object, and who for this very reason can never become an object to himself.

This has revealed to us the cause of the indiscernibility of our Self or I. It lies in the nature of our cognitive apparatus which is focused exclusively outwards on to the realm of the *Not-I* or the external world. Even the *Vedānta* recognizes this, while in our times Schopenhauer and Aldous

¹ This is the literal translation of the word subject.

Huxley have seen it through very keen eyes.¹ Moreover, Kant says: 'The I does not know itself.' The Buddha, recognizing that we experience the world only with and in our body and in the consciousness tied to that body, said: 'That which lies in the province of concepts, in the province of knowing, is the bodily organism together with consciousness.'

If everything that enters the province of our cognition cannot be our real 'I' or Self, then one may well ask: 'How do I ever arrive at the idea of my "I" or Self? If everything cognizable (my bodily organism and my cognition itself) is fundamentally something external and foreign to me, and therefore to my cognition wherever I may direct it, then should not everything give rise to the idea of the *foreign and extraneous* and not to that of myself? Yet there is really no thought which I think more frequently than that of myself, of "I".' The answer is: through cognition we comprehend everything because we perceive everything as *object*; that is to say, as something *throwing itself* at us, as something *facing* us. This too will become clear through an analogy. If someone of *perfect* intuitive perception, were to behold for the first time the light of the full moon at night, then, just because he saw through everything perfectly, he would perceive it directly as *reflected* light. At the same time, he would intuitively perceive in it the real and true nature of its source, namely the sun; although, he would not be able to see the sun itself in the night sky. In the same way, we also recognize in the intuitive perception of an object-as-such our own true and essential nature as subject, as that at which the intuitively perceived object has 'thrown itself'. But just as the person, who directly recognizes moonlight to be reflected light, would have to say to himself: 'I cannot find the source of this light anywhere in the night sky', so we, who are also reminded of ourselves with every act of cognition (if only we rightly understood how to think in conformity with reality) would have to say: 'I cannot find anywhere in the world this "I" of which I am constantly reminded when I see, hear, smell, taste, touch and think of anything; for all this is *not* my "I".' Therefore, with objective knowledge conforming to reality, every possible object, even our own personality, always calls forth the idea of our I or Self only in the form of not-I; as 'this is *not* my I'. Schopenhauer expresses this by saying that 'of things we know directly, of ourselves only indirectly'.

Only when a man is too fond of his personality and thus clings to it does there occur a darkening, and hence a falsification, of his knowledge in conformity with reality, since he no longer intuitively recognizes his personality as something 'foreign'. On the contrary, he then regards subject and object or 'the thinking and the thought as the same', and this gives rise to the *false illusion*: 'This is my I or Self'. And so he says: 'I am body and mind' in the same way as an ignorant man does not realize that the light of the full moon is reflected light. All living beings who are fond of and cling to their personality have from time immemorial lapsed into the illusion that their personality is their 'I' or Self. The Buddha broke

¹ Cf. Saher, *Eastern Wisdom and Western Thought*, George Allen & Unwin, London 1968.

through this false illusion to such an extent that his whole teaching is nothing but the revelation of this false illusion. It is a method or system (*nāya*) for reaching knowledge *in conformity with reality*, in which we directly and intuitively perceive everything, the whole of our personality, as not essentially and intrinsically part of ourselves.

Since the 'I' and anything essentially appertaining to it is not to be found in our personality, any more than the sun is in the moon, the Buddha characterizes all positive statements about the I or Self as empty fancies, indeed as the height of folly:

'Now as the I and anything appertaining to the I is not to be found, is not, disciples, the belief "This is my I" the height of folly?'

'Certainly, Lord, how could this not be the height of folly?'

The obvious result of all this is that the Buddha says nothing about our I or Self in itself. On the contrary, he concerned himself with that which alone is knowable, namely with the things of the world to which the elements of our personality belong.

'That which is perishable and transient is in the Order of the Holy One called the world.'

Now one may well ask: 'If neither the body nor the mind is my kernel, what then really am I?' But close consideration will show yet a third element that presents itself to his knowledge, namely his *will*. Yet a will without a body and mind is not possible. Now we see our body and mind incessantly arise and pass away; but our will does so as well so that it too cannot be our real 'I' or Self. Even Schopenhauer admits this when he says 'that the denial of the will-to-live by no means implies the annihilation of a substance, but the mere act of non-willing; that which has willed hitherto, no longer wills.' In other words, that which wills, and hence our essence and so our real 'I' or Self from which this will springs, can also give up its will quite apart from its integrity; and so, in the words of the Buddha, even the will is not our real 'I' or Self.

Moreover, the following shows us how at times the will is conditioned by our cognition, and thus how it also exists within us only conditionally. If the sight of a certain form appears pleasing and charming to me, my will stirs. But if later on the sight of the same form becomes unpleasant to me, this will to see it dies. Thus I see even my will arise and pass away; and if I were to recognize that *all* the possible objects of all my senses bring me nothing but sorrow, then all my willing would be extinguished. I could then observe within myself the end of all my willing without myself becoming extinct; and in the end I should see myself as wholly will-less, as a saint does. Hence even the will is not my real 'I' or Self.

But now the reader will only put the question with even greater force: 'Well, if neither my body, nor my mind, nor my will is my Self or "I", then what am I?' Everyone who wishes to answer in accordance with reality, and even a Buddha, can only reply: 'My friend, I myself do not know.' For body, mind, and will exhaust everything that is knowable by

us; indeed, they exhaust the entire world which consists *only* of these three elements. There cannot be any doubt about this, because nothing has ever entered the province of human knowledge except this triad, although in the most varied combinations and degrees. So the Great Theorem becomes world-embracing, and includes within itself all that is generally knowable. *Nothing Knowable Can Be My I!*

Now it may well be that one will at first stare at this result in complete amazement, and perhaps will exclaim: 'This indeed is something unheard of! Am I supposed to be unknowable to myself?' Yet this solution could be obtained only by a Buddha in all its clearness in the form of a syllogism. It needs an enlightened mind to solve the problems of science in a way that gives deep insight into the transitoriness and sorrowfulness of everything cognizable. Only a deeply religious mind can still want to hear the truth when it assumes this form. For this reason also only those with religious minds like the Buddha sought in the deepest meditation to draw themselves out of their fleeting personality. Even the Upanishads proclaim: 'Incapable of being seen, touched and grasped, of being characterized, conceived and described, of being grounded only in the certainty of one's own I: this is the Self.'

When Meister Eckhart exclaims: 'Therefore no thing is so unknown to the soul as the soul itself. It has nothing with which it can recognize itself; it knows everything but itself; it knows of no thing so little as it does of itself.'

Or as Angelus Silesius says: 'A blissful thing am I, a chimera to all that is known or cognizable.'

This awareness of having entered with the Buddha's Great Syllogism into the magic circle of the greatest religious geniuses may encourage the reader to challenge his previous habits of thought. Let us test the syllogism calmly, and objectively and as often as possible. Let us test it by logic and by an *intuitive* contemplation of the workings of our personality. There, in the abode of *death*, we will quickly understand what *life* is. The prize is worth it. Look at your present impersonally, at your past metaphysically; out of this will come comprehension, out of that self-mastery.

Like all great religious geniuses, the Buddha expressed himself in talk, dialogue and lively rejoinder. These despite their profundity were so extremely simple and illustrated with so many examples from daily life, that they were at once intelligible to the simplest of men. Even cowherds during their lifetime were able to realize *Nirvāṇa*, the supreme and final goal taught by the Buddha.

This holds good primarily for the Great Theorem or Syllogism which is the basis of his teaching. Wherever it appears in the Buddhist Canon—and it does so very frequently as the foundation of the entire doctrine—it is given in the following form:

'What think ye, mendicants, is the body imperishable or perishable?'

'Perishable, Lord!'

'But what is perishable, does it bring sorrow or joy?'

'Sorrow, Lord!'

'But can we really say of that which is perishable, brings sorrow, and is subject to change; "This belongs to me, this am I, this is my Self"?'

'Truly not, Lord!'

'What do you think, mendicants, are sensation, perception, activities of the mind and consciousness imperishable or perishable?'

'Perishable, Lord!'

'But does that which is perishable bring sorrow or joy?'

'Sorrow, Lord!'

'But can we really say of that which is perishable, brings sorrow, and is subject to change: "This belongs to me, this am I, this is my Self"?'

'Truly not, Lord!'

'Therefore, mendicants, what there is in bodily form, in sensation, in perception, in activities of the mind, in consciousness—thus every bodily form, sensation, and perception, every activity of the mind, and state of consciousness—is in reality, to be considered in perfect wisdom as: "This belongs not to me, this am I not, this is not my Self." Seeing thus, mendicants, the select disciple becomes weary of bodily form, weary of sensation and perception, weary of activities of the mind and of (the three states of) consciousness. Being weary he becomes unconcerned. By virtue of this equanimity, he detaches himself (from bodily form, from sensation and perception, from the activities of the mind, and the three states of consciousness). In him who is (thus) saved dawns the knowledge: "I am redeemed. Rebirth is annihilated, holy conduct has been lived to an end, I have done what had to be done, I have nothing more in common with this (worldly) order of things".'

Another example of the syllogism is expressed thus:

'"The eye is the Self": such a statement is not admissible, for we perceive an arising and passing away of the eye. But if something that arises and passes away were the Self, then we should conclude: "My Self arises and passes away!" Therefore it is not admissible to say: "The eye is the Self." And so the eye is not Self.'¹

The same argument is given for the ear, the nose, the tongue, the body (as the organ of touch), and for the organ of thought, as well as for consciousness, which arises through the activity of the 'six' organs of sense.

Thus the foundation of the Buddha's teaching consists in the following train of thought: That which is known as perishable, and therefore as sorrowful, is to be regarded as: 'this belongs not to me, this am I not, this is not my Self'. I now observe that whatever is seen, thought, known, and explored in the mind arises and passes away, and so recognize it as perishable and thus as the bringer of sorrow, of transitoriness.² This holds good of all that is cognizable. Therefore the only question that remains is whether this train of thought is correctly summarized in the Great Theorem formulated by George Grimm; and the answer is, yes.

¹ *Majjh. Nik.*, sutta 148.

² *Majjh. Nik.*, sutta 35.

The Great Syllogism is the granite foundation of the Buddha's teaching, all the other parts of which, especially immortality and rebirth, follow from it. Therefore, as soon as that syllogism is proved correct, the entire teaching of the Buddha surpasses all conflict of views and opinions, in the same way as the corollaries of Pythagoras' are as firmly established as the proposition itself. Therefore every description and appreciation of the Buddha's teaching must also describe and appreciate the Great Theorem or Syllogism. Anyone who attacks the Teaching as a whole or in part, is either ignorant or dishonest, if he does not first criticize the Great Syllogism as being the foundation of whole Teaching. For this reason, discussion of the Buddha's teaching should always include the Great Syllogism. If we do this, we shall soon discover why most people object to it, in spite of its being clear and incontestable. Protest is raised not against the syllogism as such and therefore its premises, but only against its conclusion, and hence against the idea of *anattā*.

The Buddha tells us the reason for this; it is the *asmi-māna*,¹ the presumptuousness of the 'I am' which makes it impossible to understand the idea of *anattā*. Since this idea is basic to the Buddha's teaching, it deserves to be elucidated. Now our true I or Self is inaccessible to knowledge; for the whole of our cognitive activity is directed *outwards* to the elements of our personality, such as our body, sensations, perceptions and activities of the mind, and to our cognition itself. The Buddha calls these five constituents of our personality 'the five groups'. Right knowledge, 'which observes an arising and a passing away', recognizes these five groups as our 'attributes' without ourselves passing away, we observe them arise and pass away, so that they cannot be our real Self.

Since we cannot know the Self but only our attributes, the latter are only the *objects* of cognition. Thus all concepts and words, apply only to these attributes from which they are drawn. On the other hand, they are as meaningless when applied to my real I or Self, to the subject of cognition; as it would be, if I were to attribute to myself the qualities and characteristics of my clothes. Above all, this applies to the concept of 'existence' which too is purely empirical, and is drawn from the five elements of our personality. Therefore it only applies to these, and so becomes meaningless with regard to the I that is liberated from personality, and hence to the *absolute* I. And so the Buddha says that, if we wish to say of a Perfect One who has detached himself from the five groups of his personality that 'he is' or 'he is not', this will be an expression from the sphere of the five groups, and is therefore inadmissible.

But this *right* knowledge has been lost for beings in *samsāra* (the eternal cycle of rebirths) during which they have cognized only the five groups of their personality. They have, therefore, lost that reflectiveness which is essential for seeing through these groups as mere attributes. Instead they have lapsed into the erroneous belief that *personality is their true I or Self*. Thus they *confused* their personality with their real 'I' or Self, and so thought: 'I am the personality', or 'my personality is my I'. Consequently,

¹ *Asmi* = I am, *māna* = pride, arrogance.

they have lost sight of the idea of Not-I, of the *anattā*, and have put in its place the I- or *attā*-idea. Even the philosopher Fichte recognized this confusion when he said: 'The concept of the I is thought when the thinking being and the thing thought (namely the five groups of personality) are thought to be the same thing; and conversely, what arises in such thinking is the concept of the I.'

Of course, it is easier to recognize the body as not the I or Self, but everyone shifts his I into what we call mind, consciousness, or thinking. The Buddha teaches that this is the origin of our basic delusion.

'The ordinary man may also weary of this body that consists of the four main materials, may become indifferent to and detach himself from it. Why? In this body that consists of the four main materials we see growth and decline, taking and giving. But the ordinary man is unable to weary of what is called mind, consciousness, or thinking, to become indifferent to and detach himself from it. And why not? For aeons the ordinary man has tied himself to it, has regarded it as belonging to him, has held firmly to the idea: "This belongs to me, this I am, this is my Self".'

This basic delusion of beings which has thus arisen has a special characteristic; they not only confuse themselves with their personality, but boast even more strongly of this pretended I or self of their's, so that they say with *pride*: 'This am I; the personality is my real I or Self, and so I can rightly say "I am"'. How proud men are of this pretended 'psychological' I or Self is seen from the fact that it is a most grave offence seriously to attack an element of a man's personality. Indeed it is a fundamental rule of social intercourse never to do so.

This unjustified pride or arrogance of 'I am', is the very opposite of the *anattā*-idea which says of all the groups of personality: 'This does *not* belong to me, this am I *not*, this is *not* my Self.' This then leads to the obvious conclusion that we also say to ourselves: 'Because the five groups of personality are foreign to my true inner essence, I am also superior to the concept of existence.'

This idea of *anattā* makes us modest and unpretentious. It caused the holy nun Khemā to say: 'I am ashamed of my body, it disgusts me.' This is in harmony with the thought of Plotinus, of whom his biographer Porphyry said that 'he was ashamed of having a body'.

That the arrogance of 'I am' is pride in the five groups which together result in our personality, is shown by the frequently used words of the Buddha: 'I have given up that which, *in respect of the five groups*, is the arrogance of "I am".'

The same point was made by Punna to the novice Ānanda: 'When a man clings, friend Ānanda, the arrogance of "I am" arises; but not if he does not cling.'¹ This impulsive will to cling is always unleashed by a cognition that presents the things of the world to us as beautiful and therefore as desirable. The Buddha calls this cognition in the state of *ignorance*, and says: 'Although an earlier limit to the thirst cannot be known, it can be seen that this thirst is *conditioned*.'

¹ Sam. Nīk., III.

Thus we have only to abolish its condition, namely ignorance, and we have done away with the entire chain of causality. This takes place when we intensify our cognition of the world and of the elements of our personality (body and mind) to such an extent that the whole of their transitory and sorrowful nature becomes obvious. We then understand the splendour of the state that is free from personality, and thus acquire what is termed 'right knowledge'. But when we have become 'wise' in this sense all our longing, all our *thirst*, for the world and for a personality in which we experience it, is extinguished. Thus we are certain that when death approaches, for want of any desire or impulse, we shall no longer grasp and cling to any new seed; and so, wholly redeemed from the world, we shall pass over into the state that is free from personality. We will now concern ourselves with this. Let us call it *God-Nibbāna*.

The concept of God is usually understood to be the world *cause*. Therefore, the world must have had a first beginning, a first cause *in time*, which we call God. Yet we have already seen that we not only have no first beginning, but that nothing in the world has one. Moreover, this is the result of the purely external outlook of our natural sciences. Thus nothing in the world exists through and by itself, but everything originates in the constant change of existing matter. Here every change is the effect of the change that preceded it as cause, and this cause itself is again the effect of an even earlier change as its cause, and so on back into the beginningless past. On closer examination, we see always and everywhere external chains of changes born in the form of causes and effects, and thus as chains of causality, which run back into an endless past. However far we go back into the past we never find a first change that had been preceded by no other. Thus the world is the sum-total of the innumerable chains of causality which are presented to our cognition. Therefore it cannot have had a first beginning in time. If countless billions of years back, we had been able to consider world events, then at any such point in time, we would have been face to face with a vast number of surging and fluctuating processes, and hence of material changes, although of quite a different nature from those of the present. Again we would at once have recognized them as the effect of preceding changes. In other words, any moment of the past would have presented itself as existing now, behind which there would again have yawned an infinite past. Thus at no past point in time is there room to insert a God who first created the whole out of nothing, and *today there is just as little place for such an insertion*. At any conceivable moment in the past the world clockwork already appears in motion; the law of causality does not refer to the *existence* of materials and substances, but only to their incessant changes and transformations. Thus from the Great Theorem with its characteristic impregnability, as well as from the purely external outlook of our natural sciences, it follows that there is not and cannot be a 'creation of the world in time', and so there is no God as a world cause in this sense. This concept of God originates in minds which have so little insight into nature that they believe in their own first beginning at the moment of their birth. Accord-

ingly, they also believe in a first beginning of all other things at the moment when the change occurs from which they have emerged in their present form. Thus they have no idea of the beginninglessness of every chain of causality. The concept of God in this form took its origin from the beliefs of primitive races.

The entire teaching of the Buddha is built up on the Great Theorem or Syllogism. Therefore everything depends on our testing it and seeing that it is correct. Otto Weininger can help us here, although he had never heard of the Great Syllogism. He states that David Hume discovered in the concept of the 'I' only a 'bundle of different perceptions' in a perpetual flux and motion. That this definition became so well known was due to the general over-estimation of Hume for which Kant was to blame. For Lichtenberg, however, this Self was an invention of the *grammarians*; he corrected the grammatical 'I think' by a neuter 'it thinks'. Later Mach conceived the universe as a coherent and connected mass, and the Selves as points in which the coherent mass has greater consistency. The sole reality are the sensations which in one individual are mutually strong, but which are more feebly connected with those of another who *for this reason* is distinguished from the first. The term 'I' as used by Mach is therefore a mere *waiting-room* for sensations. Every instant of time at once vanishes into the abyss of the past. But the individual experience is *not* tied to the definite moment, but is wrested from it by memory. Here memory is not exhausted in the 'general function of organized matter' to react differently to fresh stimuli. Were that so, memory would be a phenomenon of adaptability after the pattern of Lamarck. Something common exists between human memory and those facts; the identical element is found in the continued action of the first impression beyond the moment. However, there is an immense difference between the strengthening of a muscle through habituation to repeated contraction or between the adaptability of an addict to morphia, or a man's recollection of his previous experiences. On the one hand, the course of the old is traceable only in the new; on the other, situations previously experienced again appear in consciousness as old ones, just as they were before, and not made useful through a residuum for a mere after-effect on the new moment. Thus in memory individual experiences are wrested from the flux of time, and to that extent become timeless. *According to its concept, memory is already an overcoming of time.* In the mind it raises beyond time events which everywhere in nature are normally functions of time.

According to this, a being equipped with memory can *face* the lapse of time, consider and select from it any event he likes and by so doing rescue it from universal extinction. This is synonymous with saying that *the being himself is not inserted in time.* For if the being himself stood within the temporal flow of events, and thus changed with them as does a dependent variable with its independent, then the flow of time would not *surprise* him; he would not become *conscious* of it.¹ And this flow of events could never be the object, the thought, or even in the imagination of man.

¹ For consciousness presupposes duality.

We must somehow have overcome time, in order to reflect on it; *we must somehow stand outside time, in order to be able to contemplate it*. This applies not only to every separate moment, but also to the universal concept of time—for *in* passion itself we cannot meditate on passion, but must first have gone beyond it in time. *If there were not a timeless, there would be no intuitive perception of time*. In that case there could also be no possibility for logical thought. A being who did not know that he was untouched by the successive moments of time in his essence, would have no evidence of the identity of the object of his thinking at different times; for, if both parts are subject to change, the absolute system of co-ordinates is missing to which change could refer, and with the help of which change alone could be observed. Indeed, a being whose memory did not allow the psychological possibility of judging that in spite of the lapse of time an object of thought remained identical with itself, would be unable by means of his memory to overcome the infinitely small amount of time. In any case, such a short time is psychologically necessary, if we are to say of the thought-content A that at the next moment it is still A, in order to give the judgement of identity $A=A$; or to express the principle of contradiction which assumes that the thought-content A does not at once vanish from the thinker. For otherwise he could not distinguish the A from the non-A which is not A, and which he is unable to grasp at the same time on account of the narrow range of his consciousness. This is no mere jest. The proof is carried out so strictly that even the ability of the memory to exercise logical functions is extinguished. The propositions of logic are not touched in this way, but only the power to establish and apply them is shown to be tied to that condition. For the proposition $A=A$ *psychologically* has always a reference to time in so far as it can be expressed only *in contradiction to* time, namely $A_t=A_t$. Logically this reference is not inherent in it; but we shall obtain some explanation why, purely logically as a *particular* judgement, it has no *special* meaning. Accordingly, the judgement is feasible psychologically only *in relation to time* as the real *negation* of which it is set forth. Just as the temporal and continuous memory, *as the function of a subject who is himself timeless*, first makes possible knowledge and the use of the *principium identitatis*¹ so too is there most closely connected with it the fourth of the laws of logical thinking, namely the *principle of sufficient reason*, which demands of every judgement a justification. This principle of sufficient reason is the nerve of every syllogism.

God and immortality establish themselves through the mere existence and strength of their idea. We feel that there must be God and immortality. We see clearly that the phenomenal world cannot be its own Ground or purpose. Ultimately all proofs of God and immortality amount to this, and to nothing else. Thus Kant thought he could assert that nature had grudgingly provided about the ultimate questions of our fate, a statement which implies philosophy's declaration of bankruptcy in face of the riddles of God and immortality.

¹ And *contradictionis* and *exclusivertii*.

The complete helplessness of human knowledge, even in the most select minds, must be kept in mind, if we are to recognize the unprecedented nature of the Buddha's solution to the riddles of God and immortality. He does not work with ideas as the ultimate foundation in our consciousness, nor with our inherent feelings, which everyone interprets differently, and whose justification is generally questioned; for nor does he work with even more obscure allegories behind which men conceal their ignorance; nor even with subjective 'experiences' which anyone can have today with L.S.D. Instead the Buddha solved logically the two fundamental riddles, with an impregnable syllogism whose separate parts can be perceived in their manifest correctness as verifiable. As we know already, the experience of a cogent syllogism is genuine and superior to all possibility of delusion.

The direct result of this syllogism is the perfect solution to the riddles of God and immortality. Immortality is a timeless and eternal non-mortality, an indestructibility that is not a continuance, such as the profoundest minds surmised but were unable to make clear. God as the ground of the world has become so identified with the 'nameless essence' as Meister Eckhart calls him, and with the words of Dionysius the Areopagite, that all predicates can be denied but not affirmed of him. He lies so far beyond all being and knowledge, that even his name as God, deity, the absolute, the thing-in-itself is taken from him. On the other hand in Buddhism the principle concealed by these names is defined as that of being extinguished (*Nibbāna-dhātu*). This conforms *more completely* with reality. No wonder that no one recognized in this principle the Brahman of the Veda, the Deity of the other mystics, or even the God of the Christian churches, in so far as there is an underlying reality at all. No wonder that the doctrine of the Buddha seemed to be outside the consciousness of religion. Finally, no wonder that for this reason comprehension of the Master's teaching declined shortly after his death; indeed it became and still is the arena of all those whose task is to pick at everything until they have pulled it down to their own level. Students of Buddhism in this category will naturally cry out that what is here expressed is not Buddhism. Fortunately it is not that hybrid thing to which the Buddha's original teaching has been and still is so distorted as to be unrecognizable. But although it is not 'Buddhism', it is nevertheless the old, original teaching of the Buddha, just as surely as the Great Theorem reveals the noblest and sublimest truth that has ever been taught in the world.

It lies in the nature of the case that with a relationship, there can be only *one* standard of truth; for truth is the penetration of objective reality. This appears to be self-evident, but for a long time it was not so. Thus to save themselves from the contradictions of the dogmas of the Church with human knowledge, many 'orthodox' philosophers of the middle ages assumed that something could be theologically true but philosophically false, and hence that there was a double standard of truth. As against this, it is generally seen today that truth is always a product of the activity of human knowledge. Even the believer in revelation acknowledges this, in

that he only admits even his dogmas and creeds to be true only if they accord with his knowledge. Thus he concludes that, for the establishment of ultimate truths, man's faculty of knowledge is not sufficient, and that the gap must, therefore, be filled up by a divine revelation which, as such, must be believed with faith. In his faculty of reason, every believer also comes to terms with the question which of the different divine revelations is then the correct one. Here one may have the most astonishing experiences concerning the modesty of the demands made by that faculty. Thus for the vast majority of men the special religion to which they are attached is already true because they are born to it; and this satisfies *their* faculty of reason. Nevertheless, they too feel the need to give their faith a rational basis. But with this even they acknowledge that in the end it is always man's faculty of reason which has to decide what is and what is not true. This fact is taken into account by the believer in that he tries to demonstrate that the creeds and dogmas are not contrary to reason. Whoever has any insight into religious apologetics, can convince himself of this. The following questions are also clear: How can I still believe something which I immediately recognize as false? How can I acknowledge it as a divine revelation? Would this not be blasphemy against the Deity? If with our faculty of reason we have obtained a truth which as such is clear and beyond all doubt, then there is certainly no further *authority* to which we should have to submit for verification.

Now, in the first place, what is truth on its formal side, and how is it gained? *Direct* knowledge consists in the perception of the individual concrete event, is wholly taken up with this, and applies only to the particular case. But if this knowledge of the particular case were to disappear again and again, then no being on earth could say that, for want of any possibility of orientation, he would fall a victim to the dangers and difficulties which constantly threaten him. Therefore, in the course of time, the separate pieces of knowledge of the same kind, which are obtained in the form of innumerable individual experiences, crystallize into general rules or norms by which every fresh case is measured, and by which it is judged. The fruit of this criticism is for the time being the concrete judgement as the basis of the action that now ensues. Thus, for example, from innumerable particular experiences, we have discovered the universal norm that 'snakes are dangerous'. Now if we come across a snake, we at once examine it with this norm as a standard. If we decide that 'this snake is poisonous', we then make the judgement: 'This snake is dangerous', and the corresponding action follows. But if we decide that 'it is not poisonous', we arrive at the judgement: 'This snake is not dangerous', and again the corresponding action follows. Therefore all thinking, if drawing an inference or conclusion, is syllogistic; indeed, the conclusion comes about either by subsuming the particular case under the norm or by opposing it to the norm. Syllogistic thinking is, therefore, the basic form of all thinking, indeed of all cognitive activity in general. It is true that our capacity for knowledge is given different names at its various stages, such as perception, understanding, faculty of reason; but fundamentally it is only one thing always

manifesting itself in the same way, namely in the form of the inference or syllogism. An insight into this is wisdom. The teaching of the Buddha is wisdom-in-itself. For this reason, it is not possible for us really to fathom and comprehend the Buddha's system of thought. Here the most conspicuous habit of thought to be considered is that one must rule out that an ancient Indian mendicant could have succeeded thousands of years ago in solving all metaphysical problems, a solution that today is still regarded as impossible. And so to our modern men of learning the Buddha's claim to be taken seriously and *scientifically*, seems to be a piece of arrogance which is based on self-deception, and which must be challenged and rejected as a matter of course.

But this is not all. Against a dispassionate appreciation of the wisdom of the Buddha there rises a habit of thought of even greater consequence which almost all men cannot shake off. Thus for modern man it is axiomatic that a development of mankind is contained in the world-plan which, with genuine anthropomorphism, he again assumes to be self-evident; that our present refined civilization lies on the line of this 'development'; and that the task of the individual is to contribute his part in it by working out his own personality. But the Buddha's teaching arrives at opposite conclusions by saying that, since 'misery predominates' in the world, such a world is fundamentally something that ought not to be. He says that a positive and final goal that is reachable with or in the world is a vain and idle figment of the mind. He also states that the premises of a syllogism are psychologically always earlier *judgements* which precede the conclusion in time, and which must be adhered to by the thinker; thus a man's arguments and reasons are always to be sought in his past. And so the continuity, which controls man's thinking as a whole, is closely connected with causality. Consequently, every *psychological* coming into force of the principle of reason or Ground presupposes a continuous *memory* that keeps and retains all identities.

In logic the main point is the true significance of the principles of identity and contradiction. The proposition $A=A$ is of immediate certainty and evidence. At the same time, it is the basic and original standard of truth for all other propositions. If one of these contradicted it, and therefore if in a special judgement the concept of the predicate were to state of a subject something that contradicted the concept of that subject, we should regard it as false; and, if we think it over, this proposition would ultimately prove to be the law of our judgement. It is the principle of what is true and false; and whoever regards it as something tautological which states nothing and does not assist our thinking, and many have done so, is right, but has failed to understand the nature of the proposition. $A=A$, the *principle* of all truth, cannot itself be a special truth. The man who finds the principles of identity and contradiction devoid of substance, has himself to thank for it, for he imagined he would find in them special ideas. Those propositions, however, are not themselves knowledge; they are *specific* acts of thought, yet the standard must be applied to *all* acts of thought. This standard cannot itself be an act of thought which

could in any way be compared with others. The *norm* of thought cannot be located in thought itself. The principle of identity adds nothing to our knowledge; it does not enlarge it but only *establishes* it. This standard itself is either all or nothing. When I state the proposition $A=A$, then the meaning of this proposition is not that a *special* A which *exists* or even that *every* particular A of *actual* experience or of *actual thinking*, is like itself. The judgement of identity is independent of whether an A exists, which again does not mean that the proposition must not be thought by anyone who exists. But it is *thought* independently of *whether* something, *whether* someone, exists. It means: If there is no A —there may or may not be one, *even* if there is not one at all—then $A=A$ holds good. With this a position is irrevocably given, an existence is posited, namely the existence $A=A$, yet it remain hypothetical whether A itself *exists*. The proposition $A=A$ states, therefore, that something exists, and this existence is just that required *norm*. As Mill imagined, it cannot originate from empiricism, from few or many *experiences*, for it is independent of experience, and it holds good whether or not experience will indicate to it an A . It has never yet been denied by anyone and could not be, for denial itself would again presuppose it (the principle of identity), were it to deny *something*, some specific thing. Now as the proposition asserts an existence without making itself dependent on the existence of objects—or without stating anything about such an existence—then it can express only an existence that is different from all existence of actual and possible objects, and is therefore the existence of that which, according to its concept, can never become an object. Thus by its evidence it will reveal the existence of the *subject*; and this existence that is expressed in the principle of identity is not found in the first or the second A , but in the identical sign of equality $A=A$. This proposition is therefore identical with the proposition: I am.

This existence which results from the principle of identity and lies beyond cognition and exists independently of all experience, is the existence of the real 'I' or Self. No purely logical argument is possible for this, but only a psychological one from the *fact of experience*; the logical norm does not come to man from without, but is given to him from the deepest recesses of his own essence. Only for that reason can the *absolute existence* or the *existence of the Absolute*, as shown in the proposition $A=A$, be equated with the *existence of the Self or I*; the absolute I or Self is the Absolute. Let us call it the Higher Self in order to distinguish it from the vain and petty ego which also is called 'self'.

It is easier to convey this difficult deduction *psycho-cybernetically*, though logic cannot be avoided. It is clear that, in order to say $A=A$, in order to be able to establish as a norm the immutability of the concept and to maintain this in face of the constantly changing *ad hoc* data of cognition, something unalterable must exist, and this can only be the subject. If I were inserted into the cycle of change, I could not know that an A had remained equal to itself. If I were constantly changing, and did not remain something identical, if my Self were functionally connected to change, it would be impossible to face and recognize this; there would be

wanting the absolute system of co-ordinates in sole reference to which something identical could be determined and established as such.

It can therefore be shown where the existence of the subject explicitly finds expression even in logic; and we do not need to represent the 'intelligible existence' (God) as a mere logical *possibility* of thought or use it to provide us with a complete certainty of the moral law, as was done by Kant. Fichte was right when he found in pure logic the existence of the Self guaranteed to the extent that the Self is identical with intelligible and pure *Being* (God).

The principles of all truth are the logical axioms which decree an *existence*, and knowledge tends and aspires to this. Logic is a law which is to be obeyed, and *man is wholly himself only when he is entirely logical*; indeed he is not so until he is everywhere and entirely logical.

Fundamentally, logic and ethics are one and the same thing; thus ethics is possible only in accordance with the laws of logic, and at the same time all logic is ethical law. Logic represents the Self with its complete realization as absolute existence. Ethics first prescribes this realization.

Thus there is no reasonable person who cannot be convinced of the existence of the I or Self. He who denies it—this ineffable and inexplicable something—can hardly be called reasonable. And however radically world views may differ from one another in other respects, they all have one thing in common, in so far as they merit being called a world view. It is precisely that which is conveyed by the fact of Self, the belief possessed by every reasonable man; the conviction of the existence of a Self or soul which is solitary in the universe, faces the entire universe, and finally cognizes the whole cosmos.

All error and all guilt, shame, faith and hope, fear and remorse, love and hate, keen desire and solitude, sensitiveness and vanity, thirst for fame and need for immortality, presuppose the higher self. That which in self-observation considers, judges and assesses all those contents cannot be found in the contents themselves as one among the others. It is the timeless Self which sets down the past as well as the present, which first *creates* that 'unity of self-consciousness', that continuous memory. For it is not memory, as Mill imagines, or continuity, as Mach supposes, which brings about belief in an I that outside these has no existence; on the contrary, memory and continuity, like filial affection and a need for immortality, are generated from the I. It is difficult to understand how investigators, who have never attempted to analyse the above-mentioned phenomena (error, guilt, shame, and so on), have the courage to give a peremptory opinion of the I, since they do not come across it like the colour of an orange or the taste of strong coffee.

If the modern depth psychologist walks in the ways of the Buddha's Great Syllogism by setting up a centre of apperception and revealing there from the existence of a noumenal, transempirical subject of extreme hyperempirical reality, then, like every mortal except a *perfectly* awakened one, he too has failed to grasp the meaning of the *minor premise* of the Buddha's Great Syllogism in its *all-embracing* cogency. Nevertheless, with

Kant he declares *personality* to be the transempirical timeless Self, but to consist essentially in the psyche. For the logical positivist as a strict and uncompromising 'scientist', the result of this is that, as with every being lacking the religious and spiritual world-view, there ceases to be any reason for assuming a higher Self or a soul; whereupon he declares not only animals but also human beings to be without I or a soul. Self-evident as this result is when we declare the transempirical subject to *consist* in pure being, the transempirical subject does not consist *essentially* in the psyche or ego. Even this wrong conclusion of modern psychology confirms the Buddha's Great Syllogism, according to which *nothing* cognizable, not even the psyche or ego is connected *essentially* with our I or Self or with the absolute. And because the higher Self *is* itself also above all cognition and action (thus too above all ethics) it can assume *as an attribute* an organism with a *defective* intelligence and act therewith in a way that is detrimental to its welfare, and hence unethically. It is then to use the Buddha's words, a being in the state of *ignorance* which can however convert itself even here on earth into a being in the state of wisdom. This means that the psyche or ego is, when engulfed in ignorance, unable to use its cognitive apparatus with formal correctness and hence *logically*. It therefore no longer has any conception of its hyperempirical reality and thus of its obligation to ethical conduct.

Let us study modern science in *this* spirit, thus divesting it of its greatest defect, thereby obtaining much help towards the discovery of a sure criterion for determining our real I or higher Self.



The Most Excellent Truth of Suffering

Buddhist Wisdom as the Conquest of Sorrow

Let us now review the facts outlined above. We have been wandering, as in a dream or drunkenly, for countless aeons, from one form to another, from one world to another, appearing and reappearing endlessly as man, beast, god and devil. And no matter where we may be, there arises in us by means of that organism which we have assumed, an uninterrupted stream of sensations, pleasant and painful, of a kind apprehensible by that organism and dependent upon it. And these sensations succeed one another endlessly, the painful following so inevitably on the heels of the pleasant that finally we turn away from the pleasant as being the pain-bringer, the potentially painful. 'What man is there,' asks the Buddha, 'who knowingly would drink water from a poisoned well?' This ancient simile, much used by him, cannot be pondered too deeply for the warning it contains is good for all 'worlds'—even the so-called heavenly; for our sojourns there, although possibly of great duration, must inevitably come to an end and we shall again find ourselves in this world of acute suffering where we lose the memory of our 'heavenly' joys, and not knowing whence we have come, believe our 'birth' to be our 'beginning'. The true nature of this spiritually cybernetic *process*, in all the worlds and for all time, is given by the Buddha as follows: 'Only suffering arises where something arises. Suffering only ceases where something ceases.'

Although the above *résumé* of our relationship to the world, or worlds, may be abhorrent to the conventional, pleasure-loving person it is nevertheless sound and exact. And so our insight into it, if persevered with, will become clear as crystal. One can recognize intuitively that the general process of sensory life is as the Buddha describes it; that it is so, and could not be otherwise—despite the very ocean of suffering in which we thereby find ourselves submerged. One point, however, seems beyond the scope of direct intuition and that is the existence of 'hells' and 'heavens' into which we may be reborn. This supposed defect weighs so heavily with certain people that they repudiate the entire teaching. To do so is no less foolish than to reject a sound scientific work because we are unable to understand the author on certain highly technical phases of his subject. The reasonable man, however, having convinced himself of the general soundness of his author will accept and rely on the quality of his specialization in the difficult byways of his chosen province. If, on the other hand, the reader is unable to accept this phase of the Buddha's teaching it need not affect his attitude to the bulk of the doctrine—which remains accessible to his own direct insight. He may also assure himself of the actual existence of these worlds abstractly, by taking thought—much as the

astronomer Le Verrier first ascertained the existence of the planet Neptune, not seeing it, but knowing that it must be, and in such a place. To begin with it is surely not improbable that Nature, should have evolved other beings than those directly accessible to our sense organs, beings which are quite different from, and more finely organized than, the organisms known to us. There is, indeed, nothing valid to be said against the supposition¹ that such beings are removed from us less by spatial barriers than by a difference in sensory vibrations; and that we, with our grossly material sense organs, are able to apprehend the merest fraction of the reality (life) in and about us. These and other considerations make very probable the existence of such beings and such worlds—had we not also the additional assurance of the Buddha who declares that he has known them by personal experience.

The Buddha distinguishes between three kinds of so-called 'worlds'—that of sense pleasures (including this earth), that of pure forms, and the formless worlds. In the world of pure forms, the beings have 'organisms' or bodies but are not sexually differentiated. This is the world of pure joy, of abstract contemplation, of aesthetic delight. The formless World is that of liberation from form and is to be experienced rather than described.

And let us assure ourselves that the Buddha was incapable of uttering a deliberate falsehood. His whole life and teaching make ridiculous the suspicion that any fraud, over-statement, charlatanry or miracle-mongering could emanate from him. The declaration of such a witness may be accepted as next best to personal insight and a road to the truth, until the advent of this direct, irrefutable perception. Now what about the seeming impossibility of remembering former existences. Forgetfulness of past lives is not a valid objection to the theory of rebirth. Have we not also forgotten our own infancy, in our present life? And does that forgetfulness disprove the existence of those early years? The round of rebirths can, at most, be looked upon by its critics as a dark subject but even this objection is not valid for it is possible, under certain conditions, to remember our former lives. These conditions are that the faculty of memory shall be trained or developed through Yoga to a point of unusual proficiency—just as any other faculty must be practised for its efficient exercise.

We accept the fact that we cannot easily remember the events of infancy and take it for granted that to recall these events requires practice, a gradual going-back to certain outstanding events and working from them to others until the less notable, or more deeply buried, circumstances of these slowly come into consciousness. Knowing these minor difficulties of memory is it reasonable to expect that the events of past lives will come back to us without effort and exercise—without a very special training of the mind? A more plausible ground of objection lies in the problem of how such recollection is possible, since everything in us, particularly consciousness continually changes and cannot therefore serve as a storehouse of past events and images. The answer is that neither brain nor consciousness is

¹ The word supposition is a concession to those who do not know by direct insight the 'worlds' we are now discussing.

the receptacle of 'memories';¹ but that these so-called memories submerge themselves in, or are impressed upon our true being, and thus may be resuscitated by our will (desire) through the association of ideas.

To doubt is not to disprove—although I do not understand the language of the Eskimos, may I not have a friend who does so, easily and correctly? Fifty years ago it was held impossible to reach outer space. Why? Merely because the conditions of such flight were unknown. In the same way, the worldly person does not know the conditions necessary for remembering former lives and cannot therefore develop any special proficiency in the art of observing them. But does that mean that others cannot do so? The Buddha and his chief disciples were proficient adepts in this exercise (as in many others). He has left us minute instructions regarding the conditions necessary for this attainment, leaving to us the problem of bringing about similar conditions and a similar proficiency for and in ourselves. The fact of rebirth being thus provable by direct perception, one should not question its possibility. One is entitled only to prove it personally by direct perception or to accept in oneself a lack of desire (or energy) to bring about those conditions which might lead to its perception.

We are not naturally inclined to new ideas. Every great discovery has to fight for its life, no matter how well attested by competent observers. This is particularly true of discoveries in Science. If the innovator runs foul of a current prejudice he is sure to be set up as a laughing-stock. J. R. Mayer, who discovered certain laws governing the conservation of energy, was subjected to attacks and defamation even from scientists which, finally, hastened his death. It is the practice of a lazy or incompetent mind to ridicule what it does not understand—a practice which often leads 'thinkers' and scientists to ridicule the saints and philosophers who later are recognized to have been both good and wise.

Let us restate our position. I am not part of the phenomenal world. I am merely connected with it by a physical organism which I use to see, hear, taste, touch, smell and think the various objects of that world. My body is a cognizing apparatus and nothing more. Our position being simple as regards sensation, let us now consider that power or influence which causes sensation to arise. This is *tanhā* (desire or thirst) and as a rule we are dominated by it in every motion of body and mind, in every decision and in every action. We are compelled by it to see, hear, touch, taste, smell and think for its pleasure the things it likes. We are further constrained by it to preserve intact for its future use and enjoyment what we call *our* body, but what is in reality only the means of satisfying this thirst.

Were there not this continuity of desire or thirst, which extends beyond death, I might at any moment renounce the world by an act of suicide rather than await the moment of my natural death. There remains however the possibility, and where desire is present, the necessity, of grasping at the seed of a new organism in this or another 'world'. So powerful is this influence which binds us, helpless, to the world of suffering that many

¹ We do not find in the brain microscopic photographs, as it were, of past experiences.

great thinkers have maintained that we can never be free from it. The attitude of the Christian Church on this subject is not without interest—admitting the possibility of liberation from our impulses, she looks to the help of an all-powerful god for its accomplishment.

Every check of this thirst, even every attempt to resist it, brings suffering. Therefore, the problem is: 'Having a body, with certain sense organs, can I free myself from the constraint of using it in the service of thirst? Can I become master in my own house, with authority over my servants, the sense organs? Can I free myself from desire?' The Buddha answers yes, for the thirst that dwells in us is a quality *not* essential to us. He describes the state of liberation from this thirst as *cetovimutti*—the deliverance of the mind from craving. By *mind* must be understood the entire complex of sensory functions including intuitive and abstract thinking. The man, therefore, who is free from desire is also free from the constraint of using his organism in the service of 'thirst'—he becomes the master of his will not by resisting but by renouncing it.

Were we able to free ourselves wholly from this willing the use of our sense organs would be unrestrained. We would be able at any time to consider any problem and come to conclusions about it without inner conflicts, calmly, in the light of pure cognition. Should we recognize anything as worthwhile we would become active in its realization, and should we recognize a project as worthless, we would not exert ourselves for it. If we take action for no matter what purpose it would be to a degree commensurate with the true value of that purpose, the *true* value, not its possible advantage to a hypothetical, personal 'ego'. Further, we would give up, without pining or regret, any project which might prove unworthy or impossible to complete. And, above all, we would not be constrained to cling to a failing organism at the moment of death, but would relinquish it with perfect equanimity. Then, having no further desire for sensations, we would not grasp at the seed of any new organism. Desirelessness, truly realized, is unqualified freedom and happiness.

The problem of free will is thus the key problem of spiritual deliverance in the Buddha's sense. And this Deliverance, the perfect independence of our cognizing apparatus from the influences of that thirst and so the tranquillizing of sensation, constitutes *real* happiness—the holy, profound and unconditioned joy of the *Arahat*, the so-called 'bliss' of Christian and other mystics. The word 'holy' as used by the Buddha has a fixed and definite value. It designates a delivered one—a person who has become free from his own inclinations and impulses and therefore happy. It is neither absurd nor priggish to desire *such* holiness.

Tanhā, (thirst) shows itself in three ways: as desire, aversion and delusion—desire for an object of sense, aversion from an object of sense and the delusion, induced in us by objects of sense, that we are of this world—that we are somehow or somewhere contained in the illusory network of personality. Whenever any phase of thirst influences our cognition there arise in us, as mental activities distinct from the organism, emotions of joy, hate, fear, anger and so forth. Every emotion to which we are

subjected is produced by our yielding with our cognition to the thirst which wells up, and, in so yielding serving it if only for brief moments. Were we able to confront the motions of the will (thirst) as they arise with detachment, with unbiased cognition, we would regard them as enemies who are always trying to invade our stronghold, to capture our cognition and force it to obey them, to function as they wish, and for their pleasure. Were we able to envisage this uprising as the thirst really is, we would quell it instantly, at the very beginning, with the result that no emotions would arise in us: for an emotion is merely the result of our yielding with our cognition to a movement, an influence, a whim of desire.

The various organs which make up the body are for the satisfaction of thirst—the eye, for the satisfaction of the desire to see; the ear, for the satisfaction of the desire to hear, and so forth—and the organism as a whole is an apparatus for the proposed satisfaction of every sensory desire. When this desire comes into action by means of eye, ear, nose, palate, body or mind, the result is always a certain disturbance of the activating organ. Such, however, is the interdependence of organs within the body that any stirring of a particular organ affects the body as a whole. There is not one single movement of desire acceded to by the cognition, which does not, to some extent, disturb, agitate and fatigue the whole body—much as a rider moves with every motion of his horse.

When, for instance, the eye brightens with pleasure, the conditioning cause is that desire has been satisfied by one or other of the affiliated organs of sense; conversely when the eye dulls with pain or inertia, the conditioning cause is that desire has been denied satisfaction by one or other of the sense organs. And, let us repeat, every emotion which arises, no matter how slight, is a sign of our bondage, a symptom that in some part of our body we are serving a foreign master. This is why our body shakes and quivers if our will falls into the condition which we call the emotion of fear, and that our heart, as the central organ of satisfying our will to live, contracts convulsively if we suddenly face the danger of death.

This has a most important bearing on health. The more often and passionately an organism is stirred, the more quickly will it be worn out—as a machine is worn out by violent and erratic pressures.

By passion we understand the bondage of our cognition to a particular thirst—a bondage which has become habitual through our serving that particular thirst for many successive lives. The result is that with the arising of that particular thirst we are subjected to more than usually violent emotions.

Now, in the human machine, the most delicate organs for the satisfaction of desire are the nerves, the special organs of the will for sensation, the true sensory organs; and so it is the nerves which are over-taxed and exhausted by the emotions—particularly by violent ones. The best method, therefore, to keep the body healthy and to recuperate sick nerves, is not to allow our thirst to become over active, but to tranquillize it. 'Having achieved serenity,' said the Buddha, 'we become tranquil in body, tranquil in mind.'

The ultimate problem of philosophy is not What is the world?, but What am I! For it is possible that if I know what I am, I will not be interested in the world any more.

By 'I' is to be understood my own reality or essence, that which cannot be taken away from me without my complete destruction.

It is impossible to deny the 'I' in *this* sense. For the 'I' of the denier makes the denial. An absolute nothing would be unable to affirm or deny anything. Clearly, the external world of sense objects is not my Self. The forms I see with my eyes, the sounds I hear with my ears, the scents I smell with my nose, the flavours I taste with my tongue, the objects I touch with my hands have nothing to do with me. If these various objects of the organs of sense cease to exist, the 'I' will still be there; their destruction will not touch my real Self. The external world as conveyed to me through the sense organs has nothing to do with my real Self. Even ideas are not the 'I'; even thinking does not constitute my Self. We have not five but six senses. The function of the sixth is thinking and its organ, the physical brain. The objects of this inner sense of thinking are, first, all objects of the five outer senses and their causal relationships—in short, all possible phenomena of the external world. Using these phenomena, or outer sense impressions, as material I construct by means of this organ of thought the *pictures* of imagination, concepts and ideas. This is, specifically, the function of thinking, and the products of this activity are ideas, concepts, etc., which have nothing to do with the true Self.

The organ of thinking has a further object; unlimited space. This object does not depend on the activity of the five outer senses but is cognized immediately, merely by thinking, when the other five senses are at rest. Space is, indeed, the immediate object of the organ of thought, since it presents itself as soon as we begin thinking. And as the organ of thought is stirred by every activity of the outer senses so with every sense activity we necessarily perceive space. We cannot cognize any object of the outer senses without at the same time cognizing the space in which that object is placed. Inversely, we can only cognize space as such if we discontinue the activity of the five outer senses and direct the organ of cognition exclusively upon it. That is the perception of boundless space. We may even dismiss 'space' from our thinking, and still think. This is done by bringing the five outer sense activities to a standstill and directing our organ of thinking, in complete concentration, upon the thought 'There is nothing here for me.' Thus space itself may be eliminated from the content of consciousness, leaving only the thought 'There is nothing more.' Further, we can realize in a direct way, that space objectively has nothing whatever to do with us, that is, with the true Self. Let us imagine the impossible, that all space outside the body has ceased to exist. This would not affect the real Self. The question remains if the space filling my body is essential to me. Let us now imagine this body, with unimpaired vitality, shrunk to the size of, say, Tom Thumb. By so doing it becomes obvious that the space which filled my body when it was taller and larger has nothing to do with me. I, myself, would not have become less through this diminution

of the body, with a consequent diminution of the space occupying it. I would still recognize myself as myself, the same as I have always been, despite the smaller body and the reduced space occupied by it. Thus it is clear that space has nothing to do with the real Self—it is merely a condition for the existence of the body. And the body is not my Self. What, then, is my relationship to it? The body is a physical organism, consisting of materials of external nature, grasped and assimilated into a chemical rearrangement called the 'body'. This assimilation takes place in conjunction with the elimination of used materials by a process of ejection. Thus, my so-called body is alien to me; a short time ago the materials composing it were unrelated parts or fragments of external nature which I had drawn on for its manufacture. To make this condition even clearer we have only to imagine these unrelated materials as present in the body in their original, unassimilated condition. We thus see the whole body, in all its parts and organs, as an assemblage of materials wrested from external nature—an assemblage over which I preside, as regulating both the inflow and outflow. We may recognize our blood as water, and observe the foodstuffs dissolved by digestive and glandular action, broken up and carried about by it. We may also notice how the various tissues are built up by this inflow of fresh material and how the blood-stream carries towards the various evacuating organs the materials no longer needed for the body's maintenance.

Even the heat produced by these chemical changes comes originally from external nature. It is, after all, the heat of the sun bound chemically by grains, etc., in the process of ripening and remaining latent until released by further chemical adjustments. In the assimilative process this chemically bound heat becomes free through certain oxydizing 'splittings' and penetrates the whole body as vital warmth. Thus, this very warmth in my body is the same heat which was in or about the sun many millions of miles from this earth—a fact which, in its turn, makes it obvious that this heat (changing and conditioning certain materials) has nothing to do with me.

It is therefore, obvious that I do not consist in an organism, I merely have one.

Is cognition my Self?

The so-called mental functions are products of the sense organs which, as we have noted, consist of the materials of external nature no matter how combined in the complex organism called body. If I did not possess sense organs, especially a brain, I could neither see, hear, smell, taste, touch nor think. The so-called mental or spiritual functions are bound to the sense organs, the brain included, and are conditioned by them. These sense organs are components of our body and consist, as we have noted, of the materials of external nature. Now, to see, hear, taste, smell, touch and think is simply to sense and to perceive. If I see a form with the eye, visual sensation arises, visual perception arises; and so, equally, with the other organs and objects. To cognize or become conscious is merely to sense and to perceive. Thus not only seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting,

touching and thinking are foreign to us, but their dependents also—that is sensation and perception, cognition and consciousness. These processes are all equally foreign to us—that is, to our real Self.

Am I not a so-called 'soul' or spiritual entity? As the result of the preceding enquiry we now recognize the body to be an apparatus by which we see, hear, smell, taste, touch and think the various objects of external nature. It is a mere cognizing apparatus and, at the same time, our only means of coming in contact with the world. When the body dies all consciousness dies with it—for which reason there can be no soul, a supposedly conscious entity, apart from the body and its sensory equipment.

To hold the opinion that there is consciousness without sense organs is not unlike maintaining that there is digestion without a stomach. Had I a soul independent of sense organs could I not see, although born blind, or hear, although deaf from birth? Or, having merely lost these functions would not the soul fulfil them? The very notion is absurd. Sensation, perception, the activities of the mind and consciousness are bound to, and conditioned by, the six sense organs; these, in turn, to and by the body, and that to and by the materials of external nature. Strictly speaking, I can say 'I see, I hear, I think' with no less impropriety than an engine driver might say 'I am emitting smoke, steam and ashes', for as he merely causes the emergence of smoke, steam and ashes from a given apparatus, so do I allow my willing to arise to use my cognizing apparatus for the production of sensation, perception, the activities of the mind and contents of consciousness. Also, by study and application it is possible to cognize this very cognizing apparatus in all its parts and functions—in other words, to criticize and master our cognitive activities through our cognition.

In this denial of the existence of a conscious soul or entity, apart from and independent of the body, the Buddha drew a distinguishing line between himself and all other religious teachers.

Do I consist in willing?

It is by desire or will that I am connected with this cognizing apparatus—I want a body and I want to use it. I endeavour to satisfy this will, in so far as it desires cognitive activity, through the six sense organs; and in so far as it desires permanence for this activity, through the vegetative functions (breathing, circulation of the blood, etc.) which tend to preserve the body. But even this will is not essential to me. For it becomes operative only under a peculiar condition, that of a cognized object appearing to me as desirable or worthy of willing. If it should seem that the sight of a given object might cause me pain my will or desire to see that object would vanish. And were I to perceive and cognize that all sights (forms entering consciousness by the eye) might cause me suffering, the will or desire for these sights would disappear without affecting me in the least. Similar conclusions apply to the will which I try to satisfy by the operation of the other sense organs (including the brain). Should I ever decide that all possible objects of the six organs of sense could bring me only distress and suffering then my desire for them would vanish and I should be

without any will or desire whatever; but the 'I' would still continue to be. Will arises only under certain specific conditions and disappears under certain other conditions—and neither its arising nor its passing away touches or affects my real Self. Thus, not even the will is our Self.

The Real Self

If I now group together the various factors which I have found *not* to constitute my Self¹ and subtract them from my Self, what remains over is my true essence. The factors which we have eliminated are called by the Buddha *Upadhis*, meaning assumptions, because I assume them although they have nothing to do with me. If I now consider these factors of personality I find that they constitute and exhaust all that is cognizable in me or in connexion with me. What remains for cognition if desire, consciousness, the sense organs and the objects of sense disappear? Literally and truly, nothing is left; everything has ceased to be. It is, however, clear that this 'everything' is everything cognizable; and this 'nothing' which remains is nothing cognizable. How and why is this remainder a relative, not an absolute nothing? The reason is simple. We have taken away from our Self only cognizable factors, (those which we have recognized as *Upadhis*, assumptions, inessential to it) of which the sum total (as in our deductions) constitutes the not-Self—what I am not. The remaining nothingness, what I am, is therefore 'nothingness' in reference to a conditioned process, that of cognition or knowing. To say that I am 'nothing' in this sense is to say that my true Self is inaccessible to cognition, that I am nothing knowable, nothing of this world—this world which, as we have seen, is merely the aggregate of things cognizable. My true Self is, therefore, the unknowable, the inscrutable—that which lies beyond cognition.

Why is the Will an indefatigable builder?

It is vital to realize that the bodily organism is something alien to me—is not my Self. For, with this realization there comes the knowledge that the beginning and end of this body is not, nor could be, *my* beginning or *my* end. How, then, and why, if I am not this body, do I possess it? What is my relationship to it? The answer is very simple—I am connected with it solely by willing. It is my will and nothing else which procures me a body, and does so in the only way by which I procure anything, by laying hold of, by grasping it. Because I have the desire, the will for a body (sensory equipment), I grasp the seed prepared by my parents, cling to it and evolve from and with it the thing I most desire, a physical organism. Such has been my will and my occupation from beginningless time and I shall continue so to behave for life after life, as long as I desire or will for a physical organism. During my world wanderings I experience every possible sensation. Accordingly, it is not I who am constantly changing but the bodily organism and the objects sensed and perceived by it. It is I, however, who am impressed by the ever-changing sensations, produced

¹ External objects, the cognitive activity, the body and willing.

by the ever-changing organism. And this is true not only of the brief interval between the birth and death of my present life but of countless billions of lives circling endlessly through the aeons of existence. During these incalculable periods of time all possible sensations have surged in upon me, their creator and their victim. I have experienced, innumerable times and in ceaseless succession, the sensations of dying and being born again. And since this interaction has taken place from beginningless time, I have endured all things and suffered all things—dying, at one time, on a bed of tormenting sickness, at another time, on the battlefield, at another, on the scaffold as a condemned criminal—and so forth, endlessly.

All life is thus endless suffering. We are beset by a very sea of suffering, the waves of which beat upon us in endless surges of pain and self-renewal. Everything the 'I' experiences changes continually into something else; there is no sensation of joy which does not pass away, no sensation of sorrow which does not recur with inevitable certainty. Every pleasure is shadowed—even while we enjoy it—by the knowledge that it, too, will pass with the passing of the object which caused it and will be replaced by suffering equally acute. The greatest suffering comes when the whole sensory world passes away from us—the moment of death. Then, truly, am I overcome with grief and sorrow—only to reappear in a new form, exposed to new life, new sensations, new decrepitude, new dying. What man, understanding this merry-go-round of unending despair does not wish to get out of it? Where lies the difficulty of recognizing all life as suffering? The rational person observes in this sea of impermanence various aspects of happiness—the play of children, the joy of youthful lovers, the pleasures of bodily lust, the delight of a mother in her child. He knows and hears the exultation, the cries of delight of all whose wishes have been fulfilled, but he also knows and hears the grief and wailing of parents at the death of their children, the suffering of the sick and needy, the despair of the poor and friendless, the anguish of the dying. Of course, none but the wise, the truly rational, can know and understand these things. The average person *does not want to know them*. He removes from sight and hearing everything that might thwart his craving for pleasant sensations. He puts the poor in homes, the sick in hospitals, the insane in asylums, the criminals in prison—so that he may enjoy undisturbed the illusions of a pleasurable world. He romanticizes death, stifling with flowers the unpleasant odour of putrefaction. But does he lessen wretchedness by trying to cover it up, or reduce the sum of suffering by an effort to ignore it? Can any man, knowing the abysses of life, expect to find happiness in it?

It is very difficult to make a true valuation of life. Our feeble, undeveloped cognizing faculty can only apprehend a very brief phase of life, usually the immediate present in which we live. Accepting this common defect in cognition let us try to imagine a life period of eighty years with all its experiences reduced to a span of less than one hour. We would see in a few minutes the infant become a child, the child a youth, the youth a young man; then a lover, the lover a husband clasping in his arms a wife

who like himself grows momentarily older, losing charm, beauty and vigour and becoming as the seconds go by, haggard, wrinkled and decrepit. Finally, just as this person is trying to make out 'what it is all about' we would observe the faculty of understanding being torn from him in the final agony of death. This true picture of life seen in shortened perceptive shows the worthlessness of all the events and experiences which crowd in upon us—and these do not appear more desirable as an endless succession. For sense pleasures are the greatest misery. We desire only pleasant sensations, the indifferent ones fail to interest us and we avoid the unpleasant ones at all cost. And yet pleasant sensations including those of thinking are the most pernicious, a fact which most people find it difficult to understand, despite the complete agreement of all great religious teachers. Not only the Buddha and his disciples, but the Christian Church and her saints, in fact the adepts of all great religions, warn us against sense pleasures as the worst evil to which man can surrender himself—and yet these saintly men sought only their own happiness and that of others. This desire for well-being would have persuaded them to indulge in sense pleasures and recommend others to do likewise—had they not discovered for themselves that this leads inevitably to *sorrow*. Or, as the Buddha declared: 'If, O monks, the evil that is overcome resulted in unhappiness and loss, then I would not say that you must overcome this evil (sensual desire).'

Summarized briefly, the Buddha's teaching about desire (*tanhā*, thirst for sensation) and its avoidance is as follows. Desire for sense pleasure dominates us, and we seek the satisfaction (quieting) of this desire by means of our sense organs because its non-satisfaction brings us grief and suffering. 'Not to obtain what one wants—that is suffering', from which we flee as from the plague. However, since normally we desire only sense pleasures our one aim and activity is to enjoy them and thus avoid suffering. But unfortunately, desire is by its very nature illimitable and cannot therefore be 'satisfied' (fulfilled) by means of sensation. And so we are led by it on a never-ending pursuit of pleasure, the eternal will-o'-the-wisp, and this desire grows stronger with each momentary gratification—acquiring, finally, a quite terrifying power. Further, every sense pleasure turns inevitably to suffering with the passing of the object which caused it, and does so in exact proportion—the greater the joy, the greater the suffering. 'Food and drink turn into dung and urine—pleasures into suffering,' declared the Buddha, with his usual lack of equivocation; and this unsatisfying quality in all sense pleasures, with the suffering they entail, is what first makes them distasteful to the reflective mind. Their second and more serious aspect is as direct obstacles to happiness—all suffering arising from impeded desire, and ceasing with the giving up of desire. Desireless, a boundless peace descends upon us—nothing disquiets us any more.

The man who is free from the desire for possessions is free from the anxiety and suffering which this desire entails, as are those who no longer hanker after worldly honours, social considerations, etc. The man who

succeeds in giving up all desire is far happier than he who succeeds in obtaining all worldly honours, luxuries and so forth. Each would possess everything he desired, but the will of the one, who desired nothing, would be entirely quiescent, the will of the other stimulated and made stronger. He might, like Solomon, exclaim 'vanity, vanity, all is vanity', or plunge headlong into new pleasures. Indeed he has no other alternative, for it is impossible to satisfy desire by yielding to it, we merely add to its power. And so voluntary poverty and renunciation¹ is the surest means of happiness on this earth, just as the surest means of unhappiness is to acquire or assume new and more agreeable possessions.

All saints of all religions have praised and experienced this poverty, and with it happiness of the highest sort—and the sign of its realization is the cessation of this craving. Therefore, they one and all reject and despise the deceptive and momentary pleasures of sense, finding them increasingly dangerous as habitual indulgence adds to their insatiability and thus separates us farther and farther from that happiness which can only be won by giving them up. This is why they warn us against sense pleasures as the greatest obstacle in our conquest of sorrow. In our search 'for what is good, seeking after the unsurpassed state of peace most excellent', we must refuse to follow any doctrine which sets any value on passing sensations, on 'the things of this world'.

The only safe and proper guide is one who has discovered for himself, by renunciation, this 'state of peace most excellent', who by renouncing the world has come to understand it. But the way is not easy. 'This truth that I have reached', says the Buddha, 'is profound, hard to see, excellent, pre-eminent, beyond the sphere of mere thinking, subtle and to be penetrated by the wise alone.' Sense pleasures lead to a rebirth of suffering. The 'I' is not of this world; the 'I' is not even a human being; the 'I' has merely grasped or assumed certain attributes (*upadhis*, assumptions) which constitute a human being. And it is because I am not of this world, (in other words, because nothing determines or limits me) that I may, on the death of this body, grasp at another kind of 'seed', animal or human, or in the world of light or in the lower world (the Christian hell) and thus become once more a human being, an animal, a radiant being, or a denizen of the lower world.

If it is correct to say that I am a human being, in my essential Self, then I can never be reborn as an animal. But if my essence is not in the human individuality which I have assumed, then I could also be reborn as an animal.

The modern American or European, repelled by this teaching, is the victim of his own inability to follow an unwelcome line of thought to its logical conclusion; for if my real Self is not contained in, or exhausted by, this present organism, I may assume any other organism I desire and which will not properly be 'mine' or my Self. Thus, at the moment of my death, compelled to relinquish this organism with all its faculties I might grasp at a new seed, in harmony with my unguided, and unrestrained desire,

¹ The practice of giving up desire through knowledge of its harmfulness.

be that 'seed' in the womb of a woman, of an animal or in the hellish or heavenly worlds. And, later, when this seed has developed into a conscious organism, I would recognize myself in the light of this consciousness, as man, beast, god, or devil. It is, thus, the quality of my desire which determines the nature of my future birth—the more brutal the sense pleasures which now attract me, the lower the kingdom to which I shall be attracted at the moment of death, and, conversely, the less brutal my desires the more exalted the kingdom into which I shall be born again. The difference between one 'kingdom' and another is the difference between, and the reflection of varying intensities of sensual desire.

This 'sensual differentiation' is clearly noticeable between man and animal—and even more clearly between man and man. We cannot conceive a morally excellent person as grossly sensual—least of all unchaste—for unchastity is the common focus of gross sensual passion. The man who indulges unrestrainedly his sexual proclivities we classify as a criminal type—all classifications being based on 'sensual differentiation'. Chastity is the root of all virtue.

At the moment of death, when the body is taken from it, the deluded individual, in search of a new means of sensation, grasps at that 'world' or 'kingdom' which best accords with its desire, so that the man of unselfish life goes to a 'pure', 'radiant' world, the man of bestial tendencies to the world of beasts, and so forth. How could it be otherwise? To maintain a contrary opinion, one must first disprove the Law of Affinity in chemistry—in itself the application of an universal law.

The bliss of non-willing is worth knowing. The happiness of mental deliverance is the greatest that can be experienced, and is therefore what we most desire. But what is happiness? It is the cancelling-out of desire by its fulfilment. Moreover to acquire any object gives us pleasure only if we have had to strive for that object, and our pleasure in it matches the desire which has been stilled by its acquisition. But since for the most part we live carelessly, from moment to moment, we never attain to the complete happiness of the permanent stilling of desire. We are like a chronic invalid, hoping and struggling for the return of health. He considers every passing improvement as a blessing, and the greatest will be his final return to accustomed health. He will, then, for a short time at least be exuberantly happy—his desire for health having been completely satisfied. But his consciousness of this happiness will diminish as he assures himself of the permanency of his recovery, and will cease when this recovery has been established. And as with physical well-being so with every other sort—the less desire we have the better off we are, and having no desire we reach the highest well-being. Therefore, happiness increases with every advance in virtue and brings with it a common, everyday cheerfulness and contentment. 'To him who has renounced, life becomes a perpetual festival', says a Pāli text, and this has been the experience of all great mystics. It is not easy to imagine the immense happiness of one entirely freed from desire, one who wants absolutely nothing. 'Of what use is a well to one who has water? What should he who has vanquished desire, strive for any more?'

asks the Buddha. It is this extraordinary happiness to which Schopenhauer refers:

'That we feel so unspeakably happy if set free for a moment from the grim urgency of willing leaves us to conjecture how blissful must be the life of a man whose will is wholly stilled; freed from the torments of desire and fear he smiles at the illusory phantasms of this world which had beset and tormented him—the game is ended and the pawns scattered harmlessly about the board. If we picture to ourselves the heavenly peace of such a life we shall hunger for it from the depths of our own misery and despair, since willing still binds us fast, pulling us hither and thither with a thousand cords. . . .'

Thus, we must again conclude that the only proper condition for us is that in which all willing is forever extinguished. The man who has no further desire, who has caused this 'deepest, darkest, most mysterious natural force' to disappear is under no compulsion to still any desire whatever, but may, if he so decides, allow a passing desire to arise in him for some definite purpose, by directing his cognition to certain selected objects. Is there a state more sublime or more peaceful than such desirelessness? Is not this the perfection of peace, which nothing can disturb—not even the dissolution of the body, and therewith the destruction of its sensory world? Is not this destruction the means by which well-being becomes perfect—the very possibility of future suffering being thus destroyed? What could be higher than this? And is there a better way to accomplish the killing-out of desire than to consider the 'bliss of deliverance, consisting in the destruction of thirst?' The Self is transcendent: concepts (ideas) apply only to the not-Self.

'What belongs to the realm of concepts, definitions and cognition is the bodily organism, together with consciousness'—and the conjunction of these two—produces personality, the delusive ego. We are, known and differentiated by these assumptions—as Mr A or Miss B—but the Delivered One, at the moment of death, discards his personality and does not assume a new 'complex' of sensory attributes. He cannot then be defined or cognized in any particular—for that by which he had been designated no longer exists. What means have we of designating one who has no body and therefore neither thinks, perceives, nor is aware of anything? Because all concepts and definitions apply only to our assumptions (whence they spring), they are not applicable to us. The notion of a personal Self never vexes the mind of a delivered one—to him everything is alien, not-the-Self, *anattā*. We, however, think in terms of I and mine and, because we cannot differentiate concept from reality, transfer the application of laws to which the personality is subject to our true, incognizable self and thus create contradictions where none exist—a fact which Schopenhauer recognized. 'If we find contradictions in the world it is because we consider as one what is in reality two.' How can I, for instance, be reborn if I have died—if I have been dissolved, broken up and flung away? We have here the result of an absurd contradiction, for what does not exist cannot be reborn. It is both pitiful and absurd how certain modern Buddhists

have wandered into this impasse and postulate the most complex hypotheses to get out of it. There is, of course, no real impasse, no genuine contradiction. I must merely realize that death and rebirth apply only to my assumption of an ego, not to my Self. 'I, myself, am not attainable by death,' as is often said in the Buddhist scriptures. It is thus clear that I may experience many times the sensations of birth and death, that I may assume and discard certain physical and sensory attributes—exactly as I put on one suit of clothes and change it, later, for another, experiencing each time a somewhat similar sensation. The same idea has been expressed in the Gita.

The idea of extinction, in a special sense: The statement of the Buddha that the dead Perfected One is *parinibbuto*, totally extinguished, has given rise to some misunderstanding. We must regard the saint as not participating in decay and death, the passing of his organism serving merely to remove the possibility of sensory activity, and thus making his well-being absolute. Those who fail to realize this can allow as true only one or other of the following statements—the saint is totally annihilated by death or is in no way affected by death. He cannot have it both ways.

It is characteristic of modern materialism to have chosen the first alternative, that of absolute annihilation, despite the Buddha's repeated assurances that he does not teach annihilation but shows a way to the imperishable, the deathless.

The truth is that the extinction by death and the non-participation in death of the saint are not contradictory. The saint is extinguished by death like a lamp, but the extinction, as also the burning, of a lamp refer only to certain 'phenomena' which take place in the 'attributes' of the lamp, the oil and the wick, and not to the lamp itself. In the same way life and death are phenomena which have to do only with attributes or assumptions and do not affect the vanished 'perfected one'—they are not comprised in the Self, but are *posited against It*. A similar situation exists in the so-called extinction of fire. The fire no more consists in its fuel and the flame produced by it than does the saint in his body and consciousness. This fact was known to the authors of the Upanishads, as we find in phrases such as 'like the fire, when the wood is burnt up', or 'Brahma is in his nature pure cognition, like the fire when the fuel is consumed'. The Buddha explains that extinction applies only to the three 'flames' of lust, hate and delusion¹ and so he defines *Nibbānam*, the goal of sainthood, as *Tanhā-Nibbānam*—literally, the extinction of thirst. The Sublime One lives the holy life for the extinction of craving.

The fire, if it could cognize and speak, would say of the flame and the fuel—and of the 'thirst' with which it grasps the fuel—what the perfected one says of his personality: 'This is not mine; this does not belong to me; this is not my Self.' That which stands behind the appearance of fire is also an unknowable something in which desire arises, causing the grasping of fuel, which produces the 'becoming' of the process of burning—the combining of burning material with oxygen emitting a shining element

¹ The three kinds of 'thirst' for sensation.

peculiar to flames. The flame is not the chemical combination of burning material with oxygen but this combination calls forth a new element, called fire, produced by an act of grasping in and from the depths of this unknowable. The same may be said of all chemical combinations—if hydrogen and oxygen combine in the proportion of two to one, a new compound called water is called forth from the unknowable. Thus, water does not consist of H_2O , but H_2O is the preliminary condition for the appearance of the liquid element—and with it, water. So too the real thing that underlies the entire process of combustion, named fire in accordance with the actual process¹ is as uncognizable as we are, and can be named and designated only by our assumptions.

Can we free ourselves from 'thirst'? The very question presupposes a condition which we have already shown to be true—that desire is not an integral part of our essence but is wholly phenomenal; for it arises from causes, and may therefore be destroyed or relinquished without affecting our real Self. Let us, however, consider once more the manner of arising and the implications of this wholly phenomenal will. Desire is always for something and only arises in us as the result of our having cognized as desirable a certain definite object. It is inconceivable that we should desire to possess an object which we cognize as pain-producing. Having then accepted as true the proposition that every object of cognition produces pain we must attribute the desires which may arise in us to our own imperfect realization of the true nature of sense objects. Desire for them is and must be the result of insufficient cognition or, as the Buddha says, 'ignorance of their true constitutions'—their true value.

The Buddha indicates this in his statement that 'ignorance is conditioned by the *āsavas*'—the influences being desire for sensual pleasure, and the desire for continuing ignorance, based upon habitual indulgence in false cognition. This applies in particular to views and notions held tenaciously in former lives. The average person, from the moment of birth, is subjected by them to a constant and increasing deception.

Imagine a being entirely free from desire, but with efficient sense organs, emerging from some hypothetical 'nowhere' and finding himself suddenly 'alive' in the most vivid of tropical countries. His whole body would leap to and accept the proffered sensations as its natural food, he would accept, at a single gulp, as 'interesting' or 'beautiful' every sound, sight, smell, etc., that pressed in upon him, so that he would be bound to them as objects of desire. And from that moment until removed from the scene, his activities would be those of the average human being. Desire for these objects would inspire, guide, direct and make painful the remaining actions of his life.

This present continuity of desire, and its increase by habituation, has no beginning. The beginning of a continuity (and such is the world of sense objects) is unthinkable, impossible. Every 'chain of causation' is without beginning as every link in that chain can arise only from a preceding cause, the existence of which presupposes an antecedent one, and so *ad infinitum*.

¹ The emitted flame element.

It is possible, however, to stop participating in its arising—and thus to bring it to an end. Deliverance from craving is deliverance from causality and from rebirth—and it is possible.

Thirst is destroyed by right cognition. The false cognition, this ignorance that sensation is synonymous with suffering, which has dominated all our lives, arises in us by misuse of the cognizing faculties in one of two ways—by regarding phenomena superficially as things in themselves, without causal connections or consequences; or by placing these faculties directly at the service of our *cumulative* desire for the sole purpose of finding out how best to satisfy it. Such being our habitual practice during countless lives there has also arisen in us an overwhelming desire to continue using these faculties in the same way so that, finally, not only desire for sense objects but desire for false cognition constrains us from correcting the use of these faculties—and, above all, makes it extremely difficult for us to obtain correct insight.

We do not and cannot desire any object which we recognize as hurtful. If, then, we recognized the fact that all sensory objects are transitory—and must therefore continually escape us and therefore bring us suffering¹—and this realization was uninterrupted, we would never again desire any sensory object. The person who hankers for permanent possession of an impermanent object is, simply, a fool: in any case the intelligent person does not protract his desire beyond the natural life of its object and does not therefore suffer greatly at the object's passing. He wastes neither time nor energy in grief but calms himself by looking directly and fearlessly at the facts of life.

The correct use of the cognizing apparatus is to focus it upon all objects entering the field of cognition and to regard them impartially as belonging to a causal series. By so doing we discover not only their deceptive, but also their phenomenal nature—that they, the objects of sense, and with them the perceptive organs and faculties, are impermanent and therefore the cause of all sorrow. The degree to which we realize these facts governs our desire for a body and for sense objects—and is there any other way of becoming desireless? The desire to see or communicate with departed friends or lovers is very widespread. We have observed that it is folly to desire an object that has perished, and this applies to any desire we may feel to help, or be helped by, those who have died. As we have learnt, what is dissolved by death are the *upadhis*, the superimpositions of the person we loved, and he himself has not been affected by their dissolution; for he has encountered and grasped new *upadhis* with which again to sense and perceive one or other of the worlds of sensation. If the loved one had unusual nobility of character he would have been reborn in a world more agreeable than ours; if he was of an average disposition again into our world—in the first instance we may rejoice at his advancement, in the second, there is nothing to regret. May he not be just as happy or unhappy

¹ Either destiny or death will part us from them (objects of sense); Self and not-Self must part.

with others as he was with us? A seeming reason for sorrow might, perhaps, exist if the deceased person were morally bad, and had therefore been drawn downward to a lower world. But, what good would come of it—to him or to us? We have each, according to our deeds and desires, risen from and fallen back to the lower worlds innumerable times. It is not rare for the love of a living for a dead person to be strong enough to defy all such considerations. If this attachment is sufficiently intense the realization of the hope for reunion may, according to the Buddha, be counted upon. Desire, when strong enough, must have its own way. It is, then, possible that after my death I may find, and be united with a loved one—each of us in a new form and entirely ignorant of any past relationship. Despite this ignorance, our former attachment would generate a similar passion—a very simple and natural explanation of 'love at first sight'—and this proceeding may be repeated in several successive lives. Finally, in one life or another, must come satiety and estrangement—the love which is 'stronger than death' being scarcely less impermanent than the most casual of passing inclinations. How many times, in the past, have I not loved beyond death, possibly beyond many deaths, without leaving in myself the slightest trace of its passing? And what suffering have I not endured—with nothing gained, nothing to show for it.

Spiritists foster and cultivate this desire to communicate with departed friends and relatives. But this can only be effected with the dead who are still 'earth-bound' and therefore able to project some remnant or shadow of their former personalities into certain 'realms' of sensation in rapport with our own. Communication with higher 'regions' is impossible by any means known to spiritism—and the communications of the 'earth-bound' are not worth hearing. Indeed they can be a source of serious danger.

Having, thus, reached the correct cognition that to desire anything is to embrace suffering (by reason of the impermanence of all objects) the desire to possess any object must inevitably leave us. Moreover our attachment to the organism which evokes for us only transient and painful sensations will also be given up, and destroyed. And this giving up of attachment will not only apply to the present organism, but to any new one obtainable after death, for we have come to realize that the nature of all phenomena, no matter in what realm of sensation, is impermanent and painful. Even though the 'body' to be assumed were of unthinkable radiance in a 'world of light', we would recognize it as transient and the cause of sensations which, in the swing of Saṃsāra (rebirth) lead downward to the lower worlds. From understanding the causes of the arising of suffering all thirst for sense objects is extinguished. Thus discipline of the thinking faculty, is a preliminary to right cognition. We admit that it is very difficult to use our cognizing faculties in the proper way. But it can be done—for instance, a man may use glasses to discover the defects as well as the beauties of a distant landscape. It will at first be beyond us to regard steadily and for any length of time everything cognizable (including our own body with its changing sensations and perceptions) as impermanent, and therefore painful. We are subjected to innumerable assaults of agree-

able sensations—the assaults of enemies who attempt to enter our consciousness in the guise of friends, with much solicitous advice and many agreeable suggestions. Nothing could be less reasonable than to welcome sensations in our desire for their exclusion, but very often they have invaded and conquered our cognition before we can find the wit to rebuff them. The only sound course is patiently and calmly to repel and dismiss them, holding firmly to the conviction that deliverance from them is the end in view. In this way we shall gradually free ourselves from their influence and finally, if we persist, will find ourselves able to maintain untroubled contemplation for hours on end.

The difficulty of using our cognizing apparatus properly can only be overcome by practice. This teaching of the Buddha is indicated also by Meister Eckhart: 'People question whether it is possible to sin no more with the body; the best masters say that it is possible and you must understand that these men by inner and outer practice have succeeded in no longer inclining towards evil.'

Having achieved this freedom, we shall be able to regard our body as a compound of certain natural elements grasped in the form of food and productive of certain sensory phenomena, then recognize with the distinctness of free or dreamlike vision that these products are impermanent and, therefore, productive only of suffering. The practice and development of this concentration of mind was at one time common among Buddhist monks.

This may also be achieved by a particular discipline. The training enables us to persist in the contemplation of a single object—let us say, a tree; to have a clear mental picture of the tree and to hold fast to it; later, to change this object to another, say, a meadow—and by gradual and slow progression to increase or diminish its area. We can, by this means, create an image of the area, let us say, of England or Germany, and see it as a vast plain, free from hills and valleys, cities and villages, stretching out empty before us in the mind's eye. This, however, is one side of our mental development, that of extensive thinking, and to get some idea of the other side, intensive thinking, it is helpful to understand the real nature of dreams. Dreaming is the product of a concentrated visual objectivation of thinking. It only differs from day-dreaming in its degree of concentration—the extent to which we are fancy-free. The usual imaginings of day-dreams (reverie) are feeble and indistinct; on the other hand those of the true dream, have vivid plastic 'contours' which rival in clearness the 'reality' which enters consciousness by direct sensory perception. This characteristic clearness of the dream-image is due to the absence of correlative disturbances and leads to the clear visual objectivization that characterizes contemplation. Various exercises based on this knowledge lead to proficiency in intensive thinking.

With a mind thus disciplined who can doubt that the ancient battle between Light and Darkness would result in the triumph of light? This conflict between light and darkness denotes the battle between pure cognition and ignorance—ignorance being incorrect thinking induced by

attachment. It is ignorance of the fact that we are not of this world and is accompanied by the delusion that it is a pleasure to live in it. Thirst or desire is mastered gradually in the same way. The more we sharpen the weapon of correct cognition, the more effectively can we attack with it the desire which reigns in us—the dragon or devil of Christian mythology. And in this struggle every inch of ground must be wrested from the enemy. Before everything else, there must be ethical improvement—we must be able to resist the grosser desires and attachments, especially those which can only be satisfied at the expense of others. To fall below this limit is to be born in a sub-human kingdom. When, however, we succeed in establishing upright conduct as a characteristic of our nature we advance along the path of virtue, and may therefore expect to be reborn in a world somewhat nearer heaven than our own. Having thus become virtuous we may begin to attack our thirst for worldly objects, to disinterest ourselves in them, and finally, to desire above all things freedom from them—a desire only to be realized in complete renunciation and total chastity. If we cannot succeed in doing this properly we may at least reach an inner poverty. 'Even if jewels adorn the body the mind may have mastered the worldly spirit.'

The immediate result of this realization, of this refusal to continue hankering after things, is a genuine altruism, an active well-wishing towards all living creatures. This considerable moral advance brings about rebirth in the Brahma world—the world of pure forms, the Christian heaven.

It is astonishing to note the precision with which the Buddha allocated to Jesus his rightful place in the moral order of existence. We read, in the first discourse of the *Dīgha-Nikāya*, of a 'sphere' and of conditions in which the great visionaries find their natural place:

'Now there comes a time, monks, when, sooner or later, after the lapse of a long period, this world system passes away. And when this happens most beings have been reborn in a world of radiance, and there they dwell made of mind, feeding on joy, radiating light from themselves, traversing the air, continuing in glory; and thus they remain for a long period of time.

'Now there also comes a time, monks, when sooner or later this world system begins to evolve again. When this happens the palace of Brahma appears, but it is empty. And some being or other, either because his span of years has passed or his merit is exhausted, falls from that world of radiance, and comes to life in the palace of Brahma. And there also he lives made of mind, feeding on joy, radiating light from himself, traversing the air, continuing in glory; and thus he remains for a long period of time.

'Now there arises in him, from his dwelling there so long alone, a dissatisfaction and longing: "O would that other beings might come to join me in this place!" And just then, either because their span of years had passed or their merit was exhausted, other beings fall from the world of radiance, and appear in the palace of Brahma as companions to him, and in all respects like him.

'On this, monks, the one who was first reborn thinks to himself: I am Brahma, the Great Brahma, the Supreme One, the Mighty, the All-Seeing, the Ruler, the Lord of All, the Maker, the Creator, the Chief of All, appointing to each his place, the Ancient of Days, the father of all that are and are to be. These other beings are my creation. And why is that so? A while ago I thought "Would that they might come". And behold the beings came!

'And those beings themselves think thus: "This must be Brahma, the Great Brahma, the Supreme, the Mighty, the All-Seeing, the Ruler, the Lord of All, the Maker, the Creator, the Chief of All, appointing to each his place, the Ancient of Days, the father of all that are and are to be. And we must have been created by him. And why? Because, as we see, it was he who was there first, and we came after."

'On this, monks, the one who first came into existence there is longer lived, more glorious, and more powerful than those who appeared after him. And it might well be, monks, that some being on his falling from that state should come hither. And having come hither he might go forth from the household life into the homeless state. And having thus become a recluse, by reason of ardour, of exertion, of application, of earnestness, of careful thought, he attains such concentration of mind that he remembers his last dwelling place, but not the previous ones. He says to himself: That illustrious Brahma, the Great Brahma, the Supreme One, the Mighty, the All-Seeing, the Ruler, the Lord of All, the Maker, the Creator, the Chief of All, appointing to each his place, the Ancient of Days, the father of all that are and are to be, he by whom we are created, he is steadfast, immutable, eternal, of a nature that knows no change, and he will remain so for ever and ever. And we who are created by him have come hither as being impermanent, mutable and limited in duration of life.'

This was said some five centuries before Christ. By putting 'Jehova' in place of Brahma, and thinking of Jesus as having descended from the Brahma world, the nature of, and reason for, his particular teaching becomes clear. He says of himself 'I come from God', 'I come from on high', 'the Father hath sent me'. In other words, Jesus referred only to his last rebirth in a 'heavenly' world and was willing for our sake to endure being caught in the web of a terrible delusion; a delusion arising from immeasurable compassion and self-sacrifice. He was reluctant to teach the doctrine of rebirth in its endlessness for he only remembered the Brahma world, to which he therefore directs us as to the highest; HE realized that man's striving for even this so-called 'highest' would lead to spiritual progress. Let us remind ourselves also that a pure altruism, a genuine love of others, was the keynote of Jesus' character and teaching, and then consider these words of the Buddha: 'Brahma (Jehova) I know, and the world of Brahma (Heaven) I also know; and the path leading to the world of Brahma I also know. A monk radiates love to the four quarters of the earth, upwards and downwards; he penetrates and fills the whole world with thoughts of love, deep, wide, and boundless, free from enmity, free from ill-will. This is the path leading to the world of Brahma.'

And with this advance, we have reached the perfection of morality, the end of the road for the *exoteric* side of all religions. Beyond this point the religionists know and care nothing. There are, however, accessible to the mystic, adept, or Yogi¹ states of consciousness far above the Brahma or heavenly level to be reached while yet alive on this earth. Having destroyed in himself all desire for sensation and perception he becomes deaf, blind, etc., to the external world and may remain for hours, or even days, in unbroken contemplation of boundless space. To imagine the amplitude of such a deliverance one has only to consider how difficult it is to concentrate on any single thought for a few seconds only. One who attains to the perception of boundless space will be reborn in a world much higher than the highest heaven, in a sphere corresponding with his degree of freedom, where, for countless millions of years, he may enjoy untroubled peace. But even this sphere is not the highest. Meditation is the exploration of inner space. Desire for this world and similar ones must finally be overcome by the reflection that they too are transient and therefore painful; then having reached the ultimate, utterly desireless state there is left to us only 'this body equipped with the six senses'. The apparatus remains but the desire to use it has gone. Everything is thus realized as transient and painful—in particular the desire for further cognition is destroyed for we now understand everything in its relationship to ourselves. The mind now thoroughly peaceful can contemplate the extinction of desire. Such a person has accomplished, in its last perfection, the deliverance of the mind from craving; he has reached the highest, holiest freedom; he has won the greatest of battles and stands triumphant over life and death.

The difference in the relationship of a Perfected One and an average person to their respective cognizing faculties may be illustrated as follows: Finding myself in the dark and wanting to see a certain object I strike a match and try to satisfy my curiosity during the life of that match. If I succeed in doing so I look with indifference upon its coming extinction; if, however, the match nearly burns out and I have still not sufficiently 'cognized' the object in question, I shall try by every possible means to prolong its life; when, finally, it does go out I shall light another in the endeavour to satisfy my desire for cognition. In this example, the match stands for our cognizing apparatus, with which we try to satisfy our thirst for cognition. Until this is done we always become uneasy at the threatened break-up of the apparatus and try to save it by every possible means. And when, finally, it 'dies' (i.e. as the match goes out) we immediately look for and secure a new one. The saint, on the other hand, realizing that his body is only an apparatus for the sensation and perception of painful objects, is able to view its disintegration with complete indifference, and will have no desire for a new one. Thus the deliverance of the mind is deliverance from using our cognizing apparatus. The problem presents itself as follows: Since everything in the world, including my own body, is painful and pain producing I should do away with this body were I not constrained by an

¹ Yoga is the science of corrected cognition. The word Yogi here includes Christian saints, Moslem sufis and mystics of *all* religions.

inner influence, my will, desire or thirst to keep and use this body. If this influence were destroyed I might then retain or discard the apparatus in perfect freedom of choice. This destruction, however, can only be effected by a proper use of the cognizing faculties, in the knowledge that all desire ends in suffering. We are limited in this cognitive activity by the quality of our apparatus, and also by the outer circumstances of our life. These things, however, are also the result of craving and so may be changed for the better by the continual ennobling of desire, until finally we earn and deserve an organism and a set of conditions more favourable to correct cognition. This thirst can only be ennobled gradually, by exact degrees. The animal, as such, follows exclusively his thirst. For this reason he is, as yet, undelivered—and the majority of men are bound no less securely. They consider it 'natural' or 'reasonable' to do what they like and are thus held securely by the constraints of thirst in all their activities, particularly thinking. There is, however, in every human being some trace of pure activity, free from craving, and this trace, no matter how slight, offers the possibility of increase, and may lead to the gradual understanding and ennobling of desire. The virtuous man will aim at and realize a certain measure of freedom more eagerly and quickly than the dull or evil person. A very great measure is, however, realized by the extinction of the desire for worldly possessions, and the attainment thereby of the Brahma or heavenly world. Progress is gradual but consistent until, at last, freedom becomes perfect in the complete destruction of desire—all compulsion to see, hear and so forth, is forever ended and then only may one be called a great man.

'A great man, a great man it is said, Lord—but in what respect is one a great man?' asked the venerable Sāriputta. And the Buddha replied: 'If one has freed the mind (the mental processes) from every influence of desire, Sāriputta, then one is a great man; if one has not freed the mind from every influence of desire, one is not a great man.'

All thinking men today realize that the changing physical body is not identical with the Self and we are beginning to see, just as the Buddha saw over two thousand years ago, that the mental and so called spiritual processes are, like the body, continually changing and can be described as a succession of moments in consciousness. Where then is the Self? Where am 'I'? Many have reluctantly concluded that there is no Self other than the built up personality which perishes with the body. The Buddha, however, shows us that there is no reason for this and he repudiates the accusation made against him in his own day that he taught the annihilation of the Self.

'Some recluses and brahmins, wrongly, erroneously and falsely charge me, in defiance of facts, with being an annihilationist, and with preaching the disintegration, destruction and extirpation of the present sentient being. I do not affirm this.'

To cognize means that there are objects for me; not to cognize¹ means

¹ To lay aside apparatus of cognition.

that there are no sorrow-producing objects for me, that there is nothing for me. Thus the very concept nothing applies only to the world of not-Self, and denotes the absence for me of this world of not-Self. The very thought 'nothing' presupposes me who thinks it; the antithesis therefore of the world is not absolute nothing but I myself. Conversely, and resulting from this, there is only a relative nothing, a nothing for my cognition; a nothing in the sense of 'not anything of that which I cognize', never an absolute nothing, which would include my own annihilation. Absolute nothingness if closely considered, is found to be unthinkable. Since the Self is beyond time and therefore unaffected by the dissolution of the impermanent, when I think of absolute nothing I exempt myself from inclusion in it. Simultaneously, in the very concept of absolute nothing, I posit my own annihilation, the time when I shall no longer be. Thus, in the same breath, existing as subject, annihilated as object, I both am and am not—obviously a stupid and impossible *contretemps*. To think successfully of absolute nothing requires a false conception of one's own position as thinking subject; one must falsely consider oneself as wholly comprised in the elements of personality. This creates the possibility of an absolute nothing when these components break up. Since, however, the premises are false, one does not thus annihilate oneself, but merely thinks away what one has improperly put into the I concept. The contradiction is flagrant and fundamental—as in an attempt to think of dry water. To one who thinks correctly, absolute nothing and his own annihilation are alike impossible.

If we practise deep introspection we shall find that time is alien to us—a fact which philosophers and mystics, long before Kant, expressed by the concept of Eternity. And we shall also find that the body with its functions of seeing, hearing, smelling, touching, tasting and thinking is equally alien to us. That we feel, inwardly, the desire to be free from all these determinants is the foundation of true philosophy. We seek that condition in which there is no functioning of cognition, in which there is no object to which I may serve as subject, a condition in which, therefore, nothing analogous to my consciousness exists, although I may, at the extremity of consciousness, attain some intimation or prevision of it. However, no proper conception or definition of it can be formulated because it is beyond all thinking. The 'going into one's own depths' is the immeasurability of the absolute condition. To be without desire for sights, sounds, odours, tastes, tangibles and thoughts, and free therefore from the desire for sensation and perception of them, and with this freedom to be liberated also from desire to cognize,¹ is to be entirely desireless. This 'does not mean the annihilation of a substance but the pure act of non-willing.' That which willed hitherto wills no longer. Since we know this 'essence', our real I, only in and by an act of willing we, the cognizer, are not in a position to know or say what it is or does after it has ceased to will.

¹ Consciousness arises only with sensation and perception. This is valid *only* from the Buddhist standpoint for here the word consciousness is a technical term denoting the consciousness of cognition.

'Absolute desirelessness is therefore for us, for our cognition, a crossing over into the abyss, the Nothing. This unknowable (our real I) must, we conceive, be a thing so majestic that could we cognize it we would stand amazed at its grandeur—and at our own folly in having feared it and fled from it; for there is in it neither arising nor passing away,¹ it is "freedom from motion", "stillness", "bliss"—"the peace that passeth all understanding".'

'What do you think, O King, have you a calculator or a mint-master or a teller who can count the sands of the banks of the Ganges, who can say: "So many grains of sand, or so many hundreds, or thousands or hundreds of thousands of grains of sand are there?"'

'I have not, Reverend One.'

'Or have you a calculator, or a mint-master, or a teller who can say "so many quarts of water, or so many hundreds, or thousands, or hundreds of thousands quarts of water are contained in the ocean?"'

'I have not, Reverend One.'

'And why not?'

'Because the great ocean is deep, immeasurable, unfathomable.'

'Even so it is, O King, if you wish to understand the essence of a Perfected One according to the predicates of corporeality, of perception, of the activities of the mind and of consciousness. In the Perfected One this corporeality, this sensation, this perception, these activities of the mind, this consciousness would be extinguished, their root would be cut off, as the root of a palm tree is cut off and flung away, so that it will not be able to develop in a future time. A Perfected One, O King, is free from this, that his essence might be counted with the numerals of the corporeal world: he is deep, immeasurable, unfathomable like the great ocean.'

The Christian saint, following the precepts of Jesus, overcomes this world of gross sense pleasures and may not attach himself to any world however sublime—even the heavenly. The Buddhist saint too has to overcome all worlds, including the heavenly. It may even be said that the first degree of the Buddhist saint² stands higher than that of the highest ascetic; for the ascetic, as such, considers that consciousness and cognition belong to his real being, and can aspire no higher than the pure consciousness of pleasure; while the *Sotāpanna*, with more penetrating insight, realizes that his entire personality, including the cognitive functions, is *anattā*, not-Self, and by wholly discarding it he overcomes *all* possible worlds.

Nothing in the world is a being; everything is a becoming. But every becoming, as that of fire, is conditioned by an act of grasping, by the accomplishment of willing. Every desire presupposes an 'Essence', from which it emanates; this Essence remains always in the dark, behind willing with its sensory accompaniments, and is therefore wholly uncognizable. All thinking brings us face to face with this duality, which is not, however, absolute. Every phenomenon, every assumption is conditioned by this

¹ It comprehends and excludes the vast endlessness of time.

² The *sotāpanna* who has 'entered the stream'.

unknowable which stands behind willing; were all willing to cease, including that thirst which actuates the inorganic world, then all becoming would cease—without affecting the *Nibbāna-Dhātu*, the realm of the essences.

'Just as all rivers of the earth, and all waters of the air collect in the ocean which neither rises nor falls thereby, even so does the *Nibbāna* sphere neither increase nor decrease however many disciples find the path to it.'

This is our true home, the place of those beings or essences on whose willing the countless phenomena called the world primarily depend; therefore, it is said of the extinguished fire, as of the extinguished Perfected One, 'he is in his own place' or 'he has gone home'. In what relationship these essences stand to one another is beyond cognition. They are, however, so little united that in their assumptions, as an ego, they ceaselessly tear one another to pieces; and in their origin as godhead they are so little divided that they can unite in an all-embracing love. What, then, are they? Let us look to the Buddha for our answer.

'There is, brethren, a condition wherein there is neither earth, nor water, nor fire, nor air, nor the sphere of infinite space, nor the sphere of infinite consciousness: where there is no "this world" and no "world beyond"; where there is no Earth and no sun. That condition, brethren, I call neither a coming nor a going nor a standing still nor a falling away nor a rising up; it is without fixity, without mobility, without basis. That is the end of suffering.'

We must draw in eternal values in order to live out the values of life. But vital values cannot be had except by giving up at least a little of our time to silently waiting for them in meditation. This means that the life in which ethical exertion is balanced by spiritual insight must be a life in which action alternates with contemplation. This, then, is happiness and immortality; the knowing of and the transcendence over the ego of illusoriness. It is the Yoga of knowing the SELF, the clear insight into reality. It is that Deliverance of the mind which the Buddha proclaims to be the goal of the *Dharma*. It is the Great Liberation. Sages, in East and West, have also called it: the Marvell

PEACE TO ALL WHO READ THESE LINES!

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