

ISSN 0976-3066

# Dhīmahī

Journal of  
Chinmaya International Foundation  
Shodha Sansthan

Volume 5



2014

# Dhīmahī

Research Journal  
of  
Chinmaya International Foundation Shodha Sansthan

---

Volume V

शकसंवत् 1935

2013-14

---

Editor  
Dilip Kumar Rana



Chinmaya International Foundation Shodha Sansthan  
Adi Sankara Nilayam, Veliyanad  
Ernakulam, Kerala  
India

## CONTENTS

1. Relationship Between Kūṭiyāṭṭam and Tuḷḷal  
M. T. Muraleedharan 1-6
2. Kerala Sanskrit Tradition  
Ramankutty. P.V 7-22
3. निर्वचन-मीमांसा: तदभिप्रायस्तत्कार्यञ्च  
विश्वबन्धुः 23-28
4. An Inquiry into the Hand-written Documents on Music  
V. Premalatha 29-42
5. Concept of Life and Health in the Carakasamhitā  
Radhika Jadhav 43-54
6. वज्रमकुटीविलासचम्पूकाव्यवैशिष्ट्यम्  
के. सुजनि 55-59
7. Judiciary in the Smṛtis: A Study on Legal Institutions  
Brajakishore Swain 60-67
8. Treatment of Sphoṭa in Sphoṭasiddhi  
S.Vijayakumari 68-76
9. Ancient Indian Taxation System  
Sweta Prajapati 77-93
10. ज्ञानसम्पादने कस्य प्रभावः  
वी. वसन्तकुमारी 94-97
11. Re-visiting the Intellectual Traditions of India  
K. G. Paulose 98-103
12. बुद्धिवृत्तयः तद्वाचकशब्दाश्च  
वि. आर्. मनोज् 104-121
13. Paradigms of Puruṣārtha in Hindu Tradition, Significance of  
the Contribution of Vidyapati to the Rising Appeal of  
Devotional Love in Medieval Age  
Hetukar Jha 122-135
14. Perceptions on Mahatma Chithira Tirunal  
T. P. Sankarankutty Nair 136-148
- ✓ 15. Concept of Rebirth in Pythagorean and Upaniṣadic philosophy  
Shakuntala M. Gawde 149-167
16. Entangled Histories — Kashmiri Śaiva  
Encounter with Naṭarāja  
Aleksandra Wentz 168-180



## Concept of Rebirth in Pythagorean and Upaniṣadic philosophy

Shakuntala M. Gawde

Pythagoras, one of the most famous figures in ancient Greek Philosophy, lived from 570 to 480 BCE<sup>1</sup>. Pythagoras was the first man to call himself a philosopher literally the lover of wisdom.<sup>2</sup> His popular image of today is that of mathematician but in his own days he was more famous as philosopher and spiritual leader. In fact science and philosophy were not distinct for Pythagoras. Mathematical investigations were the means to attain philosophical aim. Pythagorean concepts of soul, afterlife, transmigration, reincarnation etc. greatly influenced later Greek philosophers like Plato and Aristotle.

Upaniṣads are the perennial sources of the Indian philosophy. Upaniṣads undoubtedly represent the highest product of the Indian mind. Ten out of 108 Upaniṣads are traditionally known as principal *Upaniṣads*.<sup>3</sup> Scholars take them to be the most ancient ones, because Śaṅkara has commented on them.<sup>4</sup> *AitUp*, *KauUp*, *ChUp*, *KenUp*, *TaiUp*, *BṛUp*, *IśUp*, and *Kaṭh-Up* were composed as early as the 8th and 7th centuries BCE and predate Buddha. According to Radhakrishnan, any exact date cannot be assigned to Upaniṣads. The earliest of them are certainly pre-buddhistic and some of them are post Buddha.<sup>5</sup> Though it is very difficult to decide the time period of Upaniṣads; it may be fixed between 1200 to 600 BCE which is just prior to the rise of Buddhism.<sup>6</sup> Both Pythagorean and Upaniṣadic systems have deliberated on the eschatological issues like afterlife, fate of the soul, rebirth and immortality. Striking similarities existing in both these compel us to think of cross influences between the Pythagorean and Indian Concepts of reincarnation. Keith is not willing to accept borrowing on either side, however, observes- 'The fact that two countries were not separated by uncrossed deserts or seas is so far in favour of there having been exchange of ideas.'<sup>7</sup> R. D. Ranande has resorted to the theory of Independent parallelism rather than theory of borrowal or common origin.<sup>8</sup> As Radhakrishnan has rightly said-



Whether or not we accept the hypothesis of direct influence from India through Persia on the Greeks a student of Orphic and Pythagorean thought cannot fail to see that the similarities between it and the Indian religion are so close as to warrant our regarding them as expressions of the same view of life. We can use the one system to interpret the other.<sup>9</sup>

In this light the aim of this article is to set forth some similarities through conceptual, structural analysis of rebirth eschatology from philosophical outlook on the basis of comparative study.

### Concept of Soul

Dualism is the philosophical standpoint in which the soul and body are considered two distinct entities. Body diminishes but soul survives at the time of death. This view provides hope for afterlife issues.

### Pythagorean Concept of Soul

Early Greek philosophers held that the soul has three constituents or parts: *nous*, *phren* and *thumos*. *Nous* is the thinking or rational part, *phren* the perceiving part and *thumos* the passionate or feeling part. Animals are said to have only later two parts but humans are believed to have all three. *Nous* is the only part which is immortal and said to survive after death.

This doctrine of tripartite soul which is generally ascribed to Plato seems to be originally invented by Pythagoreans.<sup>10</sup> Soul-body dualism is adopted by Pythagoreans as they declared that 'body is the tomb of the Soul'<sup>11</sup> Plato has referred to this view while saying life is actually a death and death is actually temporary freedom till attaining the next birth.

### Upaniṣadic Concept of Soul

Greek term '*psuchē*' seems to be collective term for senses, mind and intellect out of which only intellect is immortal. Division of *buddhi* (intellect), *manas* (mind) and *indriyas* (senses) in Upaniṣadic philosophy is crystal clear and they never come as intermingled in each other. *Vedāntasāra* declares these as the parts of the *antaḥkaraṇa* (inner organ). *Buddhi*, *manas*, *chittam* and *ahaṅkāra* are the four parts of the *antaḥkaraṇa*.<sup>12</sup> Upaniṣadic term *ātman* doesn't stand



in equivalence with intellect, mind or senses but it transcends all these.<sup>13</sup> *IsUp* explains the superiority of soul over the body- 'The soul is all pervasive, pure, bodiless, without wound and sinews, taintless, untouched by sin, omniscient, ruler of mind, transcendent and self-existent.'<sup>14</sup> Here the words like *akāyam*, *avranam*, *asnāvīram* show its extreme contrast to the body. *KaṭhUp* explicates that the soul is not injured even though body is killed<sup>15</sup> which is afterwards echoed by *BhGīt*.<sup>16</sup> *MuṇḍaUp* also states that wise realize the soul everywhere which cannot be perceived and grasped, which is without birth, features, eyes and ears and which is neither hands nor feet and which is eternal, all-pervasive, extremely subtle, undiminishing and the source of all.<sup>17</sup> All these references correspond to the view of psychological dualism.

### Rebirth or Metempsychosis

*Oxford English Dictionary* gives the meaning of rebirth as 'new birth or beginning or revival'.<sup>18</sup> The term *metempsychosis* is derived from Greek *metempsychosis*, from *meta-* (expressing change) *en* 'in' *psuchē* 'soul'. *Oxford English Dictionary* defines this term as 'the supposed transmigration at death of the soul of a human being or animal into a new body of the same or a different species'.<sup>19</sup> Generally this term is only used within the context of Greek Philosophy.

### Pythagorean Metempsychosis

Pythagoras has written nothing about himself or his philosophy. Whatever we know about Pythagorean thoughts is through the fragments of later philosophers, historians and biographers. Reports of Herodotus, Heraclides, Porphyry and Empedocles about Pythagorean *metempsychosis* are necessary to analyze in this case.

#### i. Account of Herodotus (484 BCE– 425 BCE)

Herodotus, renowned historian, has reported about rebirth doctrine prevalent among ancient Greeks. Herodotus has recorded that Egyptians were the first people to embrace the doctrine of reincarnation and immortality. Some scholars contradict the opinion of Herodotus and deny the Egyptian origin of



*metempsychosis* and say that he is wickedly teasing in concealing the names of its Greek advocates.<sup>20</sup>

Herodotus hesitated to write the names of Greeks who believed in concept of reincarnation. He says that – ‘There are some Greeks who have used this story, as though it were something of their own. I know their names but will not write down.’<sup>21</sup> Though Herodotus has not mentioned the name of any of the Greek philosophers, scholars have concluded that this account matches with that of Pythagoras. Herodotus seems to refer to a specific doctrine of rebirth with which he was familiar, one that had a fixed cycle of 3,000 years during which the soul gets reincarnated in land, sea and air creatures, which is a set of predetermined births that end up in a human reincarnation.

### ii. Account of Heraclides (c. 390 BCE – c. 310 BCE)

Heraclides of Pontus or Ponticus, a student of Plato and a member of Academy speaks of Pythagoras’s previous lives. Diogenes Laertius, biographer of Pythagoras has given the detailed account of Heraclides stating all previous births of Pythagoras and his power of retro-cognition. Pythagoras’s divine power of retro-cognition is due to the boon given by Hermes in an early reincarnation. First he was Aethalides then he became Homeric hero Euphorbus. After this he had to go through animal, plant lives as well as human bodies. Next his soul entered Hermodimus then Pyrrhus, a Delian fisherman and finally he became Pythagoras.<sup>22</sup> According to this account, one can be reborn as an animal or human without going through a complete cycle. Iamblichus has also reported that Pythagoras gave tremendous importance to memory. Pythagoras reminded many families their previous lives, before it was bound to this body.<sup>23</sup> Power of retro-cognition was possessed by some philosophers and it was necessary to attain freedom.

### iii. Account of Xenophanes: (c. 570-560 BCE)

Fragment (7) of Xenophanes shades light on Pythagorean theory of *metempsychosis*.

‘And they say that once as he was passing by a puppy being beaten, he felt compassion and said this: ‘Stop, don’t beat it, since it is the soul of a friend which I recognized upon hearing it cry out.’<sup>24</sup>



According to many scholars, Xenophanes is ridiculing Pythagoras but his account shades light on the Pythagorean *metempsychosis*.<sup>25</sup> It also proves that Pythagoras attributed psychological functions such as thinking and feeling to the souls.

#### iv. Account of Empedocles: (c. 492 BCE)

We find the fullest account of *Metempsychosis* in the report of Empedocles who is said to be a Pythagorean. Empedocles who possessed the divine power of retro-cognition says that he was a boy, girl, bush and fish in previous births. Thus he has gone through both animal and vegetable incarnations. He emphasized the importance of vegetarianism in order to escape the cycle of Necessity which lasts for 30,000 years.<sup>26</sup> He associated the vicious cycle of rebirth with bloodshed and non-vegetarianism.

#### v. Account of Porphyry (232/233 C. E.)

Doctrine of Eternal Recurrence is something very novel theory propounded by Pythagoras. Pythagoras believed that 'after certain period, the things that have happened once; happen again and nothing is absolutely new'. According to this particular doctrine, we or the whole world will be reborn into lives that are exactly the same as those we are living and have already lived. Porphyry, a biographer of Pythagoras says in this connection-

But especially well-known among all were first that they said that the soul was immortal, next, that it went across to other kinds of animals, and, in addition to these, that what had once taken place takes place again according to certain cycles (*periodous*), but that nothing is altogether new and that is necessary to consider all existing living things (*empsycha*) to be kin (*homogene*). For it appears that the first to bring this teaching to Greece was Pythagoras.<sup>27</sup>

Doctrine of eternal recurrence is also a matter of belief and experience. Many a times we feel that we have experienced this in the past or this might happen in future.



### Comparison with Upaniṣadic Rebirth:

After examining the rebirth accounts given by Herodotus, Porphyry, Heraclides, Xenophanes and Empedocles, we come to certain conclusions - Fixed period of cycle - There is fixed pre-determined cycle of rebirth in which a soul has to move for certain period of years to attain human birth and finally liberation. This fixed period is known as 'Cycle of Necessity' which lasts for 3,000 years according to Herodotus and 30,000 years according to Empedocles.

No fixed cycle of particular years is assumed by Upaniṣads in rebirth theory. A person can attain rebirth of any kind of creature dependent merely on his karmans. There is no specific order mentioned in the Upaniṣads through which soul has to go. Association of karmans with rebirth is too strong in Upaniṣads that other details like the order of rebirths or period of cycle become irrelevant. Soul merely due to his own karmans get entangled in the vicious circle of rebirth.

**Importance of human birth** - In Pythagorean eschatology, human birth is considered the last and gateway to attain release from this cycle. It may be that if soul fails to revive its purity in human birth then it has again go through this cycle of 3,000 or 30,000 years which contains birth of land, sea, air creatures, plants etc. and then he will attain human reincarnation.

It is a general belief in India that soul gets incarnated in human birth after transmigrating into 84 lac different yonis of animals, plants etc. Therefore human birth is very difficult to obtain so it should be utilized to attain salvation. Liberation is not possible in any other species being deprived of buddhi. Vivekacūḍāmaṇi opens with the stanza emphasizing the importance of human birth and says that human birth is very much difficult to obtain<sup>28</sup> and it is by god's grace one gets human birth<sup>29</sup> and a foolish person wastes it in engaging himself in some selfish actions.<sup>30</sup> Vedānta philosophy has given importance to human birth and considered it very much precious and responsible for salvation.

**Action and Rebirth** - Association of actions and rebirth can be seen in Pythagorean eschatology. Pythagoras was particular about the behaviour of his disciples. Before admitting them in his school, they had to go through certain probationary period. They had to follow silence and asceticism. After rigorous scrutiny, students were classified into the groups like *Akousmatikoi* (listeners)



and *mathematikoi* (mathematicians). Those who failed were declared dead and tomb was raised in their name.

Report of Xenophanes gives us faint glimpse of association of actions with rebirth. It is clearly stated in the account of Xenophanes that Pythagoras's friend who was human got reincarnated as a dog in his next birth. It means this cycle of rebirth was not simply mechanical which will pass the soul from land, sea, air creatures but it has rooted in the actions or character of the person.

Account of Empedocles which links the cycle of necessity with bloodshed is the stronger evidence to show the association of action and rebirth.

Plato (c. 428/427 -348/347 BCE) has developed certain ideas about transmigration on the basis of Pythagorean views. Plato unambiguously declared the doctrine of *metempsychosis* and linked it with the character and actions of the person. It goes closer to the upaniṣadic doctrine of *karman* and rebirth. He says that souls of the wicked get imprisoned in the body according to their characters in previous lives. If they have cultivated gluttony, drunkenness, and lechery and have not taken pains to avoid them then they enter into the births of donkeys and of that sort. Those who practice injustice, tyranny, robbery enter in the form of wolves, hawks and kites.<sup>31</sup>

Intrinsic relation between *karmans* and rebirth is well established in the discussion of Ārtabhāga and Yājñavalkya in *BṛUp*. If everything vanishes then what exactly remains on the basis of which soul attains new birth. This question instigated an elaborate discussion between rtabhga and Yājñavalkya.<sup>32</sup> Yājñavalkya concluded that mere action becomes responsible for getting a new birth. Good actions result in good birth and bad actions result in bad birth.<sup>33</sup> *ChāUp* also says in this sense that 'Those who have good residual results of actions (*ramaṇīyacaraṇāḥ*)<sup>34</sup> quickly reach a good womb, the womb of a brāhmaṇa, kṣatriya or vaiśya. Those having bad residual results of actions (*kapūyacaraṇāḥ*-) quickly reach an evil womb, the womb of a dog, a hog or a caṇḍāla.<sup>35</sup> Again it is said in *ChāUp* that whatever these creatures are here tiger, lion, wolf, boar or worm or flying insect or gad-fly or mosquito that they become again.<sup>36</sup>



*ChāUp* has given description of the third path i.e. *Jyāyasva mriyasva* (the path of recurrent births). This path is meant for those who neither go by *devayāna* (path of gods) nor by *pitryāna* (path of fathers). This whole process is extremely painful as the process of births and deaths of small creatures is overwhelmed with many sufferings and there is no time for enjoyment.<sup>37</sup> One who steals gold, one who drinks wine, one who disrespects the preceptor's wife and one who injures a *brāhmaṇa*, all these four fall and also the fifth one who associates with them, attains this third path.<sup>38</sup> *Bṛ Up* says that those who do not know two paths become insects, moths and all oft-biting creatures.<sup>39</sup>

These references are evident about the doctrine of *metempsychosis* and its relation with action prevailing in Upaniṣadic eschatology.

### Immortality of the Soul

Pythagoras believed in the immortal soul which is originally pure but gets polluted in bodily existence. Therefore escaping the Cycle of Necessity by attaining purification was very important for him. He defined various means to attain perfect wisdom, purification and eventually immortality.

### Means of attaining Immortality

Cessation from the cycle of rebirth being very important; both the systems have deliberated on certain means to attain release.'

### Detachment

**Metaphor of Olympic Game:** Pythagoras compared life with the Great Games.<sup>40</sup> There are three kinds of men in the world similar to men who come to Olympic Games. Life is like the gathering at the Olympic festival. The lowest come to buy and sell, the middle to compete and the best group is who simply watch. So the greatest purification is the disinterested knowledge, the man who devotes himself to this is the true philosopher who has released himself from wheel of birth and death.<sup>41</sup> The most pure man is the one who devotes himself to the contemplation of the most beautiful things and whom it is proper to call a philosopher.<sup>42</sup> Pythagoras has given importance to detachment and detached actions.



**Metaphor of Two Birds:** This reminds us the Upaniṣadic illustration of two birds wherein one enjoys sweet fruits of the tree and another just sitting observes everything in detached manner.<sup>43</sup> Thus, detachment (*vairāgya*) is considered to be one of the means to attain immortality.

### Purification of the Soul

Purification of the soul was something very important for Pythagoras. Soul is naturally pure but it gets polluted due to the blemishes of body. It is necessary to revive the original nature of the soul. Purified soul has the power to converse with Gods. Pythagoras was curious to heal and purify the soul and to save its divine part.<sup>44</sup> Human beings are blessed with unique reasoning power which is not possessed by animals and plants. Therefore human beings are divine and it is the human birth in which salvation is possible. Except rational part, rest of the man is an animal which is naturally full of impulses, desires and passions. He requires therefore the consistent inspection and government.<sup>45</sup> Therefore, self-control and thoughtful use of intellect becomes helpful to keep the intellect pure.

*Viveka* (power of discrimination) has been thought as significant in Upaniṣads for attaining the Supreme goal of *mokṣa*. The famous metaphor of the chariot on the human body is skilfully employed in *KaṭhUp*. Chariot is assumed as the body and the individual soul is master of the chariot. The intellect is the charioteer. The sense organs are the horses fastened to the chariot and the reins with which the intellect guides.<sup>46</sup> The intellect which is the charioteer should not be driven by senses or mind. They can dissuade the charioteer from its true goal.

When intellect becomes discriminative and remains pure from the blemishes of mind and senses then it can attain proper destination.

### Dietary Restrictions

Purification of the soul can be achieved through dietary restrictions. Pythagoras ordered to abstain from animal food, wine etc. which are hostile to the reasoning power and impede the chastity and purity of the soul.<sup>47</sup> Dietary habits are always



linked with the body, mind and soul. Healthy food results in healthy body and ultimately pure soul. Food and behavior are linked in *Ch Up* - 'the food stuff that we eat reflects our thoughts; so the behaviour'.<sup>48</sup> Food is divided into *sāttvika*, *rājasika* and *tāmasika*. These three types of foods are responsible for relevant thoughts. *Bh Git* states that *sattva* *guṇa* results in knowledge, *rajas* in greediness and *tamas* in ignorance.<sup>49</sup> *Sāttvika* diet is prescribed for the sake of *sāttvika* *guṇa* and it prolongs life, intellect, health, happiness and love.<sup>50</sup> *Tāmasika* food should be avoided as it takes you away from your goal. Food gives us purity-the purity of intellect, the purity of religion and the purity of the soul. Good or pure food is the ladder to the highest goal, the ultimate reality.

The chain can be pointed out as follows-

Good food → Good thoughts → Good actions → a noble way to mokṣa.<sup>51</sup>

### Strict Vegetarianism

Pythagoreans were banned from eating animals. He ordained not to injure animals but to preserve justice towards them. A logical explanation of strict vegetarianism in case of Pythagoreans is hidden in the belief in *metempsychosis*. The soul of the dead friend or ancestors might be living in the body one intends to eat. Empedocles also emphasized the fact that one should be free from bloodshed in order to escape from rebirth cycle. Eating meat is prohibited in *ManuS* and it gives very interesting etymology of the word 'māṃsa' i.e. māṃsa bhakṣayitā. It means one who is eaten by me in this world; I will become food of him in the other world.<sup>52</sup>

The idea behind Pythagorean rule of strict vegetarianism is the kinship of all animals. One should not cultivate the vision of difference. Unity of all beings is the prime thought of Upaniṣads. They have declared that 'All is but the Self'<sup>53</sup> or 'All is Brahman'.<sup>54</sup> *Isā Up* declares the existence of lord in each and everything<sup>55</sup>. The vision of difference of any sort is considered as ignorance. *Chā Up*, with the illustrations of clay, gold and iron explains the importance of understanding the one essence in many things.<sup>56</sup> One who has the vision of multiplicity or difference goes from death to death.<sup>57</sup> Śaṅkara in



his commentary says that a person being deluded by ignorance sees differences which are natural to the limiting adjuncts, feels such differences and such a person is subject to repeated births and deaths.<sup>58</sup> Hence the vision of difference acts as the gateway to new birth.

### Abstaining from beans

Pythagoras has a very curious and mystic taboo regarding the abstinence from beans. Scholars have interpreted this symbol of Pythagoras, 'not to eat beans' in various ways. According to Iamblichus, beans restrict us to converse with the Gods and divine prophecy. Some explanations point to supposed similarities between humans and beans.<sup>59</sup> Heraclides explains the Pythagorean ban on beans by the curious superstition that if a bean is laid in a new tomb and covered with dung for forty days, it takes the appearance of a man.<sup>60</sup> W. K. C. Guthrie has added some other opinions in this case - There was a Pythagorean saying attributed to Orpheus that eating beans is like eating the heads of one's parents, perhaps a reference to an ancestral life force contained in the head. Beans resembled testicles; they resembled the gates of Hades or the whole universe. Porphyry connected this fact with the return of souls from beneath the earth. They are of windy or breathy nature and hence full of the life force. They contain the souls of the dead. Porphyry and others adduced the belief that if chewed and left in the sun, a bean would give of an odor of semen.<sup>61</sup> In short, beans are suggestive of new existence and chain of continuous rebirths. Abstaining from beans is for the sake of keeping us away from descent into the realms of generation.<sup>62</sup> Therefore, Pythagoras ordained strict ban on beans.

Idea of beans causing rebirth has parallel thought in upaniṣadic rebirth eschatology. Descent of the soul on earth is described in *Chā Up* in symbolic manner with reference to pañcāgnividyā (doctrine of five fires).<sup>63</sup>

*Chā Up* and *Bṛ Up* describe paths by which soul of the dead transmigrates. Devayāna is the path of liberation particularly for the worshipper of Saṅgana Brahman. Pitryāna is the path of rebirth and for those who engaged themselves in philanthropic works. Souls ascending by devayāna do not come again so there is no descending. Pitryāna has both ascending and descending ways.



**Ascending of the soul** is described as given below:

Smoke → Night → Dark fortnight → Six months of the southern path of the sun → Region of Fathers → Ether → Moon.<sup>64</sup>

**Descending of the soul** is also described with details as given below:

Ether → Air → Smoke → White → cloud → Rain → Rice/barley → man → woman → born on the earth. Descending souls with their residual *karmans* are born on this earth as paddy, barley, trees, sesame, pulses etc.<sup>65</sup> Here also beans are the place in which soul enters and takes rebirth. Beans are condemned in the *Nirukta* through their etymological explanation.<sup>66</sup>

### Mathematics and Music

Science and philosophy blended together in Pythagorean School. According to Pythagoras, scientific theories and investigations open the eye of the soul and purify the intellect.<sup>67</sup> Pythagoreans invented the number theory as the key to the riddle of the universe. His Metaphysics was based on Mathematics. 'All is number' was the mystic formula of Pythagoras. Pythagoras believed that just as medicine purges the body, music purges the soul if it is used in appropriate manner. Pythagoras devised certain melodies, verses of Hesiod and Homer as remedies against passions or impurities of the soul.<sup>68</sup> Mathematics and music were the means to purify the soul in order to attain immortality. Science acted as the means towards cessation from rebirth and a way towards liberation.

Hence, science was subservient to the Highest philosophical goals.

### To Sum up

There are common threads in Pythagorean and Upaniṣadic philosophy pertaining to the eschatology of rebirth and immortality. Philosophical problems almost being universal in nature; great minds of Upaniṣadic seers and Pythagoreans might have (almost) come to the same conclusions. Concept of rebirth and its connection with karman is deeply rooted in Upaniṣadic as well as Pythagorean Eschatology. Concepts of eternal recurrence, retro-cognition etc. are not discussed in Upaniṣads but they are of much importance in Pythagorean philosophy. Upaniṣadic idea of Liberation is cessation from the



cycle of saṃsāra. Upaniṣads have devised certain means for attaining complete freedom from bondages of life. Various upāsanās, knowledge of Brahman, cessation from desires, self-control etc. are the means prescribed by Upaniṣads for preventing the cycle of rebirth and attaining freedom. Pythagoras has deliberated on certain means like pure vegetarianism, scientific investigations, detachment and self-control. These are the means to realize pure and divine nature of soul and attain salvation.

Unlike many western philosophers who gave prime importance to rational philosophy; Pythagoras invented the spiritual, symbolic, mystical as well as practical philosophy which goes very much closer to the Upaniṣads.

### Bibliography

#### Primary Sources (Sanskrit)

1. *Bhagavadgītā*, with original text, commentary of Śāṅkarācārya and Hindi translation by Shriharijishnadas Goyandaka, Geeta press, Gorakhpur, 1981
2. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, Shri Ramakrishna Math, Madras, 1951
3. *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, with original text and English translation by Swahananda Shri Ramakrishna Math, Madras, 1956
4. *Eight Upaniṣads*, vol. I,II , with original text and English translation by Gambhirananda, Advaita Ashrama, Calcuta, 1989 (1957)
5. *Īśa Upaniṣad*, with original text and English translation by Gambhirananda, Shri Aurbindo Ashram, Pondichery, 1951(1921)
6. *Manusmṛti*, Vol. III, Edited by J. H. Dave, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, 1978
7. *Nirukta*, with introduction, original text and Hindi translation by Dr. Kapildev Shastri and Dr. Shrikant Pandey, Sahitya bhandar, Meratha, 2005
8. *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi*, Original text with English translation by P. Shankaranarayanan, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, 1988 (1973)

#### Primary Works (Western Philosophy)

1. *Iamblichus Life of Pythagoras or Pythagoric Life accompanied by Fragments of the Ethical Writings of certain Pythagoreans in the Doric Dialect and a Collection of Pythagoric Sentences from Stobaeus and others*, translated in English from Greek by Thomas Taylor, J.M. Watkins, London, 1818



2. Laertius, D. *Lives of Eminent Philosophers with an English Translation by R. D. Hicks*, Vol. II, VIII.8, William Heinemann, London, 1925
3. *Select works of Porphyry*, translated by Thomas Taylor, Centaur Press, London, 1823
4. *The Dialogues of Plato*, translated in English by B. Jowett, vol. I, II, Random House, New York, 1892
5. *The Pythagorean sourcebook and library: an anthology of ancient writings which relate to Pythagoras and Pythagorean philosophy*, compiled and translated by Kenneth Sylvan Guthrie with additional translations by Thomas Taylor and Arthur Fairbanks, introduced and edited by David R. Fideler, Phanes Press, Grand Rapids, 1988 (1987)

### Secondary Sources

1. Barnes, J. *The Pre-Socratic Philosophers*, Vol. I, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1979,
2. Burnet, J. *Early Greek Philosophy*, Adam and Charles Black, London, 1958 (1892)
3. Burnet, J. *Greek Philosophy - Thales to Plato*, Macmillan, New York, 1961 (1921)
4. Chapekar, M. N. *Vedāntasāra*, Shri M. G. Chaphekar, Pune, 1994
5. Collinson, D. *Fifty Great Philosophers*, Routledge, London and New York, 1978
6. Dasgupta, S. N. *History of Indian Philosophy*, vol. I, Cambridge University Press, 1952
7. Deussen, P. *The philosophy of the Upaniṣads*, Dover publications, New York, 1996
8. Eliade, Mircea. *A History of Religious Ideas*, translated from the French by Willard R. Trask, vol. II, the University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 1982
9. Grene, D. *Herodotus The history*, II.123 University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1987
10. Guthrie, W. K. *The Pythagorean Sourcebook and Library*, Phanes Press, USA, 1988 (1987)
11. Joseph, P. *A Historical and Contemporary Look at Psychological Systems*, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, New Jersey, USA, 2007
12. Karamanides, D. *Pythagoras-Pioneering Mathematician and Musical theorist of Ancient Greece*, Rosen Publishing Group, New York, 2006



13. Keith, A. B. *The Religion and philosophy of the Veda and Upaniṣads*, part. II, Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, Delhi, 2007 (1925)
14. Leshe, J. H. *Xenophanes of Colophon: Fragments : a Text and Translation with a Commentary*, University of Toronto, London, 1992
15. Mestry, R. *Dietetics in the Purāṇas*, Ph. D thesis (University of Mumbai), 2010
16. Obeyesekere, G. *Karma and Rebirth –A Cross Cultural Study*, MLBD, New Delhi, 2006
17. Radhakrishnan, S. *Indian philosophy*, Vol. I, Oxford University Press, 1999
18. Radhakrishnan, S. *Eastern Religions and Western Thought*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1959
19. Ranade, R. D. *A Constructive Survey of Upaniṣadic Philosophy*, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, 1986
20. Riedweg, C. *Pythagoras – His Life, teaching and influence*, Cornell University Press, USA, 2008
21. Tankha, V. *Ancient Greek Philosophy : Thales to Gorgias*, Dorling Kindersley, New Delhi, 2006
22. W.K. C. Guthrie, *The Earlier Pre-Socratics and the Pythagoreans*, Vol.I, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1992 (1971)

#### Tertiary Sources

1. Edward, C. *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, vol.V, Routledge, London and New York, 1998
2. Elliot, J. *Oxford Dictionary and Thesaurus*, Oxford University and press, New York, 2008
3. Lindsay, J. *Encyclopedia of Religion*, vol. XI, Thomson Gale, USA, 2005
4. Simpson, J. A. *The Oxford English Dictionary*, Clarendon press, Oxford, 1989

#### Web Sources

1. BRENNAN, TAD. *Immortality in ancient philosophy*, Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy, London [web document] (2002) <<http://www.rep.routledge.com/article/A133SECT1>>, accessed on 27/02/2012
2. EDWARD, ZALTA. *Ancient Theories of Soul*, Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, [web document] (22/04/2009) <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/pythagoras> accessed on 19/02/2012



3. EDWARD, ZALTA. *Pythagoras*, Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, [web document] (8/8/2011) <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/pythagoras> accessed on 19/02/2012
4. PATRICK, ROUSELL. *The Complete Pythagoras*, [Online text] in World Wide Web, accessed on 03/04/2012
5. SIMPSON, JOHN. *Metempsychosis*, Oxford Dictionaries [web page] (March 2012) <<http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/metempsychosis?q=metempsychosis>>, accessed on 7/05/2012

### Notes

1. C. Riedweg, *Pythagoras – His Life, teaching and influence*, Cornell University Press, USA, 2008, p.42
2. K. S. Guthrie, *The Pythagorean Sourcebook and Library*, Phanes Press, Grand Rapids, 1988 (1987), p.30
3. ईशकेनकठप्रश्नमुण्डमाण्डूक्यतित्तिरिः। ऐतरेयं च छान्दोग्यं बृहदारण्यकं तथा।।
4. S. N. Dasgupta, *History of Indian Philosophy*, vol. I, Cambridge University Press, 1952, p.39
5. S. Radhakrishnan, *Indian philosophy*, Vol. I, Oxford University Press, 1999, p.137
6. R. D. Ranade, *A Constructive Survey of Upaniṣadic Philosophy*, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, 1986, p.12
7. A. B. Keith, *The Religion and philosophy of the Veda and Upaniṣads*, part. II, Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, Delhi, 2007 (1925), p. 601
8. R. D. Ranade, *op. cit.*, p.73
9. S. Radhakrishnan, *Eastern Religions and Western Thought*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1959, p. 143
10. J. Burnet, *Greek Philosophy -Thales to Plato*, Macmillan, New York, 1961 (1921), p. 42
11. *Gorgias* 493
12. N. M. Chapekar, *Vedāntasāra*, Shri M. G. Chapekar, Pune, 1994, p.3y  
बुद्धिर्नाम निश्चयात्मिका अन्तःकरणवृत्तिः। मनो नाम संकल्पविकल्पात्मिकान्तःकरणवृत्तिः।  
अनयोरेव चित्ताहंकारयोः अन्तर्भावः।
13. *KathUp.* 1.3.10 इन्द्रियेभ्यः परा ह्यर्था अर्थेभ्यश्च परं मनः। मनसस्तु परा बुद्धिर्बुद्धेरात्मा महान्परः।।
14. *ĪśāUp.* 8 स पर्यागाच्छुक्रमकायमन्नगमस्नाविरं शुद्धमपापविद्धम्।



- अविर्भावो जीर्णेषु स्वयम्भू रीत्यावध्यातोऽर्थात् अदशावस्थाभ्यतीत्यः शक्यम् ।
15. *Kaśh Up* 1.2.18 d  
शक्यं इति न हन्यते ।
  16. *Ith Gītā*. II. 20 d  
न हन्यते हन्यमाने शरीरे ।
  17. *Mund Up*. 1.1.6  
यत्तददेशवशात्तद्व्यक्तव्यवर्गव्यवस्थसुः श्रोत्रं तदवर्णितम् ।  
नित्यं विभुं सर्वगतं सुसुखं तदव्ययं चद्रूपमिदं विदित्वा शरीरमिति धीराः ॥
  18. Elliot, J. *Oxford Dictionary and Thesaurus*, Oxford University and press, New York, 2008, p. 626
  19. John, Simpson. *Metempsychosis*, Oxford Dictionaries [web page] (March 2012).  
<<http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/metempsychosis?q=metempsychosis>>, accessed on 7/05/2012
  20. J. Barnes, *The Pre-Socratic Philosophers*, Vol. I, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1979, p.103
  21. David Grene, *Herodotus The history*, II 123 University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1987, p.185
  22. W. K. C. Guthrie, *The Earliest Pre-Socratics and the Pythagoreans*, Vol. I, University Press, Cambridge, 1992(1971), p.164
  23. T. Taylor, *op.cit.* , p. 88
  24. J. Lesht, II. *Xenophanes of Colophon: Fragments: a Text and Translation with a Commentary*, University of Toronto, London, 1992, p. 78
  25. J. Barnes, *Early Greek Philosophy*, Adam and Charles Black, London, 1958 (1892), p. 43
  26. J. Barnes, *op.cit.*, p.104
  27. W. K. C. Guthrie, *op.cit.*, p.186
  28. *Vivekaśāstram* 2  
तन्मूर्धं नान्यत्तु दुरीणम् ।
  29. *Ibid* 3  
दुरीणं स्वयमेवात् रीत्यावध्यातोऽर्थात् ।  
तन्मूर्धं नान्यत्तु दुरीणम् ।
  30. *Ibid* 5
  31. *Phaedo* 81 e-82a
  32. *Ib Up* III.2.13



33. *Ibid*, III.2.12  
पुण्यो वै पुण्येन कर्मणा भवति पापः पापेनेति।
34. *on Cha Up V 10.7*  
रमणीयं शोभनं चरणं शूलं येषां ते रमणीयचरणाः।
35. *ChaUp V.10.7*  
तद्य इह रमणीयचरणा अभ्याशो ह यत्ते रमणीयां योनिमापद्येरन्ब्राह्मणयोनिं वा क्षत्रिययोनिं वा वैश्ययोनिं वाथ च इह कपूयचरणाभ्याशो ह यत्ते कपूयां योनिमापद्येरञ्श्वयोनिं वा सूकरयोनिं वा चण्डालयोनिं वा।
36. *Ibid.VI.9.3*  
त इह व्याघ्रो वा सिंह वा वृको वा वराहो वा कीटो वा पतङ्गो वा दंशो वा मशको यद्भवन्ति तदाभवन्ति।
37. Śaṅkara on *ibid*. V.10.8  
जननमरणक्षणेनैव कालयापना भवति, न तु क्रियासु शोभनेषु भोगेषु वा कालोऽस्तीत्यर्थः।
38. *Chā Up V.10.9*  
स्तेनो हिरण्यस्य सुरां पिबंश्च गुरोस्तल्पमावसन्नब्रह्महा चैते पतन्ति चत्वारः पञ्चमश्चाचरंतैरिति।
39. *Br Up VI.2.16*  
एतौ पन्थानौ न विदुस्ते कीटाः पतङ्गाः यदिदं दन्दशूकम्।
40. D. Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers with an English translation by R. D. Hicks, Vol. II, VIII.8, William Heinmann, London, 1925, pp. 327, 329*
41. J. Burnet, *Greek Philosophy- Thales to Plato, op.cit., p.47*
42. T. Taylor, *op.cit., p.28*
43. *Munḍa Up III.1.1*
44. T. Taylor, *op.cit., p. 35*
45. T. Taylor, *op.cit., p.93*
46. *Kath Up 1.3.3.4*  
आत्मानं रथिनं विद्धि शरीरं रथमेव तु। बुद्धिं तु सारथिं विद्धि मनः प्रग्रहमेव च॥  
इन्द्रियाणि हयानाहुर्विषयांस्तेषु गोचरान्। आत्मेन्द्रियमनोयुक्तं भोक्तेत्याहुर्मनीषिणः॥
47. T. Taylor *op.cit., p.7*
48. *Chā Up VII.9.1*  
आहारशुद्धौ सत्त्वशुद्धिः सत्त्वशुद्धौ ध्रुवा स्मृतिः।
49. *Bh Gītā XIV.16,17*  
कर्मणः सुकृतस्याहुः सात्त्विकं निर्मलं फलम्। रजसस्तु फलं दुःखमज्ञानं तमसः फलम्॥  
सत्त्वात्सञ्जायते ज्ञानं रजसो लोभ एव च। प्रमादमोहौ तमसो भवतोऽज्ञानमेव च॥
50. *Ibid, XVII.8*



आयुः सत्त्वबलारोग्यसुखप्रीतिविवर्धनाः ।

रस्याः स्निग्धाः स्थिरा हृद्या आहाराः सात्त्विकप्रियाः ।

51. R. Mestry, *Dietetics in the Purānās*, Ph. D thesis (University of Mumbai), 2010, p.147
52. *ManuS.V.55*  
मांस भक्षयिताऽमुत्र यस्य मांसमिहाद्म्यहम् ।  
एतन्मांसस्य मांसत्वं प्रवदन्ति मनीषिणः ॥
53. *Bṛ Up IV.5.7*
54. *Chā Up III.14.1*
55. *Isā Up I*
56. *Chā Up 1.4-6*
57. *Kath Up II.1.II*
58. Ś on *Ibid.II.I.II*  
इदं सर्वं यदयमात्म
59. L. Jones, *Encyclopedia of Religion*, vol. XI, Thomson Gale, USA, 2005, p. 7529
60. W. K. C. Guthrie, *op.cit.*, p.164
61. W. K. C. Guthrie, *op.cit.*, p. 184
62. T. Taylor, *op.cit*, p.211
63. *Chā Up V.3-9, Bṛ Up VI.21 Chā Up V.10.3,4 ; Bṛ Up VI.2.16*
64. *Chā Up V.10.3,4 ; Bṛ Up VI.2.16*
65. *Chā Up V.10.6*  
अभ्रं भूत्वा मेघो भवति मेघो भूत्वा प्रवर्षति त इह व्रीहि यव ओषधिवनस्पतयस्तिलमाषा इति जायन्ते ।
66. *Nirukta I.4*
67. T. Taylor, *op. cit.* p. 15
68. T. Taylor, *op. cit.*, p. 59

