

The Self and "I" in Indic Thought - Hindu, Jaina and Buddhist

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Classes: Tuesdays and Fridays 12.40 – 2.00 pm PSR 6.
September 8th to December 8th

'Who am I?' Is there a singular idea of the self in the Indian tradition? There appears from its history and literature (theology, philosophy to anthropology) to be a variety of competing ideas on the nature of the self, and the related question of personal identity, that the tradition has had to deal with, challenged to bring them together under a unitary conception. Not until the emergence of the conception of *ātman* – as Transcendental Self in Hindu philosophy and discrete eternal self in Jainism – that a stable unitary metaphysics is settled upon. But this view at the same time creates problem for the mundane experiential self, its consciousness and identity, i.e. for psychological understanding : who or what is the "I" in our waking life, in the story we tell about ourselves (or harbour within us) and in the experience of others? This course draws on hermeneutical reading of Indic textual traditions (Hindu, Jaina and Indian Buddhist), from ancient, classical, epic-medieval to modern discourses on self, no-self, non-self, selflessness, personal identity, self as Divine, Ātman as Brahman (Transcendental Unity), or *ātman* as discrete, individual self with no transcendental Other. The horizons of the self as a moral individual in relation to community, the environment and the world around with their moral ramifications will be examined; with comparative attention also to Arabic-*falasifa*, medieval Judeo-Christian theology, the Enlightenment philosophy, and contemporary analytical-cum- hermeneutical critiques of the nature and extensions of the self. Assessment methods will include written papers.

There is one text book: *Self and Its Horizon in Indian Thought* (P Bilimoria; will be available in class or Dharma Initiative office)

The rest of the material will be provided or posted in pdf form or, as links on Moodle, or in class. Published papers, chapters from books and other scripts.

* (for items under Readings) = will be provided.

Syllabus

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- To develop skills toward critical analyses via in-depth engagement with works that show the different ways in which the Self and "I", Personhood and Personal Identity have been understood and practiced in Indian thought-systems culture.
- Entails close reading of relevant philosophical and theological texts with comparative emphasis of critical perspectives in Western philosophy and contemporary discussions.
- Grasping theories in each of the traditions surveyed: Jaina, Brahmanic-Hindu, Buddhist, Esoteric, and contemporary (comparative) literature, i.e. traditional and modern developments.
- To examine the distinctions between the major theories in respect of the above.
- To encourage reflection on what is entailed in moral psychology and ethics from the theories articulated in each of the positions studied.
- To foster critical thinking about the tensions between the historical Indic understandings and the contemporary Western conceptions of the self, mind and consciousness, and the problem of "I".

Assessment

1. Reflection papers : comprises 3 short summary style 1-2 pages each (after 3 or 4 weeks per syllabus coverage) : **21%**
2. Class presentation: at least two, ppt form: **9%**; *you may choose to do your presentation as set out in Weekie schedule or at any point you feel inspired to by a particular topic or problematic (one week's advance notice needed).*
3. Major Paper/s: either two mid-length papers or one final paper (declare by 5th week, 1st is due before term break; 2nd or Final after 'dead' week): totalling **70%**.

Study Week-by-Week schedule (Teaching Weekie) (dates will be inserted later as per GTU schedule; but we have 14.5 weeks from September 8 to December 8th; our Teaching Weekies do not include Recess Week; but readings will remain in place for Recess Week as per schedule below.)

Each Teaching Week will nominally have two classes Tues & Friday (except for Easter and Thanksgiving Weeks, when we meet once only).

1st calendar Sept 8th = Week/Weekie 1

Week 1: Laying down the theoretical ground: introduction to problem of self and identity, person and personhood, in and from Western perspectives.

- [prelude: Ancient Greek - Parmenides, Plato : journey of the *psyche* (soul); Aristotle's perspectives on biological self]
- René Descartes: *cogito ergo sum*: birth of "I" versus body
- Kant & Hegel & Kierkegaard: empirical vs transcendental self
- David Hume: bundle of perceptions, no self; introspection
- John Locke: self as narrative: psychological continuity of identity
- Smart-Armstrong: Central State Materialism: neurological self
- Derek Parfit: fictional self; branching identities; exchanging brains
- Feminist critiques: political self of women, rights of the self
- Ecological narratives: Gaia; ecosystem inter-dependent shelves

Readings:

- * Bilimoria, 'Problems of the Self: Introduction' and mapping the contents of Self & Mind Theories (excel ppt).
- *J G Arapura: Foreword to *Approaches to Personhood in Indian Thought (APIT)* by Ian Kesarcode-Watson (Delhi 1994: pp. ix-xxi
- * Neil William McFadzen, 'Identity, Self and No-Self' (essay, pp 1-5)

Recommended and Referenced sources

René Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy* pp 31-2, 66-71, 114-15, 109- 24, 278-82; in *Philosophical Writings*, eds Anscombe and Geach, Leson, London, 1954.

David Hume, *Treatise on Human Nature* Bk I, Part IV, Section VI, Appendix; O.U.P. L A Selby-Bigge, 1888 pp. 250-265, pp 630-635.

John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. O U P 1924, Bk II ch 27.

Kant and Sellars, excerpt from Bilimoria, 'Attempted Reconciliation of "You" and "I"' (see below Sankara)

Williams, Bernard 1973, *Problems of the Self*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge. chs I & 5, pp1-18, 64-81.

Parfit, Derek. 'Personal Identity' in *Personal Identity*, John Perry (ed.) 1975, pp.199-223, University of California Press, Los Angeles.

_____ 1984, *Reasons And Persons*, Clarendon Press, Oxford ('Why our identity is not what matters', pp. 245-267, (And Appendix pp502-503.)

Penelhum, Terence. 'Personal Identity' in *The Encyclopedia Of Philosophy*, Paul Edwards (ed.), Vol. 6, pp. 95-107, Macmillan Publishers, New York.

Robert C Solomon, *Continental Philosophy since 1750 The Rise and fall of the Self*, Oxford University Press, 1988.

Charles Taylor, *Source of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1989

Dan Zahavi, *Subjectivity and Selfhood: Investigating the first-Person Perspective*, MIT Press, 2005, (p. 37.ff)
Dan Zahavi, *Self and Other: Exploring Subjectivity, Empathy, and Shame*, OUP, 2014

Jonardon Ganeri, *The Concealed Art of the Soul: Theories of Self and Practices of Truth in Indian Ethics and Epistemology* (Oxford; Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 171.

Weeks 2

Jaina Theories of the Self, Identity, and its Liberation

Precursor in Ājivaka Philosophy (A. L. Basham, *History and Doctrine of the Ājivikas: A Vanished*; *Bronkhorst article)

Jaina Metaphysics

Understanding the 7 categories of Jaina metaphysics:

- Sentient (*jīva*) principle of the soul (*ātman*)
- Insentient (matter, *ajīva*)
- Inflow (of matter into soul, matter becomes karma particles which block innate energy of the soul)
- Bondage (caused by inflow)
- Stoppage (of further inflow)
- Burning away (of remaining karma particles through asceticism)
- Liberation – the final result of being isolated from the influence of matter

There is close connection between soul and theory of *karma*: implications for ethics and soteriology.

Absence of Divine Transcendent Being (God/Ishvara) in the liberative process (blessings of Arihants/ Tirthankāras, selves previously attained liberation and dwelling in other regions).

The soul is said to possess two types of impurities:

1. *mithyātva* - false or illusionary knowledge about its own (soul's) nature or attributes and about worldly reality (ignorance about our true nature)

2. *kashāyas* or vices - which are anger, ego, deceit, greed, and other vices. To remove such impurities, from the practical point of view, Jainism has prescribed six essential practices, *āvashyakas*.

Week 3: Readings from Jaina texts

Primary

Selections from the following (exact locations and excerpts in article on *'The Doctrine of The Self in Jainism' (pdf)

Yogaśāstra (Hemachandra; Chris Chapple translation)

Acaraṅga-sūtras

Saravārthasiddhi

Pravacanasāra

Dravyasaôgraha pākā

Tattvārthasāra

Tattvārtharajavārttika
Dravyasamgraha-tāka
Niyamasāra-
Tattvārthsātra
Vyākhyāprajñapti
Pancâstikâyasâra. ed.and tr. By A.N.Upadhye,
Āloka of Haribhadra

Secondary

H.S. Bhattacharya, *Reals in the Jaina Metaphysics*, The Seth Santi Das Khetsy Charitable Trust, Bombay, 1966

M.L. Mehta, *Outlines of Jaina Philosophy, The Essentials of Jain Ontology, Epistemology and Ethics*, Jain Mission Society, Bangalore, 1954.

Padmanabha Jain, *The Jaina Path of Purification*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.

Jeffrey Long, *Jainism – An Introduction*. I B Tauris, 2009

Paul Dundas, *The Jains*, Cambridge University Press, 1992

Sonali Bhatt Marwaha, *Colours of Truth: Religion, Self and Emotions: Perspectives of Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Zoroastrianism, Islam, Sikhism and Contemporary Psychology*. (Concept Publishing Company, 2006; chapter on Jain Self)

Reconciling Yogas: Haribhadra's Collection of Views on Yoga
By Chris Chapple.

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Week 4 : 1st class – Guest Speaker from JCNC On Jain theory of the nature of the self and its implications for everyday Jain living.

2nd class: Complete in-class quiz on Jain theories of self; and in-class presentation by two students;

Week 5: Self in Brahmanic Hinduism: Vedas to Philosophy systems

Key Text: **Self and its Horizon in Hindu Thought* (hereafter SHo), Bilimoria).

Self in the Vedas: early ruminations in RgVeda:

- Structure of the Vedas: sections, themes, mandalas
- Key terms: *puruṣa*, *jīva*, *prāṇa*, *sūtru-ātman*, *ātman-vataḥ*' (slides and SHo 1st chapter)
- *Puruṣa-sukta* (Cosmic Man),
- Sacrifice of the Supreme Person by the gods to yield the cosmos and progeny on earth.
- Hiranyagarba: Cosmic Egg and other myths depicting possibility of self and 'dark' threat to its annihilation
- Other Vedas and their treatment of self: e.g. Medical texts (Yajur Veda, Ayurveda, Caraka Samhita and Sushruta-samhita)

Week 6 : Peregrinations of the Self in Upanishads :

- Brahman as Supreme Being and *ātman* as manifestation, emergent principle, breath, life principle, fireball, 1 millionth-part of the receding hairline, thumbnail size, empty space.
- Different perspectives on *atman*
- Substantiality of self as *ātman*
- Relation to Brahman and Brahman's Body Matrix
- Relation to body, matter, mind, senses.
- Doctrine of Kośas: envelopes/sheaths over the self: body, breath, mind, intellect, subtle ethereal body
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Sources: **Chāndogya Upaniṣad; Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad, Aitareya, Mahānārāyaṇa, Śvetāsvatara, Īśa, Markandeya; Māṇḍukya, Kaṭha* Trans. Patrick Olivelle (OUP 2004)

- 'The *Kośas* – Some Aspects of the Theory' – (Indian Kesarcodi-Watson, from *Personhood* book)
- *Self and Its Horizons* chapter on Upanishadic Self

Week 7. Self in Philosophical Systems (Brahmanic)

- Materialist
 - Realist
 - Anti-Realist
 - Yogic-ascetic
 - Mystical
 - Transcendental
1. Cārvāka , Materialist reaction against Upanishadic self
 2. Sāṃkhya : *Mikel Burley and *Knut Jacobsen (RHIP) article; and chapter in SHo, with readings from *Larson & Bhattacharya, *Enc of Indian Philosophy*.
 3. Vaiśeṣika. Readings from ShashiPrabhu Kumar, *Classical Vaisesika Philosophy* (Routledge); and *one more from RHIP
 4. *Yoga* of Patañjali: seminal article *'Patañjali- The Heart of His Approach' – from Ian Kesarcodi-Watson, *Personhood*;
 5. Mikel Burley, *Haṭha-yoga: Its Context, Theory and Practice* (2000), chapter on *'The Subtle Bodily Matrix'.
 6. Mark Singleton and Mallinson, *The Roots of Yoga* (Penguin, 2015) (Body in Yoga)
 7. David Gordon White, *Kiss of the Yogini*, Chicago. Chapter 8

Week 8

Continuing explorations of self through the taxonomy of:

- Materialism
 - Realism
 - Anti-Realism
 - Yogic-asceticism
 - Mysticism
 - Transcendentalism
8. Nyāya (the logic school). Self in Nyāya in the larger cosmo-onto-theologic picture – *'Nyāya' by P Bilimoria; *;

9. *Bhāṣā-Parichedda with Siddhānta-Muktāvalī*: verse 47-51 (soul & mind), pp 65-80; then verse 85 (mind as substance)
10. Kishor Chakrabarty: *Nyāya Dualism* (p 197ff)
11. Jonardon Ganeri, *The Concealed Art of the Soul : Theories of the Self* (2010)
12. Mīmāṃsā: ātmā in Kumārila Bhaṭṭa's *Tantravarttika* and *Ślokovartika* (with commentaries of Parthasārathi Miśra);
13. John Taber *'Ātmā in Mīmāṃsā'.
14. Vedānta: *The Brahma-sūtra* of Bādarayaṇa; Gaudapāda's view; Śaṅkara's "Ātman – Brahman" (A =B) equation (nondual view)

Readings from

1. *'Brahman – Are you That?' (P. Bilimoria, Philosophy of Religion Study Text chapter; Brahman is All; "I" is Non-Self - an illusion
2. 'Śaṅkara's Attempted Reconciliation of 'You' and 'I'', in SHo.
3. Analogies of illusory self; segments on Advaita Nondualism in SHo.
4. '*Ahaṃ-pratyaya*' ("I-maker") in Vedanta philosophy, by Anandita Balslev
5. 'A Misconception about the Nature of Self in Hindu Philosophy: A Critique of Sankara's Strategy and Foundationalism' (Panorama-Sharpe Volume article, P Bilimoria; especially reference to Buber and Levinas);
6. Sri Ramana Maharshi: David Godman (ed.). *Be as You Are: The Teachings of Sri Ramana Maharshi*

Week 9 continue with Vedānta :

- Monistic (nondual) ontology, and
- Qualified non-dualism; identity-in-difference relation of A & B
- panentheistic identification of human self and divine/absolute Self/Spirit

1st class:

1. Rāmānuja's theology of self
(*Philosophy of Religion section on Rāmānuja' and Madhva)

2. *The Bhagavad-Gītā*, dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna on the "I" and relation to Brahman, God, Krishna as Avatar; chapter 2 (35-40); chapter 3. Chapter 11 (Cosmic Epiphany)

3. 'Suturing the Body Corporate (Divine and Human) in the Brahmanic Traditions', P Bilimoria and Ellen Standell, *Sophia*. (2010) 49:237–259

4. Ram –Prasad Chakrvarthy, *Divine Self, Human Self*. Bloomsbury UK, 2015

2nd class:

Summary: key points of all readings under Philosophy Systems _ peregrinations of the self. Approx. 11/2 pages pre-class for class discussion; one presentation by student

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Week 10

Buddhist schools: exploring range of views in Buddhism culminating in **No-Self doctrine** (*anātman/ anatta*)

- No-Self thesis; beginning with discrete atomic view of self (*abhidharma*), to varied versions of **personal identity** theses,
- Selfless persons and personless no-self;
- Does Emptiness cut right through the self /person/ "I" as well?
- Whose self is it in the state of Nirvana?
- First-Person phenomenological Perspectives

Early Buddhism *pudgala* as 'I' thesis;

- *Self in Abhidharma
- No-Self : Nāgārjuna, Digñaga, Dharmakīrti, Śāntīdeva
- *Garfield: Mulamadhyāmika-kārika argument on no-self
- *Kalupahana and Jayatillika: early Mahāyāna variations

- *Candrakīrti's anti-psycho-physical argument: Peter Fenner (Philosophy of Religion segment)
- *Yogacāra: Idealism; Mind Only (Dunne, Powers, Lusthaus; Garfield)
- Zahavi and Ganeri on 1st-person perspectives in Buddhism
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Week 11: continuing from above questions, this week looks at contemporary discussions of No-Self thesis drawing on Western 'Personal Identity' and 'Persons' and Neurosciences (excerpts from these books will be provided)

- Steven Collins: *Selfless Persons*
- Mark Siderits; Buddhist Reductionism (vs Eliminativism)
- Mark Siderits, *Personal Identity and Buddhist Philosophy* (Ashgate)
- Daniel Arnold: *Brains, Buddhas and Believing* (Chicago)
- Daniel Arnold: *Buddhists, Brahmins, and Belief* (Chicago)
- Owen Flanagan: *The Bodhisattva's Brain: Buddhism Naturalized*
- Evan Thomson: *Waking, Dreaming, Being*
- Christian Coseru: *Perceiving Reality*
- *Alan Tomhave, 'Cartesian Intuitions, Humean Puzzles, and the Buddhist Conception of the Self'.
- Kant and Buddhism (Siderits etc in debate) (google for pdf)

Week 12:

The Dalai Lama and the Mind-Brain Institute Project

- More on neurological evidence supporting Buddhist theory of mind and consciousness via Mindful Meditations.
- Institute of Neuroscience (ION) (Marin)
- UC Davis Center for Mind and Brain : experimental results (using Meditation by monks and ERG scanning techniques)
- Critiques of Buddhist reductionist and eliminativist and naturalization thesis (Bronwyn Finnigan et al)
- Two Truth thesis applied to self theory: Sonam Thakchoe
- Esoteric (Vajrayana) Buddhism (David McMahan; Lama Govinda, Marco Pallis – work of Paul Weeks, excerpts)
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Week 13

Contemporary Comparative Explorations of Self and Non-Self, Identity and Personhood using Indic teachings and resources:

- *Neil William McFadzen, 'Identity, Self and No-Self' (essay, pp 5-25)
- Ram-Prasad Chakravarthi. 'A phenomenological reading of the Nyāya critique of the no-self view: Udayana and the phenomenal separateness of self'
- *Alex Watson. 'The Self as a Dynamic Constant. Rāmakaṇṭha's Middle Ground Between a Naiyāyika Eternal Ātman and a Buddhist Stream of Consciousness-Moments'
- *Alex Watson, 'Self or No-Self: A Spectrum of Views'
- *Jonardon Ganeri: 'Self-Intimation, Memory and Personal Identity' (JIP article)
- *J L Shaw, *'The Referent of "I" : An Indian Perspective
- *J L Shaw, 'Consciousness : Mental States and Mind – A Comparative Study'
- Rabindranth Tagore, 'The Problem of Self' (1913 lecture in USA)
- Richard Sorabji, *The Stoics and Gandhi* OUP 2012 (excerpt).
- Where does Jaina View of Self Feature in Contemporary Philosophy? (P Bilimoria and JCNC Guest)

Week 14 : Summary and small in-class quiz; Presentations; discussing final paper

