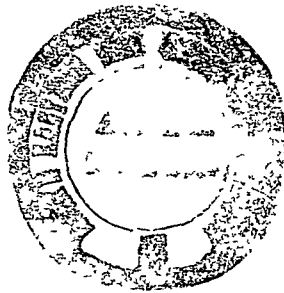


DISEMBODIED EXISTENCE : AN ANALYTICAL STUDY

THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE
UNIVERSITY OF BIHAR
FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
IN
PHILOSOPHY



BY
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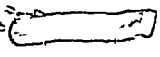
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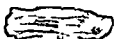
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of any previous degree to the candidate or to anybody else.


(M. N. Sinha)

P R E F A C E

The dissertation on "The Disembodied Existence: An Analytical Study" and some allied problems owe their origin to some occasional but puzzling thoughts of my school and early college days about the nature of life and soul after death, its form, its continuity through lives and such other peculiarities along with questions on caste system in our society, their rigidity and futility, which all kept me in a position of doubt without finding correct answers or getting a proper language of expression fitting to my ideas and queries. Swami Rampremi of Balasore district, Orissa, a young ardent disciple of Swami Sivananda Saraswati of Rishikesh, once spoke emotionally on these topics in a religious meeting which I attended in about 1952 when I was in class- VI . Probably, the lecture struck in the innermost corner of my tender-being, then. My respectful salutations to those noble and spiritual souls.

To late Prof. Dr. Ganeswar Mishra, who taught us philosophy truly, lovingly and affectionately, I humbly submit my respectful 'pranām'.   



I am highly grateful to Dr. M.N. Sinha, Professor of Philosophy Department, University of Bihar, for his instantaneous acceptance of my request to register my name for the Ph.D. degree under his supervision. I am grateful to him for the facilities made available to me in his department for the completion of the work.

I am thankful to all the concerned officials of the University of Bihar for their kind cooperation in this matter.

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I owe a great sense of gratitude to respected S.J. Chandra Sekhar Rath, a celebrity of Oriya literature for his invaluable suggestions and sources for my thesis.

I am thankful to the family of Dr. G.P. Das, for their silent and ungrudging cooperation till the end of this work.

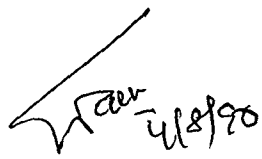
My thanks are due to Miss Gayatri Rath, M.A., M.Phil., for her experienced suggestion for a better get up to the dissertation.

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No less thanks and good wishes are due to my wife and children who assisted me in comparing original manuscript with the typescript and boosted my morale by their eagerness to see this work in its successful completion.

My last and deepest acknowledgement is due to Dr. Ganesh Prasad Das, Reader in Philosophy Department, Utkal University, who out of respectful affection, helped me to bring this dissertation to its present shape. A busy man always finds time. Amidst his constant ailments, he regularly looked into my work passionately. A zealous and resourceful Dr. Das parted his valuable time, happiness, energy and sociability for my purpose. I found in him a true friend, a sincere guide and a serious philosopher blended evenly. To end, he gave me the language of conceptual thinking and made me grateful to him for life.

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C H A P T E R

I

CHAPTER - I

THE PROBLEM OF DISEMBODIED EXISTENCE

Philosophy has set itself to the task of exploring truths about the universe as whole and man's place in it. The sciences, morality, religion are also concerned to find truths about the universe and man's place in it. But their concern is limited and specific. Philosophy is to correlate and unify the findings of these specific studies, to arrive at the most general, yet incorrigible, truths underlying them all. Philosophy, as every other study, is anthropocentric, that is, they arise out of the human needs and subserve their ends. Philosophical findings are characterised as speculative and regarded as satisfying the pleasures of speculation only. But this charge is not correct as the long history of philosophy will attest. Indeed the great philosophical systems of the world, like that of Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, Locke, Kant, Hegel, etc., have given us world-views which have influenced the course of human civilisation and culture. It is these world-views which have provided impetus to world-shaking revolutions and given birth to such social and political institutions as are committed as the best productions of human intelligence.

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The emergence of new situations in which man finds himself in course of time, makes it pertinent to cast a fresh look at the existing philosophical foundation of human existence and brings out necessary modifications as per the new needs. Seventeenth century Europe saw the emergence of new social, political and legal systems alongside of the religious institutions.

The man in the society, the citizen, is endowed with rights, responsibilities, privileges and redressal of grievances. He has to take part in polls, elect his ruler and hence is a political subject; commits crimes or protests against them and seeks the mediation of the court for justice and is thus a legal subject. In this way, the human being becomes multi-faceted. No more the concept of man is considered adequate for the purpose. After all, a human form having life might be a man, but can hardly participate in the social, political and legal proceedings. Hence the concept of a person came to a new addition in the frame-work of concepts.

In the philosophical treatises of Rene Descartes, we rarely come across the word 'person' excepting the following, perhaps the only remark as;

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" There is one single person who has at once body and consciousness, so that this consciousness can move the body and be aware of the events that happen to it".¹

It is only in the writings of John Locke that we find the frequent use of the word 'Person'. The concept of person is involved in the discussion of the philosophical foundations of politics, law, morality and religion. The concept of man is pre-eminently a biological concept whereas the concept of person is much wider than that.

There are quite a number of problems centering around the concept of person, meant for philosophical deliberations. The problem of personal identity is by far the most discussed one among them. Although this is a problem which is involved in such facts or alleged facts as resurrection, reincarnation, bodily transfer and survival, this has tremendous importance in criminology and jurisprudence. The discussion of the problem has been inspired by current scientific achievements like transplantation of limbs including that of brain, affecting (or allegedly so) the structure of both body and mind. To add to this, there are auto-sensors and artificial brains, so much so that automata have become person-like and persons have become automata like.

In this perspective, the role of the philosopher can hardly be over-emphasised. The philosopher has got to clarify what exactly is the concept of a person ; how a person is different from man; if at all he is; what are the criteria of personal identity and whether the concept of survival, etc., are meaningful.

Let us now distinguish the concept of person from the concept of human being. The word 'human being' names members of natural species alongside of the species like cats, dogs, horses, etc.. In ordinary use the word ' person' comes near to the ordinary use of the word ' human being'. Both law and theology, according to Jenny Teichman, take the human being as a kind of starting point or paradigm². In law persons are divided into the natural and the artificial and in theology, persons are classified as human and divine (spiritual). Although lawyers might agree that artificial persons are called persons in the derivative sense, theologians would not agree that spirits be called persons in the derivative sense.

Human beings are the only natural persons that we come across. " People are what we meet," said Antony Flew, in this sense, perhaps. But we cannot rule out the logical possibility of the existence of other varieties of natural persons, e.g., there might be non-human natural persons living on Mars who do not look like us and who cannot breed with us but like to

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just the way we live. Spiritual persons include gods, angels, fairies. Sometimes the distinction between natural and spiritual is not properly maintained. The gods of some mythology (Greek) behave very much like natural biological species.³

In the law government departments, trade Unions, Colleges, Associations are regarded as artificial persons. They are endowed with some power within the system of law and they have certain duties to perform and rights to enjoy. Computers which are regarded as artificial intelligences, are another variety of artificial persons.

In view of the above discussion one might think that the term 'person' is a genus with species and sub-species but it is not so. The term 'Person' is not the name of a natural genus like vertebrates, because its supposed species belong to different categories of existence. Artificial persons can have intermittent existence but natural beings cannot. Artificial persons might renew their existence like the teleprinter, say, if they are made to do so. Natural beings including human beings do not do so. The divine beings, on the other hand, do not live, they merely exist. Sometimes, of course, they are said to live, but incorrectly so. When the word 'person' is actually taught and learnt,

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it is stated as if it is coextensive with the expression 'human beings'. In the words of Teichman "The concept of a person is certainly not formed by the abstraction of a common feature (such as, say, consciousness) or set of common features, or even, from a set of overlapping resemblances. It is not abstracted from examples of (respectively) natural, artificial and divine persons".⁴

Natural persons, here human beings, are persons in the primary or central sense of the word 'person'. Non-natural persons are persons in a derivative sense. As Teichman puts it, "if human beings are not persons, then, one is inclined to say, there can be no such things as persons at all".⁵ According to him, the application of the word 'person' in its primary and most ordinary sense requires that the referent is or has a material body as well as is or has a biological body. On this consideration, parrots will not be regarded as persons because they belong to a species of different sort and computers also will not be regarded as persons because they are not living creatures at all.

The above discussion makes it clear that there exists a conceptual distinction between 'human being' and 'person'. In the Indian context the word for 'person' is 'puruṣa'. It transpires from the Sankhya literature and some others that 'puruṣa'

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(principle of plurality of 'puruṣa') is a word which is to be used in the plural in the sense of 'persons' or 'people' . In this context to think that there is no difference between human beings and persons does not appear to be correct. In ordinary parlance the two words are used synonymously but in philosophical discourse, we must steer clear of the differences in their sense.'

The problem of disembodied existence, as it is discussed in the literatures, is the possible existence of disembodied person. Whether a person can exist in a disembodied state or not will depend on what we decide to call a person. It might be said that the person is a material body. The statement is not univocal. It might mean at least two things: first, person is a kind of material body (Miri) and second, person is necessarily a body (Williams). On the first interpretation, the attributes of a person are nothing other than bodily attributes but with a difference. A person is surely different from a chair or an iron pillar and this difference is expressed in a complexity of physical attributes. On this interpretation, disembodied existence would not be possible. It we interpret in the second way, then also disembodied state of a person would be logically ruled out. Wittgenstein, in his philosophical Investigations,

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says that, "The human body is the best picture of the human soul",⁶ can go with this line of interpretation. H.H. Price puts the matter squarely in a different tone thus: "If you define 'life' in terms of certain very complicated physico-chemical processes, as some people would, then of course life after death is by definition impossible, because there is no longer anything to be alive"⁷.

This interpretation, however different it may be in that respect, according to the first, person is a body in confluence with other bodies. The class of bodies does not happen to be a unit class whereas on the other interpretation this possibility is there. Body is a class concept but persons might be the only member of this class. | *H*

Instead of saying that person is a kind of material body or person is necessarily a material body, one might say that person has a material body. This statement also does not happen to be univocal. It might be construed in two ways: it might mean that the having a body is a contingent affair for a person. It has a body; it just happens to have it. It is quite conceivable that it might not have had it. The relationship between the body and person or between a body and a non-body (mind or soul) with the person is causal and hence empirical. In this sense, body cannot, in fact, be separated from person. In the second place, the statement may be construed so that a person has necessarily a body.

Accordingly, it will not be possible to know a person without ascribing bodily attributes or without taking them into consideration. Both these constructions might be put together as Ayer does it. Empirically a body with which it is related is not separable from the person. But conceptually the two are distinguishable.⁸ Accordingly the idea of disembodied existence would be self-contradictory and meaningless.⁹

Aristotle's view regarding the concept of man would be somewhat like Ayer's concept of persons. The fundamental categories of Aristotle are form and matter coming down from Plato. According to Plato form and matter inhabit in two different worlds. But Aristotle makes them inhabit in the self-same world. The form and matter of a man both occupy the same locus. Hence they cannot be separated.

Disembodied existence is, therefore, clearly possible and is, in fact, seen as a philosophical reality in the philosophy of Plato. This is ruled out in the Philosophy of Aristotle. Whitehead had said once that the whole of modern European philosophy are so many footnotes of Plato. We can, to some extent, modify and say that the whole of modern European philosophy are so many footnotes to both Plato and Aristotle. While Descartes' views on the idea of human beings are similar to Plato's and Locke's idea of person is similar to Aristotle's.

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Apart from these dependence doctrines - empirical dependence and logical dependence: - there is another which looms large in the horizon of contemporary philosophy. This is the view of P.F. Strawson who says that the concept of person is primitive in the system of concepts that we use to talk about the world. The talk about persons is not a talk about the minds of persons or bodies of persons or even both . . . in unison. Rather the talk about the latter is basically a talk about the former. In other words, the concept of person is primary and the concepts of body and mind are secondary. In this perspective the concept of disembodied existence is not a basic concept. This is parasitical upon and draws its meaning from the concept of person.

Our concern would be to find out whether the concept of disembodied existence is viable or not. Writers like Harrison, Penelhum and Price are of the view that it is a viable concept. If it makes sense to talk of existence without body, then it will be regarded as viable. It is enigmatic to observe that while some writers are of the view that the concept is a viable one, others are of the view that it is self-contradictory. We seek to appreciate the grounds of both while talking of disembodied existence, a distinction appears to be due between disembodied existence and non-bodily existence. Disembodiment

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presupposes embodiment. This implies that there is something non-bodily which is embodied contingently or necessarily. If it is embodied contingently, then it is possible for it to remain in disembodied state to be embodied again. The problems of survival, reincarnation, resurrection are problems which are born out of this conception. But can there not be any existence which is absolutely independent of bodily existence, which is conceived apart from embodiment? We shall try to explore this in the sequel. Such a conception would be non-bodily rather than disembodied. The views of Shoemaker and Peter Parfit would be found to be in this line.

The etymological derivation of the word 'exist' appears to be very significant in this connection. The word 'exist' comes from the Latin root 'ex(s)istere' which means 'to emerge', 'to be visible' or 'to be manifest' or 'to take up a position'. In other words, an unmanifest essence becomes manifest, in the process or in the event of existence. Embodiment is only an intermediary stage before and after which the essence is assumed.

It is not physico-chemical processes which interest us when we ask such questions. But there is another sense of the words 'life' and 'alive' which may be called the psychological sense and in this sense 'being alive' just means 'having experiences of certain sorts'. In this

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psyc^hological sense of the word ' life ' it is perfectly intelligible to ask whether there is life after death, even though life in the physiological sense does ex-hypothesi come to an end when some one dies.

Let us look at the problem of disembodied existence from a different point of view - the point of view regarding its source. The problem of disembodied existence arises from at least three sources : two of them being philosophical the third one being empirical. The philosophical sources that give rise to the problem are, first , problem of substance which is a problem in metaphysics and next, the craving to match an action with appropriate consequence which is a problem in morality. A good exposition of the problem of substance is found in Rene Descartes, the father of modern philosophy. He held in doubt the certainty of any statement coming from common belief, science or from religious authorities. But he could not doubt the very existence of the doubter. It was considered by him to be logically impossible. Doubt is a form of thinking and thinking presupposes a thinker. According to Descartes mind is what thinks and which thinks incessantly. Hence his foundational statement for the existence of mind is ' cogito, ergo sum ' (I think, therefore I am). Any other action besides thinking like walking, sitting or standing cannot so entail my existence, because there might be illusions about walking, sitting or standing. These are

physical or bodily states . ' Body is extended . Mind has no extension. Body cannot think, but the very essence of mind is thinking.' Body and mind are thus considered as ~~two~~ dimetrically opposite substances.

A human being (person ?) is a peculiar combination of these two substances: a body and mind.' They do not inter-penetrate , but they interact upon one another.' To make the interaction logically viable, Descartes postulates a bi- substantial entity called the pineal gland.' This partakes the nature of thought and extension both and hence mediates between the two opposite substances.'

In the above view it has been supposed that the soul or mind can be conceived to be there as a thinking substance without being attached to a body and, of course, a body can be conceived to be there without a soul. In fact according to Descartes only human beings have souls.

Body happens to be in attachment with a soul in case of a human being . The substance of mind and body have been defined in such a way as to make themselves dependent.' They do not depend upon each other for their existence although ultimately both of them depend upon God - the Supreme Being.' But then, we are not told whether there is a supreme soul or supreme body or a product of both. However, from the definition of God that it is not necessary

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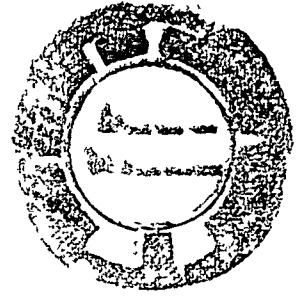
for Him to have a body because in that case it will be limited in respect to that body. Hence it is reasonable in this framework to regard God as disembodied existence or non-bodied existence. We shall discuss more about it in the body of the dissertation.

More often than not, it is thought that all human actions do not lead to proper consequences within the life span of the actor. If it is a question of public conferment of reward or punishment for the actions done, they are sometimes inexplicable and at other times erratic. In such cases it is assumed that justice must prevail and the doer concerned will reap the consequences ultimately: if not in this life, in the life after. Life is perennial, although it consists of spans. At the beginning of a span a body comes into being and at the end it perishes. The soul which keeps it active does not perish. This soul is now embodied and disembodied after some time.

The different spans are supposed to form a continuum. So one does not worry if it does not get proper justice for one's deeds at a given time. In real life situations, Bhagichandra and Saria (the characters in the famous book of Fakir Mohan Senapati in 'Chha Mana Aatha Guntha') were tortured and dispossessed of their lawful property in cliques hatched by Rama Chandra Mangaraj. It has been shown by the novelist

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that the latter character (Mr. Mangaraj) did not have a smooth sailing. All his wealth went away and he met a tragic end. But Bhagichandra and his wife had had their end already. In order to explain this discrepancy with regard to dispensation of justice, one takes recourse to the postulation that life of a being does not end here but there is a life here-after and here-after-after. Justice will be dispensed in any of the lives here-after. Or, it might be that they have reaped the consequences of some actions done here-before.

It must be emphasised here that the problem of disembodied existence is a problem by itself. It is not a subsidiary of the problem of personal identity. It might be that the problems are over-lapping to certain extent and discussion of one might lead to the discussion of the other. But it is not the case that the problem of disembodied existence cannot be discussed independently in philosophy. It must also be emphasised here that the use of the word 'disembodied' and the use of the word 'person' as the substantive qualified by the adjective 'disembodied' are loaded from the very beginning. To say that a person can remain disembodied sounds odd and awkward because we are preoccupied with the idea 'people are what we meet', or 'the human body is the best picture of the human soul'. So these words

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are inclined like the leaning tower in Pisa. They are not logically colourless, and hence we would like to desist, as far as possible, from using them while discussing the problem at hand. The word 'disembodied' is more inclined than the word 'person'. Etymologically it means that something was embodied previously. In other words, because we know a given thing in an embodied state, we are able to conceive of it in a disembodied state. To put the matter differently, the expression 'disembodied state' of something has a derivative use of language because the embodied state of that thing has a primary use. To avoid such inclinations it is better to use the expression 'non-bodied existence' which does not have implications of the above kinds. In this form, the problem at hand becomes more general and more interesting than what it is when it remains tagged with and subsidiary to the problem of personal identity.

Sydney Shoemaker is of the view that a discussion about the extension of personal identity would shed light on the nature of persons. It might be contended by this view that the discussion on the criterion of personal identity would also clarify what a disembodied being is. In response to this we want to suggest that without a discussion of personal identity or its criterion, one could very well discuss the problem of disembodied existence.

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There are many sorts of phenomena, called para-psychological which lend some support to the belief that there might be disembodied existence.' For example - (1) A boy who does not know anything of Sanskrit recites the Vedas and Upanisads .(2) A boy who has never been taught tabla , gives a performance as an expert, (3) A spirit which thrusts itself on some body.(4) A spirit being called upon through a medium of a body (Planchet call). (5) Entering into another's body as reportedly done by Sankarāchārya in king Amrik's dead body.!

In religious scriptures and popular writings pertaining to the fringe areas of religions and speculative metaphysics, vivid and picturesque descriptions of life after death (according to some it is life after life) are given. In such descriptions, death is supposed to be an event like innumerable events in life and life after death is also supposed to be consisting of innumerable events , a continuation of the former.' The world in which the life after death is laid, is supposed to be a different world transcending this world, until and unless it comes back to this world in different name and form. The different events of life , cessation of these events called death and all the phenomena there after, are supposed to be events in the same sense happening to one and the same thing called the soul. A living being is a peculiar juxtaposition of a soul and a body. The soul is sometimes viewed as being encaged in the body, sometimes viewed as

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a chariotier or as a captain in the ship, i.e , the body and some-times , as in the Gita, wearing the body as a piece of cloth. The moral of all these views, couched in analogies and picture-thinking rather than in arguments , is that body which is not necessary for the existence of the soul, rather for the life of the soul.

Life, in true sense of the term, belongs to the soul and not to the body. Body is ensouled or animated by the soul. The body is a dispensable, contingent, changeable and changeful adjunct of the soul. Death occurs to the body, not to the soul. Soul is beyond birth, growth and death. When the soul refuses to animate a particular body, that body becomes soulless, lifeless, dead, decomposable organic matter. The existence of the soul sans the body adjuncts , is known as disembodied existence or what we have called the non-bodied existence. The soul was bodied and it might be bodied once again. Whether it will be bodied once again and how it would be , constitute a different problem, namely, the problem of Karma which belongs to the field of morality. This has, again, links with problems of reincarnation and problems of personal identity. We will be concerned with those problems that would have logical links with the problems of disembodied existence. Our present concern will be to see how far the conception of disembodied existence, outlined above, is a viable one.

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Disembodied existence is a matter of interesting preoccupation for common men, newspaper men, and mischievous men alike. Now and then, news is spread that at a particular period at night (it is never a day time) a disembodied being appears at a certain place, remains there in a particular position for some time, or moves to another particular place alone , or as the co-rider with somebody . In order to establish the existence of such a being, factual evidence is often cited and theoretical justification are provided. But it has been shown that there happens to be disagreement with regard to the evidence and logical defect with regard to the theoretical justification. As regards to the first while some people swear that they have witnessed disembodied beings in their own eyes, others swear that their eyes have never been so kind to them. There are some writers who claimed to have photographed disembodied beings, whereas some other writers reject such claims as gimmicks. As regards the second , i.e, regarding theoretical justification, both arguments and matters of fact are given to the same end ,i.e, it is said that there must be disembodied beings and that there are actually such beings. This is a mistake in methodology. The reason is that what would count to be a case or a fact , depends upon a corresponding theoretical decision. If, for example, it is in principle impossible that there could be a disembodied existence

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or the concept of disembodied existence is self-contradictory, then to say that there are actual cases of disembodied existences will simply be impossible. Hence, if it is, in principle, possible for disembodied existence to be there, then to say that, in fact, there are such existences would only be otiose.¹⁰

There are some thinkers who are of the view that the concept of the disembodied existence is an obvious proposition. This is the logical outcome of the classical dualism of Descartes. This conception of 'self' which is, in his philosophy, nothing other than 'mind' is regarded as the substance which exists by itself without the aid of any other substance. Physical body is the second substance which is opposite to mind in nature and cannot be dependant on it (mind) for its existence. Ofcourse, Descartes makes it dependant upon God- the infinite, all-knowing and all-powerful Being. From this point of view, self or mind may be embodied or may not.

According to M. Miri, (What is a Person?) a person is a kind of material body. He takes Strawson to be of the belief that there is a distinction of categories between persons and material bodies. Although M-predicates (material-object predicates) are ascribable to person, P-predicates (person predicates) are not ascribable to material bodies.¹¹ Miri take Descartes to be of the

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belief that persons are categorially distinct from extended things. This belief is, according to Miri, ultimately a matter of fundamental assumption rather than something which can be seriously questioned. Strawson is anti-Cartesian in his standpoint, but still he shares this assumption with Descartes. ¹²

Descartes does not use the word 'person', as already mentioned. He uses such words like 'thinking thing', 'mind', 'self', and 'I'. Miri takes Descartes to treat a person as a being nothing other than mind.¹³ For Strawson, persons are individuals about which problem of identification and re-identification arises in different contexts.

'Person' is a term which appears to have its original home in law and in political administration where duties and responsibilities are ascribed to the subjects of a state. It is the person, rather than a human being or thinking thing or a material body, which has certain rights to enjoy and duties to perform.'

Peter Geach has, however, pointed out against Locke that his view of responsibility is morally repugnant. According to Locke the criterion of personal identity is memory. Except a few blessed cases or cursed cases (as in the case of Sikhandi in Mahābhārata), a man does

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not have memory of his previous existence. If a man lacks the memory of his previous existence, then the previous life must be of a man different from himself. So to say that the man who is there at present, is the man responsible for the deeds done by another man in the past, is certainly wrong. This has a dangerous dimension to it. In the words of Geach, "And even if a man's oblivion of a past misdeed is in itself wholly inculpable, his responsibility for the deed need not be diminished; a man who drives recklessly ought not to be excused by others or himself because he has forgotten the whole affair owing to concussion in the eventual crash. Perhaps Locke would think that God will hold such a man excused on Judgement Day; but I see no reason to think that."¹⁴

It might be said from the point of view of Locke that the lack of memory on the part of man does not exonerate him from any crime. The memory of the particular man is not self-authenticating. What authenticates it may not, however, be his bodily continuity, but the memory of other man that there could be. For Geach the chief criterion of personal identity is bodily continuity because according to him given some human body or other, there is the same person just so long as there is the same mind.¹⁵

When Locke is concerned with responsibility, reward and punishment in the context of law and jurisprudence,

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considerations regarding the affairs of the previous life, if any, are hardly of any avail. By emphasising on some such examples, Geach is trying to belittle the significance of Locke's theory.

It is John Locke who brought into currency the concept of person. According to Locke, the term 'person' is a " forensic term appropriating its actions and merit and so belongs only to the intelligent agents capable of a law, happiness and misery."¹⁶ The point is not that there cannot be any philosophical problem about the concept of person. It does not imply either that philosophers should not use the term. The point is rather that the recent philosophers setting themselves to the task to discuss problems about the concept of person, try to fit in their views in the philosophical system of the past philosophers who did not have the occasion to discuss about person. This sometimes becomes a strained affair. As already stated, a person is a combination of two categorially distinct substances ; it is not merely a thinking substance.

When Locke and other philosophers following him sought to articulate the concept of a person and discuss problems relating to that, the concept of a man and problems relating to that, which were discussed by Descartes and his followers, appeared to be obsolete

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and weak.¹ Accordingly, scholars like Miri and Mohapatra have easily found fault with Descartes for not saying things that he did not intend to say.¹ Descartes does not have the need to prove that a body is necessary for the conception of human being because that is what is corrigible and changeable. But those scholars following Locke, feel that the conception of body is necessary for the conception of person who would receive a patting on the shoulder or a kick at the back or a plaque in hand or a noose in the neck for his acts of good or evil. More about this will be discussed latter.¹

It might be objected here by the body theorists that the independence of self and body is not a two-way independence.¹ The body exists independent of the self, but the self cannot exist without the body.¹ Whenever a shadow is there a body of which it is the shadow must be there in principle.¹ But a body can very well be there without a shadow. But this analogy misconceives the whole situation.¹ Here shadow is relative to and dependent, for its existence, on body and is an attribute of body. But the conception of the soul or self and the body is such that neither of them is dependent upon the other.

It might then be said that it is only a definition of the terms 'self' and 'body' that makes them independent of each other.¹ This is but a linguistic manoeuvre which does not assert anything about what exists in the world.¹

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It does not say whether there is any body in the world or whether selves actually exist without the support of and encasement in a body. This objection, again, misconceives the issue.

The body-theorists create an impression as though possession of a body is logically necessary for being a man, but it cannot be a necessary characteristic for being a man. It may be noted here that the concept of an immortal human being is not regarded to be self-contradictory.¹⁷ The physical gross body is subject to decay and therefore, a decaying body cannot be a feature of immortality. Hence the self which is there alongside a body in the constitution of a man is conceived independent of the body. The life on the earth and the life of human beings on the earth are not co-eval. There were bodies on the earth before there were men. The point is that if physical bodies could exist without minds or selves, then minds or selves could also exist without bodies.

Descartes and for that matter any philosopher trying to justify his view, does not provide any arbitrary definition either of the self or of the body. He tries to articulate such conceptions out of the prevailing ideas about them which provides sufficient reasoning why that articulation is done in the particular way. Moreover, we must not suppose the existence of this thing or that

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independent of what is reflected in language. That is to say, the world of existence is a shadow cast by our language and discourse that is used to talk about matters of fact and existence primarily.

It is rather on the strength of the definition that the body-theorists are inclined to reject the conception of disembodied existence as self-stultifying. The term 'body' and the term 'existence' are defined in such a way that the expression 'disembodied existence' becomes empty of content. This move can well be contested.

We ordinarily say that there can be no fire without something burning: coal burning, wood burning, woods burning (apart from the Sun burning). Suppose all the fire from earth goes out, then can there be no conception of fire? Surely, the discovery of fire is a historical phenomenon. Prior to its discovery, there was no fire in one sense. But there was fire, even then, in another sense. Possession of specific organs like legs, hands, nose, eyes is never considered essential for being a man because otherwise loss of any limb would be tantamount to withdrawal of the property of manhood from the sufferer. But this would be too harsh a move. Hence Descartes considered the possession of particular limbs as contingent or accidental to particular individuals. He boldly goes a step further and considers the corporeality itself as accidental to the existence of the soul. All these go

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to suggest that the conception of the physical body is not built into the definition of man. It goes only to its description.

Strawson takes Wittgenstein to be a no-ownership theorist. Wittgenstein wants to emphasise the point that surface grammar is misleading. It misleads us into speculative metaphysics. While we formulate intentional statements like 'I think', the 'I' here gives the impression referring to an abiding metaphysical substance whose property is thinking. But instead of formulating the statement in this way, one could very well, contrary to the existing practice, formulate it in a different way, e.g., 'It thinks'. Now, the 'it' does no more give the impression of referring to an abiding metaphysical substance. This analysis makes Wittgenstein's thesis of extensionality consistent. The 'It' is the subject in the statement 'It thinks'. As such, the view that thinking is not owned by some person or other, becomes misleading. Wittgenstein is interested to find out the relation of the forms of language with forms of reality. The form of language is not affected at all when 'It' takes the place of 'I'. It rather pays to make it more intelligible without any metaphysical constituent. By branding it as 'no-ownership' theory, an unbecoming impression is created that thoughts, aspirations and dreams float in free air without there being any thinkers, aspirants

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and dreamers as their claimants, very much in the way in which the fish stock of an ill-fated truck lay scattered on the road after accident. In such a case, our thoughts or our dreams or our aspirations will be capable of being shared by different persons and not by any person in particular. So the point is that Strawson might prove the primitiveness of the concept of person which he is interested in, but Wittgenstein's view discussed above is hardly an evidence for such a proof.

The problem of disembodied existence has so far been discussed from the point of view of metaphysics as well as from that of theology, having repercussions on morality. Moreover, it has been discussed mostly in the plane of particular and specific. I want to discuss the problem from the point of view of philosophical logic and in the most general sense possible.

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CHAPTER

II

CHAPTER - II

PERSONS, BODIES AND EXISTENCE

In the introduction, we said that the question whether there could be, in principle, existence in disembodied or in non-bodied state is dependent upon a question which is more fundamental. The question pertains to the definition of the three terms - person, body and existence. In defining these terms, philosophers have not been in agreement so that disembodied existence is recognised as a possibility by some philosophers, where-as it is dismissed as sheer impossibility by some others. In defining the term 'Person', some philosophers consider body : physical organs, physical predicates or physical-object-language, to be fundamental. The other group, on the other hand, conceived that this is how things are. But the way things are, is no guarantee that they must continue the same way. The term 'person' is defined by some philosophers in such a manner that if something is regarded as a person then he must be regarded as a being having a body.' As H.H. Price puts it, " By ' a person' we are supposed to mean a human organism which behaves in certain ways and especially

one which speaks and can be spoken to. And when we say, 'This is the same person whom I saw yesterday', we are supposed to mean just that it is the same human organism which I saw yesterday, and also that it behaves in a recognizably similar way".¹

Again, on the other hand, if something is regarded as existing then that must be regarded as physical. 'Existence is full-blooded',² says Bertrand Russell. This move appears to be quite convincing and sacrosanct. But if we accept this view, then our vision is simply confined to the sphere of the material and the sensual. But our vision is not so limited. It includes many things besides gross is and the gross is not. Even in this gross sphere, all existent things are not of the same type. Obviously, the table before me, the electrons, protons, and neutrons, that it is constituted of, the causal relation in which these are bound up with each other, the ether that surrounds us, the world I live in, and the cosmos of which this is a small part - all these do not exist in the same sense. Besides, the gross is and is not, we talk about ought and ought not, and besides the empirical, we are naturally inclined to talk about the trans-empirical, we are not merely psychologically inclined to talk about it. There is some logical obligation to talk about them, If the arguments of some philosophers - called metaphysians, carry convictions. Such talks are about God, Soul and

Immortality to name a few of the trans-empirical existence. This metaphysical urge or illusion, as Kant would say, can hardly be suppressed. As S. Körner puts it, "Absolute metaphysics is no ordinary illusion which can be removed with sufficient logical care".³

The Philosophical endeavour in the two different directions as mentioned above carry conviction and indeed, pose a very hard choice before us. Those two directions have been technically termed as descriptive metaphysics and speculative metaphysics following P.F. Strawson. Strawson puts forth the distinction thus, "descriptive metaphysics in content to describe the actual structure about our thought; revisionary metaphysics is concerned to produce a better structure".⁴ To put the matter differently, the descriptive metaphysician seeks to draw a site plan of the existing state of concepts and their inter-relationship. The revisionary metaphysician, on the other hand, seeks to draw a blue print for the proposed structure of construction and their inter-relationships. Wilkerson summarises the difference better, "One does the annual stock-taking; the other suggests new brands".⁵ Descriptive metaphysics is appealing, but it poses certain difficulties. The descriptive metaphysician like Strawson seeks to locate the individuals in the universe of discourse. But what are individuals and how many are they? As Wilkerson aptly puts it, "the number of and types of individuals are themselves functions (at least in parts) of the concepts we employthere

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are numerous sets of individual which may in turn be substituted for ' shoes, ships and sealing wax and cabbages and kings'..... "6

The metaphysician is primarily an ontologist. The descriptivist describes, in general terms, the kinds of individuals, we distinguish; the revisionary metaphysician makes proposals as to which kinds of individual ought to be distinguished. According to Strawson, there is a central core of human thinking which is massive and which has stood the test of many changes in the periphery. The task of ^{the} descriptive metaphysician is to locate and describe this. The attempt of the revisionist is limited by this massive central core of human thinking. Accordingly, the concept of person, the concept of body, and the concept of existence will receive such treatment as their application will remain confined to the empirical.

The full-blooded existence is what is called 'real' as distinguished from illusion, hallucination, mirages etc. which are regarded as 'unreal'. This is the common distinction between 'real' and 'unreal' embedded in ordinary language. But the speculative metaphysician does not accept this and his non-acceptance is not without a point. He contends that those things which appear as unreal because probably they lack stability and consistency, are not nothing in the absolute sense of the term. What they are lacking something,

perhaps, a proper description . Whatever the description might be , they cannot be regarded as 'unreal.' What is unreal, is unreal , it cannot appear as real as barren-woman's son, square circle, as described in Indian contest as 'tuchha sattâ' . If we appreciate the ordinary distinction between ' real ' and ' unreal' in this way, then we find that the post-mortem existence is not nothing. What it is , may be difficult to convey in language which wears the distinction. So we have to convey it sometimes with the help of models and metaphors .

It may be noted in this connection that Strawson comes from the British Empirical tradition and is influenced by Wittgenstein's remark that the task of philosophy is description.⁸ Because there is a thrust of wholeness, the descriptive task of the philosopher is called metaphysical. But the wholeness that the descriptivist pursues does not appear to be the wholeness which the revisionist pursues. In the former case, the metaphysician tries to locate and remain satisfied with the massive central core of human thinking . In case of the latter, the metaphysician seeks to unify the different conceptual systems and present a wholistic view of the whole universe which transcends the particular and partial view of different natural and humanistic studies. Empirical philosophy is determined from the very beginning not to entertain anything existing

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beyond the scope of the sensible. Assumed for the moment that everything that the sciences refer to are sensible existences. How to account for ethics, aesthetics, theology etc. then? The concepts employed in such pursuits are committed to a transempirical ontology. Descriptive discourse is only a part of the discourse that is used by the human beings. Other discourses that they use can neither be wished away nor seen as modifications of descriptive discourse somehow or other.⁹ Wilkerson appreciates the dispute between the descriptive metaphysics and revisionary metaphysics in a critical fashion finding favour with both. Both the tasks are necessary, he says, because in this way one would not become a gross realist or a speculative philosopher.

We, therefore, feel that the concept of non-bodied existence represents such a trend by admitting the logical possibility of or intelligible discussion of non-bodied beings. We choose to avoid not only being a bodist and one shall try to show in the sequel that talks about non-bodied existence and to some extent disembodied existence too, is quite intilligible. Philosophers like Price, Penelhum, and Harrison and biologist-turned-Philosopher like Watson have vehemently tried to persuade that this is so.

Let us now go back to some classical views to drive home the conception of a disembodied existent; its mode of knowledge and mode of action. The views that we shall discuss are those of Aristotle and Descartes. We shall consider Descartes first.

According to Descartes body is what is immediately present to imagination. Therefore, it must exist. But there is nothing which nature teaches more expressly than that 'I have a body'. This body is adversely affected when I feel pain, which has a need of food or drink when I experience the feelings of hunger or thirst. Nature also teaches by these sensations of pain, hunger and thirst that I am 'lodged in my body as a pilot in the vessel'. Apart from this metaphor, I am very closely united to my body; so intermingled with it that I seem to compose with it as one whole. How do I know that the body of a man is closely united to his mind? According to Descartes, a certain body is more closely united to our mind than others. This is so, because pain and other sensations occur without our fore-seeing them and mind is conscious that these do not arise from itself alone. They do not pertain to it either in so far as it is a thinking thing, but only in so far as it is united to another thing:-

extended and mobile, called the human body.

Death occurs to man not because of the soul quitting the body or something like that, but because of the decay of the principal part of the body. The dead body is just like a broken watch with segregated parts. The soul indeed quits the body, but this happens only when the heat ceases from the body and the body disintegrates.

Behind these remarks of Descartes there appears to lurk a supposition that there is a distinction between clinical death and the actual death of a man as the present day scientists like Watson, maintain, and this supposed state between the clinical death and actual death of a person is termed as "goth" by Watson.¹⁰

On the other hand, Aristotle thinks that it is the soul which animates the body. The heat and the motion of the body are generated by the soul ensconced with it. In other words, when the soul ceases to supply heat or energy, the body is said to be dead or lifeless. Descartes would agree that the soul is ensconced with the body, but he would not agree that it generates heat or energy. He would rather say that the body itself generates all these and when it fails to generate heat death occurs to the body.

The difference between the two views is, in short, this. According to Aristotle, death occurs at the instance

of the soul, whereas according to Descartes it occurs due to decay of the body. According to Descartes, the transference and movements of the body are ultimately through nerves which are like filaments or little tubes . He is of the view that both the brain and the nerve which proceed from it, are filled with a very subtle air or wind which he terms as 'animal spirit'. His postulation of 'animal spirit' like his postulation of ' pineal gland' seeks to make best of both the worlds.' If there is something of animal, then there must be something mechanical and if there is something of the spirit, then there cannot be anything mechanical . Thus, Descartes' view is mechanical whereas Aristotle's is spiritual. The concept of animal spirit is a metaphysical concept which vitiates the mechanical explanation regarding the constitution and the functions of the body that Descartes¹¹ wishes to offer.

All the physical and physiological functions of the body then ultimately spring from the body and not from the soul.' What springs from the soul are our thoughts.' Thoughts are of two sorts : actions of the soul which includes all our desires and then its passions which include the perceptions, feelings and emotions of the soul.' The soul is united to all the portions of the body conjointly.' That is to say, the soul is the one and indivisible. It does not become small when a portion of the body is somehow separated.' But the soul separates itself from the body

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entirely when the union of the assembled organs is dissolved or ceases to be.

According to Descartes, the essence of a human being consists in the mental not in the physical. The physical adjunct in its parts or taken as a whole, is not considered necessary for the identity of man. Here mind has a logical supremacy over body which is subject to change, variation, decay, and destruction. But according to Locke, both mind and body as they go to constitute the human being are on the same par. Neither the mind nor the body has any logical supremacy over the other. Hence the identity of the human being is not determined by the mental. The physical also is a factor of determination of his identity. As Locke puts it, "if the identity of soul alone makes the same man, and there be nothing in the nature of matter why the same individual spirit may not be united to different bodies, it will be possible that those men, living in the distant ages, and of different tempers, may have been the same men ; which way of speaking must be from a very strange use of the word 'man', applied to an idea out of which body and shape are excluded".¹²

Locke also puts it in a different language thus:

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".....it is not the idea of a thinking or a rational being alone that makes the idea of man in most people's sense, but of a body, so and so shaped, joined to it, and if that be the idea of a man, the same successive body not shifted all at once must, as well as the same immaterial spirit, go to the making of the same man".¹³

According to Locke, personal identity is 'continuity of consciousness'. What is consciousness? Descartes says, "I am a thinking thing", i.e., he conceived that the essence of human being consisting in a substance that thinks. There are different manifestations of thinking like doubting, determining, dreaming, etc.. There is not a single moment in the life of man when he ceases to think. Locke, however, differed from this view. According to him, man is not a thinking thing, rather a person is a thinking and intelligent thing. It is important to note here, that he distinguishes between a 'man' and a 'person'. The idea of 'man' differs from the idea of a 'person'.¹⁴ According to Locke, man does not think always; thinking ceases during deep sleep. Thinking is rather one of the manifestations of consciousness which always continues to be. Other manifestations of consciousness are - dreaming, thinking, perceiving, etc;. The different

forms of thinking that Descartes distinguished, are different manifestations of thinking. Memory is one such manifestation. At a given period of the life of a man, we may not find any manifestation of consciousness; all these manifestations remain in the latent form in the foundational consciousness.

The idea of memory involves the idea of forgetting. One cannot possibly remember one's whole past. One's remembering is significant if one can remember. According to Locke, "even the best memories", must lose "the sight of one part, whilst viewing the another"¹⁵. Hence some sections of one's past are remembered and some sections are forgotten. In other words, memories are interrupted by forgetfulness. Forgetfulness is not a defect of memory, nor is it a welcome feature of it. It is rather a defining characteristic of it. Without forgetting memory is meaningless. Remembering the past is not re-living the past. Memory is not co-extensive with consciousness.

In this part of philosophy John Locke appears to be misrepresented by some philosophers. They are of the view that memory is what constitutes the criterion of personal identity. Locke does not say this. He rather

says that personal identity depends upon the sameness of consciousness that makes man to himself. According to Locke, "by consciousness it has, of its present thoughts and actions, that it is self to itself now".¹⁶

It is now clear that memory alone cannot determine whether a man is the same man that he once was; that Devadatta at Kasi is the same Devadatta at Pataliputra. Appropriate action at appropriate context and manifestations of thinking other than memory are also needed for determining this. If memory is said to be the sole criterion of personal identity, then Locke will be another essentialist thinker like Descartes.¹⁷

In opposition to Descartes' idea of mind and body as two substances (although in the relative sense), J.Harrison is of the view that bodies as well as persons are substances, but not minds. "Something belongs to the category of substance, in this sense of the word 'substance', if it is capable of existing by itself".¹⁸ According to Harrison, there cannot exist a mind without a body, but body can exist without a mind. In that sense body is entirely a material body. The substance of a person comprises the substance of a body and the non-substance mind. There appears to be a difficulty in the conception of a person here as a substance which can exist by itself, exists with the aid of another substance, i.e., the existence of person as dependent on the existence of a body. According to Descartes, as we have already pointed out, the substance of body

and the substance of mind are peculiarly lodged with each other to constitute a man.

J.Harrison tries to articulate the concept of person by bringing in three categories; person, body, and mind.³ He makes a distinction between having a body and being embodied and brings this distinction to bear upon the relation amongst the above categories.⁴ According to him, having a body means having a body necessarily and being embodied, having a body is only a matter of chance. A person has a body whereas a mind is embodied. Thus Harrison appears to have both Descartes and Locke in the same cage. He supports Descartes' position by making mind free to choose to be embodied and disembodied. He does not admit like Descartes that mind is a substance in which case embodiment is not at all necessary. For Harrison, embodiment for a mind is not necessary in the sense that it must necessarily be attached with a body. But it must be embodied in order that it could be disembodied. Disembodiment is significant only in the background of embodiment.⁵ He supports Locke's position by maintaining the concept of a person and making physical body basic to the concept of a person. Locke however, does not give (perhaps he was not very clear about substantiality) substantial status to body but Harrison does it, again with deference to Descartes.

The point of our concern is whether the conception of non-bodied existence is as such intelligible or not. Harrison narrates stories of disembodiment. He tries to drive along the point that the concept of disembodiment is intelligible because the concept of embodiment is intelligible. We will perfectly understand what it is for an embodied person to sleep, sit, see, say, etc.. Because this is so, we are able to understand what it is for a disembodied being to sleep, sit, see, say, etc.. The latter lives on the diet of the former. But this is no disgrace. Philosophical conception always lives on ordinary conception. If, for that matter, we say that the concepts of book, fan, etc. are primary or basic whereas the concept of object is secondary or derivative, then there is no harm provided that the importance of the latter is not belittled. The point is that non-bodied existence is a logically viable conception.

While discussing the concept of disembodied existence or what we have regarded as the something - non-bodied existence, three concepts are formed to be basic to our discussion: the concept of person, the concept of body and the concept of mind or soul. Of these three Harrison regards persons and body as substances and mind as non-substance. From the point of view of theory of meaning in general, the concept of person and the concept of a

body appear to be viable, whereas the concept of mind or soul does not appear to be so.' There is a difference between the two in respect of the roles and relations. Mind does not belong to the same status as person or body. What we want to say will be clear if we shift to a similar context. We consider the inter-relations to the concept of propositions, the concept of propositional signs and the concept of meaning or sense.

According to Wittgenstein in the Tractatus, proposition is a propositional sign with sense.¹⁹ The sense, according to him, is what he calls 'projective relation with the world'. Accordingly a proposition is a propositional sign together with its projective relation with the world. Both the proposition and the propositional sign have spatio-temporal existence. They are locatable in the sensible mark on the paper or soundwaves in the air. But sense or meaning is not locatable in this way, because it is not an entity but it is a relation - 'projective relation with the world' - very much as uncle is a relation with man.

When we liken the concept of a proposition to the concept of a person, the concept of a propositional sign with the concept of a body and the concept of sense or meaning to the concept of mind or soul, we find that Harrison has a point. Persons and bodies are locatable in space and time, capable of being identified and reidentified

whereas mind or soul is not so locatable. It is not an entity. It is a relation - say the attitudinal relation of the human beings towards things existing in the world. Very much as the 'projective relation' is reflected or shown in the meaningful use of a proposition, the attitudinal relation is shown in the successful transactions of human beings in the world. Thus the question of independent existence or dis-embodied existence or non-propositional existence of sense or meaning is impossible. So also disembodied existence or non-bodied existence of soul appears to be impossible in this sense.²⁰

This sounds as if we have exercised a rule of thumb to admit certain possibilities and reject certain others. Language is a living phenomenon and it reflects forms of life, as Wittgenstein says in the Philosophical Investigations. One form of life is as good as any other. No form of life need be supposed to be central, paradigmatic; others somehow varying from paradigm in degrees or one should not be thought to be reduced into another. Man participates in different forms of life: scientific, religious, ethical, social, legal, etc.. If we honour the autonomy of different forms of life, we have to admit the autonomy of the philosophies that we have: philosophy of science, philosophy of art, philosophy of religious discourse, philosophy of moral discourse, etc.. Accordingly, in philosophy

of religion, especially, there is an attempt to understand in a cogent and coherent manner, all the things, life as lived by religious man, his beliefs, his views about the world as a whole. Here one finds that the concepts derived from descriptive discourse do not suffice. The framework of science is not adequate to comprehend all that happens to human beings or all the facts that are found to be there in the ambit of human experience. So one has to go beyond the ambit of the scientific framework and make it broader with non-scientific issues or transcendental conceptions added to it. Accordingly, the conception of after-life, resurrection, reincarnation, and disembodied existence come to our rescue. The philosopher in such a case has before him the task to make the conceptions intelligible.

It now appears as if there is an opposition between the two lines of thinking - one in which mind or soul is accounted for as a relation and another in which mind is supposed to have an independent existence. But in reality there is no such opposition. The second line of thought happens to be more liberal, comprehensive with more explanatory power. It pays to clarify our thinking and promote our understanding if we can chart out the form of life in which the conceptions like disembodied existence or immaterial existence are not set aside as being vacuous.

Richard Rorty, is of the view that it is Descartes who has created occasions for certain problems regarding immaterial existence by articulating the concepts of mind and body. He quotes, with approval, Wallace Matson who says:

"The Greeks did not lack a concept of mind even of a mind separable from the body. But from Homer to Aristotle, the line between mind and body when drawn at all, was drawn so as to put the process of sense perception on the body side. That is one reason why the Greeks had no mind-body problem. Another is that, it is difficult almost impossible, to translate such a sentence as 'What is the relation of sensation to mind (or soul)?' into Greek. The difficulty is in finding a Greek equivalent for 'sensation' in the sense philosophers make it bear..... 'Sensation' was introduced into philosophy precisely to make it possible to speak of a conscious state without committing oneself as to the nature or even existence of external stimuli".²¹

Descartes articulated the concepts of mind and body in a way that was not done ever before and gave them the status of substance. As a result of the substantial status enjoyed by mind, questions were raised as to whether mind could exist quite independent of the body, although, as a matter of fact, this is not found to be the case. It was thought to be a logical possibility that this could be the case.

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Richard Rorty perhaps thinks that it is we who raised the dust and complain that we cannot see, i.e., the problems concerning mind, be it be the problem of mind - body relationship or be it the independent existence of mind, are all problems of language. Because there exists in our language a host of materialistic terms, these and other problems are created. If there would not have been such terms, then those problems could not have been born at all. He imagines an alternative language and calls it the language of the Antepodeans and contrasts it with the existing language of the Earthlings. In the language of the Antepodeans there are no terms like mind and its cognates - dream, desire, perceive, imagine, etc.. Now the question is whether the language of the Antepodeans is logically inadequate for using it to talk about the world of things, events and persons. It may be said that the language of the Antepodeans is poor because there is nothing in its vocabulary to reflect the inner feelings and desires of persons.³ But this is not the point. A linguist may compare two natural languages and find that one is poor in vocabulary compared to the other. The point is that whether the Antepodeans would be distinguished from the Earthlings in respect of their participation in different forms of life. It might be said that apart from the external behaviour in respect of which all the participants would be alike, still their experience will differ. I know when I look within, that I have some experiences of

which the outward behaviour is only an expression or a part of the expression. Others must be having similar ones but not the same one, because obviously we occupy different positions and conditioned by different circumstances. Moreover, without the inner, it would be impossible to distinguish the outward behaviour, movements, and changes of a human being and those in the machines. Although the language of Antepodeans appears at first to be as efficacious as that of the Earthlings', it cannot be so in reality. The idea of friendship, love, duty, responsibility, good, bad, beautiful, ugly, etc., cannot just find a place in the form of life of the Antepodeans. It is, therefore, a restricted language. Descartes has not erred in giving substantial status to both body and mind. He has rather opened up new vistas of philosophical speculation.

Prof. G. Mishra interprets Descartes to mean that the latter has made a dichotomous division between subjectivity and objectivity as such or between the subject and the object. The two are blatantly opposed to each other. They are mutually related in the context of the human person; their relation is contingent in nature and so each of the two could be there without the other. According to Prof. Mishra the idea of pure subjectivity is an unworkable idea. "It is unintelligible and therefore, less than a myth".²²

As against Descartes for whom the human being is

composed of both body and mind, Prof. Mishra seeks to maintain 'a unitary idea'. He discovers the hollowness of the thesis of pure subjectivity in an unjustified inference made by the proponent. It is true that a being can be called a human being without a leg or without a hand or without both legs or without both the hands or without both hands and legs. Thus none of these limbs, considered severally, is essential for the being of the man. But from this the inference goes that the body as a whole is not essential for the being of a person. This inference is wild. This is the concept of disembodied existence, which according to Prof. Mishra, is based on the fallacy of composition. "A man is identified even after one or two limbs are amputated, when the rest of the body is in tact. It is not possible to identify a man who has lost his entire body".²³ What does Prof. Mishra mean by 'rest of the body'? Does he regard the two hands and the two feet are the only limbs of the body? Can there be amputation of the neck and head leaving the 'rest of the body in tact'? Can there be a body in-tact with the head, hands and legs? What about the man without the tongue, the hands and legs so that he is left with no means to express his thoughts?

Prof. Mishra is of the opinion that the idea of

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a pure, self-conscious, self-identical and non-objective ego, is a problem created by the grammar of our language. This is due to the peculiar use of the pronoun 'I' in our language structure. The word 'I' is an indexing word which is like 'you' and 'he' in being a personal pronoun but while 'you' and 'he' refer to different individuals in different situations, 'I' refers to the same individual all through one's personal history. This creates the impression that there is an immaterial substance. "The idea of two distinct words of 'ego' and 'non-ego' is the result of surface grammar"²⁴ The human being is not an additive being consisting of material and immaterial substances.' This idea is due to the bad logic and wrong metaphysics as Prof. Mishra puts it.²⁵

The problem of reincarnation is an instance of bad logic and wrong metaphysics. The belief in reincarnation supposes that there is an immortal self which migrates from one body to another both of which are perishable. This, according to Prof. G.Mishra is fallacious. The sense of the 'I' is not possible when the whole body is lost. It is conceivable that a particular limb of my body might not have been mine, but it is not conceivable that the whole body might not have been mine.

Prof. Mishra is interested to see what repercussions do the metaphysical models have on the human society. The model of human beings as pure subjectivity produces a society of ascetics whereas the model of pure objectivity produces a society of man-machines. The model of persons is supposed to maintain an equilibrium between the two extremes. But if we consider the matter a bit closely keeping an eye on the tradition of the Bhagavad Gita, we can find that the model of the human being as an additive on an imperishable soul and a perishable body is the basis of a morally healthy society which ensures duty and responsibility and dignity of human beings in society. It keeps man away from the harmful indulgence in sensual pleasure and false identification with the body and bodily states. In respect of the imperishable aspect, the whole of human society is one participating in the same form of life. There is no dispute in the fact that a conscious being is by necessity a language-using-being and a language-using-being is by necessity a social being. But in order that man in society may have a peaceful coexistence, and trans-material order which lies at the basis of the material order, has to be assumed. This is in quite conformity with admission of the world here and now with all its furnitures as well as the admission of the bodied human being for whom values and ideas have significance and meaning.

Plato's theory of soul must not be left out of consideration. His philosophy is at the apex of the ancient Greek philosophy and forms the foundation of modern philosophy. Plato absorbs the Pythagorean theory of soul with due modification. According to Plato, there must be soul in the world to account for a rational behaviour of things as well as to explain motion. Accordingly, the cosmos which is regarded as a living being has a soul known as the world-soul and the individual living beings in the cosmos have their souls of their own. In the system of Plato, the soul mediates between the world of Ideas and the world of sense. The soul has different parts - the highest part is the reason which apprehends the ideas. This rational part of the soul is impartite, indestructible and immortal. The other part, i.e., the irrational part is subdivided into noble self and ignoble self. Man alone possesses all the three parts of the soul; animals possess the noble and the ignoble self; plants alone the ignoble self.

Plato links the doctrine of the immortality of the soul with his theory of Ideas. This he does through two central ideas of his philosophy. These two central ideas are: (a) knowledge is recollection and (b) soul is transmigratory. All knowledge is recollection of that which the soul experienced before being embodied. It must

be noted, however, that knowledge here does not mean any knowledge. Knowledge in this connection is rational knowledge and not sensuous knowledge, i.e., knowledge as to what perfection is, what justice is and knowledge of mathematical truths are said to be recollected because the soul originally knew it in its non-bodied or disembodied state. In the disembodied state it is in communion with the world of Ideas. With the birth of a human being the soul gets embodied and with the death of the human being it becomes disembodied and goes back to the previous state. This is what is known as transmigratory sense of the soul in the Platonic sense.

Hence for Plato the soul is immortal and pre-existent. Its natural habitat is the world of Ideas. The soul in the pure state is without a body. Because of its affinity with the world of sense, it sinks down into a body. If the man lives a holy life, contemplates on the world of Ideas, and cultivates its philosophy, the soul returns to its previous pure state.

We thus find that according to Plato, soul can be conceived by itself, without the conception of a body. In other words, the primary existence belongs to the soul and the secondary existence only belongs to the body. It would not be inappropriate to say that body is not the body without being en-souled. There is nothing like soulless body, but a bodiless soul is not nothing.

Although Descartes does not say it explicitly, his view is that the soul is only a soul when attached with a body, as the body is only a body when attached with a soul. The union of the two constitutes a man like a human being. There is nothing like a soul in an animal or a soul in a plant. But while conceiving the self, the bodily characters are not regarded as essential. In the conception of the soul or mind, all the bodily characters are dispensable because there is no certainty with regard to their nature as well as existence. Although in this respect we can say that the soul or mind in Descartes is non-bodied, we can hardly say that it is disembodied, if the term 'disembodied' implies transmigration in the Platonic sense.

Strawson comes to the concept of a person in a different way. He hails from the British empirical tradition to which John Locke belongs. We have said that according to Locke a man can be identified not by his mental characteristics alone, but by the physical characteristics too. That is to say, a person has both physical and mental characters. Strawson approaches the problem of what a person is from the point of view of identification and re-identification of particulars. Identification means bringing a given particular under

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a class and distinguishing it from other particulars coming under that class. Re-identification of particulars means recognising that particular as being the same. The idea of identification and re-identification appears to be the idea of verification in a new garb, because identification and re-identification of a particular implies the existence of that particular in space and time. Obviously, a pure self cannot be located in space and time. As a result of this it cannot be an identifiable and re-identifiable particular. Material bodies are capable of being identified and re-identified for which Strawson regards them as basic particulars. A person is locatable in space and time ('persons are what we meet', Flew says). But for that matter he is not simply a material body. As Strawson says both material-object-predicates (he weighs 100 pounds, he is fat, he is sitting on the chair) and person-predicates (he is thinking over philosophical problems, he thinks that better days would come, he believes that his income-tax will be low, etc.) are applicable to persons. A person is not a pure self nor is he merely a body, nor is he a curious admixture of the two. All these three ways of explanations are full of riddles and hence Strawson is led to say that it cannot be explained in any way. The concept of person is a

primitive concept, he holds.

A person, accordingly, means an embodied person. We have not to say it explicitly that person is embodied. The use of the word 'person' shows that it is used in this sense. The concept of disembodied person is dependent upon the meaning and intelligibility of person. The concept of person, in other words, is primary and the concept of disembodied person is secondary. This appears to be just opposite to what Plato says. For Plato the disembodied self has primary existence whereas the embodied soul has secondary existence.

Strawson seems to think that the possibility of the disembodied person is conceivable only in connection with the persons who were once embodied. Hamlyn does not agree with Strawson in this regard. "It is difficult to see", Hamlyn says, "why that restriction should be imposed once the general possibility of a disembodied existence is admitted, although it might be difficult to think of ways in which intrinsically disembodied persons could be identified in practice". "To suppose", he continues, "that that difficulty either limits or removes altogether any possibility of attaching sense to the notion of disembodied person is simply to embrace verificationism".²⁶

If we compare and contrast the views of the

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philosophers mentioned above, we shall find important and interesting features in them. For Plato, there is a world of souls or non-bodied existence. This is a metaphysical necessity. The existence of soul is incorrigible according to Descartes. There is now a shift towards epistemology and the existence of the soul is epistemologically prior to the existence of the body. Locke shifts the emphasis still further. He is concerned with social, political, and legal aspects of man. Accordingly, man has his share of duty, responsibility, and rights. He is liable to commendations or condemnations. Hence man must be embodied or better, there must be persons who are embodied. Disembodied person is an empty expression in such a framework. Wittgenstein is a philosophical logician and is interested in meaning and philosophical understanding of expression. This is linked with the use of the said expressions in different language games. The various language games are then linked up with forms of life. The concept of disembodied existence is to be understood in the context of the appropriate language game. Coming now to Strawson, the problem gets a different dimension altogether. Strawson searches for the basic particulars of the world and is worried about their identification and re-identification. Disembodied

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persons cannot be basic particulars. The particular that merits to be picked up as the basic must be bodied, locatable in space and time. Disembodied existence can only be dependent particular. It can have a secondary meaning only.

There are other philosophers in the tradition of logico-linguistic analysis who try to explode the intelligibility of the idea of disembodied existence. The views of some such philosophers like Harrison, Rorty have been taken up for detailed examination. It must be clarified that they are following the lead of Wittgenstein, the authors of the ideas of language games and forms of life. It would, therefore, be clear that the discussion of the problem of disembodied existence can be fruitfully carried on in this line.

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CHAPTER

III

CHAPTER - III

DISEMBODIED BEING - KNOWLEDGE AND ACTION

Terence Penelhum in his book "Survival and Disembodied Existence" seeks to examine some of the logical problems connected with the belief that all or some persons survive death. A set of beliefs regarding survival and resurrection are there in some of the religious doctrines in the world. They are accepted as valid in their own context. The philosophical study consists in studying the logic of such concepts and tries to make sense out of them.

A belief, according to Penelhum, would lack sense if it can be shown to be incoherent in some way. The area of religious beliefs is full of doctrines to which many people seem to attach sense, but which philosophers reject as unintelligible. The belief in survival is most notorious among these.¹

There are two concepts of survival after death. One, the Christian conception - the disembodied survival and two, the Greek conception - immortality of the soul. We are to assess their intelligibility. This can be shown in the following ways - (1) Firstly, we have to

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ascertain whether the predicates which we ascribe to pre-mortem persons can be applied to the supposed beings without bodies, (2) Secondly, we have to determine whether beings without bodies can be said to remain identical through time in their alleged disembodied state. (3) Thirdly, we have to find out whether they can be identified with the pre-mortem embodied persons.

An embodied being is said to know about things, persons and events. Knowledge implies many things, such as perceiving, imagining, thinking, dreaming, willing, and might be also its movements (in space and time). A disembodied person would obviously be imperceptible. But can it perceive? Penelhum is of the opinion that perhaps he might have perceptions and along with perceptions, imaginations, intentions, feelings of anger, but is of the view that many normal implications of perceiving things would no longer be there.²

Generally perception involves three things:

(a) perceiver, (b) objects of perception and (c) act of perceiving. It may be pointed out rightly here, that a philosopher does not have any concern with the act of perception, i.e., to perceive is to have perceived.³

In other words, the word 'perception' is not a process-word but it is a product-word. Let us suppose that the

object of perception is a bunch of flower placed on a table. The disembodied being claims to perceive the same. The claim will have to be expressed in the form of a perceptual judgement, viz., I see a bunch of flower on the table or there is a bunch of flower on the table. Both the judgements are logically the same. The claim which is now expressed in the form of a judgement becomes objective. One may agree to it or disagree with it, may contest the claim or may make a counter claim. Let us suppose, that I am in the room, and come to hear such a claim uttered. Should I look to the direction from which the sound came? Perhaps not. Because, the disembodied being cannot be said to be spatially positioned. It cannot be said to be just in the north-east corner of the room or a little south of that corner or above my head or at my back. The sound may be likened to the sound which I hear or rather 'feel' when I place two head-phones on my ears connected to a sound system, i.e., the disembodied being may be regarded as being at the centre of the visual field, because Penelhum says that there is no sense to the notion of seeing from no point of view. ⁴ So I would simply say, without changing the direction of my look, 'this is not, you see, a bunch of flower, but a bunch of grass'. But whom do I

address as 'You' in my statement. It may be said that the term 'you' does not have an indexical use here, it is only a linguistic filler or has an impersonal use like 'it' (in 'It is cold'). Granting this, if there is no response by way of reaction to my contesting claim, what should I say? Should I say that what I heard was merely illusory or should I say that the disembodied being thought it was too authentic to contest? It is hardly an illusion as it has been admitted to be a public perceptual statement. Can any claim to knowledge be its own justification? It may be said in reply that there are certain perceptual judgements which constitute their own justification, (for example - 'I feel pain'). It may be objected that one's feeling of pain cannot be given the status of authenticity, because the feeling of pain is subject to public criterion and public verification. If it is found on verification by a physician that there could be no such pain as narrated by the patient, then the verdict of the physician would be final and even after that if the patient claims his statement to be true, then such a case may be a psychiatric case.

But then there is a different kind of perceptual statement whose utterance is its own authority (such as -

'I dreamt of an elephant last night'). In such a case the truth or falsity of the statement concerned cannot be publicly ascertained. But then, the elephant of the dream, walking on the road of the dream, with the rider of the dream, are certainly different from the road, rider and the elephant of life. The objects of dream and the objects of life are distinguished from one another on the criterion of coherence.⁵ So the statement 'There is a bunch of flower on the table' cannot be likened to 'I dreamt of an elephant last night'.⁶

But if the disembodied being makes a response by way of reiterating that 'There is a bunch of flower on the table' or by way of correction that 'There is a bunch of grass on the table', then I can hardly deny that the disembodied being really perceives, even though the judgement might be incorrect. In the language of Penelhum, "If the things do not look to him, the way they really look, then there is nowhere that we can say that he is".⁷

Here an interesting question arises. Language is to be used in order to couch the judgements of perception. But which language it is? English or any other language. Though this question sounds interesting,

it is not of philosophical interest. We are not interested to know which person is that now speaking in the disembodied form and consequently the languages the person has mastery over. We are only interested in the claims to knowledge, not the particular mode in which the claim is made.

Can we grant that the disembodied being hears ? Hearing is analogous to seeing, says Penelhum. The disembodied being could not be said to touch anything, because if he touches anything, we can watch and catch him. But he might be said to learn about a thing by touch, in the sense that thing might feel rough or warm to him when the thing was rough or warm. There may be a question now as to what kind of touch it is ? Is it sense-object contact¹ or what is called in Nyāya Philosophy 'jñānalakṣṇa perception' (extraordinary perception) as one says, by seeing a piece of ice that 'it must be cold' or seeing a bed of grass that 'it must be soft' ? But this cannot be so, because one is otherwise expected to have the tactual sensation of the thing concerned and the sense of touch is not a distant organ like the sense of seeing or the sense of hearing or something. The contention of Penelhum is that the disembodied being may learn about a thing by touch without touching,

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cannot be expected. Hence the disembodied being can also be said to exercise other distant sense organs like *smelling*.

But it does not make sense to say, as Penelhum does, that he has 'taste' in the similar way. Lyall Watson, a biologist, gives certain opinions on the basis of certain scientific findings which appear to be very close to Penelhum's which we have been discussing so far. In a provocative and interesting title, "The Romeo Error", Lyall Watson attends to the question. How does a disembodied person 'enjoy any kind of experience without sense-organs?'⁸ He is of the view that 'without sense-organs a disembodied person would have to perceive things by Clairvoyance,' which is a kind of extra-sensory perception admitted by the para-psychologists; 'Without limbs, it would be able to act on the environment only by psycho-kinesis,' which is perhaps assumed to be movement of objects by mere wish; 'and without any structure, for producing vocal, visual and olfactory signals, it could communicate only by telepathy'. Watson asserts that 'none of these things is biologically impossible.'⁹

J. Harrison also testifies that there can be action at a distance on the part of a disembodied being,

very much as the gravitational power operates or remote-sensors function at a distance.¹⁰ According to him the 'body' which we have is rather a misuse. It needs re-fueling, doctoring etc.. It is a restraint on human will. It is a limitation on human action, When that is gone, it becomes all the more easy to get things done by will, to move things without moving oneself. Even if one (disembodied being) moves oneself one can move through things otherwise considered hurdles in the way of movements, like walls and closed doors. Harrison manufactures a story narrating how he, an embodied being, became a disembodied one and sensed the environment, willed and acted upon it without hurdles.¹¹

In this connection Prof. P.K.Mohapatra's reaction to Harrison's conceptual exploration needs close attention. Prof. Mohapatra hints, but does not develop the conceptual complications involved in Harrison's view. He thinks that by allowing conceptual intelligibility of lifting and moving the limbs by disembodied beings, we are attributing magical powers to them. This implies that we are making modifications in the concept of person.¹² Prof. Mohapatra's contention appears to be based upon his commitment that possession of a body and normal bodily powers, as we generally have, constitutes a person. But why should philosophical reflections be confined to how a concept

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normally functions ? Normal functioning of a concept is taken note of by empirical studies. The philosophers also take note of that only to find out the underlying presupposition of its functioning, logical necessity of those presuppositions and implications in the event of those presuppositions being discarded. In the process, new vistas in conceptual framework open up for intellectual illumination. If in this way the disembodied beings are credited with certain power, it matters little to call them magical or anything of the sort - terms that are available in the present conceptual framework.

H.H.Price thinks it "reasonable to suppose that in a disembodied state telepathy would occur more frequently than it does now".¹³ It appears from the above discussion that the existence of disembodied person is conceivable, i.e., we can make it intelligible to ourselves what form of disembodied existence could be. To facilitate our intelligibility, the idea of dream has been taken recourse to by both Watson and H.H.Price who have cited dreams as a very close parallel of the kind of experience, the disembodied existents might have. According to Watson, "the only biological comparison available to us at the moment is the kind of experience we know occurs in dreams".¹⁴

"Dreams", according to him, "include sensations

of colour, sound, texture, temperature, smell, taste, pain, and all other experiences we appreciate through our sense organs in waking life".¹⁵ In this sense, the experiences of the embodied state and the experiences of pre-mortem state and that of the post state do not differ in kind, they are only different in degree.

"The Next World" Price thinks, "might be conceived as a kind of dream-world".¹⁶ He explains that when we are asleep our sensory stimuli are cut off or at least they are prevented from having their normal effects upon the centres of our brain. But then we have experiences "it is true, that sense-perception no longer occurs, but sufficiently like it does".¹⁷

We have thus seen that the mode of knowledge which a disembodied being could intelligibly have is extra sensory perception and not perception through the exercise of any sense organ in particular. The mode of action of such a being is similarly through psycho-kineses.¹⁸

There is serious objection put forward by P.T.Geach. According to him a disembodied spirit, without sensory experiences would not be a surviving human person. He does not appear to distinguish between the near senses and distant senses when he says that a concept like seeing

or feeling collapses if we break its threads of connection with other concepts relating to the physical properties of perceived bodies and to human bodily behaviour. He subscribes to the view that "my soul is not 'I'". There appears to be a difference with reference to the very fundamentals and a virtual refusal to listen to the contender.

We shall now consider in the next section the mode of action of a disembodied being in some detail. To know about the world, is to act and react upon things of the world. When the embodied being knows that something is the case, he plans his actions accordingly or at least it remains in the commonwealth of his knowledge for any future planning. I know, for example, that there is a bunch of flower on the table. If I need one, I can pick it and present it to the guest or hold it in my hand and such other actions. Even if no such action is in the offing, future actions might be shaped accordingly, for example, if I want to keep a book, I will rather avoid placing it on the bunch of flower, I must take care of the bunch and such other actions may follow. But how should the disembodied being utilise his knowledge that there is a bunch of flower on the table? Suppose, while watching the bunch of flower, suddenly it begins

to rise, would we grant that this is being raised by a disembodied being or a spirit ? ¹⁹

A counter question can be put following Wittgenstein "what is left over when we subtract the fact that the bunch of flower rose, from the fact, that the spirit raised the bunch of flower ? It appears that there must be something left, i.e., the activity of the agent". This is clear when an embodied being raises the bunch of flower. He puts his fingers under the bunch and then exerts some upward pressure. But this is certainly absent in case of the disembodied being or spirit, obviously because he does not have a body. It may now be said that the difference between the spirit raising the bunch of flower from the fact that it simply rises, consists in a mental act which precedes the rising of the bunch of flower. When an embodied agent acts, the action involves in some physical movements by way of trying and deciding as well as willing to do certain things. These notions are markedly absent in case of the so-called actions of the disembodied agent. To quote Penelhum again, ".....these notions lean on and do not serve to explain the notion of doing." ²⁰ In this connection, Arthur Danto's concept of basic action may now be taken into account. "An action is basic for some one", according

to Danto, " if there is no other action, which he has to do in order to do that action".²¹ On this definition there are atleast, two basic actions. (1) Mental actions like imagining and saying to oneself and (2) Movements of one's limbs and their members.

According to Ryle, "there are hosts of wildly divergent sorts of behaviour in the conduct of which we should ordinarily and correctly describe as imaginative".²² "There is no special faculty of imagination.....seeing things is one exercise of imagination; growling somewhat like bear, is another; smelling things in the mind's nose is an uncommon act of fancy; malingering is a very common one and so-forth".²³ The behaviour which Ryle talks of, includes verbal and non-verbal. There cannot be any non-verbal behaviour where bodily actions are involved in case of the disembodied agent. But it could be granted to some extent that he can have verbal behaviour. If we grant one sort of basic action to the disembodied agent, perhaps we shall have to attribute some special power to the disembodied agent.

According to Stuart Hampshire, the concept of action is central to the concept of person. This action is partly, if not wholly, physical. It, therefore, follows

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from the view that the notion of personal survival or disembodied existence is meaningless.²⁴ P.F.Strawson, however, takes a liberal view of the matter. According to him, the notion is not meaningless, it only lacks primary meaning. In the primary meaning, a person means an embodied being. The notion of disembodied being is paracritical on or secondary to it (the notion of person).²⁵ Hence one can intelligibly think of the concept as surviving one's death. To put it straight in the words of A.J.Ayer "one can imagine oneself continuing, to have experiences of various kinds, without having any power to make physical changes in the world and without having any perception of the body which is related to these experiences in the way that one's living being is related to one's present experiences".²⁶ A further condition is suggested that other people do not perceive such a body either. These do not imply that this could actually happen to be the case as some monks wished to perceive their bodies floating down the sacred streams of the Ganga after their bodily death. We are only to try to find out whether the idea of disembodied existence is intelligible or not. ²⁷

Strawson lays down two essential features of these forms of existence. First, one would be entirely

alone, so much so that if there would be disembodied things of the same sort, one could not be in a position to know them. Second, one could retain one's sense of self-identify, only if one preserves the memory of one's embodied existence. That is to say "One could exist, as it were, on sufferance as a form of person."²⁸ Hence it follows that there could not be any disembodied survival unless there is a corresponding embodied existence.

Let us now conceive of some situations in which a disembodied agent is supposed to be on the play. In this connection an imaginary situation as laid down by Frederick Waismann may be considered. Suppose, I say, 'My friend is over there'. What if on drawing closer in order to shake hands with him he suddenly disappeared? Therefore, it was not my friend but some delusion or other. But suppose a few seconds later I saw him again, could grasp his hands etc.. What then? Therefore, my friend was nevertheless there and his disappearance was some delusion or other. But imagine after a while he disappeared again or seemed to disappear. What shall I say now? Do we have rules ready for all such imaginable possibilities?²⁹ 'Mystery is natural and expected, but it cannot be complete mystery', says Penelhum.

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Let us take another example. Suppose, suddenly the light goes off in a room. It is found out that light is there everywhere around and the switches in the room are on. On enquiry it was further seen that the fuse was intact. Can we say in such a situation that it all happened due to the will of a disembodied being? Not so soon, although the switches being on and the fuse being intact which two are the necessary conditions for the light to glow in the room. But they are not sufficient conditions. What constitute the sufficient condition in this case are a host of other necessary conditions. It is very difficult to determine the sufficient condition for the glowing of the light. But it is not impossible to find out the same, according to the scientist. But if the scientist exhausts all the known necessary conditions the sum-total of which is sufficient for the glowing of the light and does not find fault anywhere should he or should he not grant that this is due to the will of a disembodied being? In all probability the scientist will not grant, because the condition under which a light glows are all detectable conditions. If, for the time being, the fault is not found out, then the fault lies with the search, not that it is due to the

will of a disembodied being.'

In this connection the view of Nicholas Rescher is worth considering. According to him, "It is in principle, impossible to design a language in which the descriptive mechanisms suffer, for the discourse about real things alone, without affording the means for introducing non-existents into discussion. The mechanism of reference to non-existents are an inherent linguistic feature".³⁰ But although conceptual system as a living institution, can cope up, with some variations, in the existing state of things it cannot withstand the widest and the wildest imaginable variations.

It has been supposed till now that knowledge involves action of some sort or other in which physical change as well as bodily movement of the agency of such change are involved. This supposition is liable to be challenged. There might be actions which do not necessarily involve bodily movement of the agent. Bagehat says that the crown enjoys atleast three rights viz. - (a) the right to be informed, (b) the right to be consulted and (3) the right to warn. With due respect to the statement we may say that the disembodied being might act by way of informing us and warning us whether we choose to consult such a

being or not. Suppose, for example, the disembodied being informs that in the beginning of the next year, there will be a very severe cyclone in my area and my house is likely to be affected. And suppose, again, that this happens to be the case. If such a prediction comes true now and again, perhaps we will not have any reason to deny any action to a disembodied being.

It will not be exact to say that the disembodied being predicts the cause of action, because prediction involves tenses like past, present and future and there is no temporal distinction for the disembodied being as there is no spatial distinction for him. Spatio-temporal distinctions are applicable to bodies and embodied beings. Hence there cannot be any prediction on the part of the disembodied being. The so-called predictions are so many facts for the disembodied being. As there is no distinction of 'here' and 'there' for the disembodied being, so also there is no distinction of 'now' and 'then' for it. The world freezes for him on several facts presented to him in perpetual 'there' and perpetual 'now'.

If all the informations provided by the disembodied being and all the warnings proved to be correct then what

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the scientist would do ? Surely, at the initial stage he will try to find out the causal chain of phenomenon under investigation. He will not leave any stone unturned (in terms of verifiable experience).

But the information and warnings of the disembodied being given to us, involves phenomena in so grand a scale that the scientist will find it hard and perhaps 'impossible' to find out the causal explanation. For example, the Ranigunj coal Mine accident of 1989 may be cited. Out of the miners trapped underground, some could be rescued with scientific acuity but not all.

The scientist never said that they have ceased to attempt to rescue the rest but in fact they could not do it. This shows the limitations of working explanation in not so grand a scale. When the whole world will be involved in explaining a given phenomenon, then it will be harder still for the scientist to find out the links of a causal chain.

All these go to show that action of basic type cannot be attributed to the disembodied agent, what to speak of the non-basic actions. The most important argument which strikes at the root of the existence of the disembodied being, comes from the notion of knowledge and action themselves. We have assumed previously that

it could be granted to some extent, that the disembodied being can have verbal behaviour. Verbal behaviour involves the use of certain physical organs like the vocal cords, larynx etc." Radhakrishnan says that the secrets of nature were whispered, as if, into the ears of the sages of yore. If there is whispering, there must be a whisperer and whispering involves use of language. The whisperer must have some mechanism to communicate by way of uttering words which involves physical organism. Hence it cannot be said that the statement of the sages imply the existence of a disembodied agent. By its very nature, the disembodied being cannot possess these. So if at all the disembodied being is to express anything verbally it must do so through some medium. This is a para-psychological phenomenon which has 'evidences' and problems connected with these. But one point must be noted here that knowledge cannot be attributed to anybody unless the claim to knowledge is linguistically expressed. Similarly, one cannot be said to imagine or will, unless this is evinced, partly atleast, in linguistic behaviour. If, as we have described the bunch of flower goes off on its own accord, then we would perhaps say that it is now an embodied existence, i.e., the bunch of flower is not spirited. Similarly, in the case of the light going out in my room, I would rather concede ignorance regarding the functioning of the circuits.

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And in the case of my friend popping out of existence or popping into existence, I would rather admit I am under a spell of illusion.

Can I not say that things are happening as per the will of supreme disembodied being (God or the like) when things are not happening as per human calculations or happenings are catching them unawares like the poll-verdicts of 1989 or Bhopal Gas tregedy of 1984 or the weather situation in 1990 in the Indian sub-continent ? The naturalist will be inclined to say that the gas lick in explainable naturally through cause-effect relationship and the explanations which the subsequent investigating committee gave, was quite in this line. That we did not know it before hand or that we did not try for it or that we tried but the machine deceived us, all these do not go to prove the existence of the disembodyed agency who willed the things to happen in the way things happened. More or less, same was the case of poll verdict and the weather situation. In order to guess the trend of voting, people conduct opinion poll, or exit poll, and base their calculations on this. Howsoever sincere and meticulous the process might be, opinion is collected at random, upon which there is guess work. It can never be equivalent to the final poll. The unexpected course of events does not go to prove the existence of any such agency.

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It might be said that the will of God, i.e., the supreme disembodied agency does not make direct changes in the set up of things in the world. God's will influences human wills, which in their turn, affect changes in the set up of things in the world. In the case of poll verdict, it might be said that God could not tolerate anymore, the spreading and swelling of adharma and willed for a change. His will influenced the will of human beings who began to appreciate that there is adharma done by some people and voted against them. In reply to this, it might be said, following Danto, that human will is regarded as basic action. When it is so regarded, to say that it is caused by something else revolts against sensibility.

It may further be contended in favour of the existence of God that for Him there is nothing like a happening, event or phenomenon because these are all temporal conceptions and God is beyond any temporal conception. For Him everything is a fact, everything that is happening or going to happen have already happened.³¹ God is in full knowledge of the facts and the human being, who is limited and is situated in time, has them revealed gradually within the limited compass of his vision. Whatever happens was to be. Everything is pre-determined. The world is an inter-connected system of facts. Nothing happens fortuitously or accidentally.

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Everything happens exactly and accurately as per His will.

As Leibnitz puts it, a monad comes with all the possibilities of its change ingrained within itself. As it is windowless, no inter-action with other monads is possible. Still then, there is change and development happening to the monad. Every such happening is nothing but the unfoldment of its own nature. Such a view is characterised as deterministic in the sense in which Spinoza's system is deterministic, i.e., freedom within a deterministic framework.

This contention sounds very much alluring. Its appeal is hard to resist. But the point is that the allurements of the appeal is only psychological and holds its ground because our psyche is so conditioned by our socio-cultural environment. The aforesaid contention carves out a particular point of view about the world as a whole and man's position in it. It is a theistic world view .. which seeks to regulate the way of life in thought, expression (Language), and behaviour (action)³². It is the way of surrender or Samarpan and efacement of one's own ego. But the logical point which we want to emphasise is that a metaphysical view of the world does not go to prove the existence of its objects, as Kant would say. The religious way of life, of course, shows that there is a theological being-God or anything. But to say that it exists, lands us in logical difficulties, to put the

matter in the terminology of Wittgenstein in his Tractatus .'

The discussion of the above matter shows that there might be a sense in which knowledge can be attributed to a disembodied being. When, however, agency is attributed to such a being, there is tremendous pressure in intelligibility because action involves movement of limbs and physical change is the state of things. The disembodied being to whom knowledge and action are sought to be attributed, is not of a kind as supreme as God is said to be. The disembodied being thus conceived of, are very much like the embodied persons minus their bodies.'

We may recall here that according to writers like Watson and Price a disembodied person can have knowledge through telepathy and according to the former he can have action through psycho-kinesis , i.e., he can wish things to happen. Although we can be persuaded to admit that it makes sense to talk about knowledge of disembodied beings, it would be very hard indeed to persuade us to admit that it makes sense to talk about action of such beings. If they act within the periphery of their world (the 'Next World' as visualised by Price) then perhaps we might give our admission, but then Price does not discuss about any action of disembodied being in

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the ' Next-World ', Still then from this there is an inclination to conceive of a disembodied being of unlimited character - knowing everything and doing everything.

Some thinkers have tried to set aside such a conception because it is unverifiable. But then the proponent might defend it as saying that it is indeed verifiable.³³ But we did not say this. We rather pointed out the logical difficulty involved in saying that ' God exists', This lands us on the border of senselessness. In the pages that follows, we shall try to find out other arguments that might be advanced for the existence of disembodied spirit. Generally, such an admission is said to be necessitated by such events as bodily transfer, reincarnation and resurrection. In the next chapter we shall have a logical investigation of these phenomena.

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~~CHAPTER~~

IV

CHAPTER - IV

BODILY TRANSFER, RE-INCARNATION AND RESURRECTION

Philosophical explanations differ from scientific explanations in comprehensiveness, consistency and cogency. Scientific explanations are based upon facts found by observation and experiment and are probable in nature. They cannot be guaranteed against corrigibility in a given occasion. Fresh findings might go to strengthen a generalisation, but generalisations always fall short of universal validity.

Philosophical explanations are neither supported nor refuted by facts. They explain the facts. Even what is a fact and what is not a fact, is to be decided by a philosophical view. They have universal validity and they are capable of explaining things which are otherwise unexplainable by the sciences. Philosophy, however, does not ordinarily explain away the facts which are otherwise accepted and honoured by people. The instances of bodily transfer, reincarnation and resurrection go to

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support this view. This idea of reincarnation is a powerful idea in the culture and religion of India. It is said that Lord Vishnu who is regarded as the sustainer of the universe, is reincarnated in one form or other when He feels that the physical nature has produced certain elements which stand on the way of its sustenance. Thus, there are 'reincarnations' or 'avataaras' of Vishnu in the forms of Matsya, Sukara Kurma, Narasimha, Vamana, Parsuram, Rama, Balarama, Buddha, Kalki . Lord Krishna who is regarded as an important incarnation was instrumental in uprooting 'adharma' which was spreading its wings in the then world. Srikrishna Himself, in the Geeta explained " to establish 'dharma' and to eradicate 'adharma' He would reincarnate now and again.

Not only Lord Vishnu, but everybody who has some yearnings unfulfilled in the present life is reincarnated to get it fulfilled. For example - Vedamati who yearned to get Hamachandra (one of the reincarnations of Vishnu as stated earlier) as her husband could not materialise in that birth as her body was desecrated by Ravana. She then destroyed her body by emulating herself and then being reincarnated as Sita eventually got the

hands of Rama, the reincarnation Vishnu. Similarly, Goddess Parvati was reincarnated repeatedly to get Shiva - as Uma, Durga, Minakshi and others which is described in Shiva Purana. Also the sixteen thousand rishies who were enamoured by the supreme beauty of Rama, so much so that they desired to get him as spouse. Ramachandra assured them with the boon that in the next birth he would be born as Srikrishna and they would be born as milkwomen of Gopapura, so that their desire would be fulfilled. The scriptures in India are abound with such ideas. Such ideas are, however, not confined to India only. They are there also in Greek mythologies.

There is another belief, which is peculiar to Christian theology, namely, the idea of resurrection. The belief runs that consequent upon the death of a person the soul leaves the bodily abode for Heaven where the final judgment takes place regarding the person's activities on the earth in the de-ceased body. As per the judgement, the soul have to return to the body of suffer or enjoy in the fresh lease of life. But when will it return, one does not know. The body is restored intact by the family members of the deceased person. When the dead body gets back the soul, that was once inhabiting in it, the person concerned

is said to be resurrected or the body of the person is said to be resurrected. We shall discuss elsewhere in a different sense of resurrection which is in conformity with the Christian theology.

There is another idea which is commonly prevalent in India as well as in the West, that is, the idea of bodily transfer. The story of cobbler and the prince is the famous instance of such bodily transfer. John Locke refers to it and Terence Penelhum retells the story in a fascinating way. In this story, the cobbler's soul enters the body of the prince and the soul of the prince into the cobbler's.² A small objection can be raised here, namely, how do the souls interchange their habitats? Does a soul leave its habitat first and then beckons the other to leave its own and then the change of habitat takes place? The answer is perhaps derived from the story itself. The story says that the change is discovered on a fine morning which implies that the event must have occurred during the previous night. It is said that during the deep sleeping condition of a person, the soul does not remain in the body. Hence the accident of change of bodily habitats,

does no more appear to be an unintelligible proposition. Whatever that might be, the story which we have in the Indian tradition is more neat in this respect. The soul of Shankaracharya leaves his own body with a deliberate mission, while the body remains in safe custody of his disciples, and enters into the body of the deceased king Amrukh. The king Amrukh appears to be resurrected. But, alas, after fulfilling the mission through the person of the king, the soul of Shankaracharya returns to his own habitat. The mission of Shankarāchārya was to know the facts about the conjugal life about which he was ignorant being a sanyāsin (mendicant).³

All the three ideas, namely, reincarnation, resurrection and bodily transfer involve the problem of personal identity. To this question, I shall return towards the end of this chapter. In the case of reincarnation, however, we know further that it has a definite purpose (to sustain the world and save it from the evil persons). In this sense, this is theologically bent, as it is in the case of Rama of Dwāpara and Srikrishna of Tretayā. But the sense in which Tully is said to have been reincarnated in Cicero (as goes the Greek story) is not theologically

bent at least explicitly.

In case of resurrection, the problem remains the same. However there will be a difference between the two. In case of reincarnation, there will be the self-same soul, but two different bodily forms at two different periods of time. But in case of resurrection the self-same soul will return to the self-same body after a lapse of unspecified time. A question may now be raised as to how are we to know in such cases that the soul which was inhabiting in the particular body, has returned to the same body? If it is assumed that no other soul than the one which was inhabiting this body, will alone return, then even this epistemological question cannot be avoided. What more evidence do we need, if the body is able to show its behaviour of the previous lease of life? The problem is what to say about the position and role of the soul in between the lives, death and resurrection.

Whereas in case of bodily transfer, the self-same soul is not assuming a different bodily-form, as it is in the case of reincarnation, nor the self-same soul is re-animating the self-same body as in resurrection.

Here, the soul of our body is occupying the body of another soul which has left the same. The case of bodily transfer comes a bit closer to the case of resurrection, but not exactly the same. Here, the soul of Sankara went into the king's body and behaved unlike the king. But in other case of bodily transfer, the cobbler behaved like the king and the prince behaved like the cobbler. As a result of which the crisis with regard to the personal identity arose both in the case of prince's palace and also at the cobbler's place. How can it be known whether the cobbler is actually the prince and the prince is actually the cobbler? In any case, we are drifted towards the problem of personal identity.

Penelhum is of the view that we have no standard of identity to use in respect of disembodied existence at all. The criteria of personal identity are bodily continuity and/or memory. By definition there is no body here and as such there is no question of bodily identity. Again, memory is not an independent standard of personal identity. As he puts it "..... the subtraction of the body leaves the notion of the genuine memory chronically incomplete".⁴ He puts it in

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a more strong language thus, " I can attach no sense to the notion " loose" or un-owned experience (or agentless action)".⁵ The notion of un-owned experinece is a self-contradictory one. Memory is essentially a para-psychic concept. It needs a body to feed on. However, there is a view advocated by the biologist Lyall Watson, thus;

" There seems to be absolutely no evidence to suggest that memories are stored in any special part of the brain or anywhere else in the body. He asserts that, personality grows from a biological base and feeds on individual experience. This experience is stored as memory and can be drawn on in dreaming and allow the personality full and independent expression. All mammals are capable of this kind of expression but none of them can we find with any physical trace of such memory bank. Therefore, there is no valid biological objection to the suggestion that personality in the form of an independent set of memories would survive beyond the point of clinical death." ⁶

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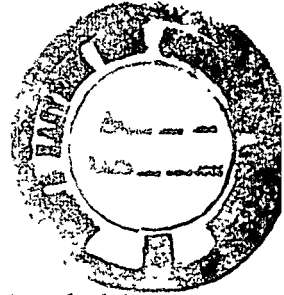
So even if one pressed for identity of the pre-mortem person with the post-mortem person on the basis of memory, an affirmative answer is quite intelligible on this contention.

There might be a different contention altogether in this connection to raise the issue of identity in respect of disembodied being, is to raise the issue of disembodied personal identity beyond its perspective.⁷ Identification and re-identification are issues which are raised in respect of empirical particulars in order to ensure whether a particular is uniquely referred to or not. Empirical particulars are plural in number. They are either things or persons or events of the world. But disembodied existence cannot strictly said to be either singular or plural. Disembodied existence, in other words, as a unit class is very much like non-existence, which is strictly speaking neither singular nor plural. It does not ordinarily make sense to say that there are non-existents: non-existence of that and non-existence of this, very much as their existent being. Similarly, we do not ordinarily say there are disembodied existences, though very much we say there are embodied existences. Disembodied existence is identical with

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itself. For example, we can say this patch of light is due to this lamp and that patch of light is due to that lamp. But when there is dark all-over, we cannot say that, this patch of darkness and that patch of darkness are from different sources.⁸

To extend the question of identification (and re-identification) from the sphere of the empirical and corporeal to the sphere of non-empirical and non-corporeal is to do harm against the idea.

But it might be objected now that because all the three occurrences, namely, reincarnation, resurrection and bodily transfer involve the idea of disembodied existence, the question of plurality of disembodied existence cannot be ruled out of court. Srikrishna is a reincarnation of Ramachandra, not of Dasaratha (somebody else might be the reincarnation of Dasaratha). So the question whether one is a reincarnation of one's counterpart or not will arise. The soul in between one bodily form and another has to maintain its uniqueness and identity. Otherwise the talk of reincarnation will not be significant. The same problem will be there in case of resurrection and bodily transfer too.

The idea of reincarnation can be made intelligible without the supposition of a disembodied existence in between two embodied persons (Avatāras). In the Indian

tradition , Parsurām and Ramā are two avatāric persons at a particular time. On one occasion Rama touched the bow of Parsuram and at once Parsuram became powerless . From this it transpires that reincarnation is conceived as investment of power. Being embodied is being empowered.

It is true that as per the requirements of re-incarnation and resurrection, uniqueness of soul must be maintained. But identification and reidentification cannot, in principle, arise in respect to this. The simple reason is that identification and reidentification are done, it may be reiterated, with respect to empirical particulars. Hence the question of identification and reidentification will arise only when souls are embodied. When a soul is embodied, the soul with body comes to be known as a person. It is the person who is, therefore, placed for identification and reidentification. Whether that is done on this basis (of body) alone or on the basis of memory alone or on the basis of both, is a matter for debate. But the point remains that the question of identification and reidentification cannot arise in case of the disembodied being. Even then it does not imply that disembodied form of existence is ruled out.

We hinted that there is a different sense of resurrection in the Christian Theology. Before concluding

this chapter, we propose to have a deep discussion of this.

John Hick raises the question as to what does the resurrection of the dead, mean ? The answer provided by St. Paul in the Christian theological framework has nothing to do with resuscitation of corpses in the symmetry (distinction is mentioned between general resurrection and unique resurrection of Jesus). It concerns the recreation or re-constitution on the part of the God on the human psycho-physical individual. This individual is not the organism which has died, it is some-pneumatikon, a " spiritual body" which inhabits a spiritual world very much as the physical body inhabits our present physical world.

Hick finds that such a doctrine is faced with big problem concerning the criteria of personal identity and tries to provide a model which may facilitate our conception of the Divine recreation of the human personality. First of all he supposes the one John Smith who lives in U.S.A. who suddenly and inexplicably disappears from before the eyes of his friends and at that very moment an exact replica of John Smith inexplicably appears in India. The person who appeared in India and the person who disappeared in U.S.A. happened to be same in both mental characteristics." There is continuity

of memory, complete similarity of bodily features including finger tips, eye-coloration, and stomach; contains and also of belief, habits, emotions, and mental dispositions".⁹ To add to this the John Smith replica that appeared in India thinks of himself as being the John Smith who disappeared in America .

In the above statements of Hick one point appears to be objectionable . He says that John Smith appeared in India the same moment he disappeared in U.S.A. . If this implies that there is no time lag between the disappearance at one place and appearance at a distant place, then this revolts against the principle of intelligibility.

In the second place John Hick supposes that John Smith dies in U.S.A.. His corpse is in our hands at the same moment as his replica appears in India complete in memories and all other Characteristics.' This conception revolts more against the principle of intelligibility. Apart from the use of the words 'these same moment' it is said that memories and all other characteristics of the individuals are the same. It is supposed in some science like Criminology that the finger prints and the constitution of hair of any two individuals are never the same . Conceding that this is not the necessary truth and that finger prints and

constitution of hair can be duplicated, it is not still intelligible how the memories of the two individuals situated at different spatio-temporal positions can be similar. The memories of an individual are dependent on his experiences and one's memory is unique to oneself. This does not mean that memory or experience is private although in a sense they are, and does not preclude their corroboration in the accredited method to establish their objective.

In the third place, Hick supposes that John Smith dies in U.S.A. and his replica appears as a resurrection replica in a resurrection world inhabited by resurrected persons only. This is not the world in which we live, but it is 'another world' as Price would call it. Hick does not expound on the nature of this world, except saying that the objects of the resurrection world are specially related to each other, but not to the objects of this world. He, however, feels sure that in his model "the element of the strange and the mysterious has been reduced to the minimum by following the view of some of the early Church Father that the re-surrection body has the same shape as physical body....".¹⁰

The more serious objection to the belief in the disembodied survival in general and to the alleged possibilities of bodily transfer, resurrection and reincarnation in particular comes from contemporary writings on the criteria are relied upon in making personal identity judgments. They are ;(1) bodily continuity and (2) psychological continuity, i.e., memory, character and personality etc.. We say of the latter that he is the same person as the earlier person, if he has the same body and/or he has the same psychological features such as memory, character and personality. Under all normal circumstances this is enough, but the problem arises in some abnormal cases, like bodily transfer, resurrection, and reincarnation. For, in these cases, there is no body to be judged as identical. On the contrary, we have evidence of dis-continuity in such cases. So the only ground on which these cases could be described as cases of personal identity, is the psychological ground. Of the psychological grounds, character and personality will not be of much help, for even in normal cases the same character and personality is displayed with excellent accuracy in more than one person. So the possibility of reduplication can never be ruled out. Memory, however, seems to be the only recourse. In

the absence of bodily continuity, the resurrected and the reincarnated persons can be said to be the same as their pre-mortem counterparts only on the ground that they remember things that have happened to the latter. But here again, the crucial question: how are we to determine that these memories are real memories and not mere memory claims, because mere memory claims also cannot avoid the possibility of reduplication? This will, therefore, take us to the larger area of how to distinguish between 'real' memories and 'apparent' memories. This distinction has to be made in principle. And this calls for the question of verifying and establishing a putative memory as real. It has been argued by several contemporary writers that memory is a causal notion and that, in order for a putative memory to be real memory, the causal chain must run through the body.¹¹ Only then the memory linkage can avoid the possibility of reduplication, 'Some body' which carries with it the fact of spatio-temporal continuity, implies continuity in one spatio-temporal path, and thus guarantees parentage to real memory which is non-duplicable. It is, indeed, in this sense that the philosophers have taken memory as presupposing personal identity.

If what ~~has~~ been said in the foregoing paragraphs is correct, then it follows that memory, in order to be a criterion of personal identity at all, depends upon the bodily continuity criterion and is thus a secondary criterion of personal identity.¹² In the alleged cases of bodily transfer, resurrection and reincarnation - where there is no continuity of bodies - the memory criterion is utterly inapplicable and hence any claim to personal identity in such cases is utterly unjustified. As a matter of fact, because of the above reason, the very concept of disembodied persons can be seen to be a degenerate concept, having only a secondary sense.¹³ The idea of disembodied existence of persons makes sense only because existence of persons has its primary sense in case of embodied persons and not viceversa . It makes sense much the same way in which ' my doll is in pain' said by a little girl, makes sense only because the word ' pain' makes sense in its ordinary human context.¹⁴

Thus the attempt to project such concepts which have only a secondary sense as meaningful in themselves is merely an attempt at logical futility. Therefore, the ideas of bodily transfer, resurrection and reincarnation are parasitic upon the embodied

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concept of a person and personal identity ; in
themselves they have no claim to intelligibility,
contends Dr.' Mohapatra. But such contentions of
philosophers like Dr.' Mohapatra who lay emphasis
on the body and bodily characteristics as the
primary reference of language need be evaluated
in the light of the comments made earlier in
this chapter upon Strawson's principle of individuation.'

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2. John Locke, (Ref. Penelhum, Survival and the Disembodied Existence).
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12. Dr. P.K. Mohapatra, Personal Identity, Ch. IV, Sec. 3 & 4, especially pages 227, 229, 250, 251, for a stronger argument to this effect.
____ See also his Concepts and Problems, Cuttack, Santosh Publications, Chapters-V & VI.
13. See P.K.Mohapatra, op. cit., P.250, 251
14. L. Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations, Sec. 252.

CHAPTER

V

CHAPTER - V

IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL

We have discussed that the properties of the soul are diametrically opposite to the properties of the body. If the body is described in the spatial terms; then the soul is denied of such terms. If the body is possessed of such properties of beginning, growth and end, that is to say, the body is being called as contingent and subject to decay and death, the soul is eternal, not subject to decay and death.

Gilbert Ryle takes Descartes into task for describing mind (mind is identical with soul in Descartes' philosophy) in the pattern of physical description. This Cartesian approach is described by Ryle as the 'Para-mechanical' hypothesis. For describing the nature of mind Descartes employs predicates which are negations of those that are properly applied to the body. This is to commit a category mistake, as Ryle puts it.

This view of Ryle has an enchanting appeal, but if we view it a bit closely then we will find that it is not all too correct. If we say that the table is near the chair or not near the chair; that it is five feet long or not five feet long; that it is heavy or not heavy; that it is broken or not broken, then I am attributing spatial characters or for that matter bodily predicates,

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to table. In such cases, particular bodies are sought to be described and such descriptions are given in specified bodily predicates. But when it is a question of a body as such, then "the workings of minds had to be described by the mere negatives of the specific description given to bodies, they are not in space, they are not motions, they are not modifications of matter, they are not accessible to public observation.' Minds are not bits of clock work, they are just bits of not-clock work".² This is not doing justice to Descartes.' Where Descartes says that mind is not extended, he means to say that all physical predicates are denied application to mind. He not only does say that mind is non-extended, but he also says that body is non-thinking. In other words, he means to say that mind is not body and body is not mind.' One can do no better than to say things in the manner in which Descartes says.

We would, therefore, not find it logically odd to say that the soul is non-mortal or immortal. That the soul is immortal is a belief which goes together with the belief that there is resurrection and reincarnation. Resurrection is a belief which is maintained by Christianity and reincarnation is a belief which is maintained by Upanisads and the Gita.' There are opposite points of view which do not believe in the immortality of soul, e.g., Cārvāka ethics and Horatian ethics. Prof.' A.E. Taylor advances the following

two arguments to establish the immortality of soul. C.D. Broad terms these two arguments as ethical arguments and empirical arguments. The ethical argument takes the form of the argument from duty. According to this argument, certain acts will be regarded as duty only if the human race is supposed to survive death. If it is supposed to die eventually, then those acts will not be regarded as duty. Similarly, certain other acts will be regarded as universal only if we are supposed to be immortal. So they will be regarded as otherwise if we are supposed to be mortal.

In the Cārvāka or Horatian ethics the only reasonable course of action is to enjoy the passing hours thus: eat, drink and be merry so long as you live, because you won't regain the body once it is burnt into ashes. But this is not an acceptable position.

In the language of C.D. Broad, if a man wishes to provide himself with sources of pleasure that will ensure a quiet but strong happiness over the greater part of his life rather than a few spasms of enjoyment in the earlier part of it followed by years of boredom, he will be most unwise to adopt the "fleeting hours" plan, even if he believes himself to be mortal.³

The example of the Greek race is given. The Greeks flowered and decayed but left certain foot-prints on the bed of time which provided inspiration for the subsequent race to follow. Those foot-prints were in the fields of artistic, literary and scientific productions. The point is that, the human beings in different ages strive to pursue certain values which survive the ravages of time. According to Prof. Taylor, if all the values which the human races have created, die with it and are not continued by other races, the world is very evil or at least not very good as Broad would put it in more liberal terms.⁴ If the human race will one day come to an end, it will be a tragic affair, but this tragedy will hardly make any difference to my duty here and now, because this is not a question of my continuing to be or ceasing to be. It is a question of the human race continuing to be. Hence Broad does not agree with Taylor's view that human beings survive death, whether they do or do not survive death, it is rational on the part of human beings to pursue these values which are favourable to the sustenance of the human race.

Taylor's ethical argument takes a different form too. The world will be very evil unless men are immortal. We find that sometimes men die quite prematurely before the potentialities come to the full bloom. If they are

not regarded as surviving death, then it will be quite unjust. This argument does not appear to have any strength because almost all the cases of death can be regarded as premature. So either all men will be regarded to survive death or none will be. There are other implications of the ethical argument which Broad examines in detail and we do not want to repeat them here. Before proceeding to the other argument, that is, the empirical argument, we must note that the ethical argument does not logically establish that human race must be immortal.

We have said earlier that there are sometimes certain happenings around us which, we think, are not amenable to ordinary explanation as per the principles provided by the physical sciences, i.e., a physical happening must be caused by some antecedent physical happening and there cannot be any action at a distance, etc. . In such cases one is inclined to postulate some non-physical agency, spiritual or diabolic, acting at a distance or simply wishing things to happen. If the bishop slips down on the road while walking to or returning from the Church, then ordinarily we are inclined to say that his slipping is due to a diabolic agent even if it is found that the bishop's feet slipped off the road because of some banana peel, the explanation will

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not alter. It may either be said that some other person , before the bishop, set his feet on the banana peel and did not fall or that the diabolic agent caused the banana peel to be there for the bishop to fall because of some laps or other, in or outside the Church. This is only an instance in which explanation in terms of a diabolic agent is pursued, might be because of widespread ignorance of scientific explanation of events or too much of belief in religious practices like the bishop . The point is that even if a man is armoured with all the facts and principles of explanation, one is sometimes helpless in providing a factual and scientific explanation of some given phenomenon, some of which we have listed in the introduction.

C.D. Broad is very critical of such procedure, taking human survival as a hypothesis. He asserts that other hypotheses in terms of state of things of the world appear to have a better standing. According to Broad two points must be considered here :- (1) The intrinsic probability: if 'p' and 'q' are two propositions, independent of each other, then the conjunction of 'p' and 'q' is less probable than 'p'. In the previous example, let 'there was a banana peel on the road ' be the proposition 'p' and 'the diabolic agent gave a push' be the proposition 'q' . Broad would say that the hypothesis that the bishop slipped is due to the banana peel on the road is

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more probable than that there was banana peel on the road and the diabolic agent gave a push . The second proposition appears to be infructuous or a less probable hypothesis . (21) The second point is that a given proposition must fit in well with respect to all known facts other than the one which it is going to explain. Here the proposition that there is banana peel on the road fits in with the facts known about surfaces on the road, smoothness of the road , momentum of the body etc., whereas the other proposition that the diabolic agent gave a push, does not fit in with any such known fact.

But the proponent of the diabolic hypothesis may not be satisfied with what Broad says. What Broad says boils down to the point that whatever does not conform to scientific facts is not science. Broad assigns two motives to the devil theory. In the first place there is a desire to frighten one's congregation away from engaging in practices which might do harm rather than good .

In the second place, this is the motive which the members, especially the officials of all close corporations have , towards the non-members who claim to perform the same functions of closing (dead body in the coffin). This is like doctor's telling that a particular patient has died under quacks."

C.D. Broad's overall conclusion is that "at the level of ordinary experience there is not the faintest trace of evidence for survival, though there is a pretty general belief in it."⁶ The causes of such belief are very many; psychological and the like. But they are never regarded as reasons for belief. But then, Broad is of the view that "the absence of evidence for the belief cannot be taken as strong evidence against it, in the view of what we know about means by which embodied human spirits have to communicate with each other."⁷

In modern philosophy, the body and soul were assigned distinct status. They exist independent of each other. Hence there arose insurmountable problems regarding their mutual relationship. In early Greek philosophy the problem of mutual interaction of mind and body was prominent by its absence. According to Aristotle, the relation between body and soul is very much like the relation between matter and form. There cannot be any formless matter or matterless form. Form and matter are distinguishable in thought but inseparable in fact.⁸ Accordingly there cannot be a bodyless soul or a soulless body. There is always a souled-body or a bodied-soul, if we can say in this way. Both soul and body are in the same locus, i.e., a human being or a man.

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When we compare the views of Aristotle and Descartes, we, of course, find a difference in their idioms of presentation. If we want not to do any injustice to Descartes, then we may perhaps begin to see that Descartes did not say that body and soul could, in fact, be separated. It was rather a wonder for him that substances of antithetical nature, like body having extension but no thought and soul having thought but no extension, could be lodged together to constitute a human being or man.

It may be mentioned that although Descartes does not say that mind and body can, in fact, be separated, they are separable in principle. They are separable in so far as the soul does not exist by itself, but also it is conceived through itself. According to Aristotle, however, the soul neither exists by itself nor is conceived through itself.

In Indian Philosophy in general and in Upanisadic tradition in particular, mind is formed in and out of Ātman. It is understood more from within than from without. Except the school of Cārvākas who view the mind as a modification of matter, all other schools regard it as a distinct reality. The study about the existence and nature of human mind is discussed under Indian psychology. Psychology and philosophy did not

have distinct boundaries untill recently and hence the conceptual problems relating to mind are regarded by the scholars as psychological. But no factual issues are discussed and no factual informations and generalisations are provided by them. Although in Descartes mind and soul are identical, in Indian philosophy ātman (self) and manas (mind) are not. The term Purusa is generally translated as ' Person ' but in the literature, the term ' Purusa ' is used to refer to the Brahman residing in the innermost heart .⁹

The senses and objects are the results of the externalising of ātman . Ātman is associated with prāna (life principle), manas (mind) and vāk (speech). Prāna is of five kinds - Prāna, Vyāna, apāna, udāna and samāna. These are the sources of activities of body, both voluntary and involuntary.

The individual person is constituted out of the five sheaths (kosa) . Each succeeding sheath is regarded as his body. The five sheaths are - the sheath of matter (annamaya kosa), the sheath of life (prānamaya kosa), the sheath of conscious activities (manomaya kosa), the sheath of intelligence (viññānamaya kosa), and finally the sheath of bliss (ānandamaya Kosa) . For the individual persons, the sheath of matter is his physical body; the sheath of life consist of the five organs of action and the five prānas; the sheath of conscious activities consists

of mind and the five organs of sense ; the sheath of intelligence consists of intelligence and again the five sense organs ; and the sheath of bliss consist of individual nescience dissociated from bodily and mental functions and where the distinction of subject and object is no more there.

There are four states of atman - waking, dream, deep sleep and dreamless sleep. There are three kinds of bodies - the gross body (sthula sarira), the subtle body (sukama sarira) and the causal body (kāraṇa sarira). The first one determines the individual's waking consciousness; the second one determines the dream consciousness ; and the third one determines the deep sleep consciousness . Besides these, Advaita Vedanta speaks of a sākṣi sarira witness - self. The soul, as identified with the subtle body, is the agent and enjoyer of actions. The witness - self does not enjoy. It only looks on . It is pure consciousness (cetanā) .¹⁰

Mind is not completely opposed to matter. It is not regarded as purely spiritual. The distinction between the subjective and the objective is not a distinction between within and without. It is a distinction within (mind). During dream and deep sleep, manas leaves the physical body which is in charge of prāṇa and enters

the hita-nādi that branches out from the heart. During dream, the subtle body is active. The mind is never without a body. When it leaves the gross body, it remains with the subtle body. The body of deep sleep is the causal body. The antah karana is absent in this body. But the subtle body remains in this body in potential form. It is maintained that when the soul leaves the body in order to enter another, it moves as it were, in the casket of subtle body.

Prof. G.C. Nayak is led to suppose that the survival hypothesis makes sense because of its long standing influence on human society and culture. He seeks to find out if there exists any trend of thought in the whole history of such a belief that makes it meaningful. He finds such a trend in Sāṅkhya Kārikā of Iṣvara Kṛṣṇa. In the 40th sloka of the Kārikā it is said, "the subtle body formed primevally, unconfinedly lasting, composed of will and the rest, down to rudimentary, elementary migrates, is devoid of experience and is invested with dispositions"¹¹. This subtle body is postulated by Sāṅkhya philosophers over and above the physical body or satkaṣika sarira as Vāc aspati puts it. This has to be postulated because the will, etc. cannot subsist supportless without specific bodies as Kārikā

puts it . It seems to make perfectly good sense to Prof. Nayak to talk of a sukṣma sarira surviving the destruction of a physical organism which it resembles more or less and with which it is continuous .¹²

Watson's view is worth citing here " on the third level is the ' astral body' - a little more than vehicle of the mind".¹³ The idea of non-standard body projected by Harrison is more or less like this.¹⁴ The conception of sukṣma sarira as advanced by the Sankhya Philosophers lacks specifications as to its shape, size etc.. But this does not lead to the ultimate breakdown of the conception. " Further specification ", Prof. Nayak thinks, " about the exact shape and size of the sukṣma sarira are both unwarranted and unnecessary ".¹⁵ The assumption of sukṣma sarira only drives home the point that bodily continuity must be there in some form or other not exactly in the gross physical form, in order that a talk of survival may be intelligible.

Strictly speaking, the concept of sukṣma sarira is a via media between the gross physical body and the soul which is non-physical. Sukṣma sarira is neither gross nor subtle. It is postulated to be both . The conception of physical body applies to the concrete and is, therefore,

intelligible. But the conception of the soul refers to the abstract and is not, therefore, easily intelligible. To make it easily intelligible the philosopher creates an artifice in the form of suksma sarira. It alleviates one's resistance to understanding the conception of a pure substance.

Prof. P.K. Mohapatra is of the view that a dogmatic adherence to the psychological criterion of personal identity gives rise to the belief in disembodied existence and reincarnation etc.¹⁶ There are writers like Peter Geach, who reject the ideas of subtle body outright as being 'wholly devoid of philosophical interest', because the supposition of the subtle body does not change the character of the mind-body problem. According to him 'there could clearly be no philosophical reason for belief in such subtle bodies but only in physical one; and further, the view is open to no philosophical objection'.¹⁷ This gives an impression that Geach does not make very clear the conceptions of the subtle body, in spite of the fact that it was popular in England in sixties as Geach claims.

The problem of personal identity might be connected with the problem of disembodied existence, but they are not necessarily connected as we have shown earlier.

Prof. Mohapatra endorses the view of Strawson and others, that the idea of disembodied existence can be understood in the derivative sense. If we look at the statement a bit closely, I think there is no reason to dispute this. For one thing when we have used the epithet 'disembodied existence' meaningfully, we are presupposing the meaningful use of embodied existence. Had we used the epithet 'non-bodied existence' as we have suggested earlier, such consideration would hardly arise. For another thing the vocabulary of philosophy develops out of the vocabulary in ordinary employment- such as 'substance', 'object' etc.. The meaning of these terms when used in philosophical deliberation, are constructed out of the meaning assigned to them in their ordinary employment. Hence it is natural that they have a secondary and technical use in philosophical literature.

As Nicholas Rescher puts it , " unrealised possibilities..
..... and so, can be said to " exist" only in a secondary
and dependant sense, as actual and potential object of
thought".¹⁸

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3. "Yavat Jīvet Sukham Jīvet, Nam kṛtya Chrtam Pīvet, Bhasmibhutasya Dehasya Punaragamanam Kutah?"
4. C.D.Broad, Mind and its Place in Nature, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1975, P. 493.
5. Op. cit., P. 495.
6. C.D.Broad, Op. cit., P. 525.
7. Ibid.
8. S.S. Barlingay, "Distinguishables and Separables."
9. Bṛhadaranyaka Upaniṣad.
10. These conceptions are now *sought* to be ratified by the findings of biology and psychology. See, for example, Lyall Watson's The Romeo Error.
11. Prof. G.C.Nayak, Essays in Analytical Philosophy, Santosh Publications, Cuttack, P. 44-54
12. Op. cit., P. 161.
13. Lyall Watson, The Romeo Error, P. 166.
14. J.Harrison, "The Embodiment of Mind or What use Is Having a Body", Proceedings of Aristotelian Society, New Series, Vol. LXXIV-1973 & 74, P. 43.
15. Prof. Nayak, op. cit., P. 162, 163.
16. A.J.Ayer, "Concept of a Person" in The Concept of a Person & Others Essays, P. 56.
17. P. Geach, God and the Soul, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1969, P. 17.
18. N.Rescher, "The Ontology of the Possible" in The Possible and the Actual, P. 179.

CHAPTER

VI

CHAPTER - VI

GOD AS DISEMBODIED BEING

In the introduction we have tried to project God as an instance of disembodied being. We said that a Supreme Soul that God is believed to be, is reasonably regarded as a disembodied being. At the very outset an objection might be raised. It might be said that God is never a subject of rational argument. His existence and non-existence is always a matter of faith and attitude. If you will, then something is a sanctum rostrum, if you do not, then it is a raised platform - goes the popular saying. But the question of disembodied existence discussed so far, is a discursive one and philosophers have been trying their very best to provide arguments for and against. Hence in this respect, the objection continues, one should not bring the discussion regarding God to bear upon the logic of disembodied existence.

It is Karl Barth who is of the view that "Belief cannot argue with un-belief; it can only preach to it".¹ According to Antony Flew, such a view is inimical to the

human civilisation itself. He says that to concede to such a claim " would be to despire to not only of reason but of human solidarity".² This would give rise to a sort of religious racism, Flew asserts. Moreover, this would give rise to " a cold war of the mind, in which there can be no room for genuine and fruitful dialogue between the enlightened and the un-enlightened".³

Flew is of the view that faith is sometimes regarded as a substitute for knowledge. . But then the question about the need, scope and direction of faith properly arise only when the evidence which is an indispensable dimention of knowledge is exhausted. It cannot be denied that there are a variety of conceptions of God prevalent among the various sects and sections of human beings. The belief in the existence of God is diverse even among a particular sect, say, the Christians. The God in which Spinoza believes, is not the same God as Einstein believes in . But this is no serious hindrance to eke out a conception of God that would be basal to the variously varied beliefs in God, prevalent among the different sections of human society. In the Coherance of Theism, Richard Swinburne has tried to give a reasonably agreeable definition of God and show whether

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such a definition could be coherent or not. By God is commonly understood as " something like 'person' without a body (i.e., a spirit) who is eternal, free, able to do anything, knows everything, is perfectly good, is the proper object of human worship and obedience, the creator and sustainer of the universe".⁴

We are not undertaking the task of examining the arguments provided in support of the belief or disbelief in the existence of God, nor are we trying to provide fresh proofs for the same. We want to emphasise that the God is commonly believed to exist implies that God is a disembodied spirit. By a 'spirit' Swinburne understands a person without a body, a non-embodied person. He uses the word 'non-embodied' in the sense of 'non-bodied' as we have used it earlier. Sometimes God is considered as being incarnated on the earth assuming bodily forms. But such doctrines are not agreed upon by all religious sects and, therefore, philosophers like Swinburne exclude this doctrine from the body of core beliefs regarding God. Again, there are thinkers according to whom the whole of manifested nature is what God is. It is Spinoza who believed in the equipollence of God and nature. Accordingly, everything that we see around us is regarded as the body of the God. But such a conception

of God is regarded as an excuse for the belief in God. It is significant to note that Spinoza was extradited from the Synagogue.

Harrison asserts that God must be a disembodied person. He is the paradigm of disembodiment indeed, but it would not be proper to call God a 'person'. It is not improper however, and it is in accordance with the usage in literature to regard Him as 'personal'. 'People are what we meet' as Flew puts it. God what we do not meet. Elsewhere, Flew says :

" crucial ones", in the Theologians' definition of God " are all essentially personal: not only is God required to be in general personal; but he is also, in particular, to have a will and as maker and preserver to be an agent".⁵

Harrison makes a distinction between having a body and being embodied. He asserts that God of the Christians, the Jews, and the Muslims are embodied. He obviously presupposes that the God of these religions is personal. They do not have bodies, because it is not necessary for them to appear in the bodily form. But when the need arises, when people are detracted from their aims and objectives, God feels it necessary to appear in the bodily form to

save the humanity, to set it on the right path. This has been implecation that without a body, i.e., in the non-bodied state, God has full knowledge of every thing. But in order to speak, remind, chastise His subjects, He has to assume a physical body. It may be mentioned here that lord Krishna pronounced that it is precisely His task down the ages.

In the Hindu philosophical tradition, the Bhagavat Gita says that the Supreme Brahman is the Creator, sustainer and destroyer of the world of beings. It is said that He is without a beginning and an end. He is neither existent nor non-existent. His eyes, hands, ears and face are on all sides. He dwells in the world enveloping everything in it. He is within and without of everything. He is seated in hearts of all.^c This conception of God does not exactly come under Panentheism but it appears to be like that. The Gita says that the world is affected by Him, but is not affected by the world. He is undivided and seems divided among beings.

The Gita conception of God appears to be quite interesting in so far as it tallies with the conception of God of some analytical philosophy. God can be regarded, Harrison says, as standing in relation to the universe

which is somewhat like the relation in which people stand to their bodies. It is odd to say that God feels pain, hence certain things happen to the universe and to say that God's thoughts and feelings were determined by the events of the universe. But Harrison emphatically suggests that there is no oddity in supposing that God perceives everything that are there in the universe. It is quite intelligible to speak of Him as being present everywhere in the universe. It is also intelligible to say that He can affect any change in the Universe. People have access to beings only at the place in which they are positioned. But as God is said to be everywhere, to say that He can have access from any place of position, is not without intelligibility. One who has anything to pray for, can do so from any location whatsoever.

We have stated above that God is regarded as personal. We invoke Him and submit to Him all our difficulties and needs. He listens to our prayers, stands for us in our support at the time of our distress and disaster. He is conceived as an Omnipresent Spirit, Omnipotent, Omniscient too, Eternal, and Immutable, Free-acting, Creator of the universe, a Necessary Being, Holy and worthy of worship. The host of expressions that we have used in the above sentence pose difficulties of meaning. There have been, in the history of philosophy, different views

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regarding the meaningfulness of these ascriptions. One of the classical statements, that is favoured by analytic philosophers like Swinburne, is by Thomas Aquinas. Aquinas brings a distinction between the res significata and modus significandi of expressions that we pick up from their ordinary employment and attribute them to God. Let us take the example of 'know' to explain what Aquinas means. When God is said to know things the res significata of 'know' remains the same, whereas its modus significandi becomes different from the modus significandi of 'knowledge' when knowledge is attributed to man or animals. God's knowledge that p, like human knowledge, entails belief that p, and p and various other things, but it differs from human knowledge in various ways.⁷ All things are before God's eyes. He does not suffer from the limitations of human beings and other animals who have a limited field of vision. They have the limitation of 'here' and 'there' and 'beyond' 'front side', 'back side', and 'right side', 'left side', 'above' and 'below' etc.. These limitations are due to the capacity of organs and position of bodies. God being non-bodied is free from all these spatio-temporal limitations. He, therefore, does not need to make (possibly) fallible inference from the observed to the unobserved in order to gain

knowledge.' Further, He so completely¹ sees things that He cannot err in His claims to knowledge in what He sees.' Hence divine claims to knowledge are not subject to error as human claims to knowledge are.' There are other differences too. To say of man that he knows that p__, does not imply that he is currently thinking about p__. Divine knowledge, however, is ever before a divine mind.⁸

There arises an incompatibility between God's omniscience and human free will.' If God is omniscient then, He knows ahead all future human actions.' If God knows ahead anything, then that will necessarily come to pass.' But if a human action necessarily comes to pass, because it constitutes the fore-knowledge of God, then the said action cannot be free. One of the solutions is that human action is not free. Another solution might be that human actions are free even if they come to pass by necessity. To see the human actions as free and as being within the ken of divine knowledge are two different points of view.'

What does it mean to say that God is non-bodied ? To answer this question, we have to answer the question what does a person say when he says that a particular body is his body. Harrison is of the view that there

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are at least five things which I say when I say that this body is my body. (1) Disturbances in this body cause me pains, aches, tingles, etc., but disturbances in the chair or T.V. over there, are not felt by me. (2) I feel the inside of this body, I feel the emptiness of this stomach, the suffocations of this bronchus and the position of these limbs. (3) I can directly move different parts of this body, but I am able to move parts of some other body only by moving parts of this body. In order to twist the arm kept on the table over there, I have to move this arm and grasp that, whereas I am able to move this arm straight away. (It may be recalled that this is what is called the basic action of an agent according to Danto). Ofcourse, some other things have to happen so that I may move any arm, such as nervous impulses have to be propagated and muscles have to be contracted . But these things happen on their own, I do not make them happen consciously or intentionally. (4) I look out on the world from within the position of this body. It is things around this body which I am able to see properly, but not so properly when things are further away from this body. I learn about the position of other bodies by their effects on this body . (5) My thoughts and feelings are affected by the processes taking place in this body.

A person can be said to have a body if there exists some material object to which he is related in all of the above five ways. If he is not related to any material object in any of these five ways, then the person cannot be said to have a body. A person can be said to be embodied to 'some degree' if he is related to different material objects in each of these ways or is related to a material object in only some of these ways."

God is not supposed to be embodied in either the first or the fifth way. The reason is that, there is no material object such that the disturbances which take place in this, cause pains in God. There is no material object either whose state affects the manner in which God thinks about the world. God is rather supposed to be able to move any part of the universe directly. He does not require one part of the universe to move the other part of the universe. He can make any part move as, what Danto calls, 'basic actions'. This capacity of God is otherwise known as omnipresence which is described succinctly by Aquinas thus, "God is everywhere in substance, power, and presence".⁹

According to Swinburne, it seems logically possible that there is such a being and he asserts that any one can conceive of himself as an omnipotent spirit.¹⁰

God is postulated as the creator of the universe. Creating the universe out of nothing, could be regarded as the basic action of God. Human beings do not have the power to bring into existence matter and energy, but we understand perfectly well what it is like for them to create these things. As Swinburne puts it, if by choice I could produce a sixth finger or a new fountain pen (not out of preexisting matter), I would be regarded as having the power to bring matter and existence. Others could see that I have such power by asking me to perform these acts. It, therefore, appears coherent that an omnipresent spirit could exercise power for more extensive than this.

In this connection, we must observe the differences that exist between divine and human agency. There is a difference, for example, in bringing about something by a person and that by God. Permitting or allowing is a species of bring about. An example of God permitting something to bring about other things, might be His permitting one man to kill another man. It may be held that such things happen only because God has permitted such things to happen, but human beings sometimes may be regarded as allowing things to happen in such way. For example, I may allow the rain to make my scooter

wet, because I can't be bothered to put the machine under the roof. But there is a difference in the form of permission. I can properly be said to have permitted my scooter to get wet, if only I could have stopped it from getting wet and I would have been able to stop it from getting wet only if I could have put it under the roof. For this I need natural laws to operate, otherwise my pushing the scooter, kicking the starter, or releasing the clutch would not help and hence natural laws independent of human beings must operate for them to permit things to happen. This is the plight for the human beings. God is not dependent in this way on the operation of natural laws independent of Himself. Nothing independent of Himself need operate, for His permission to be translated into action. Things happen only because He allows them to happen. Some of the action ascribed to God are basic actions, others are mediated actions - actions which an agent does by first doing something else. The laws of nature then operate can be regarded as the basic action of God. God just brings it about that the material objects of the universe bear the properties that they do and behave in the way that they do without doing something else, rather He brings about further things by making the laws of nature operate. In this

way. He may cause a famine in Ethiopia or flood in Bangladesh. There is further difference between divine action and human action. A man can just act, but God cannot just act. God must act for a purpose and see that his action is regarded as a good thing. It is significant here to note that Plato characterises God as the 'Highest Good' which is expressed in the epigram as 'God is Good'. God cannot act in the way that would not be good or that He believes to be evil. This is a logical constraint on divine action. There cannot be any constraint on the divine action except the logical constraint. But this is no constraint worth the name because nothing can count as divine action unless the divine being sees the doing of it as a good thing.

Previously we have discussed that God is omniscient and we just discussed that a divine being is a free agent. There arises a clash between the two ideas. It is contended that God cannot be both omniscient and perfectly free because He would not be justified in holding beliefs about his own free actions. The contention is that:

" a perfectly free agent must do any action for doing which he judges that there are overriding reasons. If he is omniscient, he will make

correct judgement about this . Given that such judgements have truth-values Hence he will do any action for doing which there are overriding reasons. But it is implausible to suppose that it greatly limits his future choice".¹¹

But the logically proper way to see that the idea of divine omniscience does not clash with the divine freedom is to appreciate that God lives in a timeless eternity. All things are present to Him as they happen. There is no moment at which He does not know a thing happening . Strictly speaking, therefore, there is only knowledge with God; there is no fore-knowledge nor retro-knowledge.

We have thus tried to show that God stands at the apex of the order of disembodied existence. It is the paradigm of disembodiment, we said. We have chosen to reason about the problems of existence of God and the allied problems rather than sidetrack it as being a matter of faith. In the front of reasoning, there are philosophers who contend that such an idea is incoherent. But we have tried to vindicate that it is coherent. In certain senses of the words 'know' and

'act' as explained in the foregoing chapters, souls of pre^hetal and post-mortem human existence are regarded as disembodied. But in the fullest significance of these words, God is regarded as a disembodied being. We have chosen to distinguish Him from the disembodied existence of the former order (soul) by attributing to Him the state of non-bodied existence as a paradigm case. The affinity between souls and God is so much so that in Advaita Vedānta the former is compared to ghatākāsa and the latter to mahākāsa and both are said to be non-different in reality.¹²

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2. A. Flew, God and Philosophy, London 1966, P. 9.
3. Ibid .
4. R.G. Swinburne, The Coherence of Theism, Great Britain, Oxfore University Press, 1977, P.1.
5. Flew, op.cit., P. 37.
6. The Bhagavad Gita, Jñān-Vijñāna Yoga, Ch. 13.
7. For a detailed discussion regarding the logic of 'know' vide A.J. Ayer's The Problem of Knowledge, Ch. I .
8. I owe these two points to R.G. Swinburne, The Coherence of Theism.
9. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica .
10. Swinburne, op.cit., P.105.
11. Swinburne, op.cit., P.172
12. I owe this point to Dr. G.P. Das.

CHAPTER

VII

CHAPTER- VII

C O N C L U S I O N

In the course of this dissertation, we have tried to find out whether we can make the conception of disembodied existence intelligible to ourselves. Our conclusion has been in the affirmative. Contrary to some recent writings, especially that of Prof. Mohapatra, disembodied existence is conceivable. It can be conceived in the form of bodily death, resurrection and reincarnation. It is also conceived as an Omniscient, Omnipresent, and Omnipotent being when it is the non-embodied existence of God. In seeking to find out the intelligibility of the concept of disembodied existence, we do not have any intention to establish the illusory, hallucinatory objects or objects of sorcery or ghosts, apparition and the like. Our sole aim is to construct a framework of intelligibility which would admit all facts as facts and disallow all non-facts as such. Of course, what is a fact and what is a non-fact, is again dependent upon philosophical deliberations and conclusions. But that is generally to be *admitted* with regard to cases bordering upon fact and fiction. By and large there is hardly any disagreement with

regard to certain cases of precocious talents, split-personality and possessed beings. If we do not have a framework which is able to accommodate and explain these facts, it is so much the worse for the framework. The framework must be such that it must not reject facts as being fictitious and try to put it on the Procrustian bed.'

The concept of disembodied existence is rejected by Hampshire as being self-contradictory. But this is the result of the presupposition that all the existence must be bodied or bodied beings alone can be said to exist, which we have seen not to be the case especially in case of God. P.F. Strawson allows the intelligibility to the conception of disembodied existence, but he says that it is intelligible only in the derivative sense. He means to say that we can intelligibly talk of disembodied state of those beings who were embodied previously having now a spatial or temporal discontinuity or even both spatial and temporal discontinuity. Accordingly talk of disembodied existence in the primary sense or non-relative sense, would not be intelligible. That is to say, we can intelligibly talk of survival, resurrection

and perhaps reincarnation but cannot talk intelligibly of soul and God, i.e., of pure disembodied existents.

However, there are philosophers who are of the view that to talk about such pure disembodied existents like an omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent being is very much intelligible (Swinburne), albeit in a derivative sense, as Strawson and Mohapatra have wanted to put it. We have discussed the view of Harrison whose aim is to establish that the talk about God as pure spirit, supposed to know everything and do everything, is an intelligible proposition, not characteristically different from the disembodied existence of a human spirit bearing the human body, which it once inhabited, but still maintaining its identity with itself.

While talking about identity with itself, one may object that this is never the problem of identity which is only raised in connection with persons (embodied), whether Devadatta of Kāsi is the same as Devadatta of Pātaliputra. There is no question as to whether something is identical with itself except perhaps in poetry while extolling the beauty of a heroine. That a thing or a person is identical with itself is taken for granted and in fact it is a fundamental principle of human

communication recognised earlier as a Law of Thought. What is asked here is rather this ; whether a person 'p' at time 'T2' is the same as person 'p' at time 'T1'.

Harrison conceives of a situation in which a person is " beamed-off" from a space-ship and reaches a planet and gets splitted into two. The question arised here as to whether the two " beamed off" persons are identical with each other and identical with the third person in the spaceship. According to Hamlyn the question of personal identity does not arise in this case, because in philo ophical discussions identity is a one-one relation (Metaphysics)

The grounds of personal identity have occupied the philosophers a great deal. John Locke struck upon the problem when he came to consider the question of prize and punishment and ascription of responsibility. The concept of person came into currency chiefly as a political and legal concept. Quite natural with the temper of the situation the question of personal identity appeared as a sort of stock verification whether a person at a subsequent time is the same person as the previous time. Behaviour was then suggested as the criterion of personal identity. Such behaviour was regarded as verbal behaviour as the expression of memory. Hence both

physical continuity as well as memory were regarded as criteria of personal identity.

Although these two criteria are helpful in determining whether a person being tried is the same person as one who committed the crime or whether a person who now claims the property of the deceased person is the same one as was known as his son. But strictly speaking, they cannot be regarded as both necessary and sufficient conditions for personal identity.

According to Butler, memory presupposed personal identity and cannot constitute it apart from the fact that memory can be fallible and deceptive. It is an extreme view to maintain, as Bernard Williams seems to do, that bodily identity is a necessary and sufficient condition of personal identity. According to Hamlyn such a view is 'hardly acceptable.'

Wittgenstein in his *Philosophical Investigations*, writes that an inner process stands in need of outward criteria. Faithful to this view, philosophers in the analytical tradition have tried to establish the existence of body and bodily behaviour as the criteria of personal identity. These criteria are applied from at least two

points of view, i.e., from the point of view of verification (hence of truth) and from the point of view of intelligibility (hence of meaning). As regards the first point, the problem is epistemological. One would seek to know how far it is true that a person has survived bodily death but has been resurrected or reincarnated. Quite naturally, therefore, spatio-temporal continuity of body is suggested as the evidence and accordingly the hypothesis of survival, resurrection and reincarnation are easily ruled out of court, not because they have not been verified in the alleged cases in the past, but because they are not verifiable in principle. But suppose somebody says that the body which one owns at present was not the same body just seven years back and will not be the same body seven years after, for the reason that all the cells of the body are replaced every seven years, according to the scientists. Similarly, archaeology has developed techniques to such an extent that they are able to reconstruct a whole structure, say a temple, with the same material at a different location. Is the reconstructed temple the same as the original temple, apart from the difference with regard to the epithet 'reconstructed'? In a sense, it is the same temple, and in a sense, it is not. It would be harsh indeed, if we press upon spatio-temporal continuity of the physical

body in the strict sense of the term as evidence of identity and hence of survival, resurrection and reincarnation. The physical body is regarded as **causal** to the self of a person in the sense that sensations in the body cause certain perception in the self. In the Indian tradition, therefore, the outward physical body is known as the causal body. It is maintained that there is another body, Sukma Sarira or subtle body which the self or soul carries in transmigration. The idea of subtle body might be a subject of controversy in so far as one emphasises on the 'body' and the other on the word 'subtle'. One might say that because body is indispensable for the identification and reidentification of persons, although there is no physical body after death, there is something body-like to provide the desired continuity. The other party may maintain that because disembodied existence is difficult to conceive on the part of the common man, a body in the 'subtle' **form** is postulated as a spring-board, so to say. 'Subtle body' is just an excuse for a body. There is a move by the logicians to make body criteriologically for personal identity. The later Wittgenstein and his followers known as logical behaviourists, press upon the description

of body and bodily behaviour as being the meaning content of the statement about the person.

Alvin Plantinga emphasises that philosophy must reflect upon the logically possible situations. He seeks to prove the Cartesian thesis in logically rigorous way by offering a 'possible world' theory. In the 'possible world', it is quite intelligible, according to Plantinga, that I am at one time a human embodied person and at another time an angelic disembodied person which implied that it is not necessary for me to have a material body.

In his paper entitled 'World & Essence', Alvin Plantinga (Philosophical Review - October 1970) seeks to find out the justifiability of Descartes' view that he (Descartes) is not a material object. Plantinga thinks that Descartes means to reason as follows: it is at present possible both that 'I exist' and that 'there are no material objects'. His argument shows that even if human beings are physical events, as a matter of fact, they only happen to be so and they are contingently so. There are worlds in which I exist, but I am not a body, nor do I have to have a body. It is not, therefore, essential for human persons to be embodied. It might just be inconceivable in the present world that human beings do not have bodies. But it does not follow that

in every possible world human persons would necessarily be bodies or have bodies. Hence, as it stands, the argument of Descartes (Meditation: I) does not establish conclusively that he is not a body or a material object. But by applying the distinction between necessity and contingency, the possible world theory argument can be strengthened.

It would appear in the above arguments that no possible change in the state of things is conceived in so far as the possible world is concerned. There is rather a possible change in the way of saying about things. This might give the feeling of uneasiness, but then we might again remember, here, that forms of saying reflect the forms of existence.

We have tried to show in this dissertation that disembodied existence could be an intelligible conception. This is supported by the findings of the science of psychology and supported by what comes to us as strange facts. The psychologists are unable to decipher what exactly constitutes the psyche. They postulate some unknown fact or a state of being termed as ' goth' by Watson as discussed earlier (Page -38 , Ch.II) which comes after clinical death , but is not exactly death as Lyall Watson puts it . In the Gita among the various characters of personality

one avyakta - the 'unmanifest' is mentioned (Ch.13, sloka - 15) . This appears to be very much like what behaviourist school of psychologists termed as the 'X-factor'. All this go to state that an outright rejection of disembodied existence would be presumptuous. A pure physicalistic or behaviouristic explanation does not appear to be adequate.

Before winding up the discussion, we must put, in a summary form, our findings in the foregoing chapters. The concept of a person is seen as intimately connected with the concept of body, so much so that a person is regarded to be or having a body. The question then is asked as to whether there could be disembodied persons or not. In other words, the question is: Is the expression ' disembodied person' logically meaningful and hence intelligible or not? Chapter -I, entitled " The Problem of Disembodied Existence" spells out in detail the different facets of the problem and distinguishes the logical aspect of the problem from the non-logical ones. It must be recalled that we have preferred the expression ' disembodied existence' to ' disembodied person' because the former is wider in meaning and makes the problem discussable from various points of view.

This takes us to the definition of the terms like 'existence', 'person' (as distinguished from 'man') and 'body' and their inter-connections. "Persons, Bodies and Existence" which is the title of the second chapter discusses this. The findings of this chapter is that there cannot be any disembodied existence, if the terms 'existence' and 'body' which are defined in such a manner that the expression 'disembodied existence' becomes self-contradictory and hence meaningless. But such a definition appears to be much restrictive. It 'explains away' facts that are otherwise admitted in the general outlook of the world of being and becoming entertained by the commonman and evidenced for by the scientist.

Granting that disembodied existence is an intelligible conception, we have explained its relation to two important conceptions: the conception of knowledge and the conception of action. Chapter-III which goes under the title, "Disembodied Being - Knowledge and Action" discusses this at some length. The concepts of knowledge and action have been dissected to find out what really constitutes the usages of these terms. Most of the things that go along with

their usage are only non-essential ; in the essential respect of their usage, a disembodied being can be regarded to know the set of things and act upon it to make necessary changes.

The fourth chapter, " Bodily Transfer, Reincarnation and Resurrection", tries to examine the conceptions allied to the conception of disembodied existence.' These ideas of the Christian and Judaic tradition as well as the parallel ideas of the Indian tradition have been studied and found to be quite supportable. The view that goes up against it is from the side of the empiricists, who were once talking of experience, subsequently of verification and now of identification.' Identification and re-identification are ideas which are applicable to empirical particulars having perceptible qualities only. By its very nature disembodied existence cannot be counted as an empirical particular and cannot, therefore , come within the consideration of identification and re-identification .

Another allied idea, namely, "Immortality of the Soul" is discussed with the same title in the fifth chapter.' Here, ~~in the~~ ethical aspect of the world view with the conception of soul at the centre has been taken up. Although the idea is unverifiable in real circumstances,

still its admission makes the world view wider,
nobler and more acceptable.'

The discussion regarding disembodied existence reaches its climax with God being admitted as the supreme form of it in the sixth chapter under the title, " God as Disembodied Being " .Taking the lead from the sympathetic critic Richard Swinburne, we have tried to understand how omniscience, omnipotence, omnipresence, benevolence and the allied qualities are assigned to God.' Many interesting features of divine knowledge and divine action have been explored.' God does not have a body in the sense in which a person does have .' Hence it is more proper to regard God as a non-bodied existence rather than disembodied existence, we have contended.'

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