

PLATO AND THE NEO-PLATONISTS RELATIVE
TO THE HINDU CONCEPT OF RELEASE

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- O.P.T. ----- Oriental Philosophical Texts
S.B.E. ----- Sacred Books of the East
S.B.H. ----- Sacred Books of the Hindus
V.C.S. ----- Vedanta Center Series
E.L. ----- Everyman's Library

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INTRODUCTION

Aristotle made the remark that, "All men seek happiness."¹ He could very well have said that men could not seek happiness if there were not in their daily lives a certain amount of unhappiness. Pain, suffering, and death are occurrences so common as to be recognized by almost all of human beings. Whether it be their own or that of someone else, there are few men indeed who do not make some effort to alleviate some of the suffering to be found in this world. There are many who attempt to remove suffering through faith in the scriptures of a particular religion; others through faith in the scientific method. Some consider philanthropy as a method for removing suffering; while others consider its removal a personal matter to be achieved in retirement. Be that as it may, even the most consummate cynic will do whatever he or she can to make life as happy as possible.

This attempt on the part of man to remove suffering is an admission that pain or suffering is a problem worthy of consideration. In this respect the Hindu seems to have outdone the rest of mankind. The problem of suffering and its cessation has occupied a large amount of his history and

1. Nicomachean Ethics, X, 9, 5. My own translation from the text of Bekker, 1831.

seems to be the reason for very much of his philosophy.¹

While most men admit the need of some kind of release from the vicissitudes of life, yet, as indicated above, there is no unanimity among men as to the kind of release desired or as to the method of achieving such a desired end. The importance of the Hindu thinkers is here most manifest. Their thinking has been left to the rest of mankind in terms of a number of statements which, whether we agree with them or not, must be considered the ideas which have set the stage in much of the history of Eastern philosophical thinking.

Brief Statement of the Problem:

Within the framework of those major systems of Indian philosophy which follow in the tradition of the Upanisads concepts of release or liberation from the body and its attendant limitations are held as the highest goal of life. These concepts, it would seem, received slight variations in meaning from system to system. However, all of the six major systems of Hindu philosophy seem to agree that the state of

1. See G. A. Moore, "Comparative Philosophies of Life," in Philosophy-East and West, edited by G. A. Moore. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1946, pp. 258-60.

liberation is in terms of the absolute negation of suffering, which life in this world brings about. Though some speak of the released state as a state of absolute bliss (ānanda), yet the very nature and absoluteness of this state precludes the existence of suffering.

To determine to what extent similar concepts are to be found in the writings of Plato and the Neo-Platonists, and, if possible, to what extent these concepts resemble those of the Hindu, are the objectives of this thesis.

The value of such a thesis lies primarily in its clarification of one of the most significant concepts in the history of philosophy. The fact that such a comparison will, so to speak, set the stage for further comparative work involving the same concepts of other thinkers is also significant.

Method:

In attempting to establish a definition of release according to the Hindu systematic thinkers, the author proposes to consider the first four systems in groups of two systems each. Thus Nyaya and Vaishesika will be treated as one system, and Sankhya and Yoga as another. Purva Mimamsa and Vedanta will be considered as separate systems. Such a procedure does not jeopardize the validity of the results, since differences in release concepts between systems of a

group are negligible, and since, in presenting the group view, the views of both systems within the group will be considered. The object, then, will be to obtain, with respect to release, the essential ideas to be found within the frame work of all of the six systems.

Plato will be treated in a different manner. His dialogues will be considered along lines loosely parallel to the developmental sequence proposed by Lutoslawski.¹ The author, not wishing to involve himself concerning the still raging dispute over the development of Plato's thought, takes Lutoslawski's order (an order based primarily on stylometric grounds) only because some order is needed and his, in more cases, will not jeopardize the objectivity of the material.

Among the Neo-Platonists (from Ammonias Saccus to Proclus), Plotinus will be given almost exclusive consideration. This is done because Plotinus is obviously the most important man of this period.

Scope:

The six systems of Hindu philosophy to be considered in

1. Wincenty Lutoslawski, The Origin and Growth of Plato's Logic, London: Macmillan and Co., 1905, pp. 1-86.

this thesis are not the only systems that have arisen within the history of Hindu philosophical thinking. The Śaiva, the Śakta, and the Vaiṣṇava are in many respects the only living systems in India today. However, the scope of this thesis does not permit a consideration of more than the so-called six systems.

Similarities between Plato and the Hindu thinkers are not new to the field of comparative thought. The author does not here intend to go into the possible historical influences of one on the other, but simply to trace and define the similarity of Platonism to the systems of Hinduism relative to the concept of release.

CHAPTER I

THE CONCEPT OF RELEASE ACCORDING TO THE SIX SYSTEMS

Of the systems of thought or darsanas which arose subsequent to the Vedic Period, six became more famous and more representative of Hindu thought than the others: Nyaya, Vaishēṣika, Sāṃkhya, Yoga, Pūrva Mimāṃsā, and Uttara Mimāṃsā or Vedānta. They are often called the Brahmanical systems since they all accept the authority of the Vedas. The acceptance of the Vedas implies that all of the systems have drawn from a common reservoir of thought, and this further implies agreement, among the systems, on certain essentials. Such implied agreement is easily verifiable within the history of Indian philosophy. Thus most of the systems protest against the scepticism of the Buddhists. Most accept the view that the universe is in a continual rhythm of creation and dissolution. All accept the view of rebirth and pre-existence. However, the one agreement which stands out among all others is that all of the systems make release or mokṣa the very reason for their philosophy. It is the ideal to achieve. Complete freedom from the discords and sorrows of life is the most noble destiny of every man whether he be priest or layman, rich or poor.

Before entering the systems, we should do well to reiterate¹ the fact that among the thinkers of this period (400 B.C.? - 700 A.D.?) there are two different treatments of release: The first is negative, defining it in terms of the absence of something; while the second is positive, making release the fullness of everything. As will be demonstrated, the latter treatment includes the former.

In obedience to custom, which it would be vain to try to unsettle, we shall start with the Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika, then move to the Sāṃkhya and Yoga, and end with the Mīmāṃsā and Vedānta.

The Concept of Release According
to the Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika:

Gotama, the author of the Nyāya Sūtra, and Kaṇāda, the author of the Vaiśeṣika Sūtra, together with most of their respective commentators, hold a similar idea concerning the individual soul and its release. To these thinkers, the soul is a real, substantive, and eternal entity. It is

1. See above, page ii.

unique in each individual.¹ There are an infinite number of souls; if not, then everybody would be conscious of the feelings and thoughts of everybody else. To these souls consciousness is not an essential property. The series of cognitions can have an end.

"As regards the final cognition, it is destroyed either when there are no causes for its continuance (in the form of merit or demerit) or by reason of the peculiarities of time (which can put an end to the operation of merit and demerit), or by impressions of the final cognition itself."²

It follows that the soul, which is the substratum of consciousness, need not always be conscious. As a matter of fact it is an unconscious principle capable of being qualified by states of consciousness. Consciousness is regarded as a quality of the soul produced in the waking state by the conjunction of the soul with the body and its senses. The body has its source in the past acts done by

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1. Vācaspati, Nyāyavārttikatātparyatīka, I, 1, 10; French translation, Le Nyāyavārttikatātparyatīka by George Pinet, O.P.T., Vol. 13., Paris: Le Mère & Co., 1922.
 2. Uddyotakara, Nyāyavārttika, III, 2, 24; French translation, Le Nyāyavārttika by Charles Masseneau, O.P.T., Vol. 9., Paris: Le Mère & Co., 1904. My own translation from the French.

the person, and is the basis of pain, suffering, experience, and bondage.

"By Samsāra, I mean that suffering which arises from the body and plagues the soul in life after life."¹

What, then, would the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika consider the exact nature of release? The answer has already been implied or partially stated. Release is the complete cessation of effort and activity which has its genesis in the body and plagues the soul via consciousness. When Kaṇāda speaks of release he means an absolute divorce of the self from the body: this type of release precludes the other type, release while still connected to the body (jīvanmukti):

"Release consists in the non-existence of conjunction with the body, when there is at the same time, no potential body existing, and consequently, rebirth cannot take place."²

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1. Uddyotakara, op. cit., IV, 1, 10. My own translation from the French.
 2. Kaṇāda, Vaiśeṣika Sūtra, V, 2, 15; English translation, Vaiśeṣika Sūtra, by Nandalal Sinha, S.B.H., Vol. 6, Allahabad: Vijaya Press, 1923.

Liberation, then, is not attained until after a final and irrevocable death has taken place. In this life as well as in all future lives the experience of both pain and pleasure is inevitable. It is only when the series of births and deaths, brought on by the past acts of an individual, is completely stopped that liberation, in the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika sense of the term, is achieved. In terms of this achievement as well as in terms of the fact that the body is the source of pain and suffering to the soul, we may safely say that the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika sense of the term liberation is to be taken as the complete absence of all pain and suffering which torments, or is capable of tormenting, the soul.

A very general description of how the released state comes about is given by Gotama himself. The description serves further to demonstrate the idea that release is to be understood ultimately as the complete absence of the pain which the soul experiences while connected with the body:

"Pain, birth, activity, faults,
and wrong knowledge--on the
successive annihilation of these
in the reverse order there follows
release."¹

1. Gotama, Nyāya Sūtra, I, 1, 2; English translation, Nyāya Sūtra, by Nandalal Sinha, S.B.H., Vol. 8, Allahabad: Vijaya Press, 1930.

The first step consists in the removal of wrong knowledge, i.e., the belief that the self or soul is identical with the body. With the removal of wrong knowledge and the realization of the difference between body and soul the faults or passions of the body cease to move the soul to activity.¹ In the absence of activity there is no creation of karma, or the moral energy which brings about rebirth. Now, with the death of the body and with no possibility of taking on another body, liberation for the soul is final and complete. Such a final state of release is called apavarga mukti, or release out of the body. The released state is to be achieved by right knowledge and the exhaustion of all fruit-bearing activity.

The Concept of Release According to the Sāṃkhya-Yoga:

As with Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, Sāṃkhya-Yoga asserts the existence of a plurality of souls lifted above time and change and free from all of the accidents of finite life. Although matter is admitted, yet these souls are spiritual

1. The activity mentioned here is primarily to be taken as the activity of consciousness since such is the only activity by which the soul can be modified.

and cannot, therefore, be referred to the same principle from which matter arises. Metaphysically speaking, the souls are identical, and yet there is, somehow, a plurality of them. Empirically speaking, differences are due to the nature of the bodies to which the souls are incorporated. Thus, Sāṃkhya-Yoga is, in both the empirical as well as the metaphysical, dualistic.

When the facts of the world are viewed from the epistemological point of view, we obtain a classification into subjects on the one side and objects on the other. The relation between any subject and any object is that of cognition or, more broadly, experience. Sāṃkhya-Yoga regards the knower as the soul or puruṣa and the known as matter or prakṛti.

Because of the foregoing, Sāṃkhya-Yoga is certain that the exact nature of the self cannot be confused with the body. Nor can it be confused with the senses,¹ since the latter are the instruments for seeing and not the seer. Positively speaking, the self is defined as pure spirit.² It cannot change for then knowledge would be impossible. It is simply pure consciousness. It does not, however, know all

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1. Sāṃkhya Sūtra, II, 29; English translation, Aphorisms of Kapila, by James Ballantyne, Third Edition, London: Trübner & Co., 1885.
 2. Ibid., VI, 1-2.

things in the empirical sense, for empirical cognition is possible only through the limitations of the body. When the soul is released from these limits, it has no cognitive modifications, but remains, in this respect, a completely unmodified entity.¹

The bound state of the purusa comes about through its being conjoined with the senses and limited by the body. In this state the purusa takes on the status of a jīva which is akin to what contemporary psychologists in the West call the empirical ego. It is this empirical self, which is a mixture of the free spirit and the mechanism of prakṛti, that is done away with in liberation. Since bondage does not, therefore, intrinsically involve purusa, release is only phenomenal. This is the only inference possible in terms of the foregoing, coupled with the fact that bondage and release refer to the conjunction and disjunction of purusa and prakṛti resulting from non-discrimination and discrimination respectively:

"Bondage arises from the error of not discriminating between nature and soul."²

When the jīva or the modified soul discriminates

1. Kapila, Op. Cit., VI, 59.

2. Ibid., I, 56.

properly between itself and continually evolving prakṛti then the latter ceases to act upon the former. When this takes place jīva disappears leaving puruṣa in its natural form:

"The cessation of the creation by prakṛti in regard to the discriminating one is nothing but this, viz., the non-production of experience."¹

In essence, then, there is no difference between the bound and the released; for the souls are in reality never bound. Per accidens, however, there is a difference. Upon the destruction of the jīva, release takes place, which is to say that some kind of a perturbation akin to suffering has ceased:

"On release, the puruṣa, unmoved and unbothered contemplates prakṛti which has ceased to produce."²

1. Vijñānabhikṣu, Sāṅkhyapravācānabhāṣya, VI, 44; French translation, Le Bhāṣya du Sāṅkhyapravācāna Par Vijñānabhikṣu, by Charles Masseneau, O.P.T., Vol. 22, Paris: Le Merle & Co., 1908. My own translation from the French.
2. Īśvarakṛṣṇa, Sāṅkhyakarika, LXV; English translation, Sāṅkhyakarika, by S.S. Shastri, Madras: University, 1935.

While disjunction between puruṣa and prakṛti is deliverance from suffering, it is not the end of all existence; nor is it the manifestation of bliss, since the puruṣas are free from all attributes.¹ All passages in the Vedas and the Upanisads where bliss is spoken of are interpreted by Samkhya-Yoga as meaning simply the state of freedom from pain.

When discrimination comes about the puruṣa is not immediately freed. The jīva continues for some time, but prakṛti ceases to bother the puruṣa, leaving it still connected with the body but not bothered or hindered by it. In this respect liberation is capable of being had in this world (jīvanmukti) and need not be postponed until after death as in the Nyaya and Vaiśeṣika:

"Virtue and the rest having ceased to function as causes, because of the attainment of perfect wisdom, (the spirit) remains invested with the body, because of the force of past impressions, like the whirl of the potter's wheel which persists for a while by virtue of the momentum imparted by a prior impulse."²

Over and above the fact the Samkhya-Yoga has a

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1. Kapila, Op. Cit., V, 82.
 2. Īśvarakṛṣṇa, Op. Cit., LXVII.

more developed theory concerning the exact nature of the self, and beyond the fact that the Sāṅkhya rejects a static categorized world as the source of bondage, there is one major difference from that of Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika with regard to release itself. This difference is the fact that Sāṅkhya and Yoga admit of release while the self is still connected with the body (jīvanmukti), whereas Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika admit of release which can be had only in a disembodied state. Whatever the differences, it is nevertheless certain that both groups admit a substantial something-or-other that can be released, and both admit that the state of release is in terms of the total absence of all pain or suffering which has its genesis in some connection between the self and the non-self.

The Pūrva Mimāṃsā Concept
of Release:

Jaimini, often termed the founder of this school, does not offer, in his Mimāṃsā Sūtra, any elaborate proof of the reality of the self. Śābara, the chief commentator on Jaimini, accepts the reality of a permanent cognizer which is, "known by itself and incapable of being seen or shown by

others".¹ Śābara's view seems to imply that the self is one with consciousness. In general this is the view of such Mīmāṃsaka thinkers as Kumāṛila,² Sucarita Miśra,³ and Maṇḍana Miśra.⁴ To these thinkers, though the self is one with consciousness yet it is to be considered distinct from the body and the senses since it persists even when the sense organs are gone. There must also be an entity which synthesizes the different sense data. It is admitted that the soul is modified, but this fact does not destroy its eternality.⁵ The soul is regarded as all-pervading (vibhu) and is able to connect with one body after another.

Despite their contention of the all-pervading nature of the soul, some of the Mīmāṃsaka thinkers mentioned above adopt the theory of the plurality of selves to account for the varieties of experiences.⁶ These experiences, which are considered qualities of the soul, are the realities which

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1. Upavaṛṣa, I, 1, 4; English translation, The Upavaṛṣa, by Swami Sabovananda, V.C.S., Vol. IV, London: Vedānta Center Press, 1948.
 2. Tantravārttika, II, 1, 5; English translation, The Tantra-Vārttika, by Gobi Bhakana, V.C.S., Vol. 8, London: Vedānta Center Press, 1951.
 3. Kāśika, II, 2, 4; English translation, Sucarita Miśra: Man of Devotion, by Nicol McNicol, E.L., #47, New York: Everyman's Press, 1951.
 4. Vidhivivekā, pp. 28-44; Latin translation, De Vidhivivekenti: Expositio, by Rev. Robert Hendley, London: Burns Oates & Washburn, 1909.
 5. Kumāṛila, op. cit., pp. 22-23.
 6. Ibid., pp. 5-7.

bring pain and bondage to the self:

"The Self is the substrate of qualities like knowledge, activity, and experience, or enjoyment and suffering."¹

According to Śābara, the self cannot be the subject as well as the object of consciousness.² It is the agent and enjoyer of conscious states. Kumārila, on the other hand, maintains that the self is both the subject and object. He argues that in the act of recognition of self, the self becomes the object, otherwise the recognition is objectless, and this cannot be so, since there can be no consciousness without an object. He maintains further, and this in contrast to both Śābara and Maṇḍana Miśra, that the soul cannot be all-pervasive since then there could be no varieties of experience, no plurality of souls. Whatever may be the case, it is obvious that, concerning the exact nature of the self, the Mimāṃsaka thinkers are not at one. It is, perhaps, this disunity in their conception of the

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1. Prabhākara Mimāṃsā (Bṛhatī), p. 344; English translation, The Mimāṃsā of Prabhākara, by Ganganath Jhā, V.C.S., Vol. 22, London: Vedānta Center Press, 1951.
 2. Pārthasārathī Miśra, Sastradīpikā, pp. 348-49; French translation, Le Sastradīpikā, by Rasa Guenou, O.P.T., Vol. 16, Paris: Le Mère & Co., 1936.

self that has produced among the Mīmāṃsaka thinkers such varying ideas concerning the exact status of release.

Jaimini and Śābara did not face the problem of ultimate release. They discussed a kind of life that would lead to heaven; but no mention is made of freedom from births and deaths. The later writers could not avoid the problem, since it occupied the attention of the thinkers of other schools. According to Prabhākara, the famous commentator on the Bhāṣya of Śābara, release is:

"...the absolute cessation of the body caused by the disappearance of all dharma and adharma."¹

Upon realization that pleasure is always mixed with pain the individual attends to becoming liberated from samsāra. He attempts to exhaust all previous karma, and gradually through a better knowledge of the self and through a certain amount of asceticism manages to rid himself of his bodily existence. Again we find that knowledge alone cannot give us freedom from bondage. This can be attained only through the exhaustion of action and the fruit of

1. Prakaranapañcikā, p. 156; quoted in Dasgupta, A History of Indian Philosophy, Vol. I, p. 82.

action. Proper knowledge prevents further accumulation of merit and demerit. Mokṣa is to be considered the end of both pleasure and pain. It cannot be considered a state of bliss because the soul which is free of attributes cannot have the attribute of bliss.

According to Kumārila, mokṣa is the state of the soul when it is absolutely free of all pain:

"In this the great ātman is free: no pain and no return of pain."¹

The conception of mokṣa as bliss is against Kumārila's view by which liberation cannot be eternal unless of a negative character.² Pārthasārathi Miśra, a Mimāṃsaka thinker later than the above mentioned ones, also holds that the state of release is one in which the self is free of pain, and does not enjoy bliss. Since enjoyment comes through the activities of the body and its senses, it is impossible for the self, in the liberated state, to enjoy bliss, for in such a state the self is devoid of body and senses.

1. Op. Cit., p. 28.

2. Ibid., p. 34.

Thus with regard to the nature of liberation, we find two overlapping views among the Mimāṃsakas. There is, first, the view that, since in liberation the soul is freed from its connection with the body, the senses, and the mind, it cannot have any consciousness; nor can it, therefore, enjoy bliss. Liberation is desirable not as a state of bliss, but as the total cessation of painful experience. It is a state in which there is neither pain nor pleasure, nor any specific quality in the soul. Then there is the other view that in liberation there is not only the cessation of all pain but also the enjoyment of bliss. This latter conception --a positive one--will be given emphasis in the Vedānta.

The Concept of Release

According to the Advaita-Vedānta:

Śankara, the founder of the Advaita-Vedānta school, is a monist, an unqualified monist. All distinctions between object and object, subject and object, self and non-self are the illusory creation of māyā. With Śankara, the concept of identity without any real difference is carried out to its logical conclusion. Śankara accepts, therefore, and without reservation, the identity of soul and Brahman which he claims is repeatedly taught in the Upaniṣads.

Ostensibly man is composed of body and soul. But that

which we term body is, like all other objects, an illusion. When this fact is realized, the remaining reality is the soul, which is nothing other than the impersonal Brahman. The famous Upaniṣadic passage, "That thou art," is taken by Śankara to mean an unqualified identity between the soul and the Absolute. What is meant is that an individual, viewed apart from all of his or her individuating circumstances, is identical with the Absolute or Brahman. Although such a statement is a tautology, yet it is not to be thought fruitless, because it serves to show the illusoriness of difference.

Because of ignorance, the genesis of which is not known, the soul erroneously mistakes itself with the body. This association is bondage. With this association comes forgetfulness of the fact of identity with Brahman. At this stage the bound individual is aware of this book at one time, or that statue at another, and further aware of some distinction between awareness and the object of awareness. Confronted with such a distinction, contemporary psychologists have been led to posit what they call an empirical ego. It is this empirical ego (aham) which according to the Advaitin is misidentified with the soul (ātman):

"It makes itself of the mind
thinking I am this or I am that."¹

1. Vedānta Sūtra, Śankara's Bhāṣya, I, 1, 2; English translation, Vedānta Sūtra with Śankara's Commentary, by George Thibaut, S.B.E., Vol. XXXIV.

To the trained scientist and to many a Western thinker, this identification of the self with the empirical ego is not only an accurate statement about a portion of reality, but is, likewise, the only accurate statement possible about that portion. Sankara and his followers, using the doctrine of dreamless sleep to be found in the Chāndogya¹ and Bṛhadāraṇyaka² Upaniṣads, presents a very clever argument, which is empirically verifiable and which supports the thesis that the self is mis-identified when it is identified with the empirical ego (aham). In essence the argument is this: When an individual is awake there is a subject-object relationship. When he is asleep and dreaming, there is still a subject-object relationship. It is only when the individual is asleep and not dreaming that such a relationship is supposedly broken. In this latter state, consciousness remains because the individual can awaken and relate the fact that his sleep was peaceful and unrelated to any object. It is thus thought by the Śāṅkarites that dreamless sleep reveals the best empirical evidence of the self in its real state. Thus the empirical method of psychology is coupled

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1. Chāndogya Upaniṣad, VI, 8, 1; English translation Chāndogya Upaniṣad, by R. E. Hume, Revised Edition, Oxford: The University Press, 1943.
 2. Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad, IV, 3, 7-12, 4, 2; English translation, Bṛhad-Āraṇyaka Upaniṣad, by R. E. Hume, Revised Edition, Oxford: The University Press, 1934.

with a metaphysical monism to substantiate the concept that:

"Release is nothing but being all without difference; and all without difference is Brahman."¹

Because Brahman is everything, i.e., everything devoid of its particularizing conditions, and because nobody has yet demonstrated how activity could lead to release, the released state is completely unrelated to any activity except that of understanding:

"Release is not something to be purified. And as nobody is able to show any other way in which release could be connected with action, it is impossible that it should stand in any, even the slightest, relation to any action, excepting knowledge."²

In the realization of the oneness of everything, especially the oneness between the Soul and Brahman, the

1. Vedānta Sūtra, op. cit., I, 1, 4.

2. Ibid., I, 1, 6.

realized individual becomes blissfull. This blissfull state is difficult to express, primarily because it has no limitations to which a description can be given.

The Concept of Release
According to the Viśiṣṭadvaita Vedānta:

Rāmānuja, the founder of the Viśiṣṭadvaita Vedānta school, is a qualified monist. The identity between the Absolute and the individual taught by the Upaniṣads is not really an unqualified one. The attempt on the part of Sankara to find an absolute monism within the context of any particular Upaniṣad--to say nothing of the Upaniṣads taken together--is, in the eyes of Rāmānuja, an almost fruitless attempt, the results being incapable of adequate verification.¹ This difficulty is further enhanced by the fact that absolute identity is repugnant to reason:

"How could that which is only a part, be the whole."²

1. See Deussen, System of the Vedānta, London: Henøry Hause, Third Edition, 1947, p. 95.
2. Vedānta Sūtra, Rāmānuja's Bhasya, I, 1, 4; English translation, Vedānta Sūtra, Rāmānuja's Commentary, by George Thibaut, S.B.E., Vol. 28.

The all-pervasive nature of the soul which the Upaniṣads describe cannot be taken in the literal sense since the soul is only a part of the whole. Its being only a part of the whole is obvious from the fact that it is encumbered by a finite body which is very real:

"How could the body and senses which are immediately with us, be denied. Illusion cannot be the explanation for these."¹

The doctrine of māyā Rāmānuja claims to be a distorted view of the prayer at the end of the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad:

"...lead us from non-being to being, from darkness to light, from death to immortality."²

Rāmānuja claims that the fact of moving from one status to another, as indicated by the poem, is that on which Śankara bases his distinction between "higher knowledge" (paravidya) and "lower knowledge" (aparavidya), and which are the

1. Rāmānuja, op. cit., I, 3, 2.

2. VI, 5, 5; English translation, Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad by Nicol McNicol, E.L., #402, New York: Everyman's Press, 1949.

constituents of his doctrine of māyā. Be that as it may, the rejection of the doctrine of māyā is supposed to complete the overthrow of Śankara's absolute monism.

The bondage of the soul to the body is due to its karma, and liberation must be sought through work and knowledge. By work Rāmānuja means the rituals enjoined by the Vedas and Upaniṣads:

"Because (also) it is taught (in context) that he who is firmly devoted to That (viz. Sat) obtains final release."¹

That text most probably referred to by Ramanuja is that found in the Chāndogya Upaniṣad:

"In this world, whatever be the nature of a man's devotion to That, yet after death he is free."²

Knowledge is also to be considered. But real knowledge is not verbal knowledge of the scriptures, for then everyone

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1. Vedānta Sūtra, op. cit., I, 5, 7.
 2. Chāndogya Upaniṣad, III, 14, 1; English translation, Chāndogya Upaniṣad, by Swami Sharvananda, Madras: Rāmakrishna Math, 1928.

who reads the scriptures would be liberated. Real knowledge is a steady, constant direction of the individual to God. This intense direction ultimately matures into an immediate knowledge, a sort of intuitive insight. This knowledge coupled with the aid of God is the final step in the path of liberation:

"God having helped the realized,
he is free and like Him."¹

Rāmānuja believes, then, that the final condition of the released soul is one of similarity with God in which the soul is happy by virtue of the communion which such a similarity produces. This happiness is blissful so that, in searching for a positive description for it, the Hindu has contented himself with sat (real), cit (consciousness), ānanda (bliss).

Recapitulation:

In view of all that has been stated thus far, a number

1. Vedānta Sūtra, op. cit., III, 4, 7.

of very salient features concerning the nature of release in the Hindu systematic thinkers can be maintained.

First of all, there appears in each of the major systems of Hindu thought concepts of the self. Thus, for Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika, the real self is a substantial, non-conscious, indestructable entity capable of being modified and bound by states of consciousness. In Sāṅkhya-Yoga the purusa is likewise an indestructable entity. It is, however, unmodified, at times mis-identifying itself with constantly evolving matter. Although the Mimāṃsaka thinkers are not at one with regard to the exact nature of the soul, yet all agreed that it at least enjoys some sort of an entative status. With Śāṅkara's concept of the self, we encounter for the first time a difficulty in establishing an entative character for the soul. Because of the identification of ātman with Brahman posited by Śāṅkara, the soul cannot be considered so much an entity as a form of universal substance. This substance becomes an apparent entity upon being bound. In Rāmānuja, the problem of classifying the soul as an entity again becomes very easy. For him, the soul is definitely finite, and there is a plurality of souls. It is also very definitely an eternal entity. Thus, while some of the systems may disagree with regard to the exact nature of the soul, yet all agree that whether it be an infinite substance or a finite entity, there is a spiritual something-or-other which may be either bound or released.

Secondly, the systems also maintain the possibility of

attaining a freedom from bondage for their something-or-other. For Nyāyā, it is the irrevocable separation from the body and from the suffering consequent upon being connected to a body and its changing states of consciousness. For Sāṅkhya-Yoga it is the absence of disturbance from constantly moving prakṛti. For Mīmāṃsā it is again the separation of soul from body and from the suffering resultant upon the existence of body. Śāṅkara denies discreteness and posits the illusoriness of change. Rāmānuja considers the body and its changing states of consciousness as very real and something to be ended through a constant direction of the mind toward a single object of love. For both Śāṅkara and Rāmānuja, release is absolute bliss. This latter concept of positive bliss conversely denies the existence of pain.

From the foregoing, we can safely say that, concerning the nature of release, the complete absence of pain is the essential accepted by all of the systems. Further, this complete absence of pain must be considered in terms of the static. Though some of the systems require also the absence of certain other things, such as ignorance, wrong action, rebirth, yet these requirements are such only in order to secure the absence of change or the illusion of change, which is the basis of suffering.

By way of conclusion, we may say that the Hindu holds that there is such a thing as a substance capable of being either in a state of bondage or in a state of release from

bondage. The former state is one primarily of pain or suffering, while the latter state consists of the total and abiding absence of such suffering, and this is called release.

CHAPTER II

PLATO'S CONCEPT OF RELEASE

Thus far we have considered the Hindu idea of release. We have discovered a definition of release compatible with all of the six major systems of Hindu thought. This chapter will be spent in attempting to discover the Platonic view of release, with chapter four reserved for a deeper study of similarities and dissimilarities between the two.

Release is a relational term. Thus before one can speak of the released state one must speak of that which is released as well as, to some extent, that state which can be called bondage. Hence, as was done in the treatment of the Hindu, we shall first try to understand the Platonic soul before attempting to understand Platonic bondage and Platonic release.

The Platonic Soul:

Aristotle, in discussing the doctrine of Ideas of his master, Plato, says: "He believed that it was impossible that a universal definition would have as its object a sensible thing, since sensible things are continually changing. This kind of being he called the Ideas. The sensible things,

he maintained, existed apart from the Ideas and are named after them; ..."¹ However this statement of Aristotle may be taken, it at least seems to suggest that the dichotomy between sensible things and the Ideas is identical with that between the changing and the static. There are numerous indications, suggestions, and direct statements in Plato which would not only render valid this implication of his brilliant pupil but would also point to a more generalized dichotomy of the world into the static and the changing, into the transcendent and the phenomenal. Thus, in the Phaedo², the master talks about truth which is beyond sense and perceived by the mind alone. He talks about the philosopher being a spectator of all that is temporal and all that is eternal,³ and maintains in the Republic⁴ that there are shadows about which we can have opinion, and the light of pure truth about which we can have knowledge. In the Cratylus⁵ there is a fairly detailed account of the difference between the continually fluctuating and the continually

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1. Aristotle, Metaphysics, I, 6. My own translation from the text of Bekker. Leipzig: D. C. Yonge and Co., 1894.
 2. Plato, Phaedo, 65. English translation by Benjamin Jowett. New York: Random House, 1937. See also Timaeus, 51 and Theatetus, 185. All footnotes specifying references to Plato's dialogues will be from this edition of Jowett's translations unless otherwise indicated, and will henceforth be stated only according to the name of the dialogue and the section.
 3. Republic, 486; also Theatetus, 173 E.
 4. 510 A; also Sophist, 266 D.
 5. 439-440.

abiding.

The above are still only suggestions of a purported dichotomy in Plato, of something which requires more disquisition. However, as we progress evidence for such a dichotomy will become more distinct. Ritter and Preller in their Historia,¹ seem to maintain that a clearly defined difference between the phenomenal and the transcendental cannot be maintained. However, in another work,² Ritter seems to adopt the position of Diels. The latter maintains that, "One of the things which strikes the reader of early Platonic commentaries is their preoccupation with Plato's division of the world into two realms: the Mutable and the Immutable."³ Although Taylor as much as possible would want to avoid any systematization of Plato, yet he maintains in discussing the Phaedo that there is a difference between that which is "the real" and that which encompasses "the fortunes of the body."⁴ Perhaps the most formidable opponent to the foregoing dichotomy is J. A. Stewart. It remains for us now to discuss Stewart's contention that the ideas do not have

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1. Historia Philosophia Graeca, Sec. 330, translated into English by J. E. Turner. London: The University Press, 1930.
 2. C. Ritter, The Essence of Plato's Philosophy. pp. 113 ff., translated into English by Adam Alles. New York: The Dial Press, 1933.
 3. H. Diels, Doxographi Graeci, I, 4, 6, translated into English by William Hardie. Oxford: The University Press, 1922.
 4. A. E. Taylor, Plato: The Man and His Work. New York: The Dial Press, 1927, pp. 178-183.

ontological status but merely logical, or, more accurately, methodological status. He says: "They the ideas are indeed separate from phenomena; but only so in the sense that they are the explanations as distinguished from the phenomena explained."¹ It is to be noted in this case that Stewart on the very same page admits that he takes as his point of departure in interpreting the Ideas the "aperçu" of Lotze. It is also significant that Stewart wrote this before Murray made his, now fruitful, contribution toward substantiating a real difference between *ἰδέα* and *εἶδος*.² Thus, we are led to reject as untenable the contention that the Platonic Idea is nothing else but a concept-in-use. It would seem that Stewart to a certain extent realized this for he qualifies himself somewhat by saying that the Ideas are dynamic only insofar as they have "methodological significance."³

An integral part of the dichotomy that we have been thus far considering is that between the transcendental soul and the phenomenal soul. In this case, we find the Platonic individual soul⁴ pivotal in any discussion about the realm of being and the realm of flux in Plato. This is why he makes

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1. J. A. Stewart, Plato's Doctrine of Ideas. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1909, p. 6.
 2. Journal of Classical Philology, Vol. VIII, No. 2. (August, 1936)
 3. Stewart, Op. Cit., pp. 7-9.
 4. Here consideration of the Platonic soul is limited to that of the individual soul with only occasional reference, where such is relevant, to the world soul.

the soul self-moving and the source of all change,¹ and yet maintains, that it is unchanging.² Its immortality is to be found in its dynamism.³ Yet it is also immortal and divine when it dwells among and becomes like the completely static Ideas. Murray maintains, "Unless a differentiation into two kinds of soul be maintained by Plato, neither the Ideas (*ἰδέα*) nor the images (*φαντάσμα*), or copies of the Ideas, can be adequately accounted for. It is here that the two find their place."⁴ Copelston⁵ contends that the distinction which Aristotle makes between the dianoetic soul and the threptic soul is historically unintelligible unless there is a basis for it in the dialogues of Plato. Jaeger in his work on Aristotle's development⁶ delineates such a basis. For the present, we shall take as an operational dichotomy the differentiation between transcendental soul and phenomenal soul. As we progress in studying this dichotomy more evidence will be brought forward toward its substantiation. In terms of such, then, we shall proceed to discuss the phenomenal soul. For the sake of adequacy and because of their

1. Phaedrus, 245 E.

2. Phaedo, 78.

3. Phaedrus, 245; see also Meno, 81 and Timaeus, 41.

4. G. Murray, Greek Studies. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1946, Vol. I, 127.

5. F. Copelston, Soul and the Platonists. Westminster: The Newman Book Sales, 1941, Vol. I, p. 127.

6. W. Jaeger, Aristotle, translated into English by Richard Robinson. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1950.

close relationship, (both) the existence as well as the nature of the phenomenal soul will be discussed.

Platonic Phenomenal Soul:

In Plato, the existence of the phenomenal soul is based on an inference from the fact of motion.¹ Plato applies the term motion ($\kappa\iota\upsilon\eta\sigma\iota\varsigma$) to many forms of the dynamic: locomotion, corruption and generation, uniting and separating, etc. However, all of these are considered types of physical motion none of which are genetically self-explanatory.

"Let us assume that there is a motion able to move other things, but not to move itself;--that is one kind; and there is another kind which can move itself as well as other things,..."²

Further:

"How can a thing which is moved by another ever be the beginning of change? Impossible."³

1. R. Demos, The Philosophy of Plato. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1939, p. 78.
2. Laws, 894 A.
3. Ibid., 894 E.

Plato, therefore, takes the self-moved or extra-physical motion as a necessary postulate for all other motion:

"Only the self-moving, never-leaving self never ceases to move, and is the fountain and beginning of motion to all that moves besides."¹

And to this self-moving principle he assigns the term soul:

"But if this be true, must not the soul be the self-moving, and therefore of necessity unbegotten and immortal."²

Plato's doctrine concerning the nature of the phenomenal soul can be divided into two parts: the soul as self-motion and the soul as motion toward others. In both cases, the meaning of motion is not to be taken in its narrow sense of simple locomotion, but as meaning also change in essence, composition and destruction. In Book Ten of the Laws, Plato in speaking about the tenth kind of motion, i.e., self-motion, says: "...that which changes (μεταβολή) itself and others, and is coincident with every action and every passion, and

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1. Phaedrus, 245 E; see also Politicus, 260 D.
 2. Ibid., 245 E.

is the true principle of change (μεταβολη) and motion (κινησις) in all that is, --that we shall be inclined to call the tenth."¹ Further, in discussing the soul's motion toward other things, Plato refers to it as, "...working in composition and decomposition, by increase and diminution and generation (αναβολη) and destruction (καταβολη), --that is also one of the many kinds of motion."²

After demonstrating that self-motion is necessary to immortality, Plato goes on to say:

"But if the self-moving is proved to be immortal, he who affirms that self-motion is the very idea and essence of the soul will not be put to confusion."³

Plato, in Book Ten of the Laws, further reinforced the above contention that the essence of the phenomenal soul is self-motion. Here he has the Athenian and Cleinias discussing the different types of physical motion and the

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1. 894 C.
 2. 894 E. The reader is directed to an unabridged Greek lexicon for a detailed account of the use of these terms in Plato; also see the Oxford Classical Dictionary, Vol. iii, pp. 410-422.
 3. Phaedrus, 245 E.

necessity for self-motion when Cleinias asks:

"You mean to say that the
essence which is defined as self-
moved is the same with that which
has the name soul.

"Yes...."¹

No matter what change takes place in the soul, no matter what soul it is, the motion is always a typed motion seeking the Good, or the True, or the Beautiful. Evil is to be had when a copy of one of these transcendentals is sought in the place of its [~]achetype. Even in discussing the motions of the tripartite soul, Plato maintains a typed motion either toward the Good or the Beautiful. This will be further discussed later when we shall consider Platonic release. Meanwhile, we shall give our attention to that other facet of the nature of the phenomenal soul, namely, motion toward others.

The notion of otherness, in Plato, is logically implied in the notion of movement toward others. Therefore, before discussing the soul's movement toward others, we must consider first the Platonic notion of otherness. In the

1. 896 A.

Sophist,¹ Plato defines otherness as the class which pervades all classes. In the Timaeus,² he makes the notion of otherness and sameness concomitantly innate in the soul, and maintains that the latter is forced to recognize either when becoming involved with anything discreet from itself. This has led Skemp to maintain an internal motion of the soul realizing otherness before the external motion of the soul involves the latter with a particular participant in otherness.³

In terms of the above, Plato finds it proper to posit an analogy between the soul's activity and a productive agent (δευρονομος). This productive agent is related to that which is produced through judgement, command, and execution. When discussing the proper excellences of things, Plato says, "...and has not the soul an end which nothing else can fulfil? for example, to superintend and command and deliberate and the like. Are not these functions proper to the soul, and can they rightly be assigned to any other?"⁴

The individual phenomenal soul's motion toward other things sets up a continuity between it and that which is

1. 254 E.

2. 37.

3. J. B. Skemp, The Theory of Motion in Plato's Later Dialogues. Cambridge: The University Press, 1942, p. 10 ff.

4. Republic, 353; see also Laws, 902 B-E and 886 A ff. and Politicus, 258 E-260 E.

non-soul. Thus, Anderson, in discussing the intelligible world of Plato says: "Motion which is to be understood as logical otherness, must be interpreted within an intelligible and interrelated cosmos. The realm in which it takes place is neither an absolute unity, such as the Eleatics assert, nor an indeterminable multiplicity, such as the Heracleiteans describe, but a dialectical unity which contains a variety of commensurably interdependent intelligibles."¹ However, the individual soul not only forms a continuum with all of that which is non-soul but also with the world soul. And it appears that such a continuum is based on an analogy of amount:

Socrates: May our body be said to have a soul?
 Protarchus: Clearly.
 Socrates: And whence comes that soul, my dear Protarchus, unless the body of the universe, which contains elements like those in our bodies but in every way fairer, had also a soul? Can there be another source?
 Protarchus: Clearly, Socrates, that is the only source."²

1. F. H. Anderson, The Argument of Plato. London: J. M. Dent and Sons Ltd., 1934, p. 193.
 2. Philebus, 30.

Thus, the individual phenomenal soul is less than the world soul with regard to the amount of the physical world it either changes or sets in locomotion,¹ but it is identical with the world soul in essence, i.e., self-motion, and implies the world soul as its source. Hence, the use of the predicate, continuum.

Having considered the phenomenal soul in its nature as self-changing and motion toward others, it remains for us to consider the reason given by Plato for the soul's motion toward others. The reason is to be found in the constituents of the tripartite soul. The constituent of appetite and sometimes that of passion or spirit causes the soul to move in the direction of or change itself relative to non-soul.² The constituent of reason also plays a role in the soul's movement toward other things. In his chapter on "Cognitive Desire," Anderson³ would want to maintain that the whole Symposium supports the contention that the rational part of the soul moves in the same way to embrace imperfect beauty. As we progress in our study of the soul and its release a more specific picture of the tripartite soul and its constituents in relation to the soul's motion will be advanced.

1. Laws, 896 A-898 E.

2. Republic, 439 ff.

3. F. H. Anderson, op. cit., pp. 107-113. We should be inclined to limit such evidence to certain passages in the conversation between Diotima and Socrates.

Thus far we have said that the need for an unmoved mover posits the existence of the soul. But because the moved logically implies the mover and because, in moving, the mover must partake, in some way, of the moved, Plato by implication contends that the soul is not only a unique self-motion but is also partly the motion it imparts to soulless things. Thus, the soul is motion in the widest sense of the term. Its essence is that of the purely dynamic. Further, the soul's motion is patterned according to the Good and the Beautiful.

Platonic Transcendental Soul:

In Plato, the clearest, and perhaps most extensive, statement about a kind of soul essentially different from the phenomenal soul is to be found in the Phaedo. There are occasional references in the Laws¹ and the Meno² and some rather precise references in Book Ten of the Republic.³ Aside from these three dialogues there is nothing from which a clear definition of a kind of soul other than the phenomenal can be drawn. Natorp⁴ is of the opinion that the Phaedo represents one work out of several others which are lost.

1. 904 A.

2. 81 A; also 88 ff.

3. 609 A-611 D.

4. Plato's Ideas, pp. 126-127, translated into English by George Lémon. Chicago: The University Press, 1936.

His reason is that the Phaedo represents a completely different approach to the soul from that of the other dialogues. Stewart¹ is not as excessive as Natorp and would want to maintain that the latter unduly separates the Phaedo from the Meno. Stewart maintains that in both there is a good deal of emphasis laid on the separation of soul from body, and from a logical standpoint, there is the delineation of "categories". In commenting upon the position of certain Donatists, Copelston discusses their adherence to a doctrine of soul which he terms "placid" and then goes on to say that they and the Messalians, "talk eloquently of one side of the Platonic Soul, that side which appears primarily in the Phaedo."² In any case, it shall be our practice in treating the transcendental soul to utilize most of all the Phaedo, with occasional references, whenever possible, to the other dialogues.

In the Phaedo, Socrates is beginning his defense of the immortality of the soul. He takes as his point of departure a discussion on the possible mutability of the Ideas. He

1. J. A. Stewart, Plato's Doctrine of Ideas, p. 42 ff.

2. F. Copelston, Soul and the Platonists, Vol. I, p. 233.

concludes that they are immutable:

"Is that idea or essence, which in the dialectical process we define as essence or true existence--whether essence of equality, beauty, or anything else--are these essences, I say, liable at times to some degree of change? or are they each of them always what they are, having the same simple self and unchanging forms not admitting of variation at all, or in any way, or at any time?

"They must be always the same, Socrates, replied Cebes."¹

The whole doctrine of the transcendental soul is based upon the real difference between the ever-changing phenomena and the static Ideas. This is undoubtedly why Pater says: "Over and against that world of flux it is the vocation of Plato to set up a standard of unchangeable reality, which in its highest theoretic development becomes the world of 'eternal and immutable idea,' indefectible outlines of thought, yet also the veritable things of experience."²

Later in the Phaedo, is put forward the hypothesis of two sorts of existence, one seen, the other unseen: "Well then, added Socrates, let us suppose that there are two sorts

1. 78 D.

2. W. Pater, Plato and Platonism. London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd., 1925, p. 27.

of existences — one seen, the other unseen."¹ Verification for such a hypothesis is to be found in our knowledge of universals over and against our knowledge of particulars. In the Theaetetus², Socrates is discussing two types of knowledge; that which refers to particulars and is related to bodily sense and that which refers to universals and is related to the soul. One is seen and the other unseen. Further, the body is akin to the seen and the soul is akin to the unseen.³ The essential difference between the seen and the unseen is that to the former is predicated transitoriness and to the latter is predicated the nature of the completely static:

"The seen is the changing,
and the unseen is the unchanging.
That may be also supposed."⁴

Thus, for Plato the transcendental soul is like the Ideas in that it is unseen by bodily sense but seen by the mind alone. It is even more akin in essence for it is static. In terms of such, both the Ideas and the transcendental soul

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1. 79 A.
 2. 185 A - 186.
 3. Phaedo, 79 A.
 4. Ibid., 79 A.

are essentially different from the world of changing phenomena. "They belong to the world of true being and unchanging reality."¹

In retrospect, then, we see Plato as: 1.) presenting evidence for supporting the contention that the Ideas are static, 2.) demonstrating the identity between the unseen and the static, 3.) demonstrating the kinship between the soul and the unseen, and 4.) making use of the Euclidean axiom: "Things which are equal to the same thing are equal to one another"² to prove the equivalence between the static and the soul. From the viewpoint of absolute being, this concept is positive. From the viewpoint of motion it is negative. The positive description of such a soul is almost of necessity, in terms of metaphor.

Platonic Release:

In terms of the foregoing treatment of the Platonic soul, Platonic release will be treated from two points of view: the release of the phenomenal soul, and the release

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1. P. Shorey, What Plato Said. Chicago: The University Press, 1933, p. 226.
 2. The Elements, p. 6 of the Toadhunter edition in English. London: J. M. Dent and Sons Ltd., 1948. This axiom is really Platonic instead of Euclidean since Plato was the first to formulate it.

of the transcendental soul.

Because of their intimate connection, and because release logically implies previous bondage, the nature of the latter will be discussed before the nature of the former, in the treatment of each of the above viewpoints.

Platonic Release: Phenomenal

Since the essential nature of the phenomenal soul is motion, then we must first ask if there is also a bondage which binds this essential nature: that which either frustrates the soul's motion or vitiates it. The Theaetetus furnishes a partial answer to this question by ascribing evil to the soul which is not in motion. Here Socrates is discussing with Theaetetus the necessity of motion and exercise to the body. Socrates then shifts his attention to the soul and asks his companion if inactivity and lack of motion are not evils to the soul: "Then motion is a good, and rest an evil, to the soul as well as to the body." And Theaetetus replies, "Clearly."¹ To this notion of the lack of activity being evil to the soul may be added innumerable instances in Plato where the soul's activity has been either frustrated or vitiating in terms of a proper end. Thus, in the Sophist, a stranger has Theaetetus admit that vice and

1. Theaetetus, 153 B.

deformity are synonymous with asymmetry. Then the stranger says: "And when things having motion, and aiming at an appointed mark, continually miss their aim and glance aside, shall we say that this is the effect of symmetry among them or of the want of symmetry;" to which Theaetetus replies: "Clearly of the want of Symmetry."¹ In Book Seven of the Republic, Plato, by means of the allegory of the cave, shows the soul in a state of relative immobility. Until some internal change takes place the soul does not know the light of truth but only shadows. Socrates maintains that if the soul were not chained by desire or necessity it would leave Hades.² The myth of the charioteer in the Phaedrus³ concerns itself with the frustrations which the soul encounters in movement toward absolute Truth, Goodness, and Beauty. Here the frustration and vitiation is attributed to unregulated desire.

The other side of the coin falls when the soul is free of the frustrations to its dynamism and is not a qualified but an absolute dynamism. A positive example of this movement from the relatively static to the dynamic is to be seen in the myth of the charioteer. In this myth of the Phaedrus, the soul begins by having "...the care of inanimate being everywhere, and traverses the whole heaven in divers

1. Sophist, 228 B.

2. Cratylus, 403 C.

3. 246-7.

forms (*μορφοσ*) appearing:--when perfect and fully winged she soars upward and orders the whole world;...."¹ The bondage or frustration to this activity comes when the soul, "losing her wings and drooping in her flight at last settles on the solid ground--there finding a home, she receives an earthly frame which appears to be self-moved, but is really moved by her power;...."² But the soul in this kind of bondage only regains the free activity of her wings after ten thousand years for, "she cannot grow her wings in less;"³ And this description of the phenomenal soul and its bondage is repeated at the end of the Republic,⁴ and in the Timaeus.⁵ The pertinent question at this time is the degree of literalness at which these myths may be taken. Shorey⁶ is of the opinion that they may be taken quite literally and maintains that the use of myth is merely to please certain rhetoricians of Plato's day. Anderson is of the same mind except that he would want to maintain that the reason for Plato's use of metaphorical language lies in his listener's familiarity with such.⁷ In making use of the

1. Phaedrus, 246 B.

2. Ibid., 246 C.

3. Ibid., 249 A.

4. 617.

5. 91 ff.

6. P. Shorey, Op. Cit., 202.

7. F. H. Anderson, The Argument of Plato, pp. 114-26.

myth of the Phaedrus we have adopted, somewhat loosely, the position of Ritter¹ which, like the foregoing, is a literal interpretation. It would seem that in elucidating a type of transmigration such as that of the Phaedrus, Plato is attempting to show the need for it until the soul's movement is completely uninhibited. This is probably why Plato says: "I have often remarked that there are three kinds of soul located within us, having each of them motions, and I must now repeat in the fewest words possible, that one part, if remaining inactive and ceasing from its natural motion, must necessarily become very weak, but that which is trained and exercised, very strong."² Then later, in delineating the natural motions of the various parts of the soul, he says of the divine part: "And the motions which are naturally akin to the divine principle within us are the thoughts and revolutions of the universe."³

The completely released phenomenal soul cannot be cognized except in terms of the pattern which it leaves among soulless things. This, of course, is the residue of influence upon Plato of the Heracleitean doctrine of flux.⁴

1. C. Ritter, The Essence of Plato's Philosophy, p. 109 ff.; see also R. Demos, The Philosophy of Plato, p. 78 ff.

2. Timaeus, 89 E.

3. Ibid., 90 C.

4. πάντα χωρεῖ καὶ οὐδὲν μένει (All things give way: nothing remaineth) says Heracleitus; and Socrates replies, εἶμέν τε καὶ οὐκ εἶμεν (We are and we are not)

Platonic Release: Transcendental

Socrates opens a discussion on what we are here terming transcendental release by the remark that the philosopher should be ready and happy to die.¹ He talks of a secret doctrine (probably Orphic) in which man is a prisoner of his body. He cautions against premature flight from this prison.² When questioned as to the reason for the philosopher being happy at death he replies that such should be the case since the philosopher is everyday trying to die. With these remarks, Plato sets the stage for everything that follows. For, the next question is: what is the definition of death? And the answer comes:

"Is it not the separation of soul and body? And to be dead is the completion of this; when the soul exists in herself, and is released from the body and the body is released from the soul, what is this but death?"³

Thus, Plato has set in opposition the body and the

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1. Phaedo, 61 E.
 2. Ibid., 62 A.
 3. Ibid., 64 C.

soul. And so, when the question is put as to why the philosopher desires this separation, Plato through Socrates can reply that, in terms of bondage, the reasons for desiring death are many. Firstly, the body misleads the soul.¹ It does this by placing the soul in continual turmoil and carrying on in its presence all sorts of foolery. In short, the body drags the soul into the realm of the fluctuating, the realm of the ever-changing. But more than all of this the body blinds the soul to absolute truth and beauty. For the body and its senses cannot perceive these. Socrates and Simmias are discussing this when the former asks:

"Is there or is there not an absolute justice?"

"Assuredly there is.

"And an absolute beauty and absolute good?"

"Of course.

"But did you ever behold any of them with your eyes?"

"Certainly not.

"Or did you ever reach them with any other bodily sense?--and I speak not of these alone, but of absolute greatness, and health and strength, and of the essence or true nature of everything. Has the reality of them ever been perceived

1. Phaedo, 65 E.

by you through the bodily organs? or rather is not the nearest approach to the knowledge of their several natures made by him who so orders his intellectual vision as to have the most exact conception of the essence of each thing which he considers?

"Certainly."¹

The inescapable conclusion of this type of reasoning is that for the soul to remain in the body is for it to remain in bondage. In the Cratylus, Plato attributes the origin of the term body to the Orphic poets. He then says of them, "... they were under the impression that the soul is suffering the punishment of sin, and that the body is an enclosure or prison in which the soul is incarcerated"² Bondage, therefore, may be proximately defined as change, confusion, and emptiness. Ultimately, it is to be placed in the body and its motions:

"And were we not saying long ago that the soul when using the body as an instrument of perception, that is to say, when using the sense of sight or hearing or some other sense--were we not saying that the soul too is then dragged by the body into the region of the changeable, and wanders, and is confused; the world

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1. Phaedo, 65 D-E.
 2. Cratylus, 400 C.

spins round her, and she is like a drunkard when she touches change?

"Very true."¹

Once again when we turn the coin over, we have what the soul is seeking, i.e., release. Life is best when the soul is freed from concerning itself with the body and its anarchy.² This is so because the soul was made to behold absolute and unchangeable truth. Since it cannot do this without being released from the body, transcendental release is defined negatively as release from the body and all of its attendant limitations:

"And what is purification but the separation of the soul from the body, as I was saying before; the habit of the soul gathering and collecting herself from all sides out of the body; the dwelling in her own place alone, as in another life, so also in this, as far as she can;--the release of the soul from the chains of the body?

"Very true he said."³

Not only is this a statement of the negative side of transcendental release but it is a statement of release possible,

1. Phaedo, 79 C.
2. Ibid., 64 D.
3. Ibid., 67 C.

*as in another life
- freedom in
body.*

to a certain extent, while in the body. Thus, Taylor says; "While in the body we make the nearest approach to our supreme good just in proportion as we accomplish the concentration of the soul on herself and the detachment of her attention from the body, waiting patiently until God sees fit to complete the deliverance for us."¹

what
The positive side of release reveals a level of absoluteness the attributes of which are purity, eternity, and the static. This positive side, it would seem stands somewhat in a reciprocal relation to the negative. Thus the soul, when she returns to herself,

"...passes into the other world, the region of purity, and eternity, and immortality, and unchangeableness, which are her kindred, and with them she ever lives, when she is by herself and is not let or hindered; then she ceases from her erring ways, and being in communion with the unchanging is unchanging."²

When all of this is accomplished, when all change is abolished, in short, when the body has disappeared from the soul, then the philosopher can look back or look forward and

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1. A. E. Taylor, Plato: The Man and His Work, p. 181; see also the Phaedo, 66 C-68 B.
 2. Phaedo, 79 D.

say of the soul:

"That soul, I say, herself invisible, departs to the invisible world--to the divine and immortal and rational; thither arriving, she is secure of bliss and is released from the error and folly of men, their fears and wild passions and all other human ills, and forever dwells, as they say of the initiated, in company with the gods."¹

Resume:

The preceding discussions should not be looked upon as presenting a single comprehensive view-point of Platonic release. Such a view-point is not possible with Plato. We have only attempted to discover the nature of Platonic release and have realized that, in Plato, there are two kinds: phenomenal release and transcendental release. Thus, Plato proves the existence of two types of soul, one phenomenal and the other transcendental. To each of them he predicates a type of essentially different release. As such, the release of the phenomenal soul is to be understood in terms of an absolute dynamism. Contrarywise, the release of the transcendental soul is in terms of the absolutely static. We

1. Phaedo, 81 A.

have not in this chapter attempted to bridge this dichotomy because we do not find sufficient evidence within the dialogues to render fruitful such an attempt.

CHAPTER III

THE CONCEPT OF RELEASE ACCORDING TO NEO-PLATONISM

In considering the Neo-Platonists, relative to the concept of release, one is confronted first with the problem of selecting those Neo-Platonists who have contributed original or semi-original speculations about the idea of release. While one would expect all of the Neo-Platonists to deal with release since it plays such a significant role in Plotinus, strange to say most of the Neo-Platonists ignore the problem and confine themselves to being Platonic scholars. The extant works of Syriannus contain no definite ideas concerning the soul and its release.¹ Simplicius, Themistius, and Macrobius confined themselves to short commentaries on Plato and Aristotle.² Therefore, of all the Neo-Platonic philosophers about whom anything is known, those who could be adequately discussed concerning release

1. E. Farlow, Asiatic Neo-Platonism. Cambridge: The University Press, 1928, pp. 142-210.

2. T. S. Phillips, The Successors to the Legacy of Plotinus. London: Burnes, Oates, and Washburn, 1926, pp. 125-146.

are Plotinus and Proclus.¹ The latter is almost completely Plotinian in thought. Wherever differences appear they do so as inconsistencies or contradictions serving, thereby, only to confuse the issue. Thus, we shall confine our discussion to Plotinus and his concept of release.

Greek philosophy before Plotinus had been almost continually confronted with the problem of the "one" and the "many". Is reality to be explained in terms of one principle or in terms of many? How, if at all, is the fact of diversity to be reconciled with a discoverable unity? The monistic systems of Heraclitus and Parmenides, the pluralism of the atomists, and the dualism concerning the realm of change and the realm of the static in Plato all point to the preoccupation of pre-Plotinian thinkers with this problem.² In this connection, Plotinus, although ultimately a monist, is significant because he proposed to solve the problem in terms of a reciprocal process: a process of the "One" to the "many" and the "many" back to the "One." Except for the speculations of Anaximander,³ nothing

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1. The works of Hypatia, Simplicius, Iamblicus have been lost. The works usually attributed to Apollonias of Tyana are definitely spurious seventh-century manuscripts. For a discussion of these latter see R. Weelright, Neo-Platonism: Fact, Fiction and Forgery. New York: Columbia University Press, 1939, pp. 122-148.
 2. F. Copleston, Recurring Problems in Greek Philosophy. London: Burnes, Oates, and Washburn, 1940. pp. 323-356.
 3. K. Freeman, The Pre-Socratic Philosophers, Second Edition. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1949, pp. 55-64.

in Greek philosophy approaches, in similarity, such a solution. If tradition and commentators are to be accepted, Plotinus received the inspiration for the core of his philosophy from Plato and Aristotle.¹ The emphasizing of the former by Plotinus seems to have been due to a need in his philosophy for a certain amount of other-worldliness.² The Roman empire with its law and order was crumbling. Plotinus lived in a time of insecurity, pain, and general decay. These things, coupled with the fact that Plotinus had contact with a number of Pythagorean ascetics during his youth, are posited as the factors producing the emphasis given to Plato.³ Be that as it may, the concept of gradation in being as well as a concept of evolution permeates the works of Aristotle, and the suggestion of an evolutionary process between the highest form of being and lowest forms is to be found in the Timaeus.⁴ Further, in his earlier dialogues, Plato is almost continually discussing the idea of participation in what is real: how a certain lack of participation is the explanation for phenomena, and the reasons for such

1. E. Kullman, "Alexandrian Philosophy," in A History of Philosophical Systems. New York: The Philosophical Library, 1950, p. 136.
2. L. J. Rosen, Plotinus: Platonist or Aristotelian, Philosophical Monographs. New York: Columbia University Press, 1948, pp. 16-23.
3. Ibid., pp. 29-48.
4. 28 C-92 A.

lack. Out of these and similar ideas, Plotinus constructs a metaphysical system to which we must give some consideration if we are to understand his idea of release.

The "One" is the unconditioned at which we arrive when we seek an ultimate. "It is the ultimate of ultimates."¹ Being beyond every distinction it does not think, for thinking implies a distinction.² Being infinitely perfect, if it wills, it wills only itself. It is the fullness of being.

The "One," in willing itself, produces the ideas which, collectively, are called Nous.³ The Nous comprises the archetypes or Ideas of those things which we designate as phenomenal objects. When the phenomenal order is designated, the five categories are added. They are: "Essence," "Difference," "Identity," "Motion," and "Rest".

Besides the fact that the Ideas make up the intelligible world, i.e., the Nous, they are also besouled. They may, therefore, be considered moving forces as well as principles

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1. Plotinus, Enneads, VI, 6, 32. My own translation from the Greek text of the Concordance of Drews. Unless otherwise stated, all successive footnotes specificating references to Plotinus will be designated by the abbreviated form, EN., followed by the particular reference.
 2. Ibid., VI, 7, 37.
 3. Ibid., IV, 5, 7.

of manifoldness.

"And is it not because they (ideas) are moving that we can speak of them as besouled. What else, then, can account for the many which are subsumed under one idea."¹

These "Ideas," when besouled, are the third step removed from the "One,"--and therefore that much removed from being. Each has three facets. One of these reflects the differentiations to be found within the "Nous." This facet is called the rational^e. The second reflects movement back toward the "One." This is called volitional. The third or appetitive facet reflects movement toward the world of indefinite matter (hyle). It is this latter facet which causes the universal soul to inform matter. The differentiation among the Ideas (Nous) and reflections of their opposite movements constitute the universal soul. Thus the universal soul becomes, in a sense, the mediator between what is in eternity and what is in time.² Wherever the universal soul touches undifferentiated matter, the individual soul comes into being. This informing of matter on the part of the universal soul is what constitutes

1. EN., XXVII, 4, 3. Parentheses are those of Drews.

2. Ibid., III, 7, 13.

the difference between the universal soul and individual soul. The individual soul has a body:

"Only while here below they inhabit bodies and are divided there. On high ... all the souls exist equally together in that world which is one, and there is no local distance between them."¹

But some may say that the soul at this stage is nothing but the body in which it dwells, or that its nature is no different from that of body. Hence, Plotinus devotes several tractates to a discussion of the difference between the individual soul and the body. In doing this he discusses both what the soul is as well as what it is not. The latter approach leads Plotinus to posit that the soul is not material; it is not a harmony; and it is not an end of something that is developing:

"In our attempt to elucidate the essence of the soul, we show it to be neither a material fabric nor, among immaterial things, a harmony. The theory that it is some final development, some entelechy, we pass by, holding this to be neither true as presented nor practically definitive."²

1. EN., II, 2, 6.

2. Plotinus, Enneads, IV, 2, 1; translated into English by Stephen MacKenna and B. S. Page. Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc., 1952.

Plotinus thinks that soul is not material because that which is material is capable of division whereas soul cannot be divided.¹ Further, soul is capable of diffusion in such a manner that it is one and the same thing in every place in which it is diffused.² Also significant is the fact that if the soul is material there is no common ground on which to unify sense experience.³

We cannot consider the soul a harmony as the Pythagoreans do because the soul is prior to all harmony. It is the harmonizer.⁴ Besides, harmony implies distinct parts and parts cannot be predicated of the soul.⁵

Soul cannot be considered an entelechy of the body because then a person could not be aware of internal contradiction.⁶ Further, the soul cannot be the entelechy of the body for an entelechy is inseparable from that of which it is an entelechy. In such a case the withdrawal of the soul in sleep could not occur.⁷

Thus far we have discussed the soul in terms of what it is not. This via-negativa approach to the soul, however, is not the only one that Plotinus takes. To him the soul is

1. Plotinus, Op. Cit., IV, 2, 1.

2. Ibid., IV, 2, 1.

3. Ibid., IV, 2, 2.

4. Ibid., IV, 8, 8 D.

5. Ibid., IV, 8, 8 D.

6. Ibid., IV, 8, 8 E.

7. Ibid., IV, 8, 8 E.

something quite positive:

"That the soul is of the family of the diviner nature, the eternal, is clear from our demonstration, that it is not material:"¹

Plotinus in places calls the soul "authentic essence."² In other places it is described as a perfect unity, utterly strange to a division of parts, a self-gathered whole.³ Furthermore, and to Plotinus this seems a positive distinction worthy of note, the soul is capable of virtue, a thing not predicated of the body.⁴ However, that which characterizes the individual Plotinian soul most uniquely is that its essence is of the nature of the abiding:

"Thus it is that, entering this realm, it possesses still the vision inherent to that superior phase in virtue of which it unchangingly maintains its integral nature."⁵

1. Plotinus, Op. Cit., IV, 8, 10; see also IV, 2, 1.
2. Ibid., IV, 1, 1.
3. Ibid., IV, 2, 2.
4. Ibid., IV, 2, 2.
5. Ibid., IV, 1, 1. From this it is not to be inferred that the soul does not move or is not being moved, but only that it does not change in essence.

This is why Plotinus, in the sixth Ennead, can maintain that, though enveloped in a body, our soul is still essentially identical with the "One":

"We have not been cut away; we are not separate, what though the body nature was closed about us to press us to itself; we breathe and hold our ground because the Supreme does not give and pass but gives on forever, so long as it remains what it is."¹

Further:

"God--we read--is outside of none, present unperceived to all; we break away from Him, or rather from ourselves; what we turn from we cannot reach; astray ourselves, we cannot go in search of another; a child distraught will not recognize its father; to find ourselves is to know our source."²

When the universal soul becomes individual in a body it is associated with something evil, for:

"So far as the nature of bodies participates in matter, it is an evil."³

1. Tractate IX, Sec. 9 of the MacKenna translation.
2. Ibid., VI, 9, 7.
3. EN., LI, 1, 8.

This seems to be so because matter participates the least in being. It is the farthest removed from the "One," which is the fullness of being. This is why the nature of this evil is not to be understood in terms of the soul,¹ or in terms of soul and body together.² Plotinus is definite in assigning evil to matter and to matter alone:

"Despite alternate hypotheses, it is yet to matter that the essence of evil must be assigned, and this because of its lack of participation in being."³

Although matter is evil, we have still to see what specific significance such a fact has for the soul. It will be recalled that a few paragraphs back we discussed the three facets of knowledge, volition, and desire as predicated of the universal soul. Such facets exist also for the individual soul finding their expression through the rational, volitional, and appetitive activities of the soul.⁴ The universal soul is drawn to matter by reason of appetite, the desire to create.

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1. EN., LI, 1, 9.
 2. Ibid., LI, 2, 4.
 3. Ibid., LVI, 1, 6.
 4. Ibid., VIII, 4, 10.

It would seem, then, that from the time of the existence of the universal soul there exists a kind of strife between that facet which is attempting reunion with the "One" and that which is seeking the actualization of matter. On the level of the individual soul this strife is between the appetitive facet of the soul and rational-volitional facet:

"Being agitated by two opposite and unregulated movements, the one rational and volitional, the other not, the soul is kept from carrying out its proper movement."¹

The principle of bondage is to be found in matter. A characteristic manifestation of bondage is strife. If it had not been for matter, strife would not have arisen. Therefore, to the former is assigned the ultimate reason for bondage. In the realm of the "One" there is no strife because there is no matter.² It is toward this indefinable "One" that the rational facets of the universal soul and the individual soul are striving. It is only when the individual has carried out a certain amount of mortification that the

1. EN., LII, 1, 4.

2. The matter about which we are concerned here is not to be confused with sensible objects. It is akin to, if not identical with, Aristotle's "matter." It is a metaphysical principle.

attractions of physical objects¹ grow less. Only then can he give more opportunity for his rational facet to seek union with what is rational in all the universe. The seeking of the rational and any consequent movement of the soul is what Plotinus terms regress.

The regress can be divided into three activities: moral activity, which is a basic preparation or katharsis, intellectual activity, and contemplation, which may end in ecstasy.

The first of the above three activities begins when the soul, realizing its bondage to matter, seeks some means toward lessening the attractions of matter. Among these are to be found such ascetic practices as fasting, abstinence from meat, wearing coarse clothing, chastity, and observing silence at specific intervals.² Here it is significant to note that Plotinus does not recommend these practices in order to suppress the body completely. He is interested rather in disciplining the body so as to keep it from interfering with the intellectual or rational facet of the soul:

"The reason which disciplines
away our concern about this life

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1. Physical objects are manifestations of metaphysical matter.
 2. Porphyry, The Life of Plotinus, IV, 2, 2. My own translation from the Greek text by A. Edgerton. Oxford: The University Press, 1904.

has no fundamental quarrel with things of this order; it merely resents their interference"¹

This is probably why Plotinus insists that, in preparing itself, the soul must become perfect in the practice of the ordinary social virtues of the world.² The soul, here, is generous, honest, sympathetic, and patient. It possesses the acme of social virtue.

The second activity which the soul must take upon itself during regress is called intellectual. After the individual soul has realized a state in which the body and its needs do not distract from the path back to the "One," then certain intellectual activities must begin in order to facilitate release. The soul must acquire the right kind of knowledge. Toward this end, Plotinus says: "The body obscures the truth, but a wise teacher makes the truth stand out."³ However, right knowledge is not all that is comprised in the notion of intellectual activity. In the Third Tractate

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1. EN., I, 4, 7. It is to be noted here that the reason why Plotinus can have no fundamental quarrel with the body is that body qua body possesses a degree of reality because it possesses a form. It is only with the completely formless that there can be a complete expression of antipathy.
 2. Ibid., I, 3, 6.
 3. Leigon an Gignoskon, IV, 9, 5. English translation, Tract Against the Gnostics, by R. J. Hardie. Edinburgh: The University Press, 1930.

of the First Ennead,¹ Plotinus devotes some time to discussing the need for vigorous thinking in order to obtain the "One." In one place he says:

"It is the method, or discipline, that brings with it the power of pronouncing with final truth upon the nature and relation of things--what each is, how it differs from others, what common quality all have, to what kind each belongs and in what rank each stands in its kind and whether its being is real-being, and how many beings there are, and how many non-beings to be distinguished from beings."²

Thus, reasoning and dialectic are what Plotinus calls "The Upward Way."³ This "Upward Way" does not admit of intuition, but requires that the soul climb the ladder of being until it is at the threshold of the intuitive.⁴

The third activity, i.e., contemplation, constitutes the nearest approach in this life to the "One." As such it constitutes the nearest approach to release in this life. The "One," as the fullness of being, is the direct opposite of matter, which is the absence of being. Consequently, only

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1. EN., I, 3, 1-6.
 2. Ibid., I, 3, 6.
 3. Ibid., I, 3, 1.
 4. Ibid., V, 9, 1.

in so far as the soul approaches the "One" does it free itself from the binding effects of matter. Conversely, in so far as the soul frees itself from matter does it approach the "One."

"Then the soul, full of scorn for terrestrial things, resides in the 'One' with the unspeakable bliss of a man who, after long imprisonment, is free."¹

After a certain amount of asceticism the soul becomes reflective and sees the continuity in things. Thinking then becomes the wandering from the many to the "One." Whereupon, contemplation ensues, and through it release. At this point beauty (kalon), truth (aleitheis), and goodness (aretai) merge in the individual soul's consciousness. Release then consists in the realization of the identity between the self and the "One." At this point it may be said of the individual that,

"He belongs no longer to the order of the beautiful; he has risen beyond beauty; he has overpassed even the choir of the virtues; he is like one who, having penetrated the inner sanctuary, leaves the temple

1. EN., VI, 8, 8.

images behind him--though these become first objects of regard when he leaves the holies; for there his converse was not with image, not with trace, but with the very truth in the view of which all the rest is but of secondary concern."¹

It is only at death that the individual soul is able to act upon this merger so as to become continually one with the "One."² However, this may happen only after a number of lives and deaths. The soul must transmigrate until it becomes wholly free from the effects of matter.³ In each one of these transmigrations it may either free itself more and more from matter or become more and more enmeshed in it.

In summation of Plotinus' concept of the soul and its release, we find the following salient features. First, the soul is to be considered essentially static. Although the soul is capable of a certain amount of motion, this does not mean that it is essentially changing. Second, the principle of bondage is matter. Ultimately bondage is due to metaphysical matter; proximately it is due to physical objects. The soul is considered bound in so far as it is associated

1. EN., VI, 9, 11.

2. Ibid., III, 8, 3. Porphyry tells us that at four different times during his life Plotinus became one with the "One."

3. Ibid., III, 2, 13.

with matter. Matter is bondage to the soul simply because it keeps the latter from achieving oneness with the source of all being. Thus, the movements of material objects and the desire which the soul has for them tie the latter in such a manner that only with effort and with certain activities can it free itself. Third, release has both a positive and a negative side. Positively, it is the union and identity with the one. It is union with infinite being. It is bliss. Negatively, release is freedom from the disturbances of material things.

CHAPTER IV

RECAPITULATION AND COMPARISON

a In the previous three chapters we have endeavored to present that date^a by which adequate comparison of release concepts would be possible. In Chapter One we attempted an understanding of the release concepts of each of the Hindu systems. Here special attention was paid to those characteristics of the various concepts of release which are common to most early Hindu thinkers of the six orthodox systems. In Chapter Two, we attempted to ascertain the nature of Platonic release. In Chapter Three, our attention was devoted to Plotinian release. The content of these chapters will be used as the essential support for the conclusions arrived at in this chapter.

In this chapter we shall devote some discussion to the similarities and dissimilarities between the Hindu concept of release and Plato's concepts of release. This discussion will take into consideration the differences between the Platonic phenomenal soul and its release and the Platonic transcendental soul and its release. We shall also devote some discussion to the similarities and the dissimilarities between the Hindu concept of release and Plotinus' concept of release. Finally, if among the above-discussed release

concepts there is found a common thread of similarity, or if there are dissimilarities, then these will be identified as such.

Comparison of Some Basic Elements
in the Philosophies of the Hindu,
Plato, and Plotinus which are
Relevant to a Comparison of
Release Concepts:

One of the first basic elements in the philosophies of the Hindu, Plato, and Plotinus is their common attitude toward life in this world. The phenomenal world and life in that world is, according to all of the philosophers under consideration, a world of suffering, vicissitudes, privations, and perplexities. The Hindu attitude toward this life is probably best depicted in the Yoga Sutra where it is said: "To the discriminating all is nothing but pain."¹ Gotama, the founder of the Nyaya system seems to be of the same mind when he says: "Misapprehension, faults, activity, birth, and pain--these in their uninterrupted course constitute

1. Patanjali, "Yoga Sutra" II, 15, in The Yoga-System of Patanjali, translated into English by J. H. Woods. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, Second Edition, 1927.

the world."¹ Further, Dasgupta in commenting upon the attitude of the Hindu philosopher toward the world says: "Though the belief that the world is full of sorrow has not been equally prominently emphasized in all systems, yet it may be considered as being shared by all of them.... All our experiences are essentially sorrowful and ultimately sorrow-begetting. Sorrow is the ultimate truth of this process of the world...."² Thus, it is certain that the Hindu is definitely pessimistic about this life.

Plato takes a more qualified pessimistic attitude toward this life than the Hindu. However, the pessimism is definitely there: "For few are the goods of human life, and many are the evils,...."³ There is in this life not only pain and suffering but also a certain lack of truth, a certain obscurity which alienates the soul from its true home. In the Phaedo,⁴ Plato maintains that this life is full of error. This error combined with folly, tears, and all sorts of human ills makes the philosopher desirous of a death which severs him irrevocably from his life. This is also why our present life is not to be preferred to death: "May not he who is truly a man cease to care about living a

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1. Nyaya Sutra, I, 1, 2, translated into English by M. S. C. Vidyabhusana, S.B.H. Allahabad: M. Manzur Ahmad, 1930.
 2. A History of Indian Philosophy. Cambridge: The University Press, 1932, Vol. I, pp. 74-76.
 3. Republic, 379.
 4. Sl A.

certain time? --he knows, as women say, that no man can escape fate, and therefore he is not fond of life;"¹
 Further: "The connection of soul and body is no way better than the dissolution of them, as I am ready to maintain quite seriously."² In terms of the foregoing statements, we can maintain that Plato, like the Hindu, is generally pessimistic about life in this world.

It would seem that the same pessimism mentioned in connection with Plato and the Hindu is to be found also in Plotinus. In the Fourth Tractate of the First Ennead, Plotinus discusses the reactions ^{to} misfortune which are typical of the Sage. When such a man foresees calamity and evils of one form or another coming upon him and those he loves, he will be at ease. "He would reflect that the nature of this All is such as brings these things to pass and man must bow the head."³ Further: "Those that refuse to place the Sage aloft in the Intellectual Realm but drag him down to the accidental, dreading accident for him, have substituted for the Sage we have in mind another person

1. Gorgias, 512 E.

2. Laws, 828 E.

3. I, 4, 7. In Henley's Invictus we find the opposite reaction to the evils of this life:

"In the fell clutch of circumstance
 I have not winced nor cried aloud.
 Under the bludgeonings of chance
 My head is bloody but unbowed."

altogether; they offer us a tolerable sort of man and they assign to him a life of mingled good and ill, a case, after all, not easy to conceive. But admitting the possibility of such a mixed state, it could not be deserved to be called a life of happiness;. . . ."¹

In terms of the foregoing statements, we may say that, although one may emphasize pessimism more than another, all of the men considered in this thesis take a pessimistic outlook on life in this world. This outlook is to some extent the motive for their seeking release. It has even influenced the motivation for their respective philosophies. Thus, the Hindu is motivated to philosophize primarily in order to obtain release from the evils of this life. The sutra literature of every system--even Advaita Vedanta--reveals this practical motivation. Chatterjee and Datta in their work on Indian philosophy make a very clear statement about this: "The most striking and fundamental agreement. . . is that all the systems regard philosophy as a practical necessity and cultivate it in order to understand how life can best be led."² Further: "The reason why the practical motive prevails in Indian philosophy is the fact that every system. . . is moved to speculation by a spiritual disquiet at the sight of the evils that cast a gloom over life in this

1. EN., I, 4, 16.

2. An Introduction to Indian Philosophy. (Third Edition)
Calcutta: The University Press, 1948, pp. 14-15.

world and it wants to understand the source of these evils and incidentally the nature of the universe and the meaning of human life, in order to find out some means for completely overcoming life's miseries."¹

Plato seems to have two motives² for philosophizing: wonder and release. To which he gives greater emphasis is difficult to determine, especially within the scope of our present inquiry. In the Theaetetus, Socrates is discussing certain axioms of geometry. Whereupon, he is told by Theaetetus that these very axioms have been perplexing the latter for a long time. Socrates replies: "I see, my dear Theaetetus, that Theodorus had a true insight into your nature when he said that you were a philosopher, for wonder is the feeling of a philosopher, and philosophy begins in wonder."² When asked by Glaucon who are to be considered the true philosophers, Socrates replies: "Those...who are lovers of the vision of truth."³ Whether Plato, in talking about a "vision of truth" is referring to a positive side of the released state or not is not clear from the text.^t In any case there is in Plato also the practical motive i.e., the release of the soul from the body. He explicitly states such as the goal of the true philosopher: "And the true philosophers, and they only, are ever seeking to release

1. Chatterjee and Datta, Op. Cit., p. 15.

2. Theaetetus, 155 D.

3. Republic, 475 C.

the soul. Is not the separation and release of the soul from the body their especial study? That is true."¹ Thus it is that in Plato we have two motives for philosophy. One is simply a detached desire to know and the other is the practical need for release. However, it should be noted-- as will be established elsewhere in the thesis²--that fulfillment of the desire to know presupposes release from the body.³

With regard to motivation, Plotinus seems to be definitely akin to the Hindu. In discussing the nature of dialectic, Plotinus calls it "The Upward Way." He then says that "The Upward Way" ends in release and is itself in some way akin to release: "What art is there, what method, what discipline to bring us there where we must go? The Term at which we must arrive we may take as agreed: we have established elsewhere, by many considerations, that our journey is to the Good, to the Primal-Principle, and, indeed, the very reasoning which discovered the Term was itself something like an initiation."⁴ Since--as previously advanced⁵--union with the "Primal-Principle" cannot be completely achieved except by an irrevocable release from the

1. Phaedo, 67 D.

2. Pp. 87-88. Hereafter, footnoted reference to pages in this thesis will be made by page only.

3. Pp. 69-70.

4. EN., I, 3, 1.

5. Pp. 66-69.

body and this world, dialectic must be for the purpose of effecting such a release. After establishing release as the whole point of dialectic, Plotinus goes on and asks several questions about the nature of philosophy, answering each of them: "What then is Philosophy? Philosophy is the supremely precious. Is Dialectic, then, the same as Philosophy? It is the precious part of Philosophy."¹ Plotinus' notion, then, that philosophy is for the sake of release, undoubtedly led Rogers to make the following statement in discussing Plotinus: "Meanwhile, however we may account for it, evil as a practical problem still remains with us; and the final task of philosophy is to show how we may escape it and attain salvation."²

The practical motivation predicated of all of the thinkers discussed in this thesis would be a chimera if it were not for the fact that all of the philosophers discussed postulate the existence of an eternal and unchangeable moral order. More specifically, the search for release would be fruitless. In the Hindu systems this moral order devolves around the law of karma: "The faith in an eternal moral order dominated the entire history of Indian philosophy barring the solitary exception of the Carvaka materialists."³

1. EN., I, 3, 5.

2. A. K. Rogers, A Student's History of Philosophy. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1935, pp. 172-173.

3. Chatterjee and Datta, Op. Cit., p. 17.

In the Rg-veda this eternal moral order is called Rta.

"This idea gradually shapes itself...into the general conception of karma which is accepted by all Indian systems."¹

The law of karma permits eventual justice to be had as the fruit of activity.

For Plato the universe definitely possesses a moral order. Permeating this order is the Good. In the *Gorgias*,² Plato makes the nature of order to be equivalent to the Good. He also explains reason and order in the universe--which to a greek generally implies meaning and value--as the ultimate principle of reality. Socrates is talking to Philebus about this order in the universe when the former says to Protarchus:

Soc. "Let us begin then, Protarchus, by asking a question.

Pro. "What question?

Soc. "Whether all this which they call the universe is left to the guidance of unreason and chance medley, or, on the contrary, as our fathers have declared, ordered and governed by a marvelous intelligence and wisdom.

Pro. "Wide asunder are the two assertions, illustrious Socrates, for that which

1. Chatterjee and Datta, Op. Cit., p. 18.

2. 504 A.

you were just now saying to me appears to be blasphemy; but the other assertion, that mind orders all things, is worthy of the aspect of the world, and of the sun, and of the moon...."¹

Plotinus also subscribes to a moral order. After talking about sickness, poverty, and various other evils to be found connected with this life, the following statements are made: "Besides these accidents are not without their service in the co-ordination and completion of the Universal system."² Further, "One thing perishes, and the Kosmic Reason--whose control nothing anywhere eludes--employs that ending to the beginning of something new; and, so, when the body suffers and the Soul, under the affliction, loses power, all that has been bound under illness and evil is brought into a new set of relations, into another class or order. Some of these troubles are helpful to the very sufferers--poverty and sickness, for example--and as for vice, even this brings something to the general service: it acts as a lesson in right doing, and, in many ways even, produces good; thus, by setting men face to face with the ways and consequences of iniquity, it calls them from lethargy, stirs the deeper mind

1. Philebus, 28 C.

2. EN., III, 2, 5.

and sets the understanding to work; by the contrast of the evil under which wrong-doers labor it displays the worth of the right."¹

Another basic similarity in philosophies which has had a great effect upon any possible similarity in release concepts is the distinct notion--to be found in Plato, Plotinus, and the Hindu--that underlying all phenomena is an essentially static substance or group of substances. It is understandable that in attempting an exploration of this notion of substance, Plato, Plotinus, and the Hindu would eventually arrive at the immateriality predicable of this ultimate. To these thinkers, that which underlies or explains the material must be essentially different from the material. In their minds, such a concept lends itself to the notion of soul and also makes possible some sort of salvation.

Comparison of the Release Concept
of the Hindu with the Release
Concepts of Plato:

Plato, as has been earlier advanced in this thesis, posited two essentially different kinds of soul: one

1. EN., III, 2, 5. -

phenomenal, the other transcendental.¹ In order to facilitate our present discussion, we shall first consider how the Platonic phenomenal soul and its release compare with the Hindu soul and its release. We shall later compare the Platonic transcendental soul and its release with that of the Hindu soul.

The Hindu soul is an unqualified static substance. At times it may mis-identify itself with the world of change. The Hindu soul is capable of being limited by a body. The body is subject to pain and decay. However, under all of the above changes and limitations there remains a basic unchangeable and unaffected substance to which and to which alone the Hindu assigns the term soul.²

The Platonic phenomenal soul is in essence the direct opposite of the Hindu soul. The Platonic phenomenal soul is essentially dynamic. It is change and the cause of all change.³ It may be qualified in terms of what it changes or the purpose it has in changing things.⁴ In any case, it

1. Although there are interpretations of the Platonic phenomenal soul other than the one presented in this thesis, we cannot agree with these interpretations because they are contrary to a number of precise statements to be found in the writings of Plato. Although we accept full responsibility for the interpretation here presented, we should like to mention the following work by Raphael Demos as partially our source of inspiration: The Philosophy of Plato. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1939, pp. 78-98.

2. p. 24.

3. pp. 33-34.

4. p. 35; also p. 45.

can be defined only in terms of the pattern which it leaves among phenomena.¹

The bondage of the Platonic phenomenal soul is considerably different from the bondage of the Hindu soul. The Hindu concept of bondage is to be taken as pain brought about by change and ignorance. Changing states of consciousness in the jiva cause pain and suffering to the soul of the Nyaya-Vaisesika.² The soul's association, through the body, with constantly evolving Prakrti causes pain and suffering in the Samkhya-Yoga.³ The bondage of the Platonic phenomenal soul is essentially in terms of a frustration of vitiation to the soul's dynamism.⁴

The foregoing dissimilarity between the nature of the Hindu soul and its bondage on the one hand and the nature of the Platonic phenomenal soul and its bondage on the other is carried through, to a great extent, in the dissimilarity of the two souls' release from bondage. The state of release for the Hindu soul is that state completely free from pain in which the absolutely static is necessary to such

1. p. 47.

2. p. 4. It should be noted that the jiva, insofar as it can be considered abstractly, possesses certain similarities to the phenomenal soul of Plato. However, such a comparison would be erroneous simply because the Hindu does not speak of the jiva as a separate entity. Jiva is the term used for the embodied soul.

3. p. 9.

4. pp. 44-45.

freedom.¹ The state of release for the Platonic phenomenal soul is a state of unqualified dynamism.² The static, or unchanging, is by definition, excluded from the concept of the phenomenal soul's release. It is, therefore, warrantable to state that between the release of the Platonic phenomenal soul and the release of the Hindu soul there is no similarity. The two concepts of release are mutually exclusive.

Thus far we have attempted to compare the release of the Hindu soul with the release of the phenomenal soul of Plato. We must now give some consideration to a comparison of the concept of release of the Platonic transcendental soul with the concept of release of the Hindu soul.

Fundamentally the Platonic transcendental soul and the Hindu soul are identical. They are both unchanging.³ They are both spiritual substances.⁴ In fact, they are similar in all respects except for one difference which we shall presently describe. In the Samkhya-Yoga there is a concept of soul which involves a notion of "pure consciousness." To both Kapila and Patanjali, this notion means that the soul is a knower without any objects of knowledge. The subject-object relationship involved with every act of

1. pp. 24-25.

2. p. 45.

3. p. 24; also p. 42.

4. p. 24; also pp. 41-42.

knowing is posited as the very essence of consciousness by the Nyaya. Samkhya, however, does not admit this. Thus, Saksena, in discussing the "pure consciousness" of Samkhya-Yoga, says: "It is a contentless consciousness in which there is no consciousness of either 'I' or 'this', 'Aham' or 'Idam'."¹ We do not find predicated of the Platonic transcendental soul any such notion of consciousness. On the contrary, the Platonic transcendental soul always possesses a subject-object consciousness. Of this Dunham says: "At no time do we find anything in Plato which indicates a severance of the distinction between awareness and the object of awareness."² This difference, however, in no way affects the common thread of similarity mentioned above. For the souls spoken of by Plato and the Hindu agree in two basic respects. Both are essentially unchanging and both are essentially spiritual. Hence, our original proposition expressing the fundamental identity between that type of soul accepted by all of the Hindu systems and the Platonic transcendental soul is valid.

Chatterjee and Datta in discussing the common characteristics of all systems of Indian philosophy make the following statement: "Another common view, held by all

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1. S. K. Saksena, The Nature of Consciousness in Hindu Philosophy. Benares: Nand Kishore and Bros., 1944, p. 44.
 2. J. H. Dunham, The Religion of Philosophers. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1940, p. 216.

Indian thinkers is that ignorance of reality is the cause of our bondage and sufferings and liberation from these cannot be achieved without knowledge of reality...."¹ Ignorance as the cause of bondage in the Hindu systems is quite different from the body as the cause of bondage in Plato. Ignorance is the conditio sine qua non for desire, aversion, anger, attachment, and the body in Hinduism. In Plato, the body is not only the ultimate source of bondage but also of ignorance: "For the body is a source of endless trouble to us by reason of the mere requirement of food; and is liable also to diseases which overtake and impede us in the search after true being: it fills us full of loves, and lusts, and fears, and fancies of all kinds, and endless foolery, and in fact, as men say, takes away from us the power of thinking at all."²

As stated above³ the nature of bondage in the Hindu involves emphasis on the suffering connected with this life. In Plato this is not completely the case. Although suffering is admitted, yet greater emphasis is laid on the soul being away from its true home. It is wandering confused in an alien land.⁴ These emphases do not, however, affect a common similarity in release concepts. Both Plato and the

1. An Introduction to Indian Philosophy, p. 19.

2. Paedo, 66 B.

3. pp. 25-26.

4. p. 15; also pp. 50-53.

Hindu admit a release on the part of the soul which is complete freedom from suffering in the widest sense of the term. This suffering may take on the aspect of an intellectual lack, frustration in the search for truth, or intense bodily pain. In any case, all of these are at an end in release.¹ This general very basic similarity is perfectly compatible with certain emphas&es which Plato and the Hindu attach to release. Thus with the exception of the Vedanta, which is positive,² the negative side of release is more emphasized by the Hindu than the positive side. The majority of the systems confine themselves to designating release as the soul's freedom from pain and suffering.³ Like the Vedantin but unlike the other thinkers of the early Hindu systems, Plato designates release as bliss.⁴ For him it is also communion with the Ideas and in company with the gods.⁵ It is also the attainment of knowledge and truth.⁶ Generally, then, both Plato and the Hindu maintain a freedom from suffering as the nature of release. In a positive view, Plato and the Vedantin add to this negative concept of release the predicate of bliss.

1. p. 5; also pp. 50-53.

2. p. 25.

3. p. 25.

4. p. 53.

5. pp. 52-53.

6. p. 53.

Comparison of the Release Concept
of the Hindu with the Release
Concept of Plotinus:

The Plotinian soul is essentially the same as the soul of the Hindu. By this we mean that the Plotinian soul is both essentially unchanging and essentially spiritual.¹ There is a difference between the soul of Plotinus and the soul of Sankara but this difference in no way affects the basic identity of the two souls. Sankara maintains an abiding absolute identity between the atman and Brahman--even in the state of ignorance during this life. Plotinus maintains that there is an absolute identity between the soul and the "One" only before the egress and only after the regress. Between these two, the soul is essentially identical with the "One."² It is not, however, completely so because the body, which possesses a degree of reality, gives to the soul a degree of discreteness.

Plotinian bondage differs both in principle and in nature from the bondage of the Hindu. As stated above, the source of bondage for the Hindu is ignorance. For Plotinus, matter manifested by a body is the source of bondage.³ From

1. p. 62.
2. p. 63.
3. p. 66.

the standpoint of the nature of bondage Plotinus emphasizes a certain alienation of the soul from its real home: "It is separated from its source."¹ This of course may be implied in Advaita but is not found among the early writers of the other systems of Hinduism. This does not mean that Plotinus excludes suffering from his concept of bondage. As was pointed out above, all of the thinkers considered in this thesis maintain that this life is full of evils and suffering. Therefore, it is not that Plotinus excludes the notion of suffering from his concept of bondage but only that he emphasizes the alienation of the soul from the "One" more than he does the evils entailed in such alienation.

The emphasis given the notion of alienation in Plotinian bondage to some extent carries over into the Plotinian concept of release. Plotinian release means primarily the positive union between the individual soul and the "One," whereas, the majority of the Hindu systems--other than the Advaita, which will be discussed later--restrict themselves to a negative statement of release, i.e., liberation from suffering. However, both Plotinus and the Hindu approach release in a similar way. They advocate disciplining the mind and body. All of the Hindu systems accept Yoga as a

1. EN., I, 6, 4.

fruitful means of attaining release.¹ Plotinus also seeks to discipline the body and mind without destroying either.² This is most manifest when one considers the emphasis which Plotinus lays on the requirement of certain preparatory virtues.³ Hence, the concepts of release in Plotinus and the Hindu are similar. There are differing emphases but a basic similarity--release from the perplexities and sorrows of life--is to be found between Plotinus and the Hindu thinkers. However, before leaving our comparison of Plotinus and the Hindu completely, we must give some attention to a very close similarity between Plotinian release and the release of the Advaita Vendanta. Both Sankara and Plotinus speak of release in terms of bliss.⁴ Both speak of release in terms of an identification with an infinite substance.⁵ Ultimately the states of release in Sankara and Plotinus are identical. There is, however, this fact which differentiates

1. See Chatterjee and Datta, An Introduction to Indian Philosophy, p. 337. Here it should be understood that Yoga is not a nihilist philosophy. Patanjali is quoted in the Yoga Bhasya of Vyasa as saying: "Some ascetics and Brahmins accuse me wrongly and baselessly saying that the man Patanjali is a nihilist, and preaches the annihilation, destruction, and non-existence of an existant being. That is what I am not and do not affirm. Both previously and now I preach only the cessation of pain."
2. p. 66.
3. pp. 66-68. For a complete description of these as well as their significance in the philosophy of Plotinus, see Fuller's, A History of Philosophy. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1938, p. 307 ff.
4. pp. 19-20; also p. 69.
5. p. 19; also pp. 69-71.

Sankara from Plotinus, namely, that release in Advaita comes about through an intellectual identification of the atman with Brahman,¹ whereas, release in Plotinus is not restricted to an intellectual identification but includes, to a certain extent, an ontological identification as well.² This, of course, is so because the atman, in Sankara, is never ontologically discrete from the Brahman, whereas, in Plotinus, the soul before its release and reabsorption is, to some extent, ontologically discrete from the "One."

Identification of Common Threads
of Similarity among the Release
Concepts Discussed in this Thesis:

We have found a type of soul and a type of release in Plato which we have termed phenomenal and which in no way resembles the concepts of soul and release to be found in the other thinkers. Further, we have discovered that the causes of bondage in Plato and Plotinus are identical and in no way correspond to the cause of bondage in the Hindu.

Despite the above differences this thesis has reached

1. p. 19.

2. p. 70.

certain very comprehensive similarities. They are:

- 1.) Plato, Plotinus, and the Hindu all admit of a concept of bondage which varies somewhat ^{in minor details} from thinker to thinker but which is basically the notion of perplexity and suffering.
- 2.) Plato, Plotinus, and the Hindu all admit of a practical motivation for philosophy.
- 3.) Plato, Plotinus, and the Hindu all admit of a soul which is essentially unchanging.
- 4.) Plato, Plotinus, and the Hindu all admit of an eternal moral order.
- 5.) Plato, Plotinus, and the Hindu all admit of a released state which embraces a freedom from the suffering and perplexities of this life, and in Plato, Plotinus, and Advaita Vedanta this state also embraces knowledge of or identity with ultimate reality.

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