

# Dehātmavāda or the body as soul

## EXPLORATION OF A POSSIBILITY WITHIN NYĀYA THOUGHT

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According to Nyāya thought, soul is one of the nine substances, the other eight being earth, water, fire, wind, ākāśa, space (*deśa*), time and the mind (*manas*). Soul itself is of two kinds, the *jīvātman* and the *paramātman*. The *jīvātman* is the embodied soul; it is plural, different in every different body.

Soul is distinct from the physical body, the senses, the mind (*manas*) and the life principle (*prāṇa*). It has no form, though it comes into contact with all substances which have a form, and thus becomes an agent and has experiences. Though it has contact with all substances which have a manifest form, yet, due to the power of *adr̥ṣṭa*, born of earlier *karma*, it experiences joy and suffering only in association with that particular body with which it becomes conjoined due to earlier *karma*. It then engages in new *karma* acquiring sin or merit depending on actions characterized by *dharma* or *adharma*. New experiences create in it new *saṃskāras* (impressions and propensities). In whatever way it acts, the mind joined to it by the force of its *adr̥ṣṭa* acts as its subordinate.

Such is the embodied soul, the *jīvātman*. It is characterized by nine *guṇas* (qualities/properties) which are specific to it: *buddhi* (cognition, consciousness), desire, aversion, effort, *dharma*, *adharma*, volition, joy and suffering. It is also characterized by five general *guṇas*, namely, number, measure, separateness, conjunction (*samyoga*) and disjunction (*vibhāga*), which inhere in it. It is born and reborn in various *yonis* (living forms) according to its *karma*. Only in a human body does it become aware of itself as a candidate (*adhikārin*) for *mokṣa*. In this state it is called *dehī*, *prānt* or *jīva*.

The *paramātman* is distinct from the *jīvātman*s or embodied souls; for *paramātman* is one, it is the creator of the world and the author of the Vedas. The *jīvas* who worship *paramātman* are in return bestowed with the gift of endless divine bliss. The *paramātman* impels the *jīvas* to enjoy the fruit of their *karma* and in the attainment of *mokṣa*. It, too, has nine *guṇas* which are its inherent properties: eternal knowledge, desire and effort in addition to number, measure, distinctness, conjunction and disjunction. *Paramātman* is called by names such as *Īśvara*, *Prabhu*, *Bhagavāna*, etc. Since *paramātman*

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creates, upholds and destroys the world, he is also given the three names, Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva.

The body cannot have *buddhi* (cognition, consciousness) as an inherent property, because, if this were true, the experience of childhood would not be remembered in old age when the earlier body no longer exists. Moreover, *buddhi* is obviously absent in a dead body. Therefore, clearly, it is not the body that possesses *buddhi*. All other specific *guṇas* of the soul (*ātman*) such as desire, effort, etc. are rooted in *buddhi* (consciousness, cognition). Therefore, they, too, cannot be inherent properties of the body. Neither can it be said that *buddhi*, desire, effort, etc. are inherent properties, not of the body but of the sense-organs; because the memory of an earlier experience, which was acquired through a sense-organ, persists even after the sense-organ itself is destroyed. Moreover, if each of the sense-organs were separately endowed with *buddhi*, desire, effort and other such *guṇas*, every single body will have a multiplicity of conscious agent (*jñānts*) pulling it in different directions and soon destroying it completely. Further, the mind, according to Nyāya, is atomic, but these *guṇas* such as consciousness, desire, etc. are not; they are thus experienced as continuous in nature. Such an experience would not be possible, if it was the mind and not the *ātman* or self which had these *guṇas* as inherent properties. Therefore, we are led to the conclusion that the *ātman* or self is a substance different from the body, the senses, and the *manas* (mind) and possesses *guṇas* such as knowledge, desire, etc. as inherent properties.

Such is the notion of the self as propounded in the standard texts of Nyāya and the Vaiśeṣika. But it cannot withstand criticism. For it can be demonstrated that within the Nyāya framework the concept of body along with that of the mind (*manas*) can effectively replace the concept of a distinct self, revealing it to be a redundant idea. This new Nyāya doctrine can be called the doctrine of *dehātmavāda*.

According to *dehātmavāda*, the concepts of *manas* and body can successfully fulfil the various purposes for which a distinct self or *ātman* has been posited. And this can be done without giving up the Nyāya framework. The living human-body can replace the self as the ground in which those *guṇas* or properties, which are capable of being directly perceived, inhere. These *guṇas* are: *buddhi* (consciousness, cognition), desire, joy, suffering, revulsion and volition. The other three *guṇas* of the self, namely, *dharma* (merit) *adharma* (demerit) and *bhāvanā*<sup>1</sup>, which are not capable of being directly perceived, can be taken as inhering in the *manas* (mind). Now it is true that in the Nyāya framework we cannot conceive of the above group of *guṇas*—*buddhi* (consciousness, cognition), desire, etc.—as specific or *viśeṣa guṇas* of the body; for such *guṇas* can arise in the body, an earthly object, only through a process such as *pāka* (maturation, evolution), a process which can result only in giving rise to newer *guṇas* that are essentially similar in nature to the earlier earthly (material) *guṇas*. The limbs of a human body are '*jaḍa*', dead material objects; they have no consciousness, and thus they cannot give rise

to radically different *guṇas* such as *buddhi*, the essence of which is consciousness. But, though we cannot conceive of *buddhi* and like *guṇas* as *specific guṇas* of the body, we can certainly conceive of them as *general* or *sāmānya guṇas* inhering in the body. This is, indeed, our move.

The *general guṇas* in the Nyāya system are such that for them to be conceived of as properties inhering in the body it is not necessary that they be emergent properties, through the process of *pāka*, of the same matter of which the body is constituted. Nor is it necessary that they be similar in character to those essentially material *guṇas* that belong to the various limbs of the body. For this reason it is possible within Nyāya to conceive of *guṇas* like *buddhi* (consciousness, cognition) as belonging to the body and as inhering in it. Just as form, according to Nyāya, inheres in a body as a *general guṇa*, so can *buddhi* and the like. The Naiyāyika cannot but allow this. The body, after all, has other *guṇas* too in his scheme such as *saṁyoga* (contact) and *viyoga* (the state of being disjoined), which inhere in it as *general guṇas*. Similarly, why can we not conceive of *buddhi* and such other *guṇas* as inhering in the body as *general guṇas*?

A question may be posed here: if *buddhi*, desire, effort and other such *guṇas* are conceived of as *guṇas* residing in a body, then why not conceive of them as *specific guṇas* rather than *general guṇas*? This, however, is patently not possible, for this will not be consistent with the very definition of a *specific guṇa*. A *specific guṇa* is defined as a *guṇa* on the basis of which one *dravya* (substance) is distinguished from another. The specificity of a *specific guṇa* has both a positive and a negative aspect. A *specific guṇa* is, by definition, present in substances which are characterized by it; but at the same time it is absent from all other substances. The *guṇa śabdatva* (sound as a property), for example, inheres in *ākāśa* as its *specific guṇa*. It is absent from all other *dravyas*, and is at the same time the *specific guṇa* which distinguishes *ākāśa* from other *dravyas*.

What we are proposing is that *guṇas* such as *buddhi* be conceived of as *general guṇas* inhering in a body as long as it lasts. They are analogous to form (*rūpa*) which, too, in Nyāya is conceived of as a body's *general guṇa*. There are other *guṇas* too, namely, conjunction (*saṁyoga*) and disjunction (*viyoga*), which in Nyāya are conceived of as inhering in the body as its *general guṇas*. *Buddhi* and the like can be similarly conceived of as inhering in a body as its *general guṇas* as long as the body endures as a living thing.

Regarding the three *guṇas*—*dharma*, *adharma* and *bhāvanā*—*dehātmaavāda* holds that these inhere in the *manas*, and further that all three are *specific guṇas* of the *manas* since they distinguish *manas* from other substances.

OBJECTION. If *buddhi* and like *guṇas* are conceived of as *guṇas* inhering in a body on the analogy of *rūpa* (form), then they, too, should be directly perceptible like *rūpa*.

ANSWER. There is no rule which stipulates that any single specific sense-organ should be able to perceive all the *guṇas* inherent in a body. We find

that *rūpa* (form) is perceived by the eye, touch by the skin, smell by the nose, and taste by the tongue. Let *manas*, we say, be the organ that perceives *buddhi*. There can be no objection to this.

However, another objection can be raised here, namely, *guṇas* belonging to the body are so conceived in the Nyāya framework that they can be perceived only by outer sense-organs and not by an inner organ like the *manas*. This, indeed, is a rule. Therefore a *guṇa* like *buddhi*, which is to be grasped or perceived only by the *manas*, cannot be a *guṇa* of the body. In reply to this objection, we declare that once we have accepted *buddhi* and other such *guṇas* as 'belonging to' the body, we can certainly further stipulate that *manas*, which is the organ for grasping or perceiving these *guṇas*, can also be taken to be an 'outer' sense-organ, since it is able to perceive *guṇas* such as *buddhi* which belong to the body. The fact that *manas* is called an inner organ is merely indicative of its 'residing within' the body. Moreover, the Nyāya rule is that an outer organ is needed to perceive a *guṇa* that resides on the outside of a body. Since *guṇas* such as *buddhi* reside within the body and not on its surface, for perceiving such *guṇas* what is needed is, indeed, an internal organ such as the *manas*.

Let me explain further. The Sāṃkhya scheme divides sense-organs into two categories: (i) *jñānendriyas* (organs of perception) and (ii) *karmendriyas* (organs of action). The *manas* (mind) acts as an aid to both these categories of *indriyas*, and is thus called both a *jñānendriya* and a *karmendriya*. On this analogy, taking *buddhi* and other such *guṇas* as belonging to the body, *manas* can be conceived of as an outer and an inner sense-organ: outer because it perceives *guṇas* residing on the outside of the substances, and inner because it resides within the body and perceives 'inner' *guṇas* such as *buddhi*.

OBJECTION. If *buddhi* and other like *guṇas* are conceived of as inhering in the body like *rūpa* (form), then it should be possible for an observer to perceive them just as he can perceive the *rūpa* (form) of another's body.

This, we answer, is absurd. We can never directly perceive *buddhi* and other such *guṇas* belonging to any body. The shape and form of a body can be perceived by another, because they come into the field of the eye's vision. *Buddhi* and other such qualities reside within; hence they never come into the field of an observer's outer vision. Direct perception can result only when an object comes into the range of a sense-organ.

Another objection to our hypothesis can be this: if we assume that it is the body that possesses *buddhi*, then memory would become impossible; an old man with his old body will never be able to remember what he experienced when he was young, for he then possessed a different, young body.

This objection can be easily answered. Our theory of *dehātmanvāda* holds that the experiences of a body give rise to *saṃskāras* (impressions) in the *manas*, and that *manas* continues to be the same in the young body as well as the old. It is through the *saṃskāra* residing in the *manas* that an old man can remember what he experienced when he was young. In our theory of

*dehātmavāda*, experience is conceived of as giving rise to *saṁskāra* which in turn, gives rise to memory. Experience causes *saṁskāra* in the *manas* through the relation known as *svāśraya-vijāṭṭya-saṁyoga-sambandha*: that is the relation of contact between two distinct and dissimilar objects residing in the same receptacle (*āśraya*). *Saṁskāra* then gives rise to memory in a similar manner. But the relation of the *manas* with the sense-organs or with the limbs of the body is not of the same nature as the relation between the *manas* and the body as a whole. Therefore, neither *saṁskāra* nor memory arise in the sense-organs or in the limbs of a body.

After death, the *manas* associated with the present body enters a new body which is born of the *adrṣṭa* associated with the present body. This is possible, because the association of the *manas* with the body is a *vijāṭṭya* association. It is for this reason that a newly born baby retains a 'memory' of its *saṁskāras* (impressions) in an earlier body, and begins suckling its mother's breasts as soon as it is born. Its experience in the earlier body had given rise to the *saṁskāra* that suckling the mother's breast is beneficial; and, therefore, in its new birth, too, the 'memory' born of the past *saṁskāra* causes it to suckle its mother's breasts.

OBJECTION. If the experience of a previous body can give rise to memory in a new and different body, then it should also be possible for the experience of one man to give rise to memory in another: what Caitra has experienced should, in this view, be remembered by Maitra.

This objection is groundless, because in the case of Caitra and Maitra the *manas* is not *identical*, whereas in the case of one body being reborn as another the *manas* continues to be the same.

OBJECTION. The present body which you have also equated with the soul engages in actions throughout its life. It cannot, however, attain the fruits of all its actions within the span of a single life time. Therefore, when it dies, some of its actions cannot but be conceived of as destroyed without giving rise to any fruit. How can the *dehātmavādin* fail to arrive at this unseemly conclusion? Further, a new body-soul begins experiencing joys and suffering from the moment of its birth. The *dehātmavādin* cannot account for this. For him these new experiences of joy and suffering must remain fruits of actions never performed.

Our answer is that the *manas* remains common to both the new and the old body. Actions performed in the older body which have not yet borne fruit reside as *saṁskāras* born of *dharma* and *adharma* (merit and demerit) in the *manas*. In the new body born of *adrṣṭa* (created through *dharma* and *adharma*) in the older body, the same *manas* continues, and thus actions which were performed in the earlier body are enabled to bear fruit in the newer body. Our theory of *dehātmavāda* does not believe in the rule that the fruit of an action is experienced by the same person who performed the action. A belief in this rule is possible only for those who believe in a soul apart from and distinct from the body. This is an old prejudice that we must give up, though,

admittedly, it is difficult to give it up. The rule in which we *dehātma-vādins* believe is this: the fruit of an action performed by a body is experienced by another body in which the same *manas* which resided in the earlier body resides. Body and mind (*manas*) in our view are two distinct entities, conjoined with each other through a contact of the *viñātīya-samyoga* kind in which two objects can remain in touch without losing their distinct identity.

OBJECTION. It is the body which performs permissible and impermissible actions. If such actions have no interaction with the *manas*, how can they give rise to merit or demerit in the *manas*? And if merit and demerit reside in the *manas* which is quite distinct from the body, how can a new body experience the fruits of earlier action, since the continuity of the new birth with the old is through the *manas* and not through the body?

This objection, we say, is not tenable. We hold that the actions performed by the body cause *adr̥ṣṭa* in the *manas* which resides in the body through the relation known as *viñātīya-samyoga-sambandha*. And then this *adr̥ṣṭa* which resides in the *manas* becomes the cause of joy and suffering in another body through the same relation.

A further objection may be raised here: the demand for economy of thought would tend to favour positing an independent self or *ātman*, because this would do away with the positing of an indirect causal relation leading from experience to *saṃskāra* to memory on the one hand, and from action to *adr̥ṣṭa* on the other.

The answer to this objection is as follows: when we choose between two alternative causal explanations, the principle of economy is not by itself sufficient to lead us to the right choice. The totality of what is to be explained should be the prime consideration. The question of economy of thought usually arises in respect to the *form* of definitions where the nature of what is being defined itself is not in question, i.e. all parties agree as to what it is that is being defined, and the choice is to be made only between different formulations of how it is to be characterized in words.<sup>2</sup> Such is not the case in the present situation. The question we have before us concerns the very basic issue as to whether experience, *saṃskāra* and memory can at all be directly related through a causal connection with *karma* and the fruits of *adr̥ṣṭa*. An appeal to economy of thought cannot be a relevant argument in deciding this issue. Moreover, even if we accept that experience, *saṃskāra*, memory and *adr̥ṣṭa* reside in the same receptacle, i.e. *ātman*, and thus they can be causally related in a direct manner without necessitating two distinct causal connections, then, too, we shall not really gain in economy; for then we will have also to accept an infinity of all-pervasive, *vibhu*, substances, namely, the *jīvātman*s, and this will lead to another kind of non-economy in thought. This we choose to avoid.

Further, the belief in *ātman* as an extra entity creates other problems. Sentences like 'I go', 'I know' necessitate a basic distinction in the analysis of the two verbs, thus resulting in another loss of economy in thought. In

explaining the first sentence 'I go', traditional Nyāya will have to take the verb 'go' as referring to an action; while the verb 'know' in the second sentence has to be taken as pertaining to the *ātman* in which knowledge resides. *Dehātmavāda* gets rid of this dichotomy. For, if we conceive of the *ātman* as indistinct from the body, both the above sentences can pertain to the same entity. Take also another pair of sentences such as 'Caitra goes' and 'Caitra knows'; the belief in *ātman* as a separate and distinct entity creates a problem in understanding these two sentences. The first sentence 'Caitra goes' may be easily construed as follows: the word 'Caitra' can be understood as referring to Caitra's body which also may be seen as the *āśraya* (ground) of the act of going. But a similar analysis cannot be made of the sentence 'Caitra knows' if we accept the *ātman* theory; because the verb 'know' will then pertain to an entity, i.e. *ātman*, which is distinct from Caitra's body. The two verbs 'go' and 'know' will thus have separate *āśrayas*. Neither can we make the move of taking the verb 'know' as pertaining not to any *āśraya* or entity that knows but to a limited piece of knowledge itself. For, then, the sentence 'God knows all' will be impossible to construe since God's knowledge is unlimited.

However, the following may be postulated by the separate *ātman* theory: the meaning of sentences like 'Caitra goes' and 'Caitra knows' are to be taken as pertaining separately to both the body and the *ātman* of Caitra. But such a move, too, will create a problem. A sentence such as 'Caitra does not know' will then not be able to contradict another statement such as 'Caitra knows', for we will be able to construe the first one as pertaining to the body of Caitra and the second one as pertaining to the *ātman*.

Another objection may be raised against *dehātmavāda* as follows: *dehātmavāda* argues that *saṃskāra* becomes a cause of memory through the fact that both memory and *saṃskāra* reside in the same receptacle (*āśraya*) and are related through a *svāśraya-vijāṭṭya-saṃyoga-sambandha*. It is through this causal connection that memory resides in a human body in the *dehātmavāda* view. But this raises a problem, for a similar causal chain connects memory to the sense-organs too. Hence the sense-organs will also have to be understood as endowed with memory. And, since memory is a kind of knowledge, sense-organs will become identical with *ātman*.

The objection is not justified. We *dehātmavādin*s think that the process through which experience gives rise to *saṃskāra* has to be construed in this way. Experience gives rise to *saṃskāra* through the *svāśraya-vijāṭṭya-saṃyoga* relation. And *saṃskāra*, then, gives rise to memory. But this relation *does not* exist between memory and the sense-organs or the limbs of the body. (Memory resides through *manas* in the body as a whole, which is an entity distinct from sense-organs and the limbs of the body, which are parts of the body.)<sup>3</sup>

OBJECTION. In *dehātmavāda* the notion of the relation between the *manas* and the body is such that ordinary material objects such as a piece of cloth or a jar can also become associated with the mind (*manas*), and, therefore, they, too, can have *ātman*.<sup>4</sup>

ANSWER. The *manas*, we believe, is related to the body only through an indirect causal connection, i.e. through a causal link established through experience and memory. This is what makes the continuity of *karma* possible for the same *bodymind* entity from one life-time to another. The *manas* has no such causal link with objects like a jar or a piece of cloth. If we make relation such as 'occurring at the same time' or 'being the object of the same knowledge' as equal in status to the relation of *saṃyoga* with the same '*āśraya*' (which the *manas* has with the body) and further argue that the former two relations can also give rise to memory through *saṃskāra*, then the whole world will become the *āśraya* of knowledge and it will have to be believed that everything has an *ātman*. But such an argument is far-fetched and is no more than a vicious attempt to destroy all cogent theorizing. Even in the theory which believes in *ātman* as distinct from the body, not everything can become the *āśraya* of *ātman*. Through relations such as 'occurring together at the same time', the *ātman* can become related to objects such as jars. But this theory denies that knowledge can rise in the *ātman* through its connection with a jar. It is only through the connection of *ātman* with living bodies (which become its *āśraya* through a *vi-jāṭṭya-saṃyoga*) that the rise of knowledge is possible. Similarly, *dehātmavāda* also believes that, though *manas* can have *saṃyoga* with every thing through relations such as 'occurring at the same time', yet such relations do not give rise to memory or other conscious entities. It is only when *manas* which is the *āśraya* of *saṃskāra* has a *saṃyoga* with a living body that such a *vi-jāṭṭya-saṃyoga* can give rise to memory, etc. These are matters which can be very easily understood, and to cast unnecessary doubt upon them is misplaced.

But another, a more serious, objection can be brought against *dehātmavāda* by someone who argues as follows: the attempt at repudiating *ātman* and replacing it by the body and the *manas*, in effect, elevates these two to the status of the *ātman*; it does not negate the *ātman* as such.

This argument, too, is not tenable. In our theory the body is non-eternal, whereas the *manas* is eternal. If both together were to form the *ātman*, we shall have to conceive the *ātman* as having two contradictory qualities of being both eternal and non-eternal. This could give rise to ideas contrary to experience, ideas such as 'sometimes I am eternal, but sometimes I am not'. The equation of the pair, body-and-*manas* with *ātman*, is thus not tenable.

Gautama in his *Nyāyasūtra* says: 'Desire, revulsion effort, joy, suffering and *buddhi*, these are what characterizes the *ātman* (*ātmano līṅgam*).' We have accepted all these characteristics as belonging to the body alone and not the *manas*. *Manas* in our postulation is the *āśraya* only of *dharma*, *adharma* and *bhāvanā*. The function of the body and *manas* being so distinct, they cannot be equated with the *ātman* in any sense.

Here, however, is another objection: *manas*, in Nyāya, is atomic. It cannot, therefore, pervade the whole body. How then is consciousness felt to pervade the whole body? The only answer can be to accept an *ātman* which does

pervade the whole body. But this the *dehātmavādin* refuses to do. Thus, his theory cannot explain the common experience of our being able to feel the body as a whole.

OUR REPLY. The theory which conceives *ātman* as distinct from the body also has no answer to the problem. *Manas* in traditional Nyāya remains in contact with the *ātman*, but *manas* can be present only at one tiny part of the body at a single moment. And yet, by the multiplication of these moments, it gives rise in the *buddhi* to experiences that cover the whole body. The *dehātmavādin's* solution to the problem can be similar.

OBJECTION. It is a common human intuition that the *manas* is an internal organ, and also that *manas* is entirely instrumental in character. Its instrumentality is revealed by feelings such as 'Now I am doing this with my mind', 'I am aware through my mind', and the like. *Ātman*, however, is not an instrument but is considered to be an agent. *Manas*, being purely instrumental, cannot, therefore, replace it.

This objection is again easily answered. *Dehātmavāda* believes that the body is the *ātman*. As for *manas*, it is merely an instrument of this body-as-*ātman*. This we have already stated earlier.

A fresh objection might still arise. If what makes the body conscious is the *adr̥ṣṭa* which belongs to the *manas*, then it becomes difficult to see how a dead body must be necessarily devoid of consciousness; because, according to *dehātmavāda*, the *manas* containing the *adr̥ṣṭa* which imparts consciousness to the body continues to exist even after the death of the body with which it was associated.

This objection, too, is not tenable; the reason is that we believe in the rule (*niyama*) that the *viġātiya-saṁyoga-saṁbandha* (the contact between two categorically different objects such as *manas* and the body which makes it possible for the *manas* to be associated with the body) is destroyed immediately and necessarily at the death of the body.

Yet, the following questions may arise: if the body is the *ātman*, then usages like 'my body' will have to be understood in a purely metaphorical sense. But in that case, how do we explain the fact that usages such as 'I am the body' are never to be found? How can the *dehātmavādin* explain this?

ANSWER. Linguistic usages depend on our knowledge of both words and the objects they refer to. Since we never have a knowledge which can be expressed as 'I am the body', such usages are not found.

But this only raises a further question: if the body is identical with the *ātman* how then can one explain the fact that such a knowledge never arises?

This question has an easy solution. The meaning of the word 'I' can be grasped only in connection with the characteristics (*guṇas*) of which 'I' can be an appropriate *āśraya*. Therefore, the knowledge of 'I' arises only in terms of 'I am fat', 'I am thin', 'I am happy', 'I am willing', etc. The knowledge such as 'I am the body' does not arise in normal experience; but, then, neither does the knowledge such as 'I am the *ātman*'. The theory, which upholds

*ātman* as a separate, distinct entity, has, therefore, the problem of explaining why a knowledge such as 'I am *ātman*' is not a common human knowledge. *Ātman* in common experience is known not directly but through its properties such as *buddhi*, joy, etc. resulting in usages such as 'I know', 'I am happy' and the like.

Another objection to *dehātmavāda* can be made on the basis of Patañjali's *Yogasūtras* which speak of various *bhūmis* (aspects or stages) of the *chitta* (psyche). These *bhūmis* such as *kṣipta*, *vikṣipta* and others have no relation at all with the body or any limb of the body, a fact which is a matter of common experience. *Dehātmavāda* cannot account for their existence. Only the postulation of a distinct *ātman* can do so.

This objection is baseless. *Dehātmavāda*, too, can successfully comprehend and accommodate *bhūmis* of the psyche.

No one has any doubt concerning his own existence. Such doubts as 'Do I exist or Do I not?' just do not arise in anyone's mind. The doubt that does arise is whether the body is the *ātman* or not. For both *dehātmavāda* and the doctrine of a separate *ātman*, the doubt 'Do I exist or not?' will not arise. Since in the *ātman* doctrine the body is decidedly not *ātman* and in *dehātmavāda* it is decidedly so, the question 'Do I exist or not?' is meaningless and adventitious in both cases, and the belief in the existence of self either as the *ātman* or the body remains unquestioned.

What we intend to point out is that the term 'I' refers to the person who utters it. In the *ātman* theory, 'I' will refer to the *ātman* as an entity distinct from the body, implying that the person who says 'I' is an *ātman* distinct from the body. In *dehātmavāda* the same 'I' will refer to the body of the person who utters the personal pronoun. In both cases, 'I' will have a meaningful, unquestionable reference. The doubt 'Do I exist or not?' will in either case be adventitious.

OBJECTION. A statement such as 'He is reflecting on the question whether he is the body or not' will sound very strange if we accept the doctrine of *dehātmavāda*.

This, however, cannot be taken as a serious objection against *dehātmavāda*. In the doctrine of a separate *ātman*, the proposition 'I am not the body' is an unquestionable given. In *dehātmavāda*, on the other hand, what is given as unquestionable is the proposition 'I am the body'. Thus, a question such as 'Am I the body or not?' is adventitious not only for the doctrine of *dehātmavāda* but also for the *ātman* doctrine.

Another objection to *dehātmavāda* can be as follows: the experience that 'I am' seems sometimes to arise from the head and sometimes from the nerves or the flesh of the body. This in *dehātmavāda* is bound to give rise to absurd experiences such as 'I am my head, or 'I am my flesh' or 'I am my nerve'.

Such an objection can only be called crude. Experiences that arise from different limbs of the body such as the head or the flesh or the nerves actually

belong to the body as a whole, which is distinct from its parts and is the real reference of the term 'I'.

YET ANOTHER OBJECTION. The 'I' experience, as we can all feel, is quite distinct from bodily experiences of pain or joy. Therefore, the 'I' experience must be grounded in something, which is quite distinct from both the body and the *manas*.

This objection is again not tenable. We do not believe in the possibility of any experience, which may be characterized as the experience of the pure 'I'; neither do those who believe in the *ātman* doctrine. For both, the meaning of 'I' refers to the person who utters the word. According to us *dehātma-vādins*, this person is no different from the body, which is the actual referent of the term 'I'. We do not understand why one should unnecessarily look for another referent.

OBJECTION. In certain states of consciousness such as dreaming, the existence of outer objects including one's own body can become either doubtful, hazy or even controverted. But such a veil of doubt or negation never falls upon the existence of the *ātman*. If the body were the *ātman*, then such an experience should have been impossible in the case of the body too.

We have an answer to this objection. What happens in the above cases is not different from what happens in cases of *bhrama* (illusion), when an object is not perceived in its true character. In a dream the true character of the body as *ātman* becomes veiled by doubt. But this does not mean that we begin to perceive the body as a non-*ātman*, something which it is not, and doubt its truth in the capacity of a non-*ātman*. Such a doubt is not possible.

We believe that the body itself is the *ātman*; there is no *ātman* distinct from the body. Yet, we also grant that the body as the ground of actions and efforts is different from the body as the ground of consciousness and the like *guṇas*. In states of dream-like illusion, the perception that we have is *not* that the body is actually a different entity, namely, the *ātman*. The body is, in fact, still taken as the body. What becomes doubtful is the existence of the body as the body, not as something mistaken for the *ātman*, distinct from it.

ANOTHER OBJECTION. The *dehātma-vādin* cannot but accept that the final goal of life (*parama puruṣārtha*) is the achievement of physical comfort and material happiness. Yet, we see that human beings are prepared to undergo personal sufferings for the good of others. How can this be explained in *dehātma-vāda*?

ANSWER. The doctrine which believes in a distinct *ātman* also has a similar problem, because in that doctrine, too, human action is conceived of as being solely directed towards the attainment of one's own happiness and in getting rid of whatever causes unhappiness. In truth, only a few altruistic persons give up their own happiness and devote themselves to performing actions that would lead to the happiness of others. Such people will continue to exist whether we believe in *dehātma-vāda* or in the *ātman* doctrine. There are men who, though they believe in the *ātman* doctrine, are yet ready to act

for the good of others giving up their own personal comforts and accepting pain in the process. Similarly, the *dehātmavādin*, too, if he is a man of sympathy, culture and discernment will devote himself to furthering the happiness of other body-souls, giving up his own happiness and accepting pain in the process. The community of *dehātmavādins* is, in fact, substantial, and among them we do find people who gladly use their wealth for the good of others, opening schools, hospitals and other such philanthropic institutions.

Some thinkers might raise a new objection. In the doctrine of *dehātmavāda*, *adr̥ṣṭa* and *bhāvanā* are said to belong to *manas*. Now, during the state of *suṣupti* (dreamless sleep) *manas* enters the organ called *puritat* (an organ near the heart) which is mentioned in the Upaniṣads. If this is true, then it will be impossible to explain how the body still keeps breathing during *suṣupti*. To account for this one must accept the existence of a distinct *ātman* which causes the body to keep breathing during that state, an *ātman* which is also the *āśraya* of *adr̥ṣṭa* and *bhāvanā*.

The objection has no real strength. We believe that the contact between *manas* and the surface of the body (*tvak*) causes consciousness (*jñāna*) which is the basis of other conscious *guṇas* such as desire, revulsion and the like. During *suṣupti* consciousness becomes dormant; and, therefore, desire, revulsion and such other *guṇas* also remain dormant. However, actions such as breathing, which are responsible for maintaining life in the body, do not depend upon consciousness. They depend on *adr̥ṣṭa* which does not become dormant. Even when the *manas* enters the physical organ called *puritat*, *adr̥ṣṭa* actively keeps up such movements in the body which are responsible for breathing as well as other such movements that are the basis of life.

ANSWER OBJECTION. The *dehātmavādin* cannot really explain all of man's actions in terms of their fruits. The actions performed by a man towards the end of his life do not give rise to results during the life time; and, therefore, such actions are bound to remain fruitless and thus meaningless if we accept the doctrine of *dehātmavāda*. Why should a man, then, engage in such actions?

ANSWER. The *dehātmavādin* believes that the fruit of a man's actions need not accrue to him alone but can accrue to others who survive him. In this manner, actions performed by a man towards the end of his life can also have their fruit. It is wrong to say that man acts only for his own good. He also acts for the good of others as is, indeed, clear from the actions of men. It cannot be said that those men, who perform actions aiming at the good of others, do so with the purpose that, if their actions are not fruitful during their own lifetime then the merit (*punya*) resulting from them will yield them fruit in subsequent lives (*janmāntara*). For it is seen that people, who believe that this life is all that we have and that there is no *janmāntara*, yet engage in good deeds throughout their life, the results of which are enjoyed by others.

FRESH OBJECTION. There is another argument that can establish the existence of *ātman* as distinct from the body. The argument is as follows: 'The body being an assemblage of parts is meant for the sake of another like a bed

which is a similar assemblage.' The existence of the body, according to this argument, establishes the existence of *ātman* for whose sake it is assembled. This argument cannot be answered by a mere battery of words or by subtle casuistry. Yet, we do have an answer. The objection is, in fact, neither clear nor cogent. The notion 'for the sake of another' (*parārtha*) is not a clear notion. If 'for the sake of another' means 'for the enjoyment of another distinct from itself', then it is difficult to see how the argument can prove the existence of a separate *ātman* through the example of the bed. For, even if a bed is meant for another, it is difficult to see why this 'another' should be the *ātman*. We can take this 'another' to be the body. The *ātman* doctrine, however, cannot agree to this interpretation, since it does not believe that a body can be an enjoyer. But, then, if 'for the sake of another' is taken to mean 'that which does not itself enjoy but is meant for the enjoyment of another', then, too, the argument will fail. It will not serve the purpose of the *ātman* doctrine, for it will fail to apply to the body. Because (as we believe) the body as a whole is distinct from a mere aggregate of its parts, it will not be proper to call it a mere 'assemblage'. If, in order to save the argument, we modify our argument and say 'the body is for the sake of another, for it is a created object', then, too, the argument will remain unconvincing. Any created object, which is meant 'for the sake of another', has to be a *jaḍa* object, something made up of dead matter; but the body, though admittedly a created object, is not a *jaḍa* object, and is thus not 'for the sake of another'.

ANOTHER OBJECTION. *Dehātmavāda* makes activities such as performing Vedic sacrifices pointless.

ANSWER. This is not really true. Firstly, because in our doctrines sacrifices such as *putreṣṭi*, which aim at bearing fruit in this very life, do retain a purpose. Secondly, sacrifices which are said to result in the attainment of *svarga* can also be meaningfully performed by a *dehātmavādin*, because *svarga* is said to be an object desirable for everyone; and so a *dehātmavādin*, too, can desire it and so perform sacrifices that aim at its attainment. However, it may yet be said that, according to *dehātmavāda*, *svarga* cannot really be attained since it is not attainable by a body. This is certainly true, but it does not constitute a major objection. Firstly, because sacrifices may be performed for the enhancement of one's prestige, if not for *svarga*; secondly, results of sacrifices which aim at a mundane fruit can be attainable by a body which may not always be the present body, but will still be the home of the same transmigrating *manas* in another life. Many sacrifices, moreover, are meant for the benefit of others; *dehātmavāda* quite approves of these, because, as we have said earlier, it is human nature to engage in actions which result in the good of others.

A FURTHER OBJECTION. It is not really possible to conceive of *punarjanma* (transmigration) in the *dehātmavāda* scheme.

Our answer to this is that, even in the doctrine of a distinct *ātman*, *punarjanma* is impossible to conceive of, for it presents the same problems of identity as it does in *dehātmavāda*. If all we mean by *punarjanma* is that the same

*ātman* comes into contact with a new body through a *viśālyā-saṁyoga* relation, thus maintaining identity through different lives, then such an identity in which the *same* person is said to be reborn is conceivable in *dehātmavāda* too, because we believe that the *manas* continues to exist after the death of the body. *Manas*, in our view, is the *āśraya* of *adr̥ṣṭa* through which it acquires contact with a new body and is thus reborn. The theory of *punarjanma* can, in this sense, be upheld even within our framework.

OBJECTION. The doctrine of *bandha* and *mokṣa* (of being fettered to *samsāra* and of liberation in *mokṣa*) becomes meaningless in *dehātmavāda*.

OUR ANSWER: *Bandha* is just another name for engaging in actions which cause *adr̥ṣṭa*. The *adr̥ṣṭa*, then, leads to results which can only be experienced in a new life through a new body. Such a conception of *bandha* is quite tenable in *dehātmavāda* too. And *mokṣa* after, all is nothing but the absence of *bandha*. We believe that a body which has not realized its own body-soul nature through yoga should be called *baddha* (fettered to the world of transmigration); for such a body continues to perform actions which result in *adr̥ṣṭa* leading to fruits that have to be enjoyed in a new life. But a man who has realized his body-soul nature does not engage in such actions, and is thus 'free' or 'liberated'.

FURTHER OBJECTION. *Dehātmavāda*, in fact, cannot avoid the view that after death both *baddha* (bound) and free persons are really reduced to naught without a trace; so there is no real difference between being *baddha* and being free. Why should, then, any 'body-soul' strive for the realization of truth, giving up the pursuit of palpable sensory pleasures?

Such an objection, we must say, can be brought against the theory of a distinct soul also. For, in that doctrine too, the liberated soul is no different from being totally dead or extinguished (*mṛtopama*).

OBJECTION. There appears to be no real point in positing the new doctrine of *dehātmavāda*. For all that this doctrine has to say is that an ever-continuing (*nitya*) *manas* keeps transmigrating from one body to another, bearing *adr̥ṣṭa* and *saṁskāra* acquired through experiences in an earlier body; that the new bodies into which this *manas* transmigrates serve merely as vehicles for remembering experiences of the older bodies and for experiencing the results of actions done through them.

ANSWER. I am sure that this much will be generally granted that our position is an improvement in terms of economy of thought on the traditional Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika doctrine, which posits an infinite numbers of all pervading (*vibhu*) souls. The doctrine of distinct and separate *ātman* has also much else that is cumbersome resulting in an unnecessary *gaṛava* (multiplication of entities and relations) in thought. It, first, posits an endless array of all-pervading souls, and then is forced to conceive of infinite relations over infinite moments with infinite substances and forms into which these souls enter. Our doctrine avoids such cumbersomeness.

Moreover, the doctrine of a separate *ātman* cannot avoid taking an amoral

stance regarding human action. Since, in that view, men are determined totally by their previous *karmas* and their *adr̥ṣṭa*, they are powerless against exploitation and tyranny. The *ātman* doctrine does not permit men to do anything about such things, for they are not free to do so. They are not free to remove inequalities from any given social and economic set-up, nor can they fight against a cruel government indifferent to the welfare of its subjects. *Dehātmavāda* is open to the idea that new action can be undertaken by a new body-soul. No earlier *karma* is powerful enough to constrain a man to acquiesce passively in the exploitation of one man by another under the belief that this is an inevitable result of earlier *karma*. The community of *dehātma-vādins* is free to engage in actions aiming at changing the present conditions and creating a more just social and economic order beneficial to them all. They are free to create a more beautiful world.

OBJECTION. This is mere wishful thinking, for *dehātmavāda* will actually encourage people to seek their own selfish ends without caring for others. Self-seeking is a common human failing; and if one is not made responsible for one's actions beyond death, then there will be no reason for a man to desist from seeking his own selfish ends without caring for the suffering and exploitation of others.

Such considerations, however, need not antagonize us towards *dehātma-vāda*. The moving spirits behind selfless actions are great selfless men of the past. The prestige that is attached to their great deeds aimed at the common good, and the reverence shown to them in history books should be enough to give rise to a similar impulse in others.

Another commendable thing about *dehātmavāda* is that it can influence people to improve themselves in this very life, since improvement in an after-life is not possible. Listening to the great tales of great men, a *dehātma-vādin* will be moved to try and improve himself in this very life. In the *ātman* doctrine, the temptation of postponing a good action and leaving it for another life is very strong. A man is more likely to pursue mean and selfish ends under that scheme than under *dehātmavāda*. *Dehātmavāda* is, consequently, not only more rational but also more moral.

#### TRANSLATOR'S NOTES

My translation is an attempt to present to the philosophically inclined English reader a non-technical version of Badrinathji's Sanskrit essay. Badrinathji was a philosopher of great originality—as this essay, I think, also evinces—but being a Navya-Naiyāyika, he assumed a knowledge of Navya-Nyāya technical vocabulary in his readers. This was natural enough, since not only Navya-Nyāya but a great deal of intellectual writing in Sanskrit assumes such a knowledge. Most disciplines in Sanskrit that touch upon philosophy—and few do not—have been using Navya-Nyāya vocabulary and techniques for the sake of a clearer articulation of concepts.

I have not tried to translate these technicalities. Attempting a closer technical translation of Badrinathji's essay would have presented hurdles which we are not yet quite able to cross. There is no satisfactory standard English version of Navya-Nyāya vocabulary and

modes of expression. And even if we were to have one, it would need years of scholarly and creative cultivation before it can become really entrenched. As it is, those who can read Navya-Nyāya in some kind of translationese, can also understand Sanskrit. Such people will discover that my English version is lacking in certain other ways, too. I have, for example, not translated a quotation or two from Navya-Nyāya texts which Badrinathji's original includes. Badrinathji assumes a close and easy familiarity with the texts he quotes. To the English reader, not familiar with the Navya-Nyāya *paramparā*, the quotations, I think, would have sounded merely scholastic, and redundant at that. Badrinathji, moreover, has no footnotes. This is a modern habit, but sometimes useful. I have resorted to it at one place (fn. 2) where I felt that what Badrinathji had to say was intended to be in a kind of parenthesis.

On the whole, however, I have tried to remain as close to the original as possible, following the steps of the argument as it moves.

#### NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. *Bhāvanā* in *Nyāya* is another name for *saṁskāra*, a property of the soul that makes it possible for experience to leave its impression or traces upon the soul. The term *saṁskāra*, however, has a larger application; it applies not only to conscious *jīvas*, but also to 'dead' matter—*vega* (speed) thus is a *saṁskāra* of wind (*vāyu*). It is through *bhāvanā* that memory becomes possible. *Bhāvanā*, in turn, cannot be directly perceived, but only inferred from the fact of memory.
2. Let us take an example. The *Mīmāṃsakas* make the following analysis of the process of inference. Inference, they say, is a result of two discrete cognitions: (1) *Sādhya-vyāpyo hetuḥ* (the *hetu*—that through which one wishes to prove, the middle term, is pervaded by the *Sādhya*—the 'cause' of the *hetu*, the major term); and (2) *hetumān pakṣaḥ* (the *pakṣa*—the locus—possesses the *hetu*). The *Naiyāyikas*, who disagree with the *Mīmāṃsakas* concerning the proper analysis of the process of inference, yet agree with them that these cognitions do arise. But they argue that it is unnecessary to accept two separate cognitions in order to characterize correctly the process of how inference is caused. A single cognition, they say, will do, namely, *Sādhya-vyāpyahetumān pakṣaḥ* (the *pakṣa* possess the *hetu* which is pervaded by the *sādhya*). The *Mīmāṃsaka* has no quarrel with the *Naiyāyika* concerning the fact that such a cognition does occur; he differs as to its relevance to a proper analysis of how inference arises.

The *Naiyāyika* analysis, we say, is to be preferred, because it has the virtue of 'economy' (*lāghava*). *Naiyāyikas* further argue that their acceptance of a single cognition as the cause of inference has another virtue. Recognizing two *separate* cognitions as necessary for the rise of inference can result in a problem. Inferences arise in human beings. If we grant the necessity of two separate cognitions for it to arise, then our analysis will not be able to negate cases where two *different* persons might each have *one* of these cognitions. In order to avoid this difficulty, the *Mīmāṃsaka* might make the move of inserting a further stipulation in his analysis, namely, 'The two cognitions necessary for inference to rise must be possessed by the same person.' This will only result in further cumbrousness in his analysis. For it will then become necessary to make a *separate* causal analysis for each different case of the occurrence of the *same* inference.

A similar problem occurs in the analysis of *sābdabodha* (understanding language). All *Naiyāyikas* agree that for *sābdabodha* to occur a knowledge of *yogyatā* is a necessary condition. *Yogyatā* is a kind of existential constraint and must be observed in using language: thus a usage such as 'wets with fire' lacks *yogyatā*, for 'wetting' and 'with fire' do not, in fact, go together, and this *fact* renders the sentence meaningless. Any philosopher defining *sābdabodha* must be careful to include the knowledge of *yogyatā* as one of the necessary factors within the body of the definition itself. Other-

wise the same kind of difficulty that we spoke of earlier in connection with defining how inference arises will pose a hurdle: the knowledge of *yogyatā* in one man, will not be able in our definition to prevent the rise of *śābdabodha* in another. The definition will become cumbersome.

3. The parenthesis is to make the point clear. It is not part of the original.
4. This objection perhaps needs a clarification. In the *dehātma*vāda view, the body is a material substance and *guṇas* such as *buddhi*, desire, effort and the like, inhere in it as *general guṇas*. Badrinathji likens these *general guṇas* to *guṇas* such as form (*rūpa*). The *manas* becomes associated with *buddhi*, desire, effort and such *general guṇas* indirectly, through its association with the body. The *general guṇas* of the body are destroyed with the body. The *manas* which is a category apart, is not destroyed and becomes attached to another body. The problem with this view which Badrinathji anticipates in this objection can be stated in terms of two related questions. One, since the *general guṇas* are so conceived that any material substance can have them, how is it that only a human body has them? And two, since the *manas* becomes associated with the *general guṇas* only through its association with a material substance, why is it that such an association takes place only in the human body and not in other material substances such as a jar or a piece of cloth.