‘religious’. It is a Path leading to the
p, to complete freedom, happiness
mental and intellectual perfection.
are simple and beautiful customs
essions. They have little to do with
their value in satisfying certain
of those who are less advanced,
ng the Path.
ide Truths we have four functions
shkha, the nature of life, its suffering,
duction and unsatisfactoriness, its
ility. With regard to this, our
as a fact, clearly and completely
the Origin of Dukkha, which is
all other passions, defilements and
ing of this fact is not sufficient.
d, to eliminate, to destroy and
the Cessation of Dukkha, Nirvāṇa,
reality. Here our function is to
the Path leading to the realization
of the Path, however complete,
tion is to follow it and keep to it

CHAPTER VI

THE DOCTRINE OF NO-SOUL: ANATTA

What in general is suggested by Soul, Self, Ego, or to use the Sanskrit expression Ātman, is that in man there is a permanent, everlasting and absolute entity, which is the unchanging substance behind the changing phenomenal world. According to some religions, each individual has such a separate soul which is created by God, and which, finally after death, lives eternally either in hell or heaven, its destiny depending on the judgment of its creator. According to others, it goes through many lives till it is completely purified and becomes finally united with God or Brahman, Universal Soul or Ātman, from which it originally emanated. This soul or self in man is the thinker of thoughts, feeler of sensations, and receiver of rewards and punishments for all its actions good and bad. Such a conception is called the idea of self.

Buddhism stands unique in the history of human thought in denying the existence of such a Soul, Self, or Ātman. According to the teaching of the Buddha, the idea of self is an imaginary, false belief which has no corresponding reality, and it produces harmful thoughts of 'me' and 'mine', selfish desire, craving, attachment, hatred, ill-will, conceit, pride, egoism, and other defilements, impurities and problems. It is the source of all the troubles in the world from personal conflicts to wars between nations. In short, to this false view can be traced all the evil in the world.

Two ideas are psychologically deep-rooted in man: self-protection and self-preservation. For self-protection man has created God, on whom he depends for his own protection, safety and security, just as a child depends on its parent. For self-preservation man has conceived the idea of an immortal Soul or Ātman, which will live eternally. In his ignorance, weakness, fear, and desire, man needs these two things to console himself. Hence he clings to them deeply and fanatically.
The Buddha’s teaching does not support this ignorance, weakness, fear, and desire, but aims at making man enlightened by removing and destroying them, striking at their very root. According to Buddhism, our ideas of God and Soul are false and empty. Though highly developed as theories, they are all the same extremely subtle mental projections, garbed in an intricate metaphysical and philosophical phraseology. These ideas are so deep-rooted in man, and so near and dear to him, that he does not wish to hear, nor does he want to understand, any teaching against them.

The Buddha knew this quite well. In fact, he said that his teaching was ‘against the current’ (patitotagāmi), against man’s selfish desires. Just four weeks after his Enlightenment, seated under a banyan tree, he thought to himself: ‘I have realized this Truth which is deep, difficult to see, difficult to understand . . . comprehensible only by the wise . . . Men who are overpowered by passions and surrounded by a mass of darkness cannot see this Truth, which is against the current, which is lofty, deep, subtle and hard to comprehend.’

With these thoughts in his mind, the Buddha hesitated for a moment, whether it would not be in vain if he tried to explain to the world the Truth he had just realized. Then he compared the world to a lotus pond: In a lotus pond there are some lotuses still under water; there are others which have risen only up to the water level; there are still others which stand above water and are untouched by it. In the same way in this world, there are men at different levels of development. Some would understand the Truth. So the Buddha decided to teach it.1

The doctrine of Anatta or No-Soul is the natural result of, or the corollary to, the analysis of the Five Aggregates and the teaching of Conditioned Genesis (Paticca-samuppāda).2

We have seen earlier, in the discussion of the First Noble Truth (Dukkha), that what we call a being or an individual is composed of the Five Aggregates, and that when these are analysed and examined, there is nothing behind them which can be taken as ‘I’, Ațman, or Self, or any unchanging abiding substance. That is the analytical method. The same result is arrived at through the

document of Conditioned Genesis and according to this nothing in the world is conditioned, relative, and inexible according to the theory of relativity.

Before we go into the questio of the Conditioned Genesis doctrine is given in a short form as follows:

When this is, that is (Imassapeda)
This arising, that arises (Imassifoja)
When this is not, that is not (Imassinga)
This ceasing, that ceases (Imassaga)

On this principle of conditionality and dependent origination, the whole existence of the world, its conditionality, cessation are explained in a de round.

Paticca-samuppāda ‘Conditioned Genesis’ factors:

1. Through ignorance are condi- karma-formations (Arijipada).
2. Through volitional action (Samkhārapaccaya viññānā).
3. Through consciousness of physical phenomena (Viññānā).
4. Through mental and physical phenomena (Vipaccaya saḷāvattaya).
5. Through the six faculties (mental) contact (Sahajāto).
6. Through (sensorial and mental) sensation (Phassavāpayā evam).
7. Through sensation is conditioned (Paccaya tanha).
8. Through desire (thirst) is conditioned (Paccaya upādāna).

1M III (PTS), p. 63; S II (PTS), pp. 12, 99
2M 1 (PTS), p. 167 f.

Explain below.
not support this ignorance, it aims at making man enlightened there, striking at their very root. Ideas of God and Soul are false and used as theories, they are all the projections, garbed in an intricate phraseology. These ideas are so dear to him, that he does not want to understand, any teaching that well. In fact, he said that his own (patissatagāmi), against man’s in after his Enlightenment, seated to himself: ‘I have realized this to see, difficult to understand . . . the . . . Men who are overpowered by a mass of darkness cannot see this sentient, which is lofty, deep, subtle mind, the Buddha hesitated for a time to explain to us realized. Then he compared the lotus pond there are some lotuses into which have risen only up to the leaves which stand above water and its way in this world, there are men men. Some would understand the two teach it.1

No-Soul is the natural result of, or the Five Aggregates and the teaching of the First Noble Truth being or an individual is composed of the mental and physical phenomena (Vibhūnapaccayā nāmarūpam).

4. Through mental and physical phenomena are conditioned the six faculties (i.e., five physical sense-organs and mind) (Nāmarūpapaccayā saññīyatanaṃ).

5. Through the six faculties is conditioned (sensorial and mental) contact (Saññīyatana-paccayā phasso).

6. Through (sensorial and mental) contact is conditioned sensation (Phassapaccayā vedana).

7. Through sensation is conditioned desire, ‘thirst’ (Vedanāpaccayā tanhā).

8. Through desire (‘thirst’) is conditioned clinging (Tanhāpaccayā upādānām).

1M III (PTS), p. 63; S II (PTS), pp. 82, 91, etc. To put it into a modern form: When A is, B is; A arising, B arises; When A is not, B is not; A ceasing, B ceases.
petty individual self with small s, but in the big Self with a capital S.

It is better to say frankly that one believes in an *Ātman* or Self. Or one may even say that the Buddha was totally wrong in denying the existence of an *Ātman*. But certainly it will not do for any one to try to introduce into Buddhism an idea which the Buddha never accepted, as far as we can see from the extant original texts.

Religions which believe in God and Soul make no secret of these two ideas; on the contrary, they proclaim them, constantly and repeatedly, in the most eloquent terms. If the Buddha had accepted these two ideas, so important in all religions, he certainly would have declared them publicly, as he had spoken about other things, and would not have left them hidden to be discovered only 25 centuries after his death.

People become nervous at the idea that through the Buddha’s teaching of *Anatta*, the self they imagine they have is going to be destroyed. The Buddha was not unaware of this.

A bhikkhu once asked him: ‘Sir, is there a case where one is tormented when something permanent within oneself is not found?’

‘Yes, bhikkhu, there is,’ answered the Buddha. ‘A man has the following view: “The universe is that *Ātman*, I shall be that after death, permanent, abiding, ever-lasting, unchanging, and I shall exist as such for eternity”. He hears the Tathāgata or a disciple of his, preaching the doctrine aiming at the complete destruction of all speculative views... aiming at the extinction of “thirst”, aiming at detachment, cessation, Nirvāṇa. Then that man thinks: “I will be annihilated, I will be destroyed, I will be no more.”’ So he mourns, worries himself, laments, weeps, beating his breast, and becomes bewildered. Thus, O bhikkhu, there is a case where one is tormented when something permanent within oneself is not found.’

Elsewhere the Buddha says: ‘O bhikkhus, this idea that I may not be, I may not have, is frightening to the uninstructed worldling.’

Those who want to find a ‘Self’ in Buddhism argue as follows: It is true that the Buddha analyses being into matter, sensation,