



## Ākimcañña: Self-Naughting<sup>1</sup>

*Vivo autem, jam non ego*

Gal. 2:20

*Eyā diz solte du sēle scheiden von allem dem, daz iht ist.*  
Eckhart, Pfeiffer ed., p. 525

*Her umbe sol der mensche geflizzen sîn, daz er sich entbilde  
sîn selbes unt allen crēatūre noch keinen vater wizze denne  
got alleine. . . . Dis ist allen menschen fremde . . . ich wolde,  
das irz befunden hētet mit lebenne.*

Eckhart, Pfeiffer ed., pp. 421, 464

When thou standest still from the thinking of self, and the  
willing of self

Jacob Boehme, *Dialogues on the Supersensual Life*

An egomania occasioned the fall of Lucifer, who would be “like the most High” (Isa. 14:14), thinking, “Who is like me in Heaven or Earth?” (*Tabārī* XXIV), and desiring to deify himself (Augustine, *Quaestiones veteris et novi testamenti* CXIII), not in the way discussed below by an abnegation of selfhood, but, as St. Thomas Aquinas says, “by the virtue of his own nature” and “of his own power” (*Sum. Theol.* 1.63.3c). We are all to a greater or less extent egomaniacs, and to the same extent followers of Satan. Acts 5:36 refers to a certain Theudas as “boasting himself to be somebody.”

In the vernacular, when a man is presumptuous, we ask him, “Who do you think you are?” and when we refer to someone’s insignificance, we call him a “nobody” or, in earlier English, a “nithing.” In this worldly sense it is a good thing to be “someone” and a misfortune to be “nobody,” and from this point of view we think well of “ambition” (*iti-bhavābhava tanhā*). To be “someone” is to have a name and lineage (*nāma-gotta*) or, at least, to have a place or rank in the world, some distinction that makes us recognizable and conspicuous. Our modern civilization is essentially individualistic and self-assertive, even our educational systems being more

[This essay was first published in the *New Indian Antiquary*, III (1940).—ED.]

<sup>1</sup> As the title implies, this study is mainly based on Christian and Buddhist sources.

and more designed to foster “self-expression” and “self-realization”; and if we are at all concerned about what happens after death, it is in terms of the survival of our treasured “personality”<sup>2</sup> with all its attachments and memories.

On the other hand, in the words of Eckhart, “Holy scripture cries aloud for freedom from self.” In this unanimous and universal teaching, which affirms an absolute liberty and autonomy, spatial and temporal, attainable as well here and now as anywhere else, this treasured “personality” of ours is at once a prison and a fallacy, from which only the Truth shall set you free:<sup>3</sup> a prison, because all definition limits that which is defined, and a fallacy because in this ever-changing composite and corruptible psychophysical “personality” it is impossible to grasp a constant, and impossible therefore to recognize any authentic or “real” substance. Insofar as man is merely a “reasoning and mortal animal,” tradition is in agreement with the modern determinist in affirming that “this man,” So-and-so (*yo-yamāyasmā evam nāmo evam gotto*, S III.25) has neither free will<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> We write “personality” because we are using the word here in its vulgar sense and not in the stricter and technical sense in which the veritable “person” is distinguished from the phenomenal “individual,” e.g., in *AA* II.3.2 and Boethius, *Contra Evtychen* II.

<sup>3</sup> The doctrine is one of escape and the pursuit of happiness. It will not be confused with what has been called escapism. Escapism is an essentially selfish activity, failure to “face the music” (as when one “drowns one’s sorrows in drink”), and the choice of easier paths; escapism is a symptom of disappointment and is cynical rather than mature. We need hardly say that to “wish one had never been born” is the antithesis of the perfect sorrow that may be occasioned by the sense of a continued existence: we are born in order to die, but this death is not one that can be attained by suicide or by suffering death at the hands of others; it is not of ourselves or others, but only of God that it can be said in the words of St. John of the Cross, “and, slaying, dost from death to life translate.”

At the same time, the true way of “escape” is more strenuous by far than the life that is escaped (hence the designation of the religious in India as a “Toiler,” *śrama-na*), and it is the degree of a man’s maturity (in Skr. the extent to which he is *pakva*, “pukka,” and no longer *āma*, “raw”) that is the measure of the possibility of his escape and consequent beatitude.

“The minds of some are set on Union (*yoga*), the minds of others on comfort (*kṣema*)” (TS II.5.11.5; cf. KU II.1-4).

<sup>4</sup> The denial of freedom in “this man,” the individual, is explicit in Sn 350, “It does not belong to the many-folk to do what they will (*na kāmākāro hi puthujjānānam*).” Cf. “Ye cannot do the things that ye would” (Gal. 5:17). This denial is made in a very striking manner in Vin I.13-14 and S III.66-67, where for the usual formula according to which the body and mentality are *anattā*, not I, nor mine, the proof is offered that this body, sensibility, etc., cannot be “mine,” cannot be “I,” for if these were myself, or mine, they would never be sick, since in this case one could say, “Let my body, sensibility, etc., be thus, or not-thus,” nothing being really

nor any element of immortality. How little validity attaches to this man's conviction of freedom will appear if we reflect that while we speak of "doing what we like," we never speak of "being when we like," and that to conceive of a spatial liberty that is not also a temporal liberty involves a contradiction. Tradition, however, departs from science by replying to the man who confesses himself to be only a reasoning and mortal animal that he has "forgotten who he is" (Boethius, *De consolazione philosophiae*, prose vi), requires of him to "Know thyself,"<sup>6</sup> and warns him "If thou knowest not thyself, begone" (*si ignoras te, egredere*, Song of Solomon, 1:8). Tradition, in other words, affirms the validity of our consciousness of being but distinguishes it from the So-and-so that we think we are. The validity of our consciousness of being is not established in metaphysics (as it is in philosophy) by the fact of thought or knowledge; on the contrary, our veritable being is distinguished from the operations of discursive thought and empirical knowing, which are simply the causally determined workings of the "reasoning and mortal animal," which are to be regarded *yathābhūtam*, not as affects but only as effects in which we (in our veritable being) are not really, but only supposedly, involved.

*ours* except to the extent that we have it altogether in our power, nor anything variable any part of an identity such as the notion of a "very person" (*satpuruṣa*) intends. A further consideration is this, that if the becoming (*bhāva*) of the finite individual were not absolutely determined by "fate," "mediate causes," or "*ḥarma*" (the terms are synonymous), the idea of an omniscient providence (*prajñā, paññā*, knowledge of things not derived from the things themselves) would be unintelligible. In this connection we may remark that we are not, of course, concerned to prove dialectically any doctrine whatever, but only to exhibit its consistency and therefore its intelligibility. This consistency of the *Philosophia Perennis* is indeed good ground for "faith" (i.e., confidence, as distinguished from mere belief), but as this "philosophy" is neither a "system" nor a "philosophy," it cannot be argued for or against.

<sup>6</sup> E.g., Avencebrol, *Fons vitae* 1.2, "quid est ergo, quod debet homo inquirere in hac vita? . . . hoc est ut sciat se ipsum." Cf. Jacob Boehme, *De signatura rerum* 1.1. The reader will not confuse the "science of self" (*ātmaśāstra*) here with that intended by the psychologist, whether ancient or modern; as remarked by Edmond Vansteenberghe, the *γνώθη σεαυτοῦ* with which Nicholas of Cusa opens his *De docta ignorantia* "n'est plus le 'Connais-toi toi-même' du psychologue Socrate, c'est le 'Sois maître de toi' (= Dh 160, 380, *attā hi attano nātho*) des moralistes stoïciens" (*Around de la docte ignorance*, Münster, 1915, p. 42). In the same way, the only *raison d'être* of "Buddhist psychology" is not "scientific," but to break down the illusion of self. The modern psychologist's only concern and curiosity are with the all-too-human self, that very self which even in its highest and least suspected extensions is still a prison. Traditional metaphysics has nothing in common with this psychology, which restricts itself to "what can be psychically experienced" (Jung's own definition).

Tradition, then, differs from the "nothing-morist" (Skr. *nāstika*, Pāli *natthika*) in affirming a spiritual nature that is not in any wise, but immeasurable, innumerable, infinite, and inaccessible to observation, and of which, therefore, empirical science can neither affirm nor deny the reality. It is to this "spirit"<sup>6</sup> (Gk. *πνεῦμα*, Skr. *ātman*, Pāli *attā*, Arabic *rūh*, etc.) as distinguished from body and soul—i.e., whatever is phenomenal and formal (Gk. *σῶμα* and *ψυχή*, Skr. and Pāli *nāma-rūpa*, and *saviññāna-kāya*, *saviññāna-kāya*, "name and appearance," the "body with its consciousness")—that tradition attributes with perfect consistency an absolute liberty, spatial and temporal. Our sense of free will is as valid in itself as our sense of being, and as invalid as our sense of being So-and-so. There *is* a free will, a will, that is, unconstrained by anything external to its own nature; but it is only "ours" to the extent that we have abandoned all that we mean in common sense by "ourselves" and our "own" willing. Only *His* service is perfect freedom. "Fate lies in the created causes themselves" (*Sum. Theol.* 1.116.2); "Whatever departeth farthest from the First Mind is involved more deeply in the meshes of Fate [i.e., *ḥarma*, the ineluctable operation of "mediate causes"]; and everything is so much freer from Fate by how much it draweth nigh to the pivot of all things. And if it sticketh to the constancy of the Supernal Mind, that needs not move, it is superior to the necessity of Fate" (Boethius, *De consolazione philosophiae*, prose iv). This freedom of the Unmoved Mover ("that which, itself at rest, outgoeth them that run," *Īśā Up.* iv) from any *necessitas coactionis* is that of the spirit that bloweth where and as it will (*ὅπου θέλει πνεῦ*, John 3:8; *carati yathā vaśam*, RV x.168.4).<sup>7</sup> To possess it, one must have been "born again . . . of the Spirit" (John 3:7-8) and thus "in the spirit" (St. Paul, *passim*), one must have "found and awakened to the Spirit" (*yasyānuvittah pratibuddha ātmā*, BU iv.4.13),<sup>8</sup> must be in *excessus*

<sup>6</sup> The phenomena of this "spirit" (the realizations of its possibilities of manifestation under given conditions) are all phenomena whatever, among which those called "spiritualistic" have no privileged rank; on the contrary, "a mouse is miracle enough. . . ."

<sup>7</sup> RV x.168.3-4, John 3:7-8, and *Gylfaginning* 18 present remarkable parallels [cf. *Edda Snorra Sturlusonar með Skáldatali*, ed. Guðni Jónsson (Reykjavik, 1935)—ED.].

<sup>8</sup> "He who sees, thinks and discriminates this Spirit, whose pleasure and play are with the Spirit, whose dalliance is with the Spirit [as in BU iv.3.21, "All creation is female to God"] and whose joy is in the Spirit, he becomes autonomous (*svarāj*), he becomes a Mover-at-will (*ḥamācārin*) in every world; but the worlds of him whose knowledge is otherwise than this are corruptible, he does not become a Mover-at-will in any world" (CU vii.25.2). The conception of motion-at-will is developed in many texts, from RV ix.113.9, "Make me undying there where motion

("gone out of" oneself, one's senses), in *samādhi* (etymologically and semantically "synthesis"), unified (*eko bhūtaḥ*, cf. *ekodi-bhāva*), or in other words "dead" in the sense that "the kingdom of God is for none but the thoroughly dead" (Eckhart), and in the sense that Rūmī speaks of a "dead man walking" (*Mathnawī* VI.742-755), or again that of initiatory death as the prelude to a regeneration. There is not, of course, any necessary connection between liberation and physical death:<sup>9</sup> a man can as well be liberated "now in the time of this life" (*ditṭhe va dhamme parinibbuto, jīvan mukta*) as at any other time, all depending only upon his remembering "who he is," and this is the same as to forget oneself, to "hate one's own life" (psyche, "soul," or "self," Luke 14:26), *deficere a se tota* and *a semetipsa liquescere* (St. Bernard),<sup>10</sup> the "death of the soul" (Eckhart),

is at will" (*yatrānukāmaṃ caranam . . . mām amṛtam kṛdhi*), onwards. The Christian equivalent can be found in John 3:8 and 10:9 ("shall go in and out, and find pasture," as in TU III.10.5, "he goes up and down these worlds, eating what he will and assuming what aspect he will").

Motion-at-will is a necessary consequence of filiation or deification, the Spirit moving "as it will" in virtue of its omni- and total presence and because "he that is joined unto the Lord is one Spirit" (1 Cor. 6:17), all possession of "powers" (*ṛddhi, iddhi*, such as flying through the air or walking on the water) being gifts of the Spirit and depending upon a more or less *ablatis omnibus alteritatis et diversitatis* (Nicholas of Cusa). In other words, our freedom and beatitude are the less the more we are still "ourselves," *un tel*. The "miracle" is never an "impossibility," but only so according to our way of thinking: performance is always the demonstration of a possibility. It is not opposites (as "possible" and "impossible"), but contraries—for example, rest and motion—both of which are "possibles," that are reconciled in *divinis*. "Primitive" languages retain the stamp of this polarity in words which may mean either of two contrary things (cf. Freud on Abel, "Gegensinn der Urwort" in *Jahrbuch für psychoanalytische und psychopathologische Forschungen*, II 1910, and Betty Heimann, "The Polarity of the Infinite," *JISOA*, V, 1937).

It may be added that because of the identity of the immanent and transcendent Spirit (1 Cor. 6:17; "That art thou" of the Upaniṣads, etc.), we make no real distinction in the present article between "my spirit" (the "ghost" that we "give up" at death) and "the Spirit" (the Holy Ghost), although sometimes writing "spirit" with reference to the immanent essence (*antarātman*) and "Spirit" with reference to the transcendent essence (*paramātman*). So far as a distinction can be made, it is "logical but not real" (*secundum rationem, non secundum rem*).

<sup>9</sup> "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it" (Eccl. 12:7). Our sense of being may be "in the spirit" or "in the dust," and so either "saved or lost." It is well for him "who has been of strength to awaken before the body is unstrung" (KU VI.4).

<sup>10</sup> For St. Bernard, see Étienne Gilson, *La Théologie mystique de Saint Bernard* (Paris, 1934), ch. 5. How close to Indian formulation St. Bernard comes appears in his distinction of *proprium* from *esse* (*mama* from *attā*) and in Rousselet's summary (*ibid.*, p. 150, n. 2) "Cela revient à dire qu'on ne peut pleinement posséder Dieu sans pleinement se posséder soi-même," at the same time that (*ibid.*, p. 152, n. 1)

"nothing else than that the spirit goeth out of itself, out of time, and entereth into a pure nothingness" (Johannes Tauler), becoming thus "free as the Godhead in its non-existence" (Eckhart); to have said "Thy will be done, not mine" or, in other words, to have been perfected in "Islām."<sup>11</sup>

Man has thus two selves, lives or "souls," one physical, instinctive, and mortal, the other spiritual and not in any way conditioned by time or space, but of which the life is a Now "where every where and every when is focused" (*Paradiso* XXIX.12), and "apart from what has been or shall be" (KU II.14), that "now that stands still" of which we as temporal beings, knowing only a past and future, can have no empirical experience. Liberation is not a matter only of shaking off the physical body—oneself is not so easily evaded—but, as Indian texts express it, of shaking off all bodies, mental or psychic as well as physical. "The word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul (*ψυχή*) and spirit (*πνεῦμα*)" (Heb. 4:12). It is between these two that our choice lies: between ourselves as we are in ourselves and to others, and ourselves as we are in God—not forgetting that, as Eckhart says, "Any flea as it is in God is higher than the highest of the angels as he is in himself." Of these two "selves" the psychophysical

"Il n'y a plus de *suum*, l'être s'est vidé de lui-même," as in SB III.8.1.2-3, where the initiated sacrificer is "as if emptied out of himself" (*viricāna ivātmā bhavati*) in order to enter into possession of his "whole self" (*sarvātmanam*), or as in A 1.249, where the man who "has brought into full being body, will and foreknowing" (*bhāvita-kāyo, -citto, -pañño*—i.e., whole self) is not emptied out (*aparitto = aprarīkta*) but the Great Spiritual-Self of which the way is beyond all measure (*mahattā appamāna vihāri*).

<sup>11</sup> As far as possible this clear distinction of "Soul" (*ψυχή, anima, naḥ, vedanā*, etc.) from "spirit" (*πνεῦμα, spiritus, rūh, ātman*, etc.) is maintained in the present article; cf. Origen, cited by Eckhart (Pfeiffer ed., p. 531) "dīn geist ist dīr niht genomen: die krefte dīner sēle sint dīr genomen" ("It is not thy spirit, but the powers of thy soul [= *indriyāni*] that art taken from thee"). It must also be recognized, however, that in the European tradition the word "soul" is used in many senses (for example, "animal" is literally "ensouled," *anima* here as *spiraculum vitae*; cf. Skr. *prāna-bhṛt*) and that in one of these senses (which is strictly that of Philo's "soul of the soul," *Heres* LV; cf. Augustine, *De duobus animabus contra Manicheos*) "soul" means "spirit." In what sense "soul" is or is not to be taken to mean "spirit" is discussed by William of Thierry in the *Golden Epistle*, I (p. 87 in Walter Shewring's English version, London, 1930). In the same way, *ātman* may refer to the psychophysical "self" or to the spiritual self; from the latter point of view, the psychophysical self is *anattā*, "not spiritual"!

It is because both "soul" and "spirit" are selves, although of very different orders, that an equivocation is inevitable. The use of the words in their context has always to be very carefully considered; the proper sense can always be made out.



and spiritual, one is the "life" (*ψυχή*) to be rejected and the other the "life" that is thereby saved (Luke 17:33 and Matt. 16:25), and of these again the former is that "life" (*ψυχή*) which "he who hateth . . . in this world shall keep it unto life eternal" (John 12:25) and which a man *must* hate, "if he would be my disciple" (Luke 14:26). It is assuredly all that is meant by *psyche* in our "psychology" that is in this way *le moi haïssable*; all of us, in fact, that is subject to affects or affections or wants of any sort, or entertains "opinions of his own."<sup>12</sup>

The unknown author of the *Cloud of Unknowing* is therefore altogether in order when he says so poignantly (ch. 44) that "All men have matter of sorrow: but most specially he feeleth matter of sorrow, that wotteth and feeleth that he is. . . . And whoso never felt this sorrow, he may make sorrow: for why, he never yet felt perfect sorrow."<sup>13</sup> This sorrow, when it is had . . . maketh a soul able to receive that joy, the which reeveth from a man all witting and feeling of his being." And so also William Blake, when he says, "I would go down unto Annihilation and Eternal Death, lest the Last Judgment come and find me Unannihilate, and I be seiz'd and giv'n into the hands of my own Selfhood."<sup>14</sup> In the same way St. Paul, *vivo, autem jam non ego: vivit vero in me Christus* (Gal. 2:20) [and Rūmī, "He has died to self and become living through the Lord" (*Mathnawī* III.3364)].

<sup>12</sup> Cf. the citation from Jacob Boehme at the head of this article. It is comparatively easy for us to admit that a "self-willing" is egotistical; it is far more difficult but equally indispensable to realize that a "self-thinking"—i.e., "thinking for oneself" or "having opinions of one's own"—is as much an error or "sin," defined as "any departure from the order to the end," as any wilfulness can be. A good case of "thinking for oneself" is what is called the "free examination of scripture"; here, as was remarked by David MacIver, "the number of possible objections to a point of doctrine is equal to the number of ways of misunderstanding it, and therefore infinite."

<sup>13</sup> *Vairāgya*, "dis-gust," as distinguished from *āśa bhanga*, "disappointment": *nek-khamana-sita* as distinguished from *geha-sita* in S IV.232 and in Mil 76. Cf. *κατὰ θεὸν λύπη* as distinguished from *τοῦ κόσμου λύπη* in 1 Cor. 7:10.

<sup>14</sup> As remarked by St. Thomas Aquinas (*Sum. Theol.* 1.63.3), "no creature can attain a higher grade of nature without ceasing to exist," which self-denial is a thing "against the natural desire." It is not of its "own" will that the creature can desire its own "annihilation" or "death" [cf. Meister Eckhart, Evans ed., I, 274]. But our consciousness of being (as distinguished from any conceit of being So-and-so or Such-and-such) is precisely *not* the "creature"; it is another will in me than "mine," the lover of another (S IV.158) self than "mine" that "longs intensely for the Great Self" (*mahattam abhikkhankatā*, A II.21)—i.e., for Itself. This does not pertain to our self-love, but God's, who is in all things self-intent and loves no one but himself. ["Thus we understand how a life perishes. . . . If it will not give itself up to death, then it cannot attain any other world" (Boehme, *Sex puncta* v.10).]

We are sometimes shocked by the Buddhist disparagement of natural affections and family ties [cf. MU VI.28, "If to son and wife and family he is attached—for such a one, no, never at all!"]. But it is not the Christian who can thus recoil, for no man can be Christ's disciple "and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters," as well as himself (Luke 14:26 [cf. Plato, *Phaedo* 68A]). These uncompromising words, from one who endorsed the command to honor father and mother and who equated contempt with murder, show clearly enough that it is not an ethical doctrine of unselfishness or altruism that we are dealing with but a purely metaphysical doctrine of the transcending of individuation. It is in the same sense that he exclaims, "Who is my mother, or my brethren?" (Mark 3:33, etc.), and accordingly that Meister Eckhart warns, "As long as thou still knowest who thy father and thy mother have been in time, thou art not dead with the real death" (Pfeiffer ed., p. 462).

There can be no return of the prodigal, no "turning in" (*nivṛtti*), except of same to same. "Whoever serves a God, of whom he thinks that 'He is one and I another,' is an ignoramus" (BU 1.4.10); "If then you do not make yourself equal to God, you cannot apprehend God: for like is known by like" (Hermes, *Lib.* XI.2.20b). The question is asked of the one who comes home, "Who art thou?" and if he answers by his own or a family name, he is dragged away by the factors of time on the threshold of success (JUB III.14.1-2):<sup>15</sup> ". . . that ill-fated soul is dragged back again, reverses its course, and having failed to know itself, lives in bondage to un-

<sup>15</sup> The traveler, at the end of life's journey (not necessarily on his deathbed), knocks at the Sundoor (as in JUB, etc.), which is the door of the house of Death (as in KU) and that of Yama's paradise (as in RV), and would be received as a guest or, as expressed in Pāli, *amata-dvāram āhacca tiṭṭhati* (S II.43). Admission, however, depends upon anonymity, with all its implications of "being in the spirit" (*ātmany etya mukha ādatte*, "going in the spirit, the gate accepts him," JUB III.33.8). There can be no doubt that the same mythical and profound eschatology underlies the Homeric legend of Ulysses and Polyphemus. The latter is assuredly Death. (His one eye corresponds to Śiva's third; that it is blinded and thus "closed" means that the world illumined by sun and moon, the *two* eyes of the gods, is to persist for Ulysses and his companions. It must be an initiatory, not a final death that is overcome, as is also suggested by the "cave".) His land which yields crops untilled is a Paradise, like Yama's or Varuna's; Ulysses would be his guest. The story, as told by Homer (and Euripides), has become an adventure rather than a myth, but it remains that the hero who overcomes Death is the one man who when he is asked, "Who art thou?" answers, "No one"; and it is noteworthy that in the Euripides version, when the blinded Cyclops cries out, "Where is Nobody?" the chorus answers, "Nowhere, O Cyclops." It would be hard to say whether Homer still "understood his material"; it may be taken for granted that Euripides did not.

couth and miserable bodies. The fault of this soul is its ignorance"<sup>16</sup> (Hermes, *Lib.* x.8a). He should answer, "Who I am is the light Thou art. What heavenly light Thou art, as such I come to Thee," and answering thus is welcomed accordingly, "Who thou art, that am I; and who I am, art thou. Come in" (JUB III.14.3-4). To the question, "Who is at the door?" he answers, "Thou art at the door," and is welcomed with the words, "Come in, O myself" (Rūmī, *Mathnawī* 1.3062-3). It is not as *un tel* that he can be received—"Whoever enters, saying 'I am So-and-so,' I smite him in the face" (*Shams-i-Tabriz*); as in Song of Solomon 1:7, *si ignoras te, . . . egredere*.

"He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit" (1 Cor. 6:17). But this Spirit (*ātman*), Brahman, God, the "What?" of JUB III.14, "hath not come anywhence nor become anyone" (KU II.18). The Imperishable has neither personal nor family name (BU III.8.8, *Mādhyamīna* text) nor any caste (Muṇḍ. Up. 1.1.6); "God himself does not know what he is, because he is not any what"<sup>17</sup> (Erivgena); the Buddha is "neither priest nor prince nor husbandman nor any one at all (*koṇi no'mhi*). . . . I wander in the world a veritable naught (*akimcana*). . . . Useless to ask my kin" (*gottam*, Sn 455-456).<sup>18</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Dh 243 where, after a list of "faults," we have: "the supreme fault is ignorance" (*saviṅṅā paramam malam*).

<sup>17</sup> The deformed soul in which an *ablatis omnīs alteritatis et diversitatis* has been effected (Nicholas of Cusa) is therefore beyond our speechways (*vādapatha*, Sn 1076); "unknown to herself or any creature, she knows well that she is, but she does not know what she is" (Meister Eckhart, Pfeiffer ed., p. 537).

<sup>18</sup> In the same way, the famous ode xxxi of *Shams-i-Tabriz* [Rūmī, *Divān*], ". . . I know not myself . . . ; I am not of Adam nor of Eve . . . ; my place is the Placeless, my trace is the Traceless; nor body nor life, since I am of the life of the Beloved" (*na tan nāsād na jān nāsād, kī man az jān jānām-am*). Nicholson comments: "I am nought" means 'God is all.'" From the Indian point of view, the "Beloved" is, of course, "the Spirit, which is also one's own spiritual essence"—"For one who has attained, there is none dearer than the Spirit" or "than the Self" (*na piyataram attanā*, S 1.75; cf. BU 1.4.8, *tad etat preyah putrāt . . . yād ayam ātmā . . . ātmānam eva priyam upāsita*; BU II.4; BU IV.5; CU VII.25; [Muṇḍ. Up. II.2.1 ff.]; etc.). With "traceless" compare Dh 179, *tam buddham anantagocaram padam, kena padena nessatha*, "that Buddha, whose pasture is without end, the footless [or trackless], by what track can you find him out?" (This is complementary to the usual doctrine of the *vestigium pedis*, according to which the intelligible Buddha [or Agni] can be tracked by his spoor, *pādā* or *padāni*.) Cf. Coomaraswamy, *Elements of Buddhist Iconography*, 1935, nn. 145 ff. "A Tathāgata, I say, is actually (*dhamme*) beyond our ken" (*ananuvejjo*, M 1.140 [similarly *anupalabbhī yamāno*, S III.112]); and in the same way of Arhats "there is no demonstration" (*vattam tesam natthi paññāpanāya*; S 141): "Him neither gods nor men can see" (*tam ce hi nādaḥkhum*, S 1.23). The last is spoken in the Buddha's physical presence and corresponds to the

Having drawn the outlines of the universal doctrine of self-naughting and of self-sacrifice or devotion in the most literal sense of the words, we propose to devote the remainder of our demonstration to its specifically Buddhist formulation in terms of *ākimcaññāyatana*, "the Station of No-what-ness," or, more freely, "the Cell of Self-naughting." "When it is realized that 'There is no aught' (*n'atthi kimci*), that is 'Emancipation of the Will'<sup>19</sup> (*ceto-vimutti*) in the 'Station of No-what-ness'" (S IV.296 and M 1.297; cf. D II.112). The exact meaning of "There is naught"—i.e.,

well-known text of the *Vajracchedikā Sūtra*, "Those who see me in the body (*rūpena*) or think of me in words, they do not see me at all, their way of thinking is mistaken; the Blessed Ones are to be seen only in the Body of the Law, the Buddha can only be rightly understood as the principle of the Law, assuredly not by any means." Cf. St. Thomas Aquinas, "Therefore if anyone in seeing God conceives something in his mind, this is not God, but one of God's effects" (*Sum. Theol.* III.92.1 ad 4); "We have no means for considering what God is, but rather how He is not" (I.3.1). [Cf. Hermes, *Lib.* XIII.3, οὐκ ὀφθαλμοῖς τοιούτοις θεωροῦμαι, ὦ τέκνον. "The new man, being incorporeal, can be seen only with 'the eyes of the mind.'" Cf. JUB IV.19 and *The Doctrine of the Sūfis*, A. J. Arberry, tr. (Cambridge, 1935), p. 34.]

<sup>19</sup> *Ceto-vimutti* (often rendered "heart's release") is contrasted with *paññā-vimutti*, "intellectual emancipation," *ceto* and *paññā* denoting both the means or way of liberation and the respect in which liberation is obtained. The texts often speak of a "being free in both departments" *ubhato-bhāga-vimutti*, as well as of other types of liberation, and it is evident that the two ways, which are those of the will and the intellect, converge and ultimately coincide. A II.36, *ceto-vasipatto hoti vitakka-pathesu*, "He is a past master of the will in matters of choice [or 'matters of counsel']," brings out very clearly the conative connotations of *ceto*, which are evident also for *cetas* in AV VI.116.3. S III.60 defines *sankhārā* as *samcetanā*, rendered by Rhys Davids "seats of will." It is clear, then, that the connection of *ceto-vimutti* with *ākimcañña* is intrinsic, since it is just to the extent that one ceases to feel that one is anyone and to the extent that one loses all sense of *proprium* (*mama*) that self-willing and self-thinking must cease. It is just because *ceto* implies both willing and thinking that it is difficult to represent it by a single English word; however, it is in just the same way that English "to have a mind to" is the same as "to wish to" or "to want to" and so, too, that Skr. *man*, to "think," and *kaṃ*, to "wish" or "want," are virtually synonymous in many contexts. *Paññā* is not, of course, "thought" in this sense, but much rather "speculation" in the strict sense of this word (*āditye mahat . . . ādarṣe pratirūpah* Kauṣ. Up. IV.2. with very many Christian and other parallels—e.g., *Sum. Theol.* I.12.9c, "All things are seen in God as in an intelligible mirror," i.e., the *speculum aeternum*). It is asked in M 1.437, how is it that some are liberated in one way and some in the other, the Buddha replying that it depends upon "a difference in faculties" (*indriya-vevattatam*). The difference is, in fact, typically that of the royal from the sacerdotal, Kṣatriya from Brāhman character; because of this difference a *bhakti-mārga* and *kaṃma-mārga* are stressed in the *Bhagavad Gītā* and a *jñāna-mārga* in the Upaniṣads. The two ways of *ceto-vimutti* (in *Itivuttaka* 27, identified with *mettā*, "charity") and *paññā-vimutti* correspond to and are essentially the same as the *bhakti-mārga* and *jñāna-mārga* of Brahmanical texts.

“naught of mine”<sup>20</sup>—is brought out in A II.177: “The Brāhman<sup>21</sup> speaks the truth and no lie when he says ‘I am naught of an anyone anywhere, and therein there is naught of mine anywhere soever’” (*nāham kvacani kassaci kimcanam, tasmim na ca mama kvacani katthaci kimcanam n’atthi*; also in M II.263–264),<sup>22</sup> the text continuing, “Therewith he has no conceit of being ‘a Toiler’ (*samaṇa*) or ‘a Brahman,’ nor conceit that ‘I am better than’ or ‘I am equal to’ or ‘inferior to’ (anyone). Moreover, by a full comprehension of this truth, he reaches the goal of veritable ‘naughting’ (*ākimcaññam yeva patipadam*).” What is neither “I” nor “mine” is above all body, sensibility, volitional conformations, and empirical consciousness (i.e., the psychophysical self), and to have rejected these is “for your best good and beatitude” (S III.33; the chapter is entitled *Natum-hāka*, “What Is Not ‘Yours’”). Accordingly, “Behold the Arhats’ beatitude! No wanting can be found in them: excised the thought ‘I am’ (*asmi*);<sup>23</sup> delusion’s net is rent. . . . Unmoving, unoriginated . . . Brahma-

<sup>20</sup> It will be seen that the Arhat or Brāhman who has attained to self-naughting and confesses accordingly *n’atthi* or *n’atthi kimci* might have been called a *natthika* or *natthikavādi* (“denier”). If he is never in fact so called (but, rather, *sūnyavādi*), it is because these were designations current in a very different sense, with reference namely to the “materialist” or “skeptic” who denies that there is another world or hereafter (as in M I.402–403) or takes the extreme view (*natthitā*) that there is absolutely nothing in common between the individual that acts and the individual that experiences the results of the acts (S II.17). We propose to discuss this other “denier” upon another occasion.

<sup>21</sup> Pāli Buddhism not only equates *brahma-bhūta* with *buddha*, *brahma-cakka* with *dhamma-cakka*, etc., but (where there is no polemic involved) maintains the old and familiar distinction of the Brāhman by birth (*brahma-bandhu*) from the Brāhman as Comprehensor (*brahma-vit*), in the latter sense equating Brāhman with Arhat.

<sup>22</sup> *Netti* 183 (cited in a note on A I.203) explains *kimcana* here by *rāga-dosa-moha*—i.e., ethically—and this is true in the sense that when self is let go, there remains no ground for any “selfish” passion; *kimcana* is the “somewhat” of the man who still feels that he is “somebody” and accordingly the ground in which interest, ill-will, and delusion can flourish.

In all respects equivalent to *n’atthi* (Skr. *nāsti*) is Persian *nēst* in *Shams-i-Tabriz* (T I.39.12a, cited by Nicholson, p. 233), “Be thou naught (*nēst shū*), naughted of self, for there is no crime more heinous than thine existence.”

<sup>23</sup> This does not imply that the Arhat “is not,” but excludes from an ineffable essence the process of thought. From this point of view, *cogito ergo sum* is altogether without validity; what I call “my” thinking is by no means my Self. The Arhat does not wonder whether he is, what he is, or how he is, has been, or will be (S II.26, Sn 774). “He does not worry about what is unreal” (*asatti na paritassati*, M I.136); he is self-synthesized (*ajjhataṃ susamāhito, passim*), and in this state of synthesis (*samādhi*), though he is unaware of anything, “yet there is awareness in him” (S V.74; cf. BU IV.3.28–30). The Buddha neither teaches that *nibbāna* is a “nothingness” nor that the Arhat “comes to naught”: “There is (*atthi*) an unborn, unbecome, un-

become . . . true ‘Persons’ (*sappurisā*), natural sons of the Wake. . . . That heart-wood of the Brahma-life is their eternal reason; unshaken in whatever plight, released from ‘still becoming’ (*punabbhava*), on ground of ‘dompted [-self]’ they stand, they in the world have won their battle. . . . They roar the ‘Lion’s Roar.’ Incomparable are the Wake (*arahanta*, S III.83–84, 159).” There is no question of a post-mortem “annihilation” here, then, but of “Persons” triumphant here and now; their unconditionality will not be changed by death, which is not an event for those who have “died before they die” (Rūmī), not an event for the *jīvan-mukta*, the veritable *dīkṣita* for whom the funeral rites have already been performed and for whom his relatives have already mourned (JUB III.7.9). Of these it is only the manifestation in terms of “name and appearance” (*nāma-rūpa*) that comes to an end (as all things must that have had a beginning), so that after death they will be sought for in vain by Devas or men in this world or any other (S I.123, D I.46, etc.), just as one might seek in vain for a God *anywhere*, of whom it is asked “Whence did he come to be?” (*khuta ā babhūva*, RV x.168.3), “In what quarter is He or in what?” (TS v.4.3.4) and “Who knows where He is?” (KU II.25): Thou “canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit” (John 3:8). In spite of this, however, it must be remarked that the attainment of infinity is not a destruction of finite possibility, for the deceased Comprehensor, being a Mover-at-will (*kā-mācārin*), can always therefore reappear if, when, where, and as he will. Examples of this “resurrection” may be cited in JUB III.29–30 (where the *noli me tangere* offers a notable parallel to the Christian resurrection), and in the *Parosahassa Jātaka* (No. 99), where a Bodhisattva is asked on his deathbed, “What good has he gotten?,” and he answers: “There is naught” (*n’atthi kimci*), which is misunderstood by his disciples to

created, uncompounded, and were there not, there would be no way out here of this born, become, created and compounded existence” (Ud 80); a Tathāgata (see Coomaraswamy, “Some Pāli Words” [in this volume—ED.]) whose “‘I am’ has been cast off” (*asmimāno pahīno*) is not “destroyed”—“It is in the very presence of such a Tathāgata that I call him ‘past finding out’ (*ananuvejjo*), and yet there are some who naughtily, vainly, falsely, and contrary to what is the fact (*asatā tucchā musā abhūtena*) charge that the Tathāgata is a misleader (*venayika*; cf. *dunnaya*, heresy) who propounds the cutting off, destruction, and ceasing to be of essences. That is just what I am not, and what I do not propound. The stoppage (*nirodha*) that I have reached, both of old and now, is nothing but the stoppage of Grief (*dukkhassa*—i.e., of that which is *anattā*, not I nor mine),” M I.139–140. (The coincidence of *anattā* with *dukkha* corresponds exactly to the *esa ta ātmā sarvāntarah ato’nyad artam* of BU III.4.2.)



mean that he had gotten "no good" by his holy life. But when the conversation is reported to his chief disciple, who had not been present, he says "You have not understood the meaning of the Master's words. What the Master said was that he had attained to the 'Station of No-what-ness' (*ākimcaññāyatana*)."<sup>24</sup> And thereupon the deceased Master reappears from the Brahma-world to confirm the chief disciple's explanation.<sup>25</sup>

The man self-naughted is a happy man; not so those still conscious of their human ties. "Look you, how they are blest, these 'Nobodies,' yea these Comprehensors who are 'men of naught': and see how hindered he for whom there is an 'aught,' the man whose mind is tied up with 'other men'" (Ud 14).<sup>26</sup> For "to have known the forthcoming of not being 'anyone' (*ākimcaññā-sambhavam nātvā*) . . . that is 'gnosis' (*etaṃ nānam*, Sn 1115); this is the Way, "Perceiving that there is 'No-what-ness' (*ākimcaññam*) . . . convinced that 'There is not' (*n'atthi*—i.e., 'naught mine,' as above), so cross the flood" (Sn 1070). And this is not an easy matter: "Hard to perceive what's false (*anattam*; here probably = *anrtam*),<sup>27</sup> nor is it easy to perceive the truth (*saccam* = *satyam*); he knows,

<sup>24</sup> It is worthy of note that Ālāra Kālāma's doctrine and realization extended to the experience of *ākimcaññāyatana* (M 1.165).

<sup>25</sup> Again a sufficient proof that even in "late" Hinayāna Buddhism to have become "no one" was by no means the same as to have been "annihilated." The Buddhist position is in no way inconsistent with the "never have I not been and never hast thou not been . . . nor ever shall not be" of BG 11.12. It should be observed that the resurrections of JUB 111.29-30 and the *Jātaka* as cited above are wholly "in order" and have nothing in common with the phenomenon of spiritualism. It is as much a Buddhist as a Brāhmanical commonplace that "the dead are not seen again amongst the living," as asked in the *Jātaka*; cf. CU VIII.13-14.

<sup>26</sup> In context the reference is to a man who steals for his wife. The contrasted terms are *ākimcana*, "man of naught," and *sakimcana*, "man of aught," the man, that is, who "has" what he calls "his" individuality, which individuality in this case "expresses itself" in an act of partiality. This "man of aught" is hindered by the notions of "himself" and of "his" wife, the "tie" being as between these two selves, subjective and objective; insofar as he does not "hate" both himself and his wife, he is not the Buddha's disciple but is troubled and gets into trouble. In all these contexts it must be remembered that it is a question of the *summum bonum* and man's last end, and not of the "good of society," which is not a final end. The man's first duty is to work out his own salvation (Dh 166). Abandonment of self and of all ties is not only literally "un-self-ish," but it is also both better and kinder to point out the way to happiness by following it than to be "sympathetic"—i.e., to "suffer with"—those who will not "seek peace, and ensue it."

<sup>27</sup> The PTS editor, Paul Steinthal, reads *anattam*, but ms A, admittedly the best manuscript, has *anatam*, which is the form that would be assumed by *anrtam* in Pāli (cf. *amrtam*, *amatam*). A commentary has *anatam*, but apparently in the sense of the "not-bent," hence *nibbāna*, and it must be with this in view that Woodward trans-

whose wanting has been smitten through, who sees that 'There is naught' (*n'atthi kimcanam*, Ud 80); "who hath overpast becoming or not becoming in any way" (*iti-bhavābhavam*, all relativity, Ud 20).<sup>28</sup>

It will be seen that anonymity is an essential aspect of *ākimcaññā*. All initiations (*dīkṣā*) and, likewise, Buddhist ordination (*pabbajana*), which as in monasticism elsewhere is a kind of initiation,<sup>29</sup> involve at the outset a self-denial.<sup>30</sup> This is explicit in Ud 55, where "Just as rivers lose their

lates "infinite." But it is almost impossible to doubt that what we have is the familiar antithesis of *anrtam* to *satyam*. The uncertainty of the reading nevertheless expresses a sort of *double entendre*; that which is *anattā*, "not what I really am" (*na me so attā, passim*) but "devoid of any spiritual-essence" (S 1v.54) and "naught-y" (*asat*, M 1.136), is equally from the Brahmanical point of view at the same time "false" and "human" as distinguished from what is "true" and "non-human"—i.e., divine—as is explicit in VS 1.5 and ŚB 1.9.3.23 (cf. AB VII.24), where the sacrificer (always in the last analysis the sacrificer of himself) when initiated and during the performance of the rite "has entered from the untruth (*anrtam*) into the truth (*satyam*)" and when at the close of the operation he formally desecrates himself, but does not like to say plainly the converse of this and so says instead, "Now I am he that I actually (empirically) am," So-and-so.

<sup>28</sup> "It is the Spirit in thee, O man, that knows which is the true and which the false (*attā te purisa jānāti saccam vā yadi vā musā*)—the 'fair self' (*ḥalyānam . . . attānam*) . . . or the 'foul' (*pāpam attānam*)" (A 1.149), in other words the "great self" (*mahattā*) or the "petty" (*app'ātumo*) of A 1.249, the "Self that is Lord of self" or the "self whose Lord is the Self" of Dh 380. The false view is to see "self in not-self" (*anattani . . . attā*, A 11.42, etc.)—i.e., in the empirical subject or its percepts (S 111.130, etc.). It is "well for him that knows himself" (*atta-saññato*, S 1.106; *attaññū*, D 111.252), "whose light is the Spirit" (*atta-dīpa*, D 11.100), the "self-lover" (*attakāmo*, S 1.75, etc.), "inwardly self-synthesized" (*ajjhatam susamāhito*, A 11.31, etc.), "in whom the Spirit has been fully brought to birth" (*bhāvitattā, passim*). "Go seek your Self" (*attānam gaveseyyātha*, Vin 1.23; *attānam gavesitum*, Vis 393). "Quicken thy Self" (*coday'attānam*, Dh 379), for "self is the Lord of self" (Vis 380).

<sup>29</sup> The initiate is "nameless" in KB VII.2-3 and speaks of none by name; he is not himself, but Agni. In ŚB 111.8.1.2, he is "emptied of self." Buddhist ordination (*pabbajana* from the point of view of the ordained, *pabbajana* from that of the ordainer, who during the Buddha's lifetime is the Buddha himself) has many of the characteristics of, and is sometimes called, an initiation (S 1.226; Commentary [= ŚA 1.346] explains *cira-dīkṣhita*, "long since initiated," by *cira-pabbajita* "long since ordained"; cf. J v.138). In *Jātakamāla* x.32, a Bodhisattva is *dīkṣita*.

The primary senses of *pabbajati* are to "wander, travel," and "be in exile," and so, to become a fellow in the "Companionship" (*sangha*) of Mendicant Travelers (*bhikkhu, pabbajaka*), a true Wayfarer; cf. Coomaraswamy, "The Pilgrim's Way," and "The Pilgrim's Way, A Buddhist Recension," 1938 (article in two parts); the Traveler is bound for a world's End that is within himself.

<sup>30</sup> The ethical aspect of this self-denial is a dispositive means to the end of self-naughting and self-realization, not an end in itself. *Tapas*, whether Brahmanical

former name and lineage (*purimāni nāma-gottāni*) when they reach the sea, and are accounted just as 'the great sea,' so men of the four castes (*brāhmaṇa khattiyā vessā suddā*), when they 'as-wanderers-are-ordained' (*pabbajitvā*), discard their former names and lineage, and are reckoned only to be 'Toilers, Sons of the Sakyan.' It is thus that the "exile" (*pabbajaka*) sets to work to "de-form himself of himself," as Eckhart expresses it (*daz er sich entbilde sin selbes*) or, in other words, to "transform" himself.

The anonymity which we have described above as a doctrinally inculcated principle is by no means only a monastic ideal, but has far-reaching repercussions in traditional societies, where our distinctions of sacred from profane (distinctions that are, in the last analysis, the signature of an internal conflict too rarely resolved) can hardly be found. It reappears, for example, in the sphere of art. We have discussed elsewhere "The Traditional Conception of Ideal Portraiture"<sup>31</sup> (citing, for example, the *Pratimānātaka* III.5, where Bharata, though he exclaims at the artists' skill, is unable to recognize the effigies of his own parents), and we may point out here that there is a corresponding anonymity of the artist himself, not only in the field of the so-called "folk arts" but equally in a more sophisticated environment. Thus, as H. Swarzenski has remarked, "It is in the very nature of Mediaeval Art that extremely few names of artists have been transmitted to us . . . the entire mania of connecting the few names preserved by tradition<sup>32</sup> with well-known masterpieces, . . . all this is characteristic of the nineteenth century's cult of individualism, based upon ideals of the Renaissance."<sup>33</sup> Dh 74 exclaims, "May it be known to religious and profane that 'This was my work' . . . that is an

or Buddhist, is never a "penance," but in its disciplinary aspect a part of that training by means of which the petty self is subjected and assimilated to the Great Self or, in a familiar symbolism, by which the steeds are brought under the driver's control, apart from which the man is "at war with himself" (S 1.71-72, like BG VI.5-6); and in its intrinsic character, a radiance, reflecting his "Who glows (*tapati*) yonder."

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Coomaraswamy, *Why Exhibit Works of Art?* 1943, ch. 7.

<sup>32</sup> "History," rather than "tradition" in our stricter sense.

<sup>33</sup> *Journal of the Walters Art Gallery*, I (1938), 55. Cf. Josef Strzygowski, "the artist in Viking times is not to be thought of as an individual, as would be the case today. . . . It is a creative art" (*Early Church Art in Northern Europe*, New York, 1928, pp. 159-160); and with respect to this distinction of "individual" from "creative" art, "I do nothing of myself" (John 8:28), and, "I take note, and even as He dictates within me, I set it forth" (Dante, *Purgatorio* xxiv.52). ["No pronouncement of a prophet is ever his own," Philo, *De specialibus legibus* IV.49; cf. IV.192.] Better to be an amanuensis of the Spirit than to "think for oneself!"

infantile thought."<sup>34</sup> DhA 1.270 relates the story of thirty-three youths who are building a "rest hall" at four crossroads, and it is explicit that "The names of the thirty-three comrades did not appear," but only that of Sudhammā, the donor of the roofplate (the keystone of the dome).<sup>35</sup> One is irresistibly reminded of the "Millennial Law" of the Shakers that "No one should write or print his name on any article of manufacture, that others may hereafter know the work of his hands."<sup>36</sup> And all this has not only to do with the body of the work and its aesthetic surfaces; it has just as much to do with its "weight" (*gravitas*) or essence (*ātman*). The notion of a possible property in ideas is altogether alien to the *Philosophia Perennis*, of which we are speaking. It is of ideas and the inventive power that we can properly say, if we are thinking in terms of the psycho-

<sup>34</sup> The words of the original could mean either my "work" or my "doing," *kamma* covering both things made and things done. The same ambiguity, or rather ambivalence, is present in the corresponding text of BG III.27, "One whose self is confounded by the concept of an 'I' imagines that 'I am the doer,'" and V.8, where the Comprehensor does not think of "himself as the doer of anything," the word for "doer," *kartr*, meaning equally "maker" or "creator"; cf. JUB 1.5.2, "Thou (God) art the doer," and IV.12.2, "I (God) am the doer" (or "maker"). Like BG, as cited above, is Ud 70, "Those who give ear to the notion 'I am the doer' (*ahamkāra*), or are captivated by the notion 'another is the doer' (*paramkāra*), do not understand this matter, they have not seen the point."

We need hardly remind the reader that this is a metaphysical position and must not be confused with the *akīriyāvāda* heresy—namely that of the man in Ud 45 who is represented as saying, "even while acting, 'It is not I that am agent' (*yo c'āpi katvā na karomīti c'āha*)." "I," "this man," *un tel*, have no right to evade "my" responsibility in this way, by maintaining that it does not matter what I do, because it is not really I that am doing it. It is only when the nonentity of this "I" [which is not "mine" (Dh 62) but an assumption], has been *verified* (*sacchikatvā*) that 'I,' in the sense of 1 John 3:9, being "born of God, . . . cannot sin," or that of Gal. 5:18, am "not under the law."

<sup>35</sup> In early Indian art, the names of the donors are constantly met, those of artists almost never. The donor's name is recorded because he wishes to "acquire merit" for what he has done; the artist is not, as such, in this specifically moral sense acquiring merit, but on the one hand earning his wages and on the other working for the good of the work to be done, neither of these points of view implying any wish for fame.

<sup>36</sup> Edward and Faith Andrews, *Shaker Furniture* (New Haven, 1937), p. 44. In all these connections, however, it is the spirit rather than the letter that matters. In the same community, for example, furniture could not be owned "as private property, or individual interest" and yet might be marked with a person's initials "for purposes of distinction." And it was, in just the same way, in order for a Buddhist monk to say, "I" or "mine," when convenient (S 1.14). In the same way an artist's signature need not be an advertisement but can be, like a hallmark, a simple guarantee of quality and acceptance of responsibility.



physical ego, that this is not "mine" or—if the self has been naughted, so that, to use the Brāhmaṇa phrase, we have "come into our own"—that these gifts of the Spirit are truly "mine," since it is the Synteresis, the Divine Eros, inwit, "in-geium," immanent spirit, daimon, and not the natural individual that is the ground of the inventive power, and it is precisely this inwit, this intellectual light, and not our own "mentality" of which it is said that "That art thou."

In conclusion, the student must not be misled by such terms as self-naughting, nonbeing, or any other of the phrases of the negative theology. Nonbeing, for example, in such an expression as Eckhart's "nonexistence of the Godhead," is that transcendent aspect of the Supreme Identity which is not, indeed, being, but that to which all being, even God's, can be reduced, as to its principle; it is that of God's which is not susceptible of manifestation, of which, therefore, we cannot speak in terms that are applicable only to states of manifestation, yet without which God would be only a "pantheon," a "pantheistic" deity, rather than "all this" and "more than this," "within" and "without." In the same way, it must be realized that of one assimilated to God by self-naughting and therefore no longer anyone, we have no longer any human means or speechway (*vādapatha*) to say what he is, but only to say that he is not such or such. It would be even more untrue to say that he is not than that he is; he is simply inaccessible to analysis. Even a theoretical grasp of metaphysics is impossible until we have learned that there are "things which our intellect cannot behold . . . we cannot understand what they are except by denying things of them" (Dante, *Convito* III.15) and that these very things are the greater part of man's last end. If, for example, the Arhat no longer desires, it is not because he is in human language "apathetic," but because all desires are possessed, and pursuit has no longer any meaning; if the Arhat no longer "moves," it is not as a stone lies still but because he no longer needs any means of locomotion in order to be anywhere; if he is not curious about empirical truths, whether "this is so" or "not so," it is not because he does not know but because he does not know as we know in these terms. For example, he does not think in terms of past or future, but only is now. If he is "idle," from our point of view who still have "things to do," it is because he is "all in act" (*kṛtakṛtyah*, *katakaranīyo*), with an activity independent of time.

But if we cannot know him, it does not follow that he cannot know or manifest himself to us. Just as in this life, while in *samādhi*, he is inac-

cessible and for all practical purposes dead, but on emerging from this synthesis and "returning to his senses" can conveniently make use of such expressions as "I" or "mine" for practical and contingent purposes without attainder of his freedom (S 1.14), so after death, by which he is not changed, a resurrection is always possible in any guise (he "shall go in and out, and find pasture," John 10:9, with many Indian parallels—e.g., TU III.5, "he goes up and down these worlds, eating what he desires and assuming what aspect he will"). This possibility by no means excludes that of reappearance in that very (dis-)guise by which he had been known in the world as So-and-so. Examples of such resurrection can be cited not only in the case of Jesus, but in that of Uccaiśśravas Kaupayeya (JUB III.29-30), in that of the Bodhisattva of the *Parosahassa Jātaka*, and in that of the former Buddha Prabhūtaratna. Such a resurrection, indeed, is only one of innumerable "powers" (*iddhi*), such as those of walking on the water, flying through the air, or disappearing from sight, which are possessed by one who is no longer "in himself" but "in the spirit," and inevitably possessed precisely because they are the powers of the Spirit with which he is "one" (1 Cor. 6:17):<sup>87</sup> which powers (as listed, for example, in S II.212 ff., A 1.255 ff., and S v.254 ff.) are precisely the "greater works" of John 14:12, "the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do." There can, indeed, be no question for those who know the "facts" that insofar as the *yogin* is what the designation implies, "joined unto the Lord," these "powers" are at his command; he is only too well aware, however, that to make of these powers an end in themselves would be to fail of the real end.

It will be seen that in speaking of those who have done what was to be done, we have been describing those who have become "perfect, even as your Father in Heaven is perfect." There will be many to say that even if all this holds good for the all-abandoner, it can have no meaning for "me," and it is true that it cannot have its full meaning for "me" who, *en étant un tel*, am insusceptible of deification and therefore incapable of

<sup>87</sup> This unification is to be understood in the same way that the "eternal reasons" are one with the intellect that entertains them and yet distinguishable among themselves, so as to be *in posse* to project their images upon the walls of our cave. Filiation or theosis by an *ablatis omnibus alteritatis et diversitatis* can be expressed in terms of "glorification" as a becoming consciously a ray of the Light of lights: the relation of a ray, although of light throughout its course, is that of identity with its source at one end and separate recognizability at the other, where its effect is observed as color. In no better way than by this adequate symbol, made use of in all traditions, can we express or suggest the meaning of Eckhart's "fused but not confused" or Indian *bhedābhedha*, "distinction without difference."

reaching God. Few or none of "us" are yet qualified to abandon ourselves. As far as there is a Way, it can be trodden step by step. There is an intellectual preparation, which not merely prepares the way to a verification (*sacchikīriyā*) but is indispensable to it. As long as we love "our" selves and conceive of a "self-denial" only in terms of "altruism," or cling to the idea of a "personal" immortality for our or other selves, we are standing still. But a long stride has been taken if at least we have learned to accept the idea of the naughting of self as a good, however contrary it may be to our "natural" desire, however *allen menschen fremde* (Eckhart). For if the spirit be thus willing, the time will come when the "flesh," whether in this or any other ensemble of possibilities forming a "world," will be no longer weak. The doctrine of self-naughting is therefore addressed to *all*, in measure of their capacity, and by no means only to those who have already formally abandoned name and lineage. It is not the saint, but the sinner, that is called to repent of his existence.



## Ātmayajña: Self-Sacrifice

*Svasti vah parāya tamasa parastāt*

*Mundaka Upaniṣad, 11.2.6<sup>1</sup>*

When a man vows to Almighty God all that he has, all his life, all his knowledge, it is a holocaust.

St. Gregory, XX Homily on Ezekiel

Just as Christianity turns upon and in its rites repeats and commemorates a Sacrifice, so the liturgical texts of the *R̥g Veda* cannot be considered apart from the rites to which they apply, and so are these rites themselves a mimesis of what was done by the First Sacrificers who found in the Sacrifice their Way from privation to plenty, darkness to light, and death to immortality.

The Vedic Sacrifice is always performed for the Sacrificer's benefit, both here and hereafter.<sup>2</sup> The immediate benefits accruing to the Sacrificer are that he may live out the full term of his life (the relative immortality of "not dying" prematurely) and may be multiplied in his children and in his possessions; the Sacrifice ensuring the perpetual circulation of the "Stream of Wealth" (*vasor dhārā*),<sup>3</sup> the food of the gods reaching them in the smoke of the burnt offering, and our food in return descending from heaven in the rain and thus through plants and cattle to ourselves, so that neither the Sacrificer nor his people shall die of want. On the other hand, the ultimate benefit secured to the Sacrificer who thus lives out his life on earth and in good form is that of deification and an absolute

[This essay was first published in the *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, VI (1942). —ED.]

<sup>1</sup> "Welfare to ye in crossing over to the farther shore of darkness!"

<sup>2</sup> "For the winning of both worlds," TS vi.6.4.1; "that 'life's best' that has been appointed by the gods to men for this time being and hereafter," Plato, *Timaeus* 90D.

<sup>3</sup> TS v.4.8.1, v.7.3.2, 3; ŚB v.4.1.16, vii.3.1.30, ix.3.2, etc.; MU vi.37, BG iii.10 ff. The *vasor dhārā* is represented iconographically in the Cakravartin compositions at Jaggayapeta, cf. James Burgess, *Buddhist Stūpas of Amarāvati and Jaggayapeta* (London 1887), pl. LV, fig. 3, etc.